



# METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN PAPERS

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Faculty of Communication

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## FOREWORD

Written papers are an essential component of the study process. They help consolidate knowledge and enhance the competencies acquired during lectures and practical sessions while also enabling students to explore specific fields or issues in communication and information science in greater depth. Writing papers fosters students' independence and strengthens their ability to think creatively and critically, apply appropriate research methods, synthesise facts and generalise phenomena, formulate problems, and identify their solutions.

The objective of the methodological guidelines presented in this publication is to outline the requirements for written papers within all study programs offered at Vilnius University (VU) Faculty of Communication. Both general and specific requirements for written papers and/or creative works within particular study programmes, along with specific aspects of their preparation and evaluation, are regulated by the relevant documents approved by Vilnius University and the Board of the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication\*:

- Study Regulations of Vilnius University;
- Regulations for the Preparation, Defence and Storage of Research Papers of Students Studying at Vilnius University;
- Descriptor of the Procedure for the Administration of Research Papers in the Vilnius University Study Information System;
- Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius University;
- Vilnius University Study Internship Regulations;
- Guidelines on Artificial Intelligence Usage at Vilnius University;
- Regulations for the Defence and Evaluation of Final Theses at the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication;
- Course unit descriptions for specific subjects within the corresponding study programmes at the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication;
- Other relevant documents.

All written, video, and/or audio works completed during the course of studies must be prepared independently by a student or a group of students. Anyone writing an academic paper or completing a creative assignment is responsible for their own work and must adhere to the norms of academic and professional ethics. This includes avoiding the presentation of others' works, statements, and ideas as one's own, maintaining an academic writing style, and ensuring the accurate and honest presentation of all data. Objectivity is essential in all works—sources supporting a claim, as well as those challenging it, must be included, hypotheses should be clearly formulated and discussed, and, when analysing a topic, em-

\* The documents are available at: <https://www.vu.lt/en/studies/academic-info-for-students/regulations>

pirical data and factual materials that contradict the initial assumption or hypothesis must also be considered.

**Part One** of the Methodological Guidelines provides an overview of the most common types of papers written within the bachelor's and master's programmes: the academic essay, review paper, internship report, term paper, and master's research paper. Other types of written assignments not listed here are described in the course descriptions of specific subjects, where the process for completing the work and the specific requirements are outlined. **Part Two** outlines the requirements for bachelor's thesis and master's thesis. **Part Three** details the process of preparing a written paper, from selecting a topic to submitting the final version for evaluation. **Part Four** specifies the requirements for language, formatting, visual presentation, and the use of illustrations in written papers. This section also discusses the principles of academic ethics and their practical application. **Part Five** details the requirements for in-text citations and the compilation of the reference list, including examples. **Part Six** provides a list of recommended methodological literature relevant to the preparation of written papers.

The Methodological Guidelines are regularly updated based on the observations, feedback, and suggestions of the Faculty of Communication's teaching staff with the aim of continuously improving the quality of written papers.

# 1. TYPES OF PAPERS IN BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S PROGRAMMES

**1.1 ACADEMIC ESSAY** is a concise written paper that discusses a topic related to the studied subject, explores common issues or a specific problem within the field, demonstrates knowledge in the discipline, analyses a particular issue, and interprets various theoretical and empirical data. Essays can take different forms, including critical, deductive, exploratory, and descriptive essays.

The aim of an academic essay is to develop critical and scientific thinking, as well as skills in scientific reasoning. Therefore, an academic essay must focus on analysis rather than mere description or explanation. It should incorporate general concepts, established theories, and references to scientific sources while presenting the author's arguments and interpretations.

The teacher of the subject determines the length of an academic essay; however, it must always be between 6,000 and 15,000 characters, including spaces. (For details on fonts and line spacing, see Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*.) The teacher presents the evaluation system for academic essays in the course description and discusses it during the first class. Papers that do not meet the specified requirements or other relevant criteria receive a negative evaluation.

## Typical structure of an academic essay

**Title Page.** The layout of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*, with the term *academic essay* replacing *Bachelor's/Master's Thesis*. Additionally, the word *Supervisor* is replaced with the phrase *Evaluated by*.

**Introduction.** This section presents the relevance of the chosen topic, defines the specific problem to be explored, and states the author's main thesis, which will be analysed in the main body of the essay.

**Main Body.** This part examines the discussed problem, such as a scientific concept or another relevant issue, within the framework of the subject of study. The problem is analysed and interpreted through well-founded statements and supported arguments.

**Conclusions.** This section briefly summarises the key insights of the author, synthesising the main arguments and findings presented in the main body of the academic essay.

**List of References.** This section provides a complete list of all sources that have been directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise referenced in the academic essay (on the form of references, see Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*).

**1.2. REVIEW PAPER** is a concise written work that focuses on an objective analysis of a topic, concept(s), or approach(es) within the framework of the subject being studied, drawing from academic literature. The author's personal (subjective) opinion may be included at the end of the paper.

The aim of a review paper is to conduct an in-depth analysis of specific topics covered in the studied subject, gain a deeper understanding of the issues raised in the field, and develop skills in analysing literature and sources. Writing a review paper also develops general scientific research skills and logical thinking, strengthens the ability to paraphrase and reference sources, produce a concise text, and helps mastering formal academic writing style.

The teacher of the subject determines the length of a review paper; however, it must always be between 10,000 and 30,000 characters, including spaces. (For details on fonts and line spacing, see Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*.) The teacher presents the evaluation system for review papers in the course description and discusses it during the first class. Papers that do not meet the specified requirements or other relevant criteria receive a negative evaluation.

### Typical structure of a review paper

**Title Page.** The layout of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*, with the term *Review Paper* replacing *Bachelor's/Master's Thesis*. Additionally, the word *Supervisor* is replaced with the phrase *Evaluated by*.

**Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents presents the structure of the paper, listing the headings of its structural parts along with the corresponding page numbers. The Table of Contents is formatted according to the example provided in *Appendix 2*.

**Foreword.** This section outlines the relevance of the chosen topic, introduces the aim of the review paper, and provides a general overview of the sources used during the writing process.

**Main Body.** The main body of a review paper expands on the chosen topic by presenting key concepts and perspectives commonly found in academic literature, exploring a specific problem area, etc. It is recommended to structure the main body into no more than three chapters.

**Final Remarks** (conclusions, suggestions).

**List of References.** This section provides a complete list of all sources that have been directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise referred to in the review paper (on the form of references, see Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*).

**1.3. INTERNSHIP REPORT** is a written paper that presents the student's completed internship and describes the tasks performed during the internship.

The aim of the internship report is to develop the ability to describe and reflect on the application of theoretical knowledge in practice, enhance skills in documenting and analysing completed tasks and activities, as well as instances of problem-solving using



theoretical knowledge. Additionally, it strengthens the ability to write structured reports. The evaluation criteria for internship reports are outlined in the Internship Guidelines of the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication and are also presented in the internship course description.

**1.4. TERM PAPER** is an independent analytical research paper in the field of communication and information sciences, aimed at exploring relevant theoretical and practical problems.

The aim of a term paper is to broaden and deepen knowledge in the field and specific subjects of communication and information sciences, as well as to develop academic research skills. The term paper must be based on literature relevant to the subject matter, including theoretical texts and previous research by other authors.

The length of a term paper is between 45,000 and 60,000 characters, including spaces, excluding the appendices (for details on fonts and line spacing, see Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*). In cases where a term paper includes a significant number of figures (such as pictures, graphs, diagrams, etc.), the total length of the paper may exceed the specified limit by up to 5 percent. The text of a term paper must not overlap with any previously evaluated text by the same author, or with the text of any other written work. Papers that do not meet the specified requirements or other relevant criteria receive a negative evaluation.

#### Requirements for structural parts of a term paper

**Title Page.** The layout of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*, with *Term Paper* replacing *Bachelor's/Master's Thesis*.

**Abstract Page.** The Abstract page includes the bibliographic description\* of the term paper in two languages—English and Lithuanian. It also contains four keywords in both languages, followed by an abstract of the paper in both languages. The abstract should present the research aim, key statements, and conclusions. Each version of the abstract must not exceed 1,000 characters.

**Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents page presents the structure of the paper, listing the headings of its structural parts along with the corresponding page numbers. It is formatted according to the example provided in *Appendix 2*.

All structural parts included in the paper (chapters, sections and subsections) must have clear and concise titles that accurately reflect their content, and these titles must be listed in the Table of Contents. Chapters, sections, and subsections of the term paper are numbered using Arabic numerals, following the format outlined in *Appendix 2*. The List

\* *The format of bibliographic description:*

Smith, J. (2024). *The Influence of Digital Media on Public Opinion Formation: Analyzing the Role of Social Media Algorithms in Shaping Political Discourse* [Term Paper, Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication, supervisor Prof. Dr. N. Johnson]. 35 p. (45,000 characters). Tables, Summary in Lithuanian, List of References (30 titles) p. 34–35.

of Abbreviations (if applicable), Introduction, Conclusions and Recommendations, List of References, and Appendices are listed as independent structural parts, but are not numbered.

**List of Abbreviations.** The List of Abbreviations includes all abbreviations (such as acronyms, initialisms, special symbols, units, and more) along with their explanations. If there are fewer than 20 abbreviations in the paper, it is not necessary to include a separate list. In such cases, each abbreviation must be explained the first time it appears in the text.

**Introduction.** The Introduction presents the research problem addressed in the paper, explains the relevance of the topic, defines the aim and objectives of the research, specifies the research object, outlines the applied research methods, provides a general overview of the literature used, and offers a brief overview of the paper's structure. The recommended length of the Introduction is between 5 percent and 10 percent of the total length of the term paper.

**Main Body.** In the main body of the paper, the collected material is systematically discussed and analysed. This part of the paper is divided into chapters, sections, and subsections as needed. The chapters should be proportionate in length, avoiding significant discrepancies, and all subsections must be substantial, with none being shorter than one page. Each chapter and section must contribute meaningfully to the development of the subject matter, and their titles should clearly reflect the main idea discussed in that part.

**Conclusions.** The Conclusions section presents the key findings of the research. It may also include recommendations, suggestions, and potential directions for further research on the topic. Conclusions should not merely summarise the paper but should also connect key points and reflect on the significance of the findings. They should specifically address the research aim, objectives, and core aspects of the investigated issue rather than offering a general discussion of the topic. It is recommended that the Conclusions comprise 5 percent to 10 percent of the term paper.

**List of References.** This section provides a complete list of all sources that have been directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise referred to in the term paper (on the form of references, see Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*).

**Appendices.** Appendices include tables, diagrams, and other supplementary materials, if necessary.

### Criteria for the evaluation of term papers

- The content of the paper aligns with its topic; the aim is achieved, and the objectives are met.
- The analysis of the topic is coherent (the paper is well-organised, the sequence of ideas is clear and logical, and generalisations and conclusions are derived from the presented arguments).
- The research methods are appropriately chosen and effectively applied.
- Formal requirements are met, including adherence to academic writing style, proper use of in-text citations, accurate compilation of the reference list, and correct formatting of the paper.

Term papers are prepared and written by students independently, by adhering to the requirements of academic ethics. Completed papers must be submitted to the Vilnius University Study Information System (VUSIS) before the indicated deadline. The paper should be saved as a single document. Once uploaded to VUSIS, the papers undergo computer checks for plagiarism and AI-generated content. **Papers found to be plagiarised or prepared in any other dishonest manner are considered violations of academic integrity and are not evaluated. Additionally, papers that do not meet the minimum required length are not evaluated.**

**1.5. MASTER'S RESEARCH PAPER** is an inherent part of the scientific research work, as indicated in the master's study programme. It is an independent analytical research paper that investigates a specific theoretical or practical issue within the field of communication and information sciences.

The objective of the master's research paper is to expand or deepen knowledge in a specific area of communication and information sciences, develop the ability to critically interpret scientific works in the relevant field, apply theoretical frameworks and/or conduct empirical research to solve research problems, and independently carry out research in the field of communication and information sciences.

Students in the master's programmes write one or more master's research papers, as specified in the respective study programme. The preparation of a master's research paper is an integral step in the process of developing the final master's thesis. Therefore, it is recommended that the topics of the master's research papers and the master's thesis are related and that the papers are integrated into the final thesis. The continuity of master's research papers and their connection to the final master's thesis define their nature—these papers cannot be purely applied works, except for those focused on methodology. Additionally, the text of a master's research paper must be original and cannot duplicate any previously evaluated work by the same author, including another master's research paper.

The length of a master's research paper should be between 60,000 and 70,000 characters, including spaces, excluding the appendices. For details on fonts and line spacing, refer to Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*. In cases where a master's research paper includes a significant number of figures (such as pictures, graphs, diagrams, etc.), the total length of the paper may exceed the specified limit by up to 5 percent.

### **Requirements for the structural parts of master's research paper**

**Title Page:** The format of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*. Instead of *Bachelor's/Master's Thesis*, the term *Master's Research Paper* is used.

**Abstract Page.** The Abstract Page includes the bibliographic description of the master's research paper\* in two languages—English and Lithuanian. It also contains four keywords in both languages, followed by an abstract of the paper. The abstract should outline the aim of the research, key statements, and conclusions, and must be provided in both languages. Each version of the abstract should not exceed 1,000 characters.

**Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents provides a detailed overview of the structure of the paper, listing the titles of all structural parts (chapters, sections, and subsections) along with their corresponding page numbers. All structural parts included in the paper must have clear and concise titles that accurately reflect their content, and these titles must be listed in the Table of Contents. Chapters, sections, and subsections of the paper are numbered using Arabic numerals, following the format outlined in *Appendix 2*. The List of Abbreviations (if applicable), Introduction, Conclusions and Recommendations, List of References, and Appendices are listed as independent structural parts but are not numbered.

**List of Abbreviations.** The List of Abbreviations includes all abbreviations (such as acronyms, initialisms, special symbols, units, and more) along with their explanations. If there are fewer than 20 abbreviations in the paper, and each is used no more than three times, it is not necessary to include a separate list. In such cases, each abbreviation must be explained the first time it appears in the text.

**Introduction.** The Introduction outlines the research problem addressed in the paper, explains the relevance of the topic, presents key studies by other authors related to the thematic area, defines the aim and objectives of the research, specifies the research methods applied, and provides a brief overview of the paper's structure.

**Main Body.** Based on the objectives outlined in the Introduction, the main body discusses (i.e., describes and analyses) the existing literature. This section is divided into chapters, sections, and subsections. Each chapter begins with an introductory sentence and ends with a brief generalisation.

**Conclusions.** The Conclusions summarise the key findings of the master's research paper without repeating the generalisations from specific sections. They must be based on the material explored in the paper and presented concisely, aligning with the objectives outlined in the Introduction.

**List of References.** The List of References provides formal descriptions of all sources—whether printed, manuscript, or online—that are directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise used in the paper. The entries in the list, as well as the list itself, must be presented in accordance with the requirements outlined in Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*.

\* *The format of bibliographic description:*

Smith, J. (2024). *The Influence of Digital Media on Public Opinion Formation: Analyzing the Role of Social Media Algorithms in Shaping Political Discourse* [Master's Research Paper, Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication, supervisor Prof. Dr. N. Johnson]. 45 p. (60,000 characters). Tables, Summary in Lithuanian, List of References (50 titles) p. 44–45.

**Appendices.** The Appendices include important supplementary material that supports the paper, such as publications of primary sources (with comments), extensive tables, figures, visual materials, questionnaires, processed survey data, and other relevant documents.

### **Criteria for evaluation of master's research paper**

- Analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of key scientific literature and primary sources (if applicable), demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the research field.
- Depth of analysis of the research object from theoretical, empirical, and/or methodological perspectives, as well as the interpretation and discussion of research data.
- Logical consistency and originality in drawing conclusions that are independently formulated and clearly relevant to the research topic.
- Scientific communication skills, including the use of precise academic language, proper formatting and presentation of the paper, and the ability to defend statements made (if the paper is subject to defence).

**Submission of Completed Papers.** Completed papers must be submitted to the Vilnius University Study Information System (VUSIS) before the indicated deadline. The paper should be saved as a single document. Once uploaded to VUSIS, the papers undergo computer checks for plagiarism and AI-generated content. **Papers found to be plagiarised or prepared in any other dishonest manner are considered violations of academic integrity and are not evaluated. Additionally, papers that do not meet the minimum required length are not evaluated.**

## 2. BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S THESES

Bachelor's and master's theses are written during the final year of the study cycle. A bachelor's thesis may incorporate term papers, while a master's thesis may integrate master's research papers, provided they were prepared independently by the author. However, **these integrated papers must not exceed 30 percent of the total length of the thesis, excluding appendices.**

Both bachelor's and master's theses are defended in a public defence procedure.

**2.1 BACHELOR'S THESIS** is an academic written paper that counts towards the completion of a bachelor's degree. It is independently prepared in one of the thematic areas within the field of communication and information sciences and presented by a student at the end of the first cycle of studies.

The aim of a bachelor's thesis is to expand or deepen knowledge in a specific aspect of communication and information sciences, create an opportunity to apply the knowledge gained during studies in practice, and develop skills in analytical scientific work, such as (1) the ability to critically analyse research conducted by others; (2) the ability to conduct academic research independently while appropriately applying research methods; (3) the ability to effectively plan a scientific text and present it in a structured manner, and to describe the implemented research; (4) science communication skills.

The length of a bachelor's thesis must be no less than 100,000 characters, including spaces, excluding the text of appendices (for details on fonts and line spacing, see Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*). In cases where a thesis includes a significant number of figures (such as pictures, graphs, diagrams, etc.), the total length of the paper may exceed the specified limit by up to 5 percent – it is advisable not to exceed 120,000 characters. Papers that do not meet the length requirements are not allowed to be defended.

### Requirements for the structural parts of a Bachelor's Thesis

**Title Page.** The format of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*.

**Abstract Page:** The Abstract Page includes the bibliographic description of the bachelor's thesis\* in two languages—English and Lithuanian, keywords (in descending order of

\* *The format of bibliographic description:*

Smith, J. (2024). *The Influence of Digital Media on Public Opinion Formation: Analysing the Role of Social Media Algorithms in Shaping Political Discourse* [Bachelor's Thesis, Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication, supervisor Prof. Dr. N. Johnson]. 55 p. (1000,000 characters). Tables, Summary in Lithuanian, List of References (60 titles) p. 54–55.



importance) in both languages, followed by an abstract of the thesis also in both languages. Each version of the abstract should not exceed 3,000 characters.

**Summary in Lithuanian.** Summary in Lithuanian must include the title of the bachelor's thesis in Lithuanian, the author's name and surname, and the word *Santrauka*, followed by a concise overview of the thesis. It should indicate the relevance of the topic, specify the research object, aim, and objectives, list the applied scientific research methods, and present the obtained results along with the key conclusions.

**Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents provides a detailed overview of the structure of the thesis, listing the titles of all structural parts (chapters, sections, and subsections) along with their corresponding page numbers. All structural parts included in the thesis must have clear and concise titles that accurately reflect their content, and these titles must be listed in the Table of Contents. Chapters, sections, and subsections of the bachelor thesis are numbered using Arabic numerals, following the format outlined in *Appendix 2*. The List of Abbreviations (if applicable), Introduction, Conclusions and Recommendations, List of References, and Appendices are listed as independent structural parts but are not numbered.

**List of Abbreviations.** The List of Abbreviations includes all abbreviations (such as acronyms, initialisms, special symbols, units, and more) along with their explanations. The list is optional; alternatively, each abbreviation should be explained the first time it appears in the text.

**Introduction.** The Introduction explains the relevance of the selected topic, provides a brief general overview of previous studies on the subject, introduces the object of the thesis, and outlines its aim and objectives. It also specifies the methods to be used in the research, explains their application, presents the structure of the thesis, and states the theoretical and practical significance of the work. The Introduction should constitute 5 to 10 percent of the total length of the bachelor's thesis.

In justifying the *relevance* of the chosen topic, the introduction should identify the research problem and discuss the issues related with the topic; assess the current level of knowledge about the research object and highlight any gaps in understanding the selected research object or the relevant practical needs; and emphasise and support with arguments the need for purposeful knowledge of the research object in both science and practice.

A bachelor's thesis explores problems in information and communication sciences by applying concepts from this field, as well as concepts and methods from other academic disciplines. A research problem is a theoretical or practical issue that requires investigation and resolution. When defining the research problem, the author formulates one or more related questions to be addressed through research. In reviewing previous studies, the author objectively discusses key works by other researchers, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and then explains how his or her thesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of the issue. The research problem should be relevant, non-trivial, and scientifically meaningful.

The *research object* is closely related to the research problem. It is a clearly defined and specific object or phenomenon that the research aims to investigate (i.e., the subject of

inquiry). Description of the research object specifies which objects, phenomena, processes, facts, or their relationships will be examined. Each study (thesis) must identify a single research object. The research object of the thesis is presented in a separate line of text.

The definition of the *aim of the thesis* must be directly connected to the topic and the problem under investigation. The aim sets the direction of the research and outlines the expected outcome, which may involve solving the identified issue and/or presenting new data. The aim of the thesis must be stated on a separate line.

The *objectives of the thesis* (it is advisable to outline 3–5 objectives) define how the aim will be achieved. They clarify the logical approach to investigating the research problem and outline the research stages and sequence. The aim and objectives must be logically connected, with the objectives being more specific than the aim. There should be no objectives unrelated to the topic or irrelevant to the aim of the thesis. The objectives should be listed on separate lines and numbered.

The description of *research methods* outlines the research methodology of the bachelor's thesis. It details the methods used to collect and evaluate information, specifies the theoretical and/or empirical research methods applied, and identifies key data sources, theoretical works, and other relevant literature.

When writing research papers, it is essential to select methods that are appropriate for investigating and resolving the issue at hand. The theoretical background and research methodology serve as the foundation for addressing the issue under investigation in any scientific paper. For a bachelor's thesis, it is advisable to apply various theoretical methods, such as *deduction* (reasoning based on logic, where several correct statements (assumptions) lead to the formulation of a new statement); *induction* (reasoning based on logic, where recurrent features of an object lead to the conclusion that the object belongs to a specific class); *analogy* (reasoning based on logic, where similarities between certain features of different objects suggest that other features of these objects must also coincide); *extrapolation* (reasoning based on logic, where conclusions regarding one part of the object are applied to explain another part); *comparison* (reasoning based on logic, where two objects are aligned and their similarities and differences are identified).

When selecting empirical methods for scientific research, it is important to assess the potential sources of factual information (such as opinions, behaviours, activities, and their outcomes). Based on the aim and context of the specific research, as well as the researcher's capacity, the appropriate research methods and strategic approach should be selected, and the duration of the research should be estimated. Bachelor theses may employ various *qualitative and quantitative empirical research methods*, such as case study, ethnography, content analysis, interviews, focus groups, surveys, document analysis, observation, experiments, quasi-experiments, sociometry, statistical methods, and more. When selecting empirical research methods, it is crucial to evaluate the *validity* of the quantitative research (whether the method is appropriate for the intended measurement), *objectivity* (ensuring the researcher does not influence the research process or outcomes), *reliability* (the precision and consistency achieved in the research), and *representativeness* (the probability-based justifi-



cation for generalising the sample data to the broader population). When opting for qualitative research, it is essential to evaluate the research's *transferability* (whether the research description allows an understanding of where the conclusions can be applied), *reliability* (whether the obtained data are accurate, stable, and replicable), and *authenticity* (whether the interaction between the researcher and participants was meaningful and genuine).

When discussing the *theoretical and practical significance* of a thesis, the theoretical importance of the research outcomes is addressed, and the potential practical applications of the research results and conclusions are highlighted.

Finally, the Introduction outlines the *structure of the thesis* by providing a brief overview of the content and the issues addressed in each chapter of the paper.

**Main Body.** The main body, in line with the outlined objectives, presents, discusses, and analyses historical, theoretical, or factual materials. This part is divided into chapters, sections, and subsections as necessary. Typically, a bachelor's thesis consists of three chapters, each of which is divided into two or three sections. The chapters and sections should be proportional in length, avoiding significant discrepancies, and all sections and subsections must be substantial, with none being shorter than one page. Each chapter, section, and subsection should contribute meaningfully to the development of the subject matter. Each chapter concludes with a brief generalisation of the issue discussed within it.

The empirical research conducted by the author and its findings are described in a separate chapter of the bachelor's thesis. This chapter should include an explanation of how the empirical research relates to the theoretical and/or methodological aspects of the thesis. The first section of this chapter presents the methodology of the research conducted by the author. This includes an explanation of the research problem, the definition of the research object, the aim and objectives of the research, key concepts and their interpretations (if necessary), research hypotheses (if applicable), and the type of research (such as pilot or exploratory, descriptive or analytical, qualitative or quantitative, etc.).

Further in this section, the author should present the research method(s) used in the empirical research, justify their selection and appropriateness, discuss the choice of the research object and/or participants, explain the sampling strategy and the choice of sample size, and assess the representativeness of the research. The author should then indicate the time of the research implementation, its duration, and how the ethical issues of the research were addressed (for more information, see Section 4.4: *Ethics of Scientific Research*).

When conducting qualitative and/or quantitative analysis and describing the research outcomes, it is advisable to use visual tools to present the data (such as tables, figures, diagrams, etc.). The research findings must be interpreted, and their relationship with the theoretical background should be assessed. A separate section should outline the conclusions of the empirical research and, if possible, provide suggestions and/or recommendations.

**Conclusions.** This section of the thesis must be based on the investigated theoretical material, as well as on the data from the empirical research conducted by the author, while considering the aim and objectives outlined in the Introduction. The Conclusions should

constitute approximately 5 percent of the total length of the bachelor's thesis. This section should be divided into paragraphs, which may or may not be numbered.

**List of References.** The List of References provides a complete list of all sources, whether printed, in manuscript or electronic form, that have been directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise referred to in the term paper (on the form of references, see Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*).

**Appendices.** Appendices present important materials that complement the thesis. These may include publications of important primary sources with comments, extensive tables and/or figures, questionnaires, processed survey data, and other relevant materials.

### Criteria for evaluation of bachelor's theses

- Theoretical level of the research, systematic analysis of the chosen research object, alignment between the content of the thesis and the selected topic, adequate definition of the aim and objectives, relevance of the defined objectives in achieving the aim and revealing the topic, and the extent to which the tasks and objectives were realised.
- Quality of description and implementation of the empirical research (if applicable): the definition of the research aim and objectives, their implementation, selection and justification of appropriate research methods, the description and execution of research methods, explanation of the research process, interpretation of the research data, and the validity of the research conclusions.
- Quality of conclusions: evaluation of how well the conclusions align with the aim and objectives of the thesis, their logical consistency, and their grounding in both theoretical and empirical research, as well as the ability to formulate practical insights based on the thesis results, such as recommendations or suggestions for application.
- Systematic and competent selection of sources (if applicable) and academic literature, proper compilation of the reference list according to established requirements, adherence to academic writing standards, the clarity and quality of language, and the visual presentation of the thesis (including layout, text formatting, and illustrations).
- Organisation and structuring of the text: the efficiency and coherence of the thesis structure, and the relationship between the theoretical and practical parts of the thesis.
- Skills and abilities in scientific communication: the ability to emphasise key points of the thesis, defend arguments, use appropriate academic language, and select precise terminology.

Completed thesis must be submitted to the Vilnius University Study Information System (VUSIS) by the specified deadline. The thesis should be saved as a single document. After submission, the thesis undergoes automated checks for plagiarism and AI-generated content. **Any thesis found to contain plagiarism or to have been prepared dishonestly is considered a violation of academic integrity and is not evaluated. Additionally, theses that do not meet the minimum required length are not evaluated.**

**2.2 MASTER'S THESIS** is an academic analytical written paper that counts towards the completion of a master's degree. It must be original and independently prepared in one of the thematic areas within the field of communication and information sciences.

Master's theses can be historiographic, theoretical, or methodological. Historiographic master's theses explore and evaluate key historical materials (including sources and historiography) related to a specific branch of communication and information sciences, a particular subject, or a theoretical or practical issue within the field. These theses may also present new empirical data that the student has independently collected, processed, and analysed. Additionally, such theses may offer innovative interpretations of issues within a branch or subject of communication and information sciences, examine the laws governing the development of an object, and analyse causal relationships.

Theoretical master's theses discuss, analyse, and evaluate essential academic literature related to a branch or a specific subject in communication and information sciences, as well as theoretical or practical problems. They review key theoretical concepts and provide novel interpretations of theories, concepts, constructs, or models. Theoretical-empirical theses complement theories with new data, present new empirical data collected, processed, and analysed by the student, or offer an analysis of secondary data.

Methodological master's theses discuss, analyse, and evaluate general methodology (the methodology of scientific cognition) within a specific branch of communication and information sciences. They examine academic literature and sources related to scientific methods and techniques for researching theoretical or practical problems. These theses analyse the process, individual elements, and stages of scientific cognition within the field. They also evaluate key academic research and its methodology, potentially proposing novel research methods, new applications, or reinterpretations of previously known methods. Additionally, these theses may supplement theories, concepts, and models with new data or offer new interpretations of data by introducing novel research methods or techniques. Finally, these theses may present independently collected, processed, and analysed data using established research methods.

**Master's theses must not be purely descriptive or limited to a general overview of the problem.** Instead, they must be analytical and based on independent basic or applied scientific research. The research may serve different objectives: contributing new knowledge to the field of communication and information sciences (basic, or fundamental, research) or addressing practical questions and challenges (applied research).

Master's theses must align with the current level of scientific knowledge and meet the mandatory requirement of research novelty. The thesis must explore new factors, phenomena, or regularities. It may also offer generalisations of existing statements, but must do so by incorporating alternative scientific perspectives, considering diverse viewpoints, or introducing another aspect of novelty.

The research object of a master's thesis must be related to the theory or practice of a specific branch of communication and information sciences. Therefore, it is recommended

that the thesis topic aligns with the study programme. Master's theses are written during the final year of studies and should be prepared systematically as a continuous project that integrates the master's research paper(s) and possibly other academic work completed by the student throughout their studies.

The goal of a master's final thesis is to broaden and/or deepen knowledge in the field of communication and information sciences or its specific subjects, develop analytical skills, demonstrate the ability to independently search for academic literature and sources, critically evaluate academic works in the relevant field, and address theoretical and/or applied research problems. Additionally, the thesis should showcase the student's ability to conduct scientific research in communication and information sciences, accurately describe their methodology and findings, formulate clear and evidence-based conclusions, and engage in scientific discussion, argumentation, and communication.

The length of a master's thesis must be no less than 120,000 characters, including spaces, excluding the text of appendices (for details on fonts and line spacing, see Section 4.2: *Text Formatting and Visual Presentation*). In cases where a thesis includes a significant number of figures (such as pictures, graphs, diagrams, etc.), the total length of the paper may exceed the specified limit by up to 5 percent. However, it is advisable not to exceed 150,000 characters. Papers that do not meet the length requirements are not allowed to be defended.

### Requirements for structural parts of master's theses

**Title Page.** The format of the Title Page follows the example provided in *Appendix 1*.

**Abstract Page.** The Abstract Page includes the bibliographic description of the master's thesis\* in two languages—English and Lithuanian, keywords (in descending order of importance) in both languages, followed by an abstract of the thesis also in both languages. Each version of the abstract should not exceed 3,000 characters.

**Summary in Lithuanian.** Summary in Lithuanian must include the title of the master's thesis in Lithuanian, the author's name and surname, and the word *Santrauka*, followed by a concise overview of the thesis. It should indicate the relevance of the topic, specify the research object, aim, and objectives, list the applied scientific research methods, and present the obtained results along with the key conclusions.

**Table of Contents.** The Table of Contents provides a detailed overview of the structure of the thesis, listing the titles of all structural parts (chapters, sections, and subsections) along with their corresponding page numbers. All structural parts included in the thesis must have clear and concise titles that accurately reflect their content, and these titles must be listed in the Table of Contents. Chapters, sections, and subsections of the thesis are numbered using Arabic numerals, following the format outlined in *Appendix 2*. The List of Abbrevia-

\* *The format of bibliographic description:*

Smith, J. (2025). *The Influence of Digital Media on Public Opinion Formation: Analysing the Role of Social Media Algorithms in Shaping Political Discourse* [Master's Thesis, Vilnius University, Faculty of Communication, supervisor Prof. Dr. N. Johnson]. 65 p. (120,000 characters). Tables, Summary in Lithuanian, List of References (65 titles) p. 64–65.

tions (if applicable), Introduction, Conclusions and Recommendations, List of References, and Appendices are listed as independent structural parts but are not numbered.

**List of Abbreviations.** The List of Abbreviations includes all abbreviations (such as acronyms, initialisms, special symbols, units, and more) along with their explanations. The list is optional; alternatively, each abbreviation should be explained the first time it appears in the text.

**Introduction.** The Introduction presents the research problem addressed in the thesis, explains the relevance and novelty of the selected topic, briefly reviews the current state of research on the subject, and defines the research object, aim, and objectives. It also specifies the methods to be used in the research process, outlines the structure of the master's thesis, and presents its theoretical and practical significance.

In justifying the *relevance* of the chosen topic, the Introduction should identify the research problem and discuss the issues related with the topic; assess the current level of knowledge about the research object and highlight any gaps in understanding the selected research object or the relevant practical needs; and emphasise and support with arguments the need for purposeful knowledge of the research object in both science and practice.

Master's theses in the field of communication and information sciences address research problems specific to this domain by drawing on concepts and methods from communication and information sciences, as well as from other disciplines. A clearly defined research problem justifies the need for scientific investigation and underscores the relevance and potential benefits of the research. The significance of the research can be demonstrated from various perspectives, including social, practical, and theoretical aspects within the field.

The *novelty of the thesis topic and the research* is justified by explaining the current state of knowledge in the specific area of the topic and the practical relevance of the planned research. The overview of the *current level of knowledge* identifies the key academic works related to the topic and briefly summarises their main points. The key works of previous research are discussed objectively, with their strengths and weaknesses highlighted, and the author should indicate how their research will contribute to the development of theory and the improvement of applied solutions. If no prior academic works are directly related to the topic of the master's thesis, the author should discuss works that are closest to the topic.

The *research object* is closely related to the research problem. It is a clearly defined and specific object or phenomenon that the research aims to investigate (i.e., the subject of inquiry). Description of the research object specifies which objects, phenomena, processes, facts, or their relationships will be examined. Each study (thesis) must identify a single research object. The research object of the thesis is presented on a separate line of text.

The definition of the *aim of the thesis* must be directly connected to the topic and the problem under investigation. The aim sets the direction of the research and outlines the expected outcome, which may involve solving the identified issue and/or presenting new data. The aim of the thesis must be stated on a separate line.

The *objectives of the thesis* define how the aim will be achieved. They clarify the logical approach to investigating the research problem and outline the research stages and se-



quence. The aim and objectives must be logically connected, with the objectives being more specific than the aim. There should be no objectives unrelated to the topic or irrelevant to the aim of the thesis. The objectives should be listed on separate lines and numbered.

The description of research methods in the master's thesis outlines the research methodology used in the study. It details the methods employed to collect and evaluate information, specifies the theoretical and/or empirical research methods applied, and identifies key data sources and theoretical works relevant for the topic. When writing research papers, it is essential to select methods that are appropriate for investigating and resolving the issue at hand. The theoretical background and research methodology serve as the foundation for addressing the issue under investigation in any scientific paper. For a master's thesis, it is advisable to apply various theoretical methods, such as *deduction* (reasoning based on logic, where several correct statements (assumptions) lead to the formulation of a new statement); *induction* (reasoning based on logic, where recurrent features of an object lead to the conclusion that the object belongs to a specific class); *analogy* (reasoning based on logic, where similarities between certain features of different objects suggest that other features of these objects must also coincide); *extrapolation* (reasoning based on logic, where conclusions regarding one part of the object are applied to explain another part); *comparison* (reasoning based on logic, where two objects are aligned and their similarities and differences are identified).

When selecting empirical methods for scientific research, it is important to assess the potential sources of factual information (such as opinions, behaviours, activities, and their outcomes). Based on the aim and context of the specific research, as well as the researcher's capacity, the appropriate research methods and strategic approach should be selected, and the duration of the research should be estimated. Master's theses may employ various *qualitative and quantitative empirical research methods*, such as case study, ethnography, content analysis, interviews, focus groups, surveys, document analysis, observation, experiments, quasi-experiments, sociometry, statistical methods, and more.

When selecting empirical research methods, it is crucial to evaluate the *validity* of the quantitative research (whether the method is appropriate for the intended measurement), *objectivity* (ensuring the researcher does not influence the research process or outcomes), *reliability* (the precision and consistency achieved in the research), and *representativeness* (the probability-based justification for generalising the sample data to the broader population). When opting for qualitative research, it is essential to evaluate the research's *transferability* (whether the research description allows an understanding of where the conclusions can be applied), *reliability* (whether the obtained data are accurate, stable, and replicable), and *authenticity* (whether the interaction between the researcher and participants was meaningful and genuine).

Then the Introduction outlines the *structure of the thesis* by providing a brief overview of the content and the issues addressed in each chapter of the paper.

Finally, the discussion of the theoretical and practical significance of the thesis highlights the theoretical novelty of the research and its potential practical applications, and describes the practical validation of the research results and conclusions.

**Main Body.** The main body of the thesis, in line with the outlined objectives, presents, discusses, and analyses historical, theoretical, or factual materials. This part is divided into chapters, sections, and subsections as necessary. It is recommended that each chapter concludes with a brief generalisation of the issue discussed within it.

The main body of a master's thesis presents the existing body of knowledge on the analysed problem and examines the key academic works related to the selected topic.

The empirical research conducted by the author and its findings are described in a separate chapter of the master's thesis. This chapter should include an explanation of how the empirical research relates to the theoretical and/or methodological aspects of the thesis. The first section of this chapter presents the methodology of the research conducted by the author. This includes an explanation of the research problem, the definition of the research object, the aim and objectives of the research, key concepts and their interpretations (if necessary), research hypotheses (if applicable), and the type of research (such as pilot or exploratory; descriptive or analytical; cross-sectional or longitudinal; qualitative or quantitative, etc.). Further in this section, the author presents the research method(s) used in the empirical research, justifies their selection and appropriateness, discusses the choice of the research object and/or participants, explains the sampling strategy and the choice of sample size, and assesses the representativeness of the research. The author should then indicate the time of the research implementation, its duration, and how the ethical issues of the research were addressed (for more information, see Section 4.4: *Ethics of Scientific Research*). When conducting qualitative and/or quantitative analysis and describing the research outcomes, it is advisable to use visual tools to present the data (such as tables, figures, diagrams, etc.). The research findings must be interpreted, and their relationship with the theoretical background should be assessed. A separate section should outline the conclusions of the empirical research and, if possible, provide suggestions and/or recommendations.

**Conclusions.** This section of the thesis should present original conclusions and recommendations, without merely repeating the generalisations from the end of individual chapters or sections. The Conclusions must be based on the investigated theoretical material, as well as on the data from the empirical research conducted by the author, while considering the aim and objectives outlined in the Introduction. Recommendations should be specific and directly derived from the materials discussed in the thesis.

**List of References.** The List of References provides a complete list of all sources, whether printed, in manuscript or electronic form, that have been directly quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise referred to in the master's thesis. The sources should be presented in the required citation format, as outlined in Part 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*.

**Appendices.** Appendices present important materials that complement the thesis, such as questionnaires, tables, illustrations, and other relevant materials.

### Criteria for evaluation of master's theses

- Theoretical level of the research, systematic analysis of the chosen research object, alignment between the content of the thesis and the selected topic, adequate definition of the aim and objectives, relevance of the defined objectives in achieving the aim and revealing the topic, and the extent to which the tasks and objectives were realised.
- Quality of description and implementation of the empirical research (if applicable): the definition of the research aim and objectives, their implementation, selection and justification of appropriate research methods, the description and execution of research methods, explanation of the research process, interpretation of the research data, and the validity of the research conclusions.
- Quality of conclusions: evaluation of how well the conclusions align with the aim and objectives of the thesis, their logical consistency, and their grounding in both theoretical and empirical research, as well as the ability to formulate practical insights based on the thesis results, such as recommendations or suggestions for application.
- Systematic and competent selection of sources (if applicable) and academic literature, proper compilation of the reference list according to established requirements, adherence to academic writing standards, the clarity and quality of language, and the visual presentation of the thesis (including layout, text formatting, and illustrations).
- Organisation and structuring of the text: the efficiency and coherence of the thesis structure, and the relationship between the theoretical and practical parts of the paper.
- Skills and abilities in scientific communication: the ability to emphasise key points of the thesis, defend arguments, use appropriate academic language, and select precise terminology.

Completed thesis must be submitted to the Vilnius University Study Information System (VUSIS) by the specified deadline. The thesis should be saved as a single document. After submission, the thesis undergoes automated checks for plagiarism and AI-generated content. **Any thesis found to contain plagiarism or to have been prepared dishonestly is considered a violation of academic integrity and is not evaluated. Additionally, theses that do not meet the minimum required length are not evaluated.**



### 3. PROCEDURES OF PREPARING WRITTEN PAPERS

This section describes the preparation procedures for term papers, master's research papers, and bachelor's and master's theses (hereinafter referred to as 'papers' for brevity), applicable to students in all study programmes offered by the Faculty of Communication. These guidelines do not apply to other written assignments completed during the course of studies for specific courses, such as reports, academic essays, review papers, projects, etc. The preparation and evaluation procedures for these types of papers are defined by the instructor of the corresponding subject.

#### 3.1. SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF THE PAPER TOPIC; TOPIC CHANGE

The topics for papers are proposed by lecturers involved in the study programme, but students may also suggest their own topics. Master's programme students must propose their own topics and discuss their choice with their future supervisor. All proposed topics must be approved by the corresponding Study Programme Committee.

The written request from a student to select a specific topic is forwarded to the chairperson of the relevant Study Programme Committee. At its next meeting, the Committee will make a decision on whether to allow the student to prepare a paper on the selected topic. If the topic is rejected or if modifications are suggested, the student must revise the topic or propose a new one. Only one paper can be prepared on each topic, i.e. multiple students cannot choose the same topic.

If a student fails to select a topic before the deadline, they must submit a well-grounded request to the chairperson of the relevant Study Programme Committee. The request should explain the substantial reasons for the delay and seek permission to select a specific topic.

A student can modify or change the topic by submitting a motivated request to the chairperson of the Study Programme Committee. This request must include approval from the supervisor of the paper. In the nearest sitting, the Committee will make a decision, and the student will be informed via email at their Vilnius University email address. Topics can be modified no later than one month before the deadline for uploading the paper to the VUSIS.

A student may submit a motivated request to the chairperson of the relevant Study Programme Committee regarding the substitution of their supervisor, including the valid reasons for the change. Such requests must be submitted no later than two months before the paper submission deadline.

### 3.2. PREPARATION OF THE PAPER

Papers are prepared and evaluated in accordance with this document (Methodological Guidelines for Written Papers of Vilnius University Faculty of Communication) and the course descriptions of the relevant subjects within the study programmes. Papers must be prepared independently by students. Supervisors provide consultation to students regarding methodological and subject-related issues during their office hours or at other mutually agreed times. After selecting a topic, each student must contact their supervisor to discuss and agree on the process of preparing the paper and scheduling consultations.

Study Programme Committees may organise intermediate presentations, hearings, or defences of papers, even if these are not specified in the study programmes as separate subjects. Students will be informed of intermediate defences at least one month prior to the scheduled date. Participation in these intermediate defences, as arranged by the Committees, is mandatory.

### 3.3. SUBMISSION OF THE PAPER FOR EVALUATION

#### **Submission of a term paper or a master's research paper**

Only those term papers and master's research papers that have been uploaded into the Vilnius University Study Information System (VUSIS) before the deadline and meet the relevant formal requirements will be evaluated.

Term papers and master's research papers that have already been uploaded into the VUSIS may be revised and re-uploaded only with the supervisor's approval. Supervisors evaluate these papers after reviewing the automatically generated reports on plagiarism and AI-generated content in VUSIS and ensuring that the work has been prepared independently and meets all applicable requirements.

A supervisor has the right to refuse to evaluate a paper if the student did not follow the agreed-upon preparation process and/or if the paper was prepared without consulting the supervisor.

Supervisors enter the grades for term papers and master's research papers into the VUSIS before the end of the exam session for the corresponding semester.

#### **Submission of bachelor's and master's theses**

Bachelor's and master's theses must be uploaded by their authors into the VUSIS no later than one month before the first day of the Final Theses Evaluation Committee meeting for the corresponding study programme. Failure to submit the thesis by the deadline is considered equivalent to non-submission. If the thesis has been prepared without following the agreed-upon plan of preparation and consultations, the supervisor has the right to withhold permission for thesis defence.

Bachelor's and master's final theses can only be defended after the supervisor has reviewed the automatically generated report on plagiarism and AI-generated content in VUSIS

and has determined that the thesis has been prepared independently and meets all applicable formal requirements.

If the supervisor decides that the thesis meets the requirements for independent preparation and other formal criteria, and that the thesis is eligible for defence, they must validate their decision in VUSIS within three working days. The supervisor also submits a review in the standardised form, including the recommended evaluation of the thesis, to the secretary of the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee.

If a supervisor decides that a thesis cannot be defended, this decision is recorded in VUSIS. The supervisor informs the student of this decision via email. Upon receiving notification that the thesis cannot be defended, the student has the right to appeal within two working days by submitting a motivated request to the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee to defend the thesis. After reviewing the report on plagiarism and AI-generated content, the student's request, and the supervisor's explanation, the Committee must make a decision regarding the student's right to defend the thesis within three working days. The chairperson of the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee will inform both the student and the supervisor of the decision via email to their VU email addresses within one working day of the decision.

The order of the Dean regarding permission to defend a bachelor's or master's thesis is drafted and entered into VUSIS, provided that the student has:

- Completed the study programme in full;
- Uploaded the final thesis into VUSIS on time and in the appropriate manner;
- Received permission from the thesis supervisor or the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee to defend the thesis.

If a student fails to meet any of the above conditions, their bachelor's or master's thesis will not be permitted for defence.

## 4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN PAPERS

All papers written by students enrolled in study programmes where the language of instruction is English must be written in English. Papers written in English must include a summary and a list of keywords in Lithuanian.

### 4.1. LANGUAGE OF WRITTEN PAPERS

The language of written papers must be fluent, consistent, and clear, ensuring that ideas are conveyed precisely and logically. A formal academic style should be maintained, avoiding colloquialisms, contractions, and overly conversational expressions. Sentences should be well-structured, concise, and free from ambiguity, with careful use of active and passive voice to enhance clarity and readability. Papers should maintain proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling, with thorough proofreading to eliminate errors. Terminology should be used accurately and consistently, adhering to the established conventions of the relevant academic discipline. In case of any questions regarding the use or development of terms, it is advisable to consult with the supervisor or other specialists in the relevant field.

When lengthy terms or titles need to be repeated, abbreviations may be used. The full term should be written out the first time it appears, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses, e.g., information technologies (hereinafter IT). Similarly, when referring to a person for the first time, their full name and position should be provided. In subsequent mentions, only the surname and an appropriate shortened form of the position may be used, e.g., Name Surname, Manager of the Materials Technologies Institute (MTI) (further in the paper: Surname, MTI Manager).

### 4.2. TEXT FORMATTING AND VISUAL PRESENTATION

Term papers, master's research papers, and bachelor's and master's theses must be uploaded to VUSIS in PDF format as a single document. Appendices must be included in the same PDF document, while supporting audio and video materials should be made available by the student upon request by the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee before or during the defence. Video, audio, and multimedia materials included in such appendices are **not uploaded** to the VUSIS. Information regarding the submission of other written papers is provided in the corresponding course descriptions.

The text should be formatted on A4 pages, using *Times New Roman* 12 pt font with 1.5 line spacing. The author's name and the title of the paper should be written in *Times New Roman* 14 pt, with the title (headline) in bold (see [Appendix 1](#)). Footnotes should be

in 10 pt font with 1.0 (single) line spacing. The spacing between words in the text should be single, and the spacing between characters should be set to the regular size (0 pt). The space between paragraphs should also be set to the regular size (0 pt). The text should be justified throughout, except for the Title Page.

In the text, specific words can be highlighted using *italics*, **bold**, or underlining. Each method of highlighting creates a visual pause and contributes to the typographic appearance of the text. Therefore, it is important to avoid using an excessive number of highlighting techniques.

The first paragraph of each structural part of the paper should start without any indentation from the left margin, while all subsequent paragraphs should begin with a 1 cm indentation. The following margins should be used for pages containing text:

- left margin: 30 mm;
- right margin: 10 mm;
- top margin: 20 mm;
- bottom margin: 20 mm.

Text pages should be numbered consecutively, starting with the Title Page. Page numbers should not appear on the Title Page or the Table of Contents page. The numbering should continue throughout the appendices.

Page numbers should be written in Arabic numerals at the bottom of the page, aligned to the right side of the empty margin. No full stops or hyphens should be used. The font size for the page numbers should be 10 pt.

The main body of the text is divided into chapters, sections, and, if necessary, subsections. These parts are numbered using Arabic numerals, with lower-level sections receiving an additional digit on the right (e.g., 1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2).

Each chapter begins on a new page, while sections and subsections start on the same page. Chapter headlines are numbered, with words not split between lines, and are fully capitalised. The headlines are centred and do not end with full stops. The headlines for lower-level structural parts are capitalised only with the first letter of the first word, and their alignment is also centred.

Headlines of chapters, as well as the headlines for the Table of Contents, Introduction, Conclusions, and List of References, should be placed one line below the top margin of the page. Headlines for sections, subsections, and other minor structural parts should be separated from the text by leaving one empty line both before and after each headline. The appendices should include headings, with each new appendix starting on a new page (i.e., a page break should be used).

### 4.3. USE OF IDEAS AND EXCERPTS FROM OTHER AUTHORS' WORKS

In academic papers, *when using ideas or concepts from another author, it is essential to provide the name of the author and the source from which these ideas or concepts are derived.* This means that, when presenting the ideas of another author—whether through direct quotes or paraphrasing—it is necessary to indicate the author and the source. If the idea is drawn from a specific part of the work (e.g., one or more pages), the exact page number(s) should be provided when citing the source. However, if the idea is derived from the entire work, only the work itself should be cited as the source.

A reference to an author and a source should be provided immediately after the sentence in which the idea or concept of another author is used, by inserting an in-text citation. The in-text citation should include the author's name, the publication year of the work, and, if applicable, the specific page(s) where the idea is found. If the ideas of another author are not rephrased or interpreted but are presented verbatim—i.e., by using a direct quote from the original work—the quoted text should be clearly distinguished by quotation marks, and the reference to the author should include the exact page number. This source must also be listed in the reference list of the paper, with a complete bibliographic reference, as outlined in Section 5: *Documentation of Sources in Written Papers*.

#### *Example:*

As Rogers (2003) argues, the perception of newness is more important than the objective age of an idea in defining what constitutes an innovation: “It matters little, so far as human behaviour is concerned, whether or not an idea is ‘objectively’ new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. The perceived newness of the idea for the individual determines his or her reaction to it” (p. 11).

In the list of references, the following entry is included:

Rogers, E. M. (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.

### 4.4. ETHICS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

When conducting empirical research, academic ethics and integrity must be upheld throughout all stages of the research process. This includes planning the research, selecting the sample, recruiting research participants, collecting research data, analysing the data, presenting the research outcomes, and storing the data. When planning and conducting research, it is essential to ensure: (1) the confidentiality of the data of empirical research and its participants (informants/respondents); (2) the integrity of the collection, processing, storage, and destruction of the empirical data; (3) the quality of academic publications. The objective of protecting research data is to present the empirical data while maintaining

the confidentiality of the research subjects\*. Although ethical issues and challenges may vary between qualitative and quantitative research, it is crucial to adhere to the following fundamental principles of ethics in all types of research: reliability, integrity, respect, and accountability.

The Principle of **Reliability** is upheld by striving for objective research results, ensuring high-quality research, and maintaining a consistent research process. This principle is implemented through the careful selection of appropriate data collection and analysis methods, as well as a thorough consideration of the potential harm and benefits of the research concerning the interests of the groups and communities involved, as well as society as a whole. Researchers must assess and mitigate any risks of harm, ensuring that the research adheres to the ethical standard of causing no harm.

The Principle of **Integrity** is upheld by taking full responsibility for the outcomes of the research, the dissemination of its results, and the potential consequences for those affected by the study, while actively avoiding conflicts of interest. Researchers must conduct their work with honesty, ensuring that research findings are presented transparently, accurately, and impartially.

All written papers in the process of the studies must be prepared by the student themselves.

If written papers are prepared in collaboration with co-authors, all contributors must actively participate in the creative aspects of the work, such as drafting the text, conducting data analysis, or interpreting the findings. Each co-author's specific creative contribution must be clearly outlined in the Introduction of the paper to ensure transparency and proper attribution. Passive involvement, such as merely providing feedback or administrative support, does not qualify for co-authorship.

If individuals other than the author contributed to the preparation of the paper—for example, by collecting data, assisting with research tools such as specialised software, or editing the text—their contributions and the extent of their involvement must be acknowledged in the Introduction of the paper. Additionally, these individuals should be informed in advance that they are being credited for their contributions.

The use of Artificial Intelligence-based software is regulated by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and the internal regulations of Vilnius University. Compliance with these regulations is mandatory.

The Principle of **Respect and Accountability** is upheld by obtaining informed consent from research participants, complying with personal data protection requirements, and ensuring the ability to demonstrate adherence to these regulations. Personal data includes any information that can identify a natural person, such as their name, email address, IP address, employer, or job position, which may be inferred by combining multiple data ele-

\* *Atitikties mokslinių tyrimų etikai vertinimo gairės* [Guidelines for Conformity with the Ethics of Academic Research]. (2022). Order of the Ombudsperson of Academic Ethics and Procedures, Republic of Lithuania, December 10, 2020, No. V-60. <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/1a13d0423daf11ec99bbc1b08701c7f8/asr>



ments. This principle also requires respecting the rights of research participants, including their dignity, privacy (encompassing personal data protection), and overall well-being.

The Principle of **Informed Consent** in research means that:

- Research participants voluntarily agree to take part in the study. No researcher, institution, or organisation can compel an individual to participate without their explicit and freely given consent.
- Research participants must receive sufficient information about the study, including its purpose, the use of collected data, and any potential implications, allowing them to make an informed decision about whether to participate or decline.

It is crucial to respect the research participants' right to withdraw from the study at any point, without facing any negative consequences. This principle must be upheld even in situations where participants may experience direct or indirect pressure to continue, such as when the research is conducted within an organisation or group setting.

**Personal data and their protection.** Each student must protect the anonymity of all participants of research, either humans or organisations. Quantitative studies must use anonymous questionnaires, and it is not allowed to demand that the participants of the research should identify themselves by providing their name, surname or any other data which would allow to identify an individual. Confidentiality must also be ensured: in qualitative research, no one (except for the researcher) without explicit agreement of the research participants can use the information provided by these participants, except for the cases when the participants of the research agree to be named and when it is necessary considering the specifics of the research. Privacy must be protected, and the researcher has no right of getting involved in the personal lives of the research participants without their explicit approval. Each student must ensure confidentiality of the data of the research participants in the process of data collection: for instance, no participant should be able to see the data of any other participant, which may happen in such cases if a message is e-mailed to more than one recipient. In this case, it is necessary to ensure the confidentiality of the e-mail address by using the mode of invisible copies or employing any other solution. When collecting research data (for instance, when implementing questionnaire surveys), only reliable surveying platforms can be employed, i.e., those suggested by Vilnius University, such as *MS Forms*.

Before starting an empirical research, it is essential to obtain approval of the research supervisor for the selected research methodology: the instrument of the research (interview questionnaire, the list of questions to be used, etc.), the informed consent form (should such need arise, additional information can be included in the template provided in *Appendix 3*), and the course of conducting the research (how the information participants will be selected, what type of contact with them will be maintained, what information they will be given, how the confidentiality of personal data will be ensured throughout the course of the research, and where the research data will be stored/archived). While conducting research,



a student must store the research data within the infrastructure provided by Vilnius University (e.g., *MS Sharepoint*, *MS OneDrive*, etc.) or in personal devices, by maintaining the integrity of the research data, their authenticity and confidentiality.

If the collection and use of personal data are necessary for the research, the student must obtain the supervisor's approval and submit a request to the Final Thesis Evaluation Committee regarding the implementation of scientific research involving personal data. This request must be submitted no later than two months before registering the graduation paper (see *Appendix 4*). This request must include the aim of the research and its objectives, along with a justification for the necessity of using personal data. It should specify the type of data to be collected, how it will be gathered, processed, used, and stored. Additionally, the request must be accompanied by relevant documents detailing the research tools, such as a survey questionnaire, which must first be approved by the thesis supervisor before submission to the Committee.

Within ten working days of submitting the request, the student will be informed of the Committee's decision via email. The Final Thesis Evaluation Committee may request clarifications or modifications to the submitted request. If ethical issues or other concerns are identified, the student may submit a revised request, provided it is submitted no later than two months before the scheduled thesis defence. Requests submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

#### 4.5. EXPLANATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

To illustrate and/or concisely present the material, it is recommended to use tables and figures. If necessary, footnotes may be employed to provide additional brief explanations. **Explanations** serve as critical notes that comment on terms, ideas, and other important aspects of the topic under investigation, offering essential contextual information.

**Figures** include all graphical, photographic, cartographic, and other visual materials used for illustration. Both tables and visual materials must be provided with titles and numbers. The numbering sequence must be kept separate for each category. The titles of the illustrating materials are provided above the illustrating material (a table or a figure) in sentence case with 'Center' alignment.

The number of the illustrative material is included as part of its title. The number is followed by a full stop, then the title of the material. A full stop is not required after the title. The fonts and sizes used for tables and figures may differ from those of the main body of the text. Tables and figures should be reasonably compact, occupying **no more than one page** each. Larger tables and figures should be presented in the appendices.

Each table and figure must have its author and source (if applicable) indicated. If a table or figure was created by the author of the paper, a reference to the literature from which the material was sourced to create the table or figure should be provided. All figures and tables without references are assumed to have been created independently by the author of the thesis.

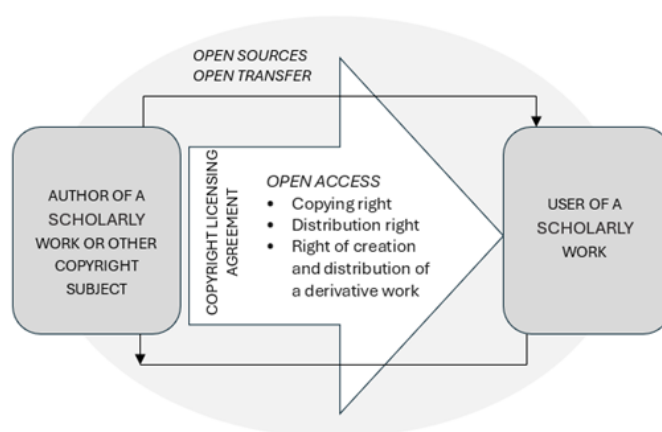
All illustrating materials must be referred to in the text of the thesis. They should be discussed and analysed within the text, rather than merely describing their content.

It is recommended to present tables and figures immediately below the reference in the text. However, if there is insufficient space on the current page, the table or figure can be placed on the following page.

*Example:*

Any individual seeking open access to an online paper, with the intention of copying, distributing, or creating derivative works from it, must obtain explicit permission or an agreement from the author or the copyright holder. This legal framework supports the ethical use of scientific information and ensures the legitimacy of business models associated with the creation and distribution of new information products (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Legal grounds of open access to scholarly works



Source: created by the author

**Systematising information using tables** is highly effective in written papers, as they help present data in a structured and easily perceivable format. Tables are particularly useful for organising information that is easier to understand when presented in rows and columns. The design and appearance of tables should be adapted to the type of data being displayed—whether it involves numbers, symbols, or plain text.

Tables consist of:

- Table header rows;
- Rows containing data.

It is recommended to visually emphasise the header rows by highlighting the text or framing the header row with thicker lines, a coloured background, or other techniques.

In each header row and data row, the first letter should be capitalised. The text in the header row should be simple, clear, and concise. If arbitrary symbols are used in the header rows, they must be explained either under the table (in the table's footnotes) or in the text that comments on the table.

Digits, symbols, and text in all cells of a table must be presented in the same format, including consistent alignment, line spacing, font, etc.

Tables are numbered sequentially as Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and so on. Even if a paper contains only one table, it should still be numbered. The titles of tables are written in sentence case and placed above the table, with 'Centre' alignment.

*Example:*

Table 1. Main tools of the second-generation website networks for scientists, as classified by Lina Šarlauskienė

Purpose	Tools	Examples
Spread of information and news	Website development tools	<i>Blogger</i> <i>WordPress</i> <i>Posterous</i>
	Microblog development tools	<i>Twitter</i> <i>Tumblr</i> <i>Instagram</i>

Source: Šarlauskienė, 2016.

*The list of references includes a following entry:*

Šarlauskienė, L. (2016). Mokslininko reprezentacijos skaitmeninėje erdvėje sąsajos su publikacijų duomenų bazėmis [Interfaces between the digital representation of a researcher and publication databases]. *Knygotyra*, 67, 206–225.

If a table needs to be split into two or more parts (either in an appendix or in the main body of the text), the author should indicate at the bottom of the first and each subsequent section: 'Table 1 continued on the next page'. Before the continued part, it should be labelled as: 'Table 1 (continued)'. Header rows should be repeated on each subsequent page.

**Illustrating text with diagrams.** When analysing empirical data and presenting results, it is recommended to use diagrams to illustrate the text. All charts, diagrams, etc., used in the text are referred to as Figures; however, during the defence of the paper, the specific category of diagrams should be mentioned.

When illustrating a paper with diagrams, it is essential to properly select the categories for the coordinate axes and choose the correct scales and variables. Diagrams may include lines, two-dimensional or spatial images, therefore charts, pie charts, graphs, and other appropriate types should be used as needed.

## 5. DOCUMENTATION OF SOURCES IN WRITTEN PAPERS

Sources (literature or sources of empirical information) in written papers are documented through in-text citations and a list of references, both of which should follow the requirements outlined below. In papers written at Vilnius University Faculty of Communication, the **APA (American Psychological Association)** 7th edition citation style is used for both in-text citations and the reference list. Each author must familiarise themselves with the requirements for compiling and presenting references independently before beginning their paper. All sources that are directly quoted or paraphrased in the paper must be documented, and papers that were not read or directly used by the author should not be included in the reference list.

Unless otherwise specified by the referencing guidelines, capitalisation in the reference list should follow the norms of the original source's language. References to websites (*https*) must always be interactive (clickable).

### 5.1. IN-TEXT CITATIONS

An **in-text citation** is a reference within a document that directs the reader to another source of information or a specific section of it. It is provided in parentheses within the text and varies depending on the type of source being cited. Typically, it includes the author's surname followed by the year of publication, for example: (Johnson, 2016).

**Exact quotes** (up to 40 words) should be enclosed in quotation marks, with the reference including the author's name, year, and page number, for example: (Rogers, 2003, p. 83).

Quotes longer than 40 words should be presented as a separate, indented paragraph without quotation marks, with the author's name, year, and page number indicated.

Exact page numbers of the quoted source should also be provided when **paraphrasing the author's words**.

**One author:** (Rogers, 2003). If multiple works by the same author published in the same year are cited, lowercase letters (a, b, c, etc.) are added alphabetically after the year: (Rogers, 2003a; Rogers, 2003b; Rogers, 2003c). When citing multiple works by the same author from different years, they should be listed in chronological order, from the earliest to the most recent: (Rogers, 2003, 2005, 2012).

**Two authors:** (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

**Three authors:** The first in-text citation should include all authors' surnames: (Windahl, Signizer, & Olson, 2009). In subsequent citations, only the first author's surname is used, followed by "et al.": (Windahl et al., 2009).

**Four or more authors:** (Martin et al., 2020).

**No author:** If there is no author, the next element in the bibliographic description—usually the title—is used instead. In the first citation, the full title is included. An abbreviated version of the title may be used in subsequent citations.

*Example*

In-text citation: (*Many Voices, One World*, 1980).

Reference list entry: *Many Voices, One World: Towards a New More Just and More Efficient World Information and Communication Order*. (1980). <https://waccglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MacBride-Report-English.pdf>

**Collective author** (e.g., institution, association, corporation, government agency, research group): If cited multiple times, the first citation should include the full name followed by the abbreviation in brackets. In subsequent citations, only the abbreviation should be used.

*Example*

Reference in the text: (*World Bank*, 2016)

Bibliography description: World Bank (2016). *Migration and remittances fact book 2016*. World Bank.

**Multiple sources in one reference.** When citing multiple sources within a single reference, they are listed in alphabetical order within the parentheses and separated with a semicolon.

*Example*

(Cotter, 2003; Nabi, 2020; Rogers, 2003).

## 5.2. REFERENCE LIST

A reference list, consisting of entries for the sources mentioned or cited in the paper, is included at the end of the written paper and arranged in alphabetical order. Each entry in the reference list contains specific publication information that allows readers to identify and locate the source. To correctly compile the list of sources used, the type of each source must first be identified (e.g. is it a book, an article, an electronic document, or an unpublished document). Additionally, the type of authorship must be determined (e.g., a single author, a group of authors, a collective author, or an editor).

When citing sources in a language other than English, an English translation of the title should be included in square brackets, placed directly after the title and before the full stop (an example can be found below under *Book*).

## Book

### **One author**

Surname, N. (Year). *Book Title: Subtitle* (edition information). Publisher.

#### *Example*

Rogers, E. M. (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations* (5th ed.). Free Press.

Anderson, C. (2016). *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*. Headline.

Schäfer, M. S., Kristiansen, S., & Bonfadelli, H. (Eds.). (2015). *Wissenschaftskommunikation im Wandel* [Science Communication in Transition]. Herbert von Halem.

### **Two authors**

Surname, N.<sup>1</sup>, & Surname, N.<sup>2</sup> (Year). *Book Title: Subtitle* (edition information). Publisher.

#### *Example*

Clark, G., & Phillips, A. (2014). *Inside Book Publishing* (5th ed.). Routledge.

### **3–6 authors**

Surname, N.<sup>1</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>2</sup>, & Surname, N.<sup>3</sup> (Year). *Book Title: Subtitle* (edition information).

Publisher.

#### *Example*

Windahl, S., Signizer, B., & Olson, J. T. (2009). *Using Communication Theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

### **7 or more authors**

Surname, N.<sup>1</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>2</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>3</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>4</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>5</sup>, Surname, N.<sup>6</sup>, ... Last author's surname, N.<sup>x</sup>, (Year). *Book Title: Subtitle* (edition information). Publisher.

### **Publications compiled by editors**

The editor's name appears in place of the author, with the designation (Ed.) for a single editor and (Eds.) for multiple editors.

#### *Example*

Oliver, M. B., Raney, A. A., & Bryant, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (4th ed.). Routledge.

### **One volume in a multiple-volume publication**

Surname, N. (Year). *Book title: subtitle* (edition information, Vol. number). Publisher.

#### *Example*

Fiske, S. T., Gilbert, D. T., & Lindzey, G. (2010). *Handbook of social psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1). John Wiley and Sons.

### ***Part of a book or a collection of articles***

Surname, N. (Year). Title of the part or article. In N., Surname, *Book Title: Subtitle* (edition information, pp. page range of chapter). Publisher.

#### ***Example***

Nabi, R. L. (2020). Media and Emotion. In M. B. Oliver, A. A. Raney, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (4th ed., pp. 163–178). Routledge.

### ***Part of a multi-volume book or a collection of articles***

Surname, N. (Year). Title of the part of the book or the article. In N., Surname, *Book Title: Subtitle* (volume, pp. page range of chapter). Publisher.

#### ***Example***

Kinni, T. B. (2004). Disney, Walt (1901–1966): founder of the Walt Disney company. In *Encyclopedia of leadership* (Vol. 1, p. 345–349). Sage Publications.

### ***E-book with DOI***

#### ***Example***

Holtz-Bacha, C., Novelli, E., & Rafter, K. (Eds.). (2017). *Political advertising in the 2014 European Parliament elections*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. <http://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-56981-3>

### ***E-book without DOI***

#### ***Example***

Hartley, P. (1999). *Interpersonal communication*. Routledge. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=60578&site=ehost-live>

### ***Journal article or online journal article without DOI***

Surname, N. (Year). Article title. *Journal title*, volume (number), page range of the article.

#### ***Example***

Vanoost, M. (2021). From Literary Journalism to Transmedia Worlds: Into the Wild and Beyond. *Literary Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 35–60.

### ***Online journal article with DOI***

#### ***Example***

Grigorjevas, A., Gramigna, R., and Salupere, S. (2017). A. J. Greimas: The perfection of imperfection. *Sign Systems Studies*, 45(1–2). <http://doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2017.45.1-2.01>

### ***Online journal article without DOI***

#### ***Example***

Raman, C. V., & Krishnan, K. S. (1928). A new type of secondary radiation. *Nature*, 121, 501–502. <http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-0013348347&partnerID=tZOtx3y1>



### **Online encyclopaedia entry**

#### *Example*

Marcowsky, G. (2025). Classical information theory. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/science/information-theory/Classical-information-theory#ref710460>

### **Article in a printed periodical (daily, weekly, monthly, bimonthly, etc.)**

Surname, V. (Year, month, day). Article title: subheading. *Title of the Periodical*, page range.

#### *Example*

Tett, G. (2023, April 21). Wake up to the danger of digital bank runs. *Financial Times*, 17.

### **Article from a news site**

#### *Example*

Chang, K. (2017, October 5). Space council chooses the Moon as Trump administration priority. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/science/national-space-council-moon-pence.html>

### **Bachelor/master/doctoral thesis accessible via online databases**

Surname, N. (Year). *Headline: subheading* [type of source, academic institution issuing the degree]. Internet database title, URL.

#### *Example*

Ponomarenko, K. (2022). *Project manager's perspective communication factors determining project success* [Master's thesis, Vilnius University]. eLABa. [https://www.lvb.lt/permalink/370LABT\\_NETWORK/5bfq8/alma9912931518508451](https://www.lvb.lt/permalink/370LABT_NETWORK/5bfq8/alma9912931518508451)

### **Legal acts, cases and other legal documents available online**

*Document title with its number(s)*, date of passing or signing. (Year). Publisher, if available. URL

### **Law**

#### *Examples*

Law on the provision of information to the public, 1996, July 2, No. I-1418. (2024). <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/2865241206f511e687e0fbad81d55a7c?jfwid=bkaxlcc0>

### **Order by Minister**

#### *Example*

*Dėl kasmetinio universitetų ir mokslinių tyrimų institutų mokslinių tyrimų ir ekspertinės plėtros ir meno veiklos vertinimo reglamento patvirtinimo* [On the adoption of the Regula-



tions on the annual evaluation of research and expertise development and artistic activities of universities and research institutes]. (2017). Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 2017, October 4, No. V747. <https://eseimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b519a500a93f11e7a65c90dfe4655c64>

### **Other legal documents**

#### **Example**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. (2023). *For a Secure, Resilient and Prosperous Future: Lithuania's Indo-Pacific Strategy*. [https://eimin.lrv.lt/uploads/eimin/documents/files/Lietuvos%20inovacij%C5%B3%20pl%C4%97tros%20programa\\_patvirtinta%202013%2012%2018\\_EN.pdf](https://eimin.lrv.lt/uploads/eimin/documents/files/Lietuvos%20inovacij%C5%B3%20pl%C4%97tros%20programa_patvirtinta%202013%2012%2018_EN.pdf)

### **Blog entry**

Blog entries are described by following the standard for articles in periodicals.

### **Blog entries as journal articles**

#### **Example**

Cotter, A. (2023, May 4). The Art of Corporate Communication. *Workvivo Blog*. <https://www.workvivo.com/blog/corporate-communications/>

### **Social media post**

#### **Example**

Harari, Y. N. (2025, March 20). *For centuries, people believed that industrial progress required empire....* Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BU8ZhLnS6/>

### **Website**

Surname, V. (Year, month, day). Title. Website title. URL

#### **Example**

Knudsen, V. (2023, October 5). Innovation and Creativity: Inspiring Stories of Success and Nurturing a Culture of Innovation. BOAR. <https://boarcommunity.com/innovation-and-creativity-inspiring-stories-of-success-and-nurturing-a-culture-of-innovation/>

International Publishers Association (2024, October 12). Our Industry. <https://internationalpublishers.org/our-industry/#valuechain>

### **Video recording (YouTube, TED talk, and others)**

#### **Example**

Widmaier, D. (2022, July). *The future of fashion—made from mushrooms* [video]. TED Conferences. [https://www.ted.com/talks/dan\\_widmaier\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_fashion\\_made\\_from\\_mushrooms?utm\\_campaign=tedspread&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=ted-comshare](https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_widmaier_the_future_of_fashion_made_from_mushrooms?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=ted-comshare)

### ***YouTube music video***

#### ***Example***

Jazzu. (2019, February 1). *Dumblas* [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMtU-7fj9wc>

### ***Movie***

#### ***Example***

Naujokas, Ž. (Producer) & Markevičius, M. (Director). (2018). *Ashes in the Snow* [movie]. Acme Film.

Aïnouz, K. (Director). (2019). *A vida invisível* [Invisible Life] [movie]. Amazon Studios.

### ***TV show***

#### ***Example***

Howard, R. (Director). (2019). *Eight days in April* (Season 1, Episode 3) [TV series episode]. In J. Singer (Executive Producer), *Inside Bill's Brain: Decoding Bill Gates*. Netflix.

### ***Musical album***

#### ***Example***

Styles, H. (2022). *Harry's House* [Album]. Columbia.

### ***Music recording (CD)***

#### ***Example***

Styles, H. (2022). Matilda [Song]. On *Harry's house*. Columbia.

### ***Unpublished documents***

Surname, V. (Year, month, day). *Headline: subheading*. Title of the fund (fund description, file No., etc.). Storage title, location.

#### ***Example***

Biržiška, V. (1942). *Lietuvių literatūrinis kalendorius* [Lithuanian literature calendar]. Lithuanian Scientific Society (f. 15- 71). Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Folklore Manuscript Library, Vilnius.

## **5.3. OTHER EXAMPLES OF REFERENCES; AUTOMATED TOOLS**

The authors of APA (7th edition) define all currently known document types and provide methodologies and examples for compiling reference list entries. If these Methodological Guidelines do not include a required example for a paper, please refer to the examples of references for cited sources at:

APA style (2024, October 12) *Reference Examples*. <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples#textual-works>

***Automated assistance***

The Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (eLABa) e-catalogue (<https://www.lyb.lt>) provides automatically generated citations for publications found in the library, formatted according to APA (7th edition) style. To cite a publication, locate and select the desired source, click on the toolbar (three dots), and choose the quotation mark icon (followed by 'citavimas'). Then, select APA (7th edition) and copy the generated citation.

Academic online journals also offer tools that allow readers to automatically select the reference style and generate reference list entries. Additionally, there are other online citation generators available for APA style. However, since inconsistencies may arise when automatically generating citations, it is essential to independently verify them against the requirements of APA 7th edition before including them in the paper.

## 6. RECOMMENDED METHODOLOGICAL LITERATURE ON RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC WRITING

1. Babbie, E. R. (2015). *Practice of Social Research* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). Cengage Learning.
2. Banks, M. (2001). *Visual Methods in Social Research*. SAGE Publications.
3. Berger, A. A. (2000). *Media and Communication Research Methods: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
4. Bernard, H. R. (2011). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> edition.). AltaMira.
5. Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford University Press.
6. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.
7. Daymon, C., & Holloway, I. (2011). *Qualitative Research Methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communications* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Routledge.
8. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.
9. Fielding, N., Lee, R. M., & Blank, G. (2008). *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. SAGE Publications.
10. Hall, J. A., & Bryant, J. M. (Eds.). (2006). *Historical Methods in the Social Sciences (SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods)* (Vols. 1–4). SAGE.
11. Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*. SAGE Publications.
12. Healey, J. F. (2005). *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thomson/Wadsworth.
13. Iarossi, G. (2006). *The Power of Survey Design: A User's Guide for Managing Surveys, Interpreting Results, and Influencing Respondents*. World Bank.
14. Jørgensen, W., & Louise, M. P. (2004). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. SAGE Publications.
15. Punch, K. (2007). *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.
16. Roberts, B. (2002). *Biographical Research*. Open University Press.
17. Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. Teachers College Press.
18. Silverman, D. (2002). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text, and Interaction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications.
19. Sullivan, T. J. (2001). *Methods of Social Research*. Harcourt College Publishers.
20. Toepoel, V. (2016). *Doing Surveys Online*. SAGE Publications.
21. Walliman, N. (2006). *Social Research Methods*. SAGE Publications.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. EXAMPLE OF TITLE PAGE

<p>Vilnius University Faculty of Communication</p> <p>Student of _____ study programme</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(student's name, surname)</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>(title of the bachelor's/ master's thesis)</p> <p>Bachelor's/ Master's Thesis</p> <p>Supervisor: _____</p> <p>(pedagogical title and academic degree, name, surname)</p>
<p>Vilnius, 2025</p>

## Appendix 2. EXAMPLE OF TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### Appendix 3. FORM OF INFORMED CONSENT

This document certifies your agreement to participate in the research study “(title)” conducted by (name, surname), a student at the Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University. The aim of this research is (specification of the aim).

If you have any questions regarding the research and/or the use of its results, you may contact the researcher via email at (email address).

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without providing a reason. In the event of withdrawal, any information you have previously provided, along with any related data, will not be used in this study.

During the course of this research, any information and/or data you provide will be used solely for conducting the study, analysing its results, drawing generalisations, and presenting findings in an **open/closed** (leave one as appropriate) defence of the thesis before the defence committee. Any information and/or data you provide will only be used publicly in an anonymised format (i.e., your personal data will not be disclosed at any stage of the research).

The thesis will be submitted to the Vilnius University Information System, where access is granted only to registered users, in accordance with the regulations set by Vilnius University. The information and/or data collected throughout the research may be reviewed only by authorised individuals, including the Vilnius University Faculty of Communication study programme Final Thesis Evaluation Committee, the thesis advisor, the reviewer of the paper, the official responsible for data security at Vilnius University, the Vilnius University Academic Ethics Committee, and the Faculty of Communication Academic Ethics Committee.

Any information and/or data you provide, if recorded as audio, video, or any other visual material, will be destroyed after the defence of the thesis.

Please mark your choice(s) as applicable:

- I agree that an audio recording will be made during the research: YES / NO
- I agree that a video recording will be made during the research: YES / NO
- I agree that photos will be taken during the research: YES / NO
- I agree that my responses may be quoted verbatim or rephrased (anonymously) when presenting the research results: YES / NO

I agree to take part in the research:

Research participant's name, surname	Date	Signature
Student's name, surname	Date	Signature

*Prepared based on the “Guidelines for Conformity with the Ethics of Academic Research,” approved by the Ombudsperson of Academic Ethics and Procedures, Republic of Lithuania (December 10, 2020, No. V-60, TAR, November 4, 2021, No. 22952).*



## Appendix 4. REQUEST TO CONDUCT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

VILNIUS UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION

(Study programme, year of studies)

(Student's name, surname)

Vilnius University Faculty of Communication

(Study Programme Committee / Final Theses Evaluation Committee)

### REQUEST

20\_\_\_\_  
(year – month – day)

#### 1. Title of research

#### 2. Research description (max 200 words) (indicate the aim and objectives of the research, and other relevant information).

(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)

#### 3. Methods and instruments of the research, research subjects/participants, research location (Define the research methods and instruments, specify who the research subjects/participants will be, and indicate the location(s) where the research will be conducted. Provide the research instruments along with the application.)

(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)

#### 4. If the research utilises instruments developed by individuals other than the researcher(s), specify how the copyright and legitimacy of their use will be ensured. Provide the sources of these instruments and attach any obtained permissions for their use.

(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)

#### 5. Stages and timeline for the implementation of the research

(Briefly outline the stages, including the start and completion dates of the research).

(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)

#### 6. Are there any vulnerable individuals among the participants in the research? Vulnerable individuals are defined as those whose agreement to participate in research may be influenced by external circumstances, or those who are partially or fully unable to protect and defend their own interests:

Individuals who, due to their health condition, are unable to objectively perceive their interests	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Individuals under 18 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Students whose participation in the research is related to their studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Individuals residing in social care institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Military personnel during their military service	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Employees of the institution where the research is conducted, if they are subordinate to the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Individuals in detention facilities or other institutions of restricted freedom	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any other vulnerable individuals or socially vulnerable groups (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If any vulnerable individuals participate in the research, please specify the measures that will be implemented to ensure their protection.

(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)

---

7. Indicate whether any risks or potential harm to research participants may arise during the research and describe the measures that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

8. Indicate whether participation in the research will be voluntary for the research subjects and describe the measures that will be taken to ensure their voluntary participation.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

9. Indicate whether the research subjects' agreement to participate in the study will be based on informed consent. Along with the application, submit the prepared informed consent forms, templates, or documents.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

10. If obtaining informed consent directly from the research participants is not possible, specify the measures that will be taken to ensure their safety, rights, and dignity.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

11. Indicate how the research participants will be informed that they can withdraw from the research at any time and request the return of their data.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

12. Indicate in what way(s) the research participants will be informed on the possibilities of discussing any aspects of the research with the researcher(s) and contact the researcher(s) in the course of or after the research.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

13. Indicate how the research participants will be informed about the possibility of discussing any aspects of the research with the researcher(s) and contacting the researcher(s) during or after the research.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

14. Indicate how the safety, dignity, and rights of the research participants will be ensured if, due to the methodological concept of the research, the aim of the research cannot be revealed to the participants, or if the research may cause any discomfort.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---

15. Indicate how the personal data of the research participants will be stored and processed, and how the confidentiality of the data will be ensured.

*(If this is a resubmitted request, please mark the changes.)*

---



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*(Student's name, surname)*

---

*(signature)*

---

*(Supervisor's name, surname)*

---

*(signature)*

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