

APPROVED
by Resolution No. TPN-40 of 28 October
2024 of the Council of the Faculty of
Communication, Vilnius University

PROCEDURE FOR THE DEFENCE AND ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL THESIS AT THE FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. This procedure establishes the defence and assessment of the final thesis at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University (hereinafter – the “Procedure”).
2. Terms used in the Procedure:
 - 2.1. **Final Thesis** – a independent written work prepared by a student in either the first cycle (Bachelor’s) or second cycle (Master’s) of studies, in accordance with the requirements of university-level education. The final thesis shall demonstrate the student’s ability to apply the knowledge acquired in their field of study, to select and use scientific literature (i.e. to present, analyse, interpret, etc.), to apply appropriate research methods, to independently address the research questions posed, to present their own conclusions and/or recommendations, and to describe the research conducted in academically appropriate, precise, and clear language.
 - 2.2. **Final Thesis Assessment Committee** – a committee established upon the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University, with its Chair appointed by the order of the Rector of Vilnius University or an authorised Vice-Rector. The Final Thesis Assessment Committee shall conduct the procedure for the defence and assessment of the final thesis, consider students' requests regarding the conduct of scientific research and the use of personal data in the final thesis, and issue the final evaluation of the final thesis.
 - 2.3. **Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee** – a person appointed by order of the Rector of Vilnius University or an authorised Vice-Rector, who presides over the defence and assessment of the final thesis. The same order may also appoint a Vice-Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee.
 - 2.4. **Opponent** – a member of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee, who poses oral questions to the defending student and engages in a discussion based on their submitted final thesis.
 - 2.5. **Reviewer** – a person appointed by the Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee, who provides a written review of the final thesis and its evaluation in the forms established by the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University (see Annexes 1 and 2).
 - 2.6. **Secretary of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee** – a study coordinator responsible for the respective study programme at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University, who performs as secretary during the Final Thesis Assessment Committee’s proceedings. The Secretary shall administer and take minutes of the Committee’s proceedings, perform other functions related to the defence and assessment of the final thesis, and execute other tasks assigned by the Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee.
3. The defence of the final thesis shall be public and take place during a formal proceeding of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee (hereinafter – the “Committee”).
4. Final theses shall be defended (final examinations shall be held) at the time set by order of the Dean of the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University.
5. The Committee shall operate in accordance with the *Vilnius University Regulations for the Preparation, Defence, and Storage of the Studying Persons’ Research Papers*, approved by Resolution No. S-2017-12-11 of 19 December 2017 of the Senate of Vilnius University (wording of

Resolution No. SPN-44 of 21 May 2024 of the Senate of Vilnius University); *Procedure for the Administration of Written Works in the Vilnius University Study Information System*, approved by Order No. R-512 of 22 November 2017 of the Vice-Rector for Studies of Vilnius University (wording of Order No. R-351 of 4 September 2024 of the Vice-Rector for Studies of Vilnius University); *Guidelines for written works at the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University*, approved in protocol No. 160000-10-10 (136) of 13 February 2012 of the Council of Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University (wording of Resolution No. TPN-40 of 28 October 2024 of the Council of Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University).

CHAPTER II

DEFENCE OF THE FINAL THESIS

6. At its first proceeding, the Committee shall establish the procedure of its work. The defence of the final thesis (hereinafter – the “defence”) and its assessment shall be considered valid if no fewer than two-thirds of the Committee members are present at the proceeding.

7. If the Committee determines that the final thesis has not been prepared independently, has been plagiarised, or does not meet the minimum length requirements, the student shall not be permitted to defend it. The Chair of the Committee shall inform the author of the final thesis of this decision in writing via electronic email address provided by Vilnius University or orally before to the defence begins.

8. The defence shall begin with the Chair of the Committee introducing the Committee members, outlining the procedure for the defence and assessment of the final thesis, and announcing the beginning of the formal proceeding.

9. The defence shall take place during a public proceeding of the Committee.

10. During the proceeding, the author of the final thesis presents their thesis orally in public.

11. Up to 25 minutes shall be allocated for the defence of a bachelor’s final thesis, of which up to 7 minutes shall be allocated for the presentation of the final thesis. Up to 40 minutes shall be allocated for the defence of a master’s final thesis, of which up to 15 minutes shall be allocated for the presentation of the final thesis. During the presentation, the author of the final thesis may use independently prepared slides of high quality.

12. If the time allocated for the presentation of the final thesis is exceeded, the Chair of the Committee shall have the right to terminate the presentation of the final thesis after issuing a warning remark.

13. After the author has presented their final thesis, the Reviewer’s final thesis review shall be read aloud. The author of the final thesis shall respond to the Reviewer's comments and questions. The Reviewer shall ask at least one and no more than three questions for students in bachelor’s study programmes, and at least two and no more than five questions for students in master’s study programmes.

14. Once the author of the final thesis has responded to the Reviewer’s questions, the Chair of the Committee shall give the floor to the Opponent.

15. Once the author of the final thesis has answered the Opponent’s questions, members of the Committee and other people present at the defence may ask the author of the final thesis additional questions related to the final thesis.

16. After all questions have been addressed and the allotted time for the defence has ended, the Chair of the Committee shall announce that the public defence of the final thesis in question is concluded.

17. If the final thesis under defence contains confidential (non-disclosable) data, the final thesis may be defended in a closed proceeding of the Committee, with the approval of the Chair of the Committee and by order of the Dean of the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW AND OPPOSITION OF THE FINAL THESIS

18. The final thesis shall be reviewed according to the following procedure:
- 18.1. The final thesis shall be submitted to the Reviewer by the study coordinator responsible for the respective study programme no later than five working days prior to the scheduled defence date.
- 18.2. The Reviewer shall submit the final thesis review (see Annex 1) and the completed and signed final thesis assessment form (see Annex 2) to the Secretary of the Committee via electronic email address provided by Vilnius University no later than two working days prior to the scheduled defence date of the respective final thesis.
- 18.3. The author of the final thesis shall receive the review via electronic email address provided by Vilnius University no later than one working day before the scheduled defence date.
19. The final thesis shall be opposed according to the following procedure:
- 19.1. The Opponent of the final thesis shall be appointed by the Chair of the Committee no later than two weeks before the first proceeding of the Committee. The Opponent shall be selected from among the members of the Committee.
- 19.2. The final thesis shall be submitted to the Opponent and other members of the Committee by the Secretary of the Committee.
- 19.3. If the Reviewer or the Opponent determines that the final thesis has not been prepared independently, has been plagiarised, does not meet the minimum length requirements or any other formal requirements that prevent it from being defended, they shall inform the Chair of the Committee in writing, providing justification, prior to the start of the proceeding at which the final thesis is to be defended.

CHAPTER IV

ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL THESIS

20. The Committee's decision on the evaluation (grade) of the final thesis shall be made collegially in a closed proceeding, with no fewer than half of the Committee members present. Only Committee members, the Secretary of the Committee, and the final thesis supervisor (if necessary) shall attend the closed proceeding.
21. The Committee's decision on the evaluation of the final thesis shall not be subject to appeal.
22. If a Committee member is the supervisor of a final thesis, they shall not be required to withdraw from the proceeding at which the respective final thesis is evaluated. When the Committee assesses a final thesis supervised by one of its members, that supervisor shall not participate in the discussion or evaluation of the final thesis or its defence.
23. When assessing the final thesis and its defence, the Committee may apply the following final thesis assessment system (hereinafter – the “assessment system”):
- 23.1. The evaluation of the submitted final thesis constitutes 70% of the final grade: 20% – evaluation by Committee members; 20% – evaluation by the Opponent; 15% – evaluation by the final thesis supervisor; 15% – evaluation by the final thesis Reviewer, in accordance with the assessment criteria for the final thesis (see Annex 2 and 3).
- 23.2. The evaluation of the final thesis defence constitutes 30% of the final grade: 10% – evaluation of the presentation during defence; 20% – evaluation of responses to questions from the Reviewer, Opponent, and others (see Annex 3).
- 23.3. If the evaluations provided by the final thesis supervisor, Reviewer, and/or Opponent differ by three or more points, the assessment system outlined in points 23.1 and 23.2 shall not apply. In such cases, the final grade shall be determined by a joint decision of the Committee members.

23.4. The individual evaluations of the final thesis and its defence proposed by the Committee members shall remain confidential.

24. The final evaluation of the final thesis shall be approved by the Committee through a formal vote.

25. At the request of the Chair of the Committee, a Committee member shall not only propose an evaluation (in writing or orally, as determined by the Committee) but also provide a justification for it. If a Committee member's proposed evaluation differs by three or more points from those of other Committee members, the member shall be required to provide a reasoned justification for the evaluation.

26. A Committee decision to prohibit the defence of a final thesis on the grounds that it has not been prepared independently, has been plagiarised or does not meet other formal requirements shall be recorded in the proceeding protocol. An excerpt of the protocol shall be attached to the Committee's report (see point 29).

27. The Chair of the Committee of the respective study programmes may be provided with additional documents, such as excerpts from the protocol, listing final theses not permitted for defence, the evaluation tables for these theses, etc.

28. No later than one working day after the defence, the Committee shall complete the electronic register. The electronic register shall indicate the final evaluation of the thesis, the access status of the final thesis in the *eLABa* database, and the applicable embargo period (if determined by the Committee). Alongside the electronic register, a protocol of the Committee's proceeding shall be automatically generated in the Vilnius University Information System (*VUSIS*), on the basis of which the student is awarded an academic degree and/or a qualification. The electronic register and the protocol of the Committee's proceeding shall be signed by the Chair and the Secretary of the Committee. The protocol concerning the award of the academic degree shall be signed by the Dean of the Faculty of Communication of Vilnius University.

CHAPTER V

FINAL THESIS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

29. The Chair of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee shall prepare a Committee Report (hereinafter – the “Report”) (see Annex 4), which shall be presented at a meeting of the Faculty's Board of Studies. Once approved, the Report, together with the annual activity report of the respective study programme committee, shall be submitted to the Faculty Council for consideration and approval.

30. The Report shall include information on the work of the Committee, the participation of the Committee members in its activities, and defence statistics, including the number of final theses submitted for defence and the number of theses defended, their research topics, evaluations, supervision and Reviewer statistics, etc. (see Annex 4). The Report shall conclude with comments and suggestions for thesis supervisors and reviewers, as well as recommendations for improving the defence and evaluation process.

31. The Report shall be accompanied (if applicable) by the protocol recording the Committee's decision regarding a substantiated student's request to defend a final thesis despite the supervisor's refusal, and the protocol recording the Committee's decision to prohibit the defence of a final thesis that has not been prepared independently.

FINAL THESIS REVIEW

| | |
|--|--|
| Study programme and cycle of studies | |
| Author of the final thesis | |
| Title of the final thesis | |
| <i>Criteria for the evaluation of the final thesis</i> | <i>Arguments for the evaluation</i> |
| Correspondence between the thesis topic and its content | |
| Formulation of the final thesis aim and objectives, and their realisation | |
| Logical structure of the final thesis; coherence between theoretical and empirical parts | |
| Theoretical level of the final thesis (depth of topic analysis) | |
| Presentation of the empirical research, methodology, discussion of research ethics, presentation and analysis of research results | |
| Justification of conclusions, recommendations, and proposals | |
| Language style and quality | |
| Formatting (bibliographic references list, layout, text accompanying illustrations, etc.) | |
| Conclusion on whether the final thesis fulfills the qualification requirements | |
| Questions for the author of the final thesis (Bachelor's students must be asked between one and three questions; master's students between two and five questions) | |

Reviewer (name, last name)

Signature

Date

ANNEX No. 2 to
The Procedure for the Defence and
Assessment of the Final Thesis
at the Faculty of Communication,
Vilnius University

FINAL THESIS ASSESSMENT FORM

| | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Study programme and cycle of studies | | | | |
| Author of the final thesis | | | | |
| Title of the final thesis | | | | |
| <i>Criteria for evaluation of the final thesis</i> | <i>Evaluation</i> | | <i>Evaluation</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
| | <i>Bachelor's Final Thesis</i> | <i>Master's Final Thesis</i> | | |
| Correspondence between the thesis topic and its content | 0,5 | 0,5 | | |
| Formulation of the final thesis aim and objectives, and their realisation | 1,5 | 2 | | |
| Logical structure of the final thesis; coherence between theoretical and empirical parts | 1,5 | 1 | | |
| Theoretical level of the final thesis (depth of topic analysis) | 2 | 2 | | |
| Presentation of the empirical research, methodology, discussion of research ethics, presentation and analysis of research results | 1,5 | 2 | | |
| Justification of conclusions, recommendations, and proposals | 1 | 1 | | |
| Language style and quality | 1,5 | 1 | | |
| Formatting (bibliographic references list, layout, text illustration, etc.) | 0,5 | 0,5 | | |
| Suggested grade | | | | |
| Conclusion on whether the final thesis fulfills the qualification requirements | | | | |

Name, last name

Signature

Date

ANNEX No. 3 to
The Procedure for the Defence and
Assessment of the Final Thesis
at the Faculty of Communication,
Vilnius University

FINAL THESIS ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

| | |
|---|---|
| Final evaluation of the thesis is based on a total of 100%, of which 70% is allocated to the evaluation of the final thesis and 30% to the evaluation of the defence. | |
| Evaluation of the final thesis | Evaluation of the final thesis defence |
| Evaluation by the Committee members – 20% Evaluation by the Opponent – 20% Evaluation by the supervisor of the final thesis – 15% Evaluation by the Reviewer – 15% | Presentation of the final thesis – 10% Answers to questions of the Reviewer, Opponent and other members of the Committee – 20% |

ANNEX No. 4 to
The Procedure for the Defence and
Assessment of the Final Thesis
at the Faculty of Communication,
Vilnius University

Final Thesis Assessment Committee Report
for theBachelor's/Master's study programme

Chair of the Committee:

Members: (social partner).

Secretary:

The proceeding of the Final Thesis Assessment Committee took place on

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Final theses defence statistics (number of final theses defended and successfully defended; thesis evaluations; average evaluation score) | |
| 2. | Scientific topics of the final theses | |
| 3. | Supervision and review statistics | |
| 4. | Final theses not defended despite timely registration (statistics and reasons) | |
| 5. | Notes and suggestions for final theses supervisors and reviewers | |
| 6. | Recommendations regarding the final thesis defence and evaluation procedure | |