**Lithuanian University of Health Sciences**

**Medical Academy**

**Faculty of Public Health**

**Regulation of the preparation and public presentation of the final thesis of the second cycle study programme “Lifestyle Medicine”.**

Approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health, Protocol No. VSF8-1 on 4 January 2021

The regulation enters into force from 4 January 2021

# I. General provisions

* The regulation for the preparation and public presentation of the final thesis of the second cycle study programme (master's degree) “Lifestyle Medicine” of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LSMU) (hereinafter - the Regulation) is an official document of the Faculty of Public Health of the LSMU, which regulates the preparation of the final theses of the second-cycle study programme “Lifestyle Medicine” and public presentation procedures and deadlines.
* The final thesis is an integral part of the second cycle study programme, regulated by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, normative documents approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences:
  + Order no. V-826 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 June 2010 “On the approval of the description of the general requirements of master’s degree study programmes” (current version);
  + Order no. V-1034 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 October 2015 “Description of the field of public health studies” (current edition);
  + LSMU Senate resolution. Study regulations of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (current edition);
  + LSMU Senate resolution. Regulation of first and second cycle and integrated studies of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (current version);
  + LSMU Senate resolution. Provisions for the preparation, submission and uploading of first and second cycle electronic documents of the master’s thesis of LSMU and the procedure for uploading them to the information system of Lithuanian science and studies electronic documents and the procedure for their use (current version).
* The final thesis is prepared throughout the period of second cycle studies.
* Amendments to this Regulation can only be made after they have been considered by the study programme committee and approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health.
* Terms used in this Regulation:
  + The final thesis is a scientific work on topics relevant to lifestyle medicine, which reflects the master's degree student's acquired abilities to independently solve the set tasks, applying the principles of research work and using the knowledge gained in studies and practice.
  + A master's degree student is a person studying at LSMU university in a second cycle study programme.
  + Thesis supervisor – a person with at least a master's degree, or a doctoral student in the third and fourth year of doctoral studies, who supervises the preparation of the thesis.
  + Thesis consultant – a person who works in a scientific or practical institution and has a doctorate or master's degree and experience in scientific or practical work. The candidacy of the thesis consultant is selected by the thesis supervisor, and it is approved by the master’s Thesis Preparation Commission.
  + The Thesis Preparation Commission (hereinafter - the Preparation Commission) is an expert group of lecturers of the Faculty of Public Health participating in the programme.
  + Thesis Public Presentation Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Public Presentation Commission) is a group of experts approved by the Rector of LSMU, which evaluates the master's thesis.
  + Reviewer – a person who has at least a master's degree and evaluates the compliance of the thesis with the requirements according to the form approved by the Study Programme Committee.
  + eLABa – information system of electronic documents of Lithuanian science and studies.
  + ETD (electronic theses and dissertations) document – an electronic work document, including documents of individual work elements (for example, content, summary, annotation and, if necessary, appendices), prepared for uploading, uploaded, or stored in the Lithuanian ETD document database.

# II Duties and Responsibilities

* Responsibilities of the master's degree student in the preparation and public presentation of the thesis:
  + to prepare a thesis guided by this Regulation;
  + choose a topic on time, initiate meetings with the supervisor;
  + prepare an individual thesis preparation programme and plan together with the thesis supervisor, and follow it throughout the preparation period (Annex No. 1);
  + obtain the approval of the Centre for Bioethics to conduct scientific research;
  + according to the individual plan, conduct research, analyse, and describe research results, summarise them, discuss and formulate conclusions;
  + prepare the thesis in accordance with valid methodological recommendations and in compliance with the preparation stages and deadlines for public presentation specified in this document.
  + when preparing the thesis, take into account the comments and recommendations of the supervisor and Thesis Preparation Commission;
  + in accordance with the procedure for submission of eLABa ETD electronic documents established by LSMU, place the thesis in the electronic database.
* Functions of the supervisor in preparing the thesis:
  + to help the master's degree student to formulate the topic of the final thesis and draw up the final thesis preparation programme and activities implementation plan;
  + advise on work-related issues and make suggestions for the improvement of the thesis (the structure of the thesis and its parts, literature search and its suitability, the purpose and tasks of the research, sample preparation, selection of research methods, organisation of the research, selection of evaluation and analysis methods);
  + systematically monitor the progress of final thesis preparation, inform the Preparation Commission if the master's degree student does not implement the approved individual plan;
  + at the end of each semester, evaluate the work done by the master's degree student and approve the report with their signature (Annex No. 2).
* Functions of the Preparation Committee:
  + consider and approve theses topics and their supervisors;
  + to organise deliberations on the subjects of the final theses and compliance with the individual plan, in order to ensure a successful process of preparation of the final thesis;
  + if necessary, to appoint thesis consultants;
  + appoint thesis reviewers;
  + to suggest members of the Thesis Public Presentation Commission;
  + to decide on the suitability of theses for Public Presentation.
* Functions of the Public Presentation Commission:
  + participate in the Public Presentation session of theses;
  + evaluate theses and their presentation.

# Final thesis preparation

* To supervise the preparation of final theses, a permanently operating Preparation Commission consisting of at least 5 members is formed. The Commission consists of at least 3 scientists from the field of Public Health. The composition of the Preparation Commission is approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health, on the proposal of the study committee of the second cycle study programme “Lifestyle Medicine”.
* The topic of the final thesis must correspond to the direction of the postgraduate study programme “Lifestyle Medicine”. Master's degree students choose the topics of the thesis based on their professional interests from the list of proposed thesis topics or submit their own proposals for the topics. The Preparation Commission can also propose topics.
* At the end of the first month of the first year of study, the Preparation Commission publishes a list of potential thesis topics and guides in the Moodle learning environment.
* Master's degree students must comply with the following defined stages of thesis preparation and payment deadlines:
  + In the first semester:
    - by the end of the first week of October, students choose a preliminary thesis topic, coordinate it with the thesis supervisor, report their choice to the master's degree studies administrator, consult the thesis supervisor – discuss the thesis plan;
    - until 20 October – the master's degree student prepares an individual thesis plan with the supervisor, filling in a special form (Annex No. 1), which, signed by the master's degree student and the supervisor, is submitted in the Moodle system. The final thesis plan is discussed and approved at an open meeting of the Preparation Commission.
    - the master's degree student, after taking into account the comments and suggestions of the Preparation Commission and after consulting with the work supervisor, supplements the work plan and submits it. The drafting commission gets acquainted with the final thesis plans and approves the minutes of the meeting in the Moodle environment until 15 November.
    - the master's degree student analyses the literature on the topic of the thesis, discusses the work methods with the supervisor, prepares the research instrument(s) and documents to obtain Bioethics approval.
  + In the second semester, the master's degree student:
    - prepares a literature review;
    - describes the methodological part of the work;
    - submits to the supervisor the approval of the Bioethics Committee for the conduct of the study;
    - initiates an investigation;
    - reports to the work supervisor for the work performed according to the prearranged schedule;
    - until 10 June the student submits in Moodle system the completed report form and the work supervisor’s conclusion about the compliance of the work preparation process with the intended work plan. The approval of the Bioethics Committee for the conduct of the study, the prepared part of the final thesis (literature review; description of the research methodology; data collection forms) is submitted to the study administrator (Annex No. 2);
    - at the end of the second semester, a meeting of the Preparation Commission is organised, where the master's degree students' thesis preparation reports are considered. If necessary, master’s degree students and/or their scientific supervisors may be invited to the commission meeting. The completed work is evaluated with credit/failure.
  + In the third semester, the master's degree student:
    - continues the investigation and analyses the results, consults with the supervisor and consultant (if appointed) on issues relevant to the performance of the work;
    - until 20 November the student provides a report on completed work in the Moodle learning system;
    - within ten working days after the submission of the report, an open meeting of the Preparation Commission is organised, where the reports on the preparation of the master's thesis are discussed (Annex No. 2). During the deliberation, students briefly present the results of completing the components of their final theses. The completed work is evaluated with credit/failure.

# Submission of final work for public presentation and evaluation

* The procedure and deadlines for submitting the final thesis for public presentation:
  + in the third semester, no later than 25 days before the announced date of public presentation of the final theses, the master's degree student submits the prepared final thesis to the supervisor;
  + not later than 20 days before the announced day of the public presentation of the Final Thesis, the supervisor prepares feedback indicating whether the work meets the requirements for the final thesis and is suitable for submission to the reviewer's evaluation and public presentation. The supervisor's feedback is also printed and bound a copy of the thesis is handed over to the master's studies administrator (Annex No. 3);
  + master's degree student, after receiving the approval of the thesis supervisor, no later than 20 days before the announced public presentation date uploads the thesis to the temporary storage of the information system, according to the eLABa ETD electronic document submission procedure established by LSMU.
  + no later than 20 days before the date of public presentation, the Preparation Commission appoints a final thesis reviewer and delivers the final thesis to them;
  + no later than 15 days before the announced day of public presentation, the reviewer evaluates the work and provides feedback on the quality and suitability of the final work for public presentation. A copy of this feedback is given to the graduate student;
  + no later than the 10 days before the announced day of public presentation, the Preparation Commission, considering the conclusions and comments submitted by the supervisor and the reviewer, makes a final decision on the suitability of the work for public presentation. If necessary, the supervisor and/or reviewer may be invited to the meeting. The conclusions of the Preparation Commission are presented in the minutes of the meeting;
  + The chairperson of the Planning Commission, within two days of the presentation of the conclusions of the Planning Commission, hands over the theses recognised as suitable for public presentation to the chairperson of the Public Presentation Commission;
  + at the proposal of the Dean of the faculty, the permission to publicly present the final thesis is established by the order of the Rector. The final thesis is allowed to be defended after receiving the credits provided for in the study plan and after passing all the exams and after receiving a positive decision of the Preparation Commission.
* Public presentation of the thesis:
  + the final thesis is publicly presented at the public meeting of the postgraduate

study programme “Lifestyle medicine” Public Presentation Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission);

* + The composition of the commission (5-7 persons) and the meeting schedule are approved by the Rector and the Dean of the Faculty. At least one member of the Commission must be a person, who has not worked at LSMU for the past three years. The meeting is considered legal if at least 4 members participate in it;
  + The Chairperson of the Commission appoints one opponent from among the Commission members for each thesis, who provides reflection and assessment during the public presentation;
  + The participation of the master's degree student in the public presentation session is mandatory, and the work will not be considered if the master's degree student does not participate.
  + The chairperson of the Commission or the member of the Commission presiding at the meeting introduces the participants to the topic of the final thesis, introduces the master's degree student, the supervisor of the research work, work consultants (if there were any) and gives the floor to the master's degree student. Master's degree student presents their work in 10 minutes, answers the questions posed by the meeting participants. After that, the opponent's reflection and remarks are presented, the graduate student answers the opponent's questions. All participants of the meeting can participate in the discussions, the master's supervisor and/or consultant are given the right to speak.
* Evaluation of the final thesis presented to the public:
  + in a closed meeting of the Commission, the work is graded (a ten-point rating scale is used) according to predetermined criteria;
  + The member of the commission recuses themselves from the evaluation of the thesis they supervised;
  + the formula for the final thesis assessment cumulative score is published in the subject description;
  + the subject of the thesis and the evaluation grade are recorded in the Commission's protocol and added to the electronic register.
* A master's degree student who does not present or does not receive a positive assessment after the presentation is removed from the student lists.
* A master's degree student removed from the student list may publicly present their thesis for a fee set by the University no earlier than four months and no later than two years after the completion of the second-cycle study programme and after receiving the Rector's consent (unless the law provides otherwise). The procedure for public presentation of the thesis is free of charge if the work was not delivered on time for justifiable reasons.
* If the master's degree student does not agree with the assessment of the thesis, they can appeal to the Rector of LSMU no later than one day after the announcement of the results. Final thesis is reviewed within 3 working days by an appeals commission established at the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty and by order of the Rector. The Appeal Commission, having completed the necessary steps, submits a conclusion in which it names the decision made regarding the assessment of the final thesis. If the appeal commission recognises the student's complaint as unfounded, the Commission's assessment remains valid. If the master's degree student's complaint is justified, they are given the right to present the thesis at a repeated meeting of the Public Presentation Commission.
* If dishonest behaviour of the student during the preparation and/or public presentation of the thesis is detected, the supervisor of the thesis, the reviewer, the member(s) of the Preparation Commission or the Public Presentation Commission write an official report to the Dean of the Faculty. The dean forms a three-person commission to make the final decision. A student is also invited to the meeting of the commission established by the Dean. If the commission confirms the fact of the student's dishonesty, the student is not allowed to present the thesis, or the work is not considered during the Public Presentation. At the student's request, the Rector may allow the public presentation of a new final thesis for a set fee and no earlier than one year later.

# Storage of theses

* The printed version of the publicly presented and positively evaluated Thesis is stored at the Department of Preventive Medicine for 5 years.
* In accordance with the intellectual property management regulations of LSMU, non-property rights to the thesis belong to the student, and property rights to the University.