

**LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**  
**MEDICAL ACADEMY**  
**FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
**REGULATION ON PROCEDURES FOR PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF**  
**MASTER THESES MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (ENGLISH LANGUAGE)**  
**MASTER STUDY PROGRAMME**

Approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health on 4 December 2020

Protocol No. VSF8-11

Regulation is effective from 4 December 2020

**I. General Provisions**

1. This regulation is an official document of the Faculty of Public Health of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS), which regulates the procedures and terms of the preparation and defence of the Master thesis of the Master study programme *Management of Public Health (English language)*.
2. The Master's thesis is an integral part of the Master study programme, which is regulated by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, normative documents approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 No. V-826 *On Approval of the Description of the General Requirements for Master's Degree Programmes*, Order No. V-1034 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 *Description of the Field of Public Health Studies*, etc.) and of the Studies Regulation of LUHS.
3. The Master thesis is being prepared during the whole period of the Master studies.
4. The Master thesis must be prepared in accordance with the current and approved methodological recommendations (*Manual for Preparation of the Master Theses of Public Health* (2016), Kalėdienė R., Sauliūnė S., Vanagas G., et.al.). All the stages and terms must be followed by the Master thesis preparation guidelines specified in the manual.
5. Amendments of thesis preparation and defence regulation may be revised only after considering the proposed changes by the study programme committee and approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health.

**II. Key concepts**

6. Concepts and terms used in this Regulation:
  - 6.1. Master thesis - a research paper that covers issues, that are relevant to the management of public health. Also, the Master thesis reflects the postgraduate's ability to solve the tasks that are

set independently by applying the necessary elements of the research work. In addition, the postgraduate must show the knowledge and skills, acquired during the studies and practice.

6.2. Postgraduate - a person studying for a master's degree and preparing the Master thesis. The postgraduate's duties and functions for the preparation of Master thesis are as follows:

6.2.1. To prepare the Master thesis in accordance with the Regulation;

6.2.2. To select or come up with the topic of the thesis at the specified time;

6.2.3. To prepare and follow the individual work plan of the Master thesis;

6.2.4. To prepare the necessary documents and obtain permission from the Bioethics Center in order to carry out the scientific research if such permission is required;

6.2.5. To regularly co-operate with the supervisor of the Master thesis and to inform him or her about the progress of the thesis;

6.2.6. If necessary, the postgraduate can have a consultant for preparing the Master thesis;

6.2.7. Follow the methodological and structural guidelines of the Master thesis;

6.2.8. To consider comments and recommendations from the supervisor and the Preparation Commission;

6.2.9. To submit the paper of the initial and final versions of the Master thesis to the supervisor on time; to upload the Master thesis in the eLABa ETD database according to the submission regulations determined by LUHS.

6.3. Supervisor of Master thesis - a person who supervises the preparation of the Master thesis and has a scientific degree or is a doctoral student of the third or fourth year. The tasks of the supervisor in the preparation of the Master thesis are as follows:

6.3.1. To assist the postgraduate with formulating the topic, aim, objectives and to arrange an individual Master thesis preparation plan;

6.3.2. To recommend the necessary literature for the Master thesis;

6.3.3. To advise the postgraduate on the organization of research methodology;

6.3.4. To monitor regularly the progress of the Master thesis preparation, to help solving the issues that emerge;

6.3.5. At the end of each semester to evaluate the postgraduate's completed work and confirm it by signing the report.

6.4. The Master thesis consultant - a person working in another LUHS department, other scientific or practice institution than the Master thesis supervisor. The consultant has to have a scientific degree or a Master's degree and research work experience. A candidature of consultants for the Master thesis is chosen by the supervisor and is approved by the Master thesis Preparation Commission.

6.5. Reviewer - a person who has a scientific degree. The Reviewer evaluates if the Master thesis is in accordance with the requirements by completing the specific form approved by the Study Programme Committee.

6.6. The Preparation Commission for the Master Thesis (hereinafter referred to as the Preparation Commission) - the group of lecturers, experts of the Faculty of Public Health, who supervise the preparation of the Master thesis.

6.7. The Commission of the Master Thesis Defence (hereinafter referred to as the Defence Commission) - is a group of lecturers, experts approved by the LUHS Rector. This Commission evaluates the postgraduate's Master thesis in public defence.

### **III. Preparation of the Master Thesis**

7. In order to supervise the Master thesis arrangement process, the Preparation Commission is formed. The Preparation Commission must be formed from 5 public health field scientists (1-2 members of may be representatives of other scientific fields). Members of the Preparation Commission are proposed by the Committee of the Master study programme and approved by the Faculty of Public Health Council.

8. The Preparation Commission must monitor the process of the Master theses preparation:

8.1. Discuss and approve the topics of the Master theses and their supervisors;

8.2. If necessary, appoint theses consultants;

8.3. Discuss and approve individual work plans and reports of Master theses in open meetings with postgraduates;

8.4. Appoint reviewers for Master theses;

8.5. Decide if the thesis is completed and suitable for the public defence;

8.6. Solve various issues, related to Master theses preparation.

9. The topic of the Master thesis must correspond to the Master's study programme Management of Public Health. The topic and supervisor of the Master thesis may be offered by the faculty departments and health care institutions. Another option is that postgraduates would choose the topics themselves according to their professional interests. Once the topic is chosen it has to be provided to the Master's studies administrator.

10. In the I semester until October 1 a list of suggested topics and their supervisors is declared.

11. Postgraduates are required to follow the terms of the Master thesis preparation and settlement.

11.1. In the I semester:

11.1.1. Until November 1 – the postgraduate chooses the topic of the Master thesis, coordinates it with the supervisor, informs about his / her choice Master's studies administrator;

11.1.2. Until November 15 – the postgraduate prepares the individual work plan with the supervisor by completing a special form which has to be submitted to the administrator of Master's studies;

11.1.3. Until December 1 - the individual work plan is reviewed in an open meeting of the Preparation Commission. The plan must be presented in 3–5 minutes presentation. The Preparation Commission evaluates, approves the topic and plan of the Master thesis.

11.2. In the II semester:

11.2.1. The postgraduate reviews literature on the topic of the Master thesis, discusses research methodology with the supervisor, prepares instruments (e.g. questionnaire) for the research and submits all the necessary documents to the Bioethics Center in order to get approval, which is needed in order to carry out the research;

11.2.2. Until the April 25 postgraduate presents to the supervisor interim report with completed sections of the thesis (introduction; aim and objectives of the study; literature review; description of the research methodology; expected results; data collection forms).

11.2.3. The postgraduate until June 10 provides a completed report form signed by the supervisor and the completed sections of the thesis (introduction; aim and objectives of the study; literature review; description of the research methodology; expected results; data collection forms) to the administrator of Master's studies;

11.2.4. A meeting of the Preparation Commission is held a week before the end of the semester, during which the submitted reports are reviewed and the completed tasks are being evaluated by a grade. If necessary, postgraduates and supervisors of the thesis may be invited to the meeting.

11.3. In the III semester:

11.3.1. The postgraduate must submit a report of the performed tasks according to the arranged individual work plan to the supervisor;

11.3.2. The postgraduate must submit a completed report form of the Master thesis with the supervisor's conclusions and comments until January 15<sup>h</sup>. The supervisor must review if the completed tasks are in accordance with the individual work plan;

11.3.3. A meeting of the Preparation Commission is held a week before the end of the III semester during which the reports are reviewed and approved. In this meeting postgraduates, who has not managed to follow the tasks of the established work plan, are invited.

11.4. In the IV semester, preparation of the Master thesis is continued, in regular consultations with the supervisor.

#### **IV. Submission of thesis, defence, and evaluation**

12. The procedure and terms of the Master thesis submission.

12.1. Until April 1 (in the IV semester) the postgraduate must submit a completed Master thesis to the supervisor.

12.2. By April 10 the supervisor decides whether the work is complete and ready for the public defence. The supervisor prepares feedback, comments and evaluates the Master thesis by a grade. The supervisor's feedback and one copy of the Master thesis are handed over to the Master's studies administrator.

12.3. The postgraduate, with the supervisor's approval, at least 20 days before the public defence must upload the Master thesis to the temporary information database system according to the procedure for submission of electronic documents on the eLABa ETD database established by LUHS.

12.4. By April 15 the Preparation Commission appoints a reviewer to every Master thesis and handles it to the reviewer.

12.5. By May 1 the reviewer evaluates the thesis, provides feedback on the quality of the Master thesis and its suitability for the defence. A copy of the feedback is handed over to the postgraduate.

12.6. By May 15 the postgraduate according to the reviewer's comments can improve the quality of the Master thesis and has to submit two completed, printed and bound copies of the Master thesis to the Master's studies administrator. Also, the postgraduate must submit a written form where details on how reviewers' comments were taken into account (what changes were made, why, etc.).

12.7. The Preparation Commission takes a final decision if the Master thesis is suitable for the public defence by May 25, taking into account the conclusions and observations of the supervisor and the reviewer. The conclusions of the Preparation Commission are included in the meeting's protocol.

13. Faculty Dean's official permission to defend the Master thesis is validated by the Rector's order. The Master thesis can be defended when all the credits provided in the study plan, passing all examinations and receiving approval from the Preparation Commission.

14. Public defence of the Master thesis.

14.1. The Master thesis is defended in English language at the public hearing of the Defence Commission for Management of Public Health. The Commission's agenda for the defence is recommended by the Faculty Dean and approved by the Rector's order.

14.2. The Defence Commission is formed in order to conduct the public defence. The Defence Commission consists of 5-7 persons and the chairman is approved by the Rector on the Faculty Dean's recommendation. Also, at least one member of the Defence Commission must have not worked in LSMU for the last three years. Defence Commission's meeting is legitimate if more than half of the members of the Commission participate in it.

14.3. The Chairman of the Preparation Commission presents the Master theses that are suitable for the public defence to the Chairman of the Defence Commission. The Chairman of the Defence Commission appoints members of the Commission to every Master thesis, who act as opponents and their role is to provide an assessment of the thesis during the defence.

14.4. At the public defence, the participation of the postgraduate is obligatory, and the work is not considered if the student is absent.

14.5. The Chairman of the Defence Commission or the member of the Commission chairing the meeting introduces the topic of the Master thesis to the participants. Also, the Chairman presents the postgraduate, supervisor, work consultants (if there were any) and invites the postgraduate to present the Master thesis. A postgraduate within 10 minutes must present the Master thesis and answer the questions of the Commission. After that, an opponent appointed by the Defence Commission provides his or her remarks. Then the postgraduate responds to the opponent's remarks. All participants of the meeting and the supervisor can participate in the discussion and speak up.

15. Evaluation of the defended Master thesis.

15.1. The Master thesis is evaluated by grade (using a ten-point scale) in a separate Defence Commission's meeting. The comments of the Defence Commission opponent and reviewer are taken into account before giving the final grade.

15.2. The members of the Defence Commission must disqualify themselves from the evaluation of the Master thesis that they have supervised.

15.3. The cumulative score formula of the Master thesis evaluation is available in the academic subject description of the Master Thesis Defence.

15.4. The topic of the thesis and the final mark are included in the protocol of the Defence Commission's meeting. In addition, the evaluation of the Master thesis must be put in the electronic grades list on LSMUSIS.

16. If the postgraduate does not agree with the evaluation of the thesis final mark, the student can file an appeal. Appeals shall be accepted no later than within one working day after publication of the grades. The Master thesis and its evaluation are reviewed by the Board of Appeal and it is formed by the Rector and acting in accordance with the Study Regulations of LUHS.

17. The postgraduate, who has not completed the Master thesis at the appointed time or has not defended it, is removed from the LUHS students' list.

18. The postgraduate, who has been removed from the students' list, may defend the Master thesis for a fixed fee not earlier than two months and not later than two years after the completion of the Master study programme. Moreover, in order to renew the studies, the postgraduate has to receive the Rector's permission (unless otherwise provided by the law). The defence of thesis can be free of charge if it could not be defended on time due to illness or other justifiable reasons.