

LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
MEDICAL ACADEMY
FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
SECOND CYCLE DEGREE STUDIES
REGULATION ON PROCEDURES FOR PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF
MASTER THESES OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC HEALTH (FOREIGN
LANGUAGE (ENGLISH)) STUDY PROGRAMMES

Approved by the Council of the Faculty of Public Health on January 17th, 2017

Protocol No. VSF8-1

Regulation is effective from September 1st, 2017

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 Final master's thesis of the second cycle study programmes *Public Health* and *Public Health (foreign language (English))*.
2. The Final master's thesis (hereinafter referred to as the Final thesis) is an integral part of the second cycle 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 3rd, 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 5th, 2015 *Description of the Field of Public Health Studies*, etc.) and of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Studies Regulation.
3. The Final thesis is being prepared during the whole period of the second cycle studies.
4. The Final 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., etc.). All the stages and terms have to be followed by the Final 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. Final thesis- a research paper that covers issues, that are relevant to the health and healthcare of the society. Also, the Final 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 has to show the knowledge and skills, gained during the studies and practice.

6.2. Postgraduate - a person studying for a master's degree and preparing the Final thesis. The postgraduate's duties and functions of the Final thesis are as follows: to prepare the Final thesis in accordance with the Regulation; to select or come up with the topic of the thesis at the specified time; to prepare and follow the individual work plan together with the supervisor of the Final thesis; 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; to regularly co-operate with the supervisor of the Final thesis and to inform him or her about the progress of the thesis; if necessary, the postgraduate can have a consultant for preparing the Final thesis; follow the methodological and structural guidelines of the Final thesis; to take into account comments and recommendations from the supervisor and the Preparation Commission; to submit the paper of the initial and final versions of the thesis to the supervisor on time; to upload the Final thesis in the eLABa ETD database according to the submission regulations determined by LUHS.

6.3. Supervisor of Final thesis - a person who supervises the preparation of the Final thesis and also 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 Final thesis are as follows: to assist the postgraduate with formulating the topic, aim, objectives and to arrange an individual Final thesis preparation plan; to recommend the necessary literature for the Final work; to advise the postgraduate on the organization of research methodology; to regularly monitor the progress of the Final thesis preparation, to help solving the issues that emerge; at the end of each semester to evaluate the postgraduate 's completed work and confirm it by signing the report.

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

6.5. Reviewer - a person who has a Ph.D. degree. The Reviewer evaluates if the Final 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 Final Thesis (hereinafter-the Preparation Commission) - the group of lecturers, experts of the Faculty of Public Health, who supervise the preparation of the master's thesis.

6.7. The Commission of the Final 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 Final thesis.

III. Preparation of the Final Thesis

7. In order to supervise the Final thesis arrangement process, the Preparation Commission is formed. The Commissions for both Public health programmes (English and Lithuanian) have to be formed from 5 public health field scientists (1-2 members of this committee may be representatives of other scientific fields). The members of the Preparation Commission are proposed by the Committee of the second cycle study programme and approved by the Faculty of Public Health Council.

8. The Preparation Commission has to monitor the process of the thesis preparation: discuss and approve the topics of the Final theses and their supervisors; if necessary, appoint thesis consultants; discuss and approve individual work plans and reports of Final thesis in open meetings with postgraduates; appoint reviewers for every Final thesis; make a decision if the thesis is completed and suitable for the public defence; solve various met issues.

9. The topic of the Final thesis must correspond to the Master's study programme "Public Health" or the area of one of the specializations of this programme. The topic and supervisor of the Final 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 first semester until October 1st a list of suggested topics and their supervisors is declared.

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

11.1. In the first semester:

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

11.1.2 Until November 15th – 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 1st - the individual work plan is reviewed in an open meeting of the Preparation Commission. The plan has to be presented in 3-5 minutes. The Preparation Commission evaluates, approves the topic and plan of the Final thesis.

11.2. In the second semester:

11.2.1 The postgraduate collects literature on the topic of the Final 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 The postgraduate until June 10th provides a completed report form signed by the supervisor and the completed sections of the thesis (literature review; description of the research methodology; data collection forms) to the administrator of Master's studies;

11.2.3 An open 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 third semester:

11.3.1 The postgraduate has to submit a report of the carried out tasks according to the already arranged individual work plan to the supervisor;

11.3.2 The postgraduate has to submit a completed report form of the Final thesis with the supervisor's conclusions, comments until January 15th. The supervisor has to review if the completed tasks are in accordance with the individual work plan;

11.3.3 Another open meeting of the Preparation Commission is held a week before the end of the 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 fourth semester, preparation of the Final thesis is continued, in regular consultations with the supervisor.

IV. Submission of thesis for defence, defence, and evaluation

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

12.1. Until May 1st (in the 4th semester) the postgraduate has to submit a completed Final thesis to the supervisor.

12.2. By May 10th the supervisor decides whether the work is complete and ready for the public defence. The supervisor prepares feedback, comments and evaluates the thesis by a grade. The supervisor's feedback and one copy of the Final 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 has to upload the final work 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. Till May 12th the Preparation Commission appoints a reviewer to every thesis and handles it to the reviewer.

12.5. By May 20th the reviewer evaluates the thesis, provides feedback on the quality of the Final thesis and its suitability for the defence. A copy of the feedback is handed over to the postgraduate. Then the postgraduate has to submit two completed, printed and bound copies of the Final thesis to the Master's studies administrator.

12.6. The Preparation Commission takes a Final decision if the thesis is suitable for the public defence by May 25th, 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 Final thesis is validated by the Rector's order. The Final thesis is allowed to 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 Final thesis.

14.1. The Final thesis is defended at the public hearing of the both Defence Commissions for Public Health and Public Health (foreign language (English)). 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 direct the public defence. The composition of 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 considered to be legitimate if more than half of the members of the Commission participate in it.

14.3. The Chairman of the Preparation Commission presents the Final 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 Final 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 Final thesis to the participants. Also, the Chairman presents the postgraduate, supervisor, work consultants (if there were any) and invites the postgraduate to present the thesis. A postgraduate within 10 min. has to present the thesis, 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 Final thesis.

15.1. The 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 have to disqualify themselves from the evaluation if they were supervisors to any of the defended theses.

15.3. The cumulative score formula of the Final thesis evaluation is available in the academic subject description of the Research work.

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 Final thesis has to be put in the electronic grades list on LSMUSIS and in the final exam section of the credit book (students that enrolled from 2017 do not have credit books).

16. However, if the postgraduate does not agree with the evaluation of the thesis final mark, the student can file an appeal. Appeals against the Final thesis shall be accepted no later than within one working day after publication of the results. The Final 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 the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences.

17. The postgraduate, who has not completed the Final 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 Final thesis for a fixed fee not earlier than two months and not later than two years after the completion of the second cycle 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.