

**FINAL THESIS REGULATIONS OF THE
SECOND-CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMME
“CLINICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY” OF THE MEDICAL ACADEMY
OF THE LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

1. General Provisions

- 1.1. These Regulations lay down the procedure for the writing, submission, and defence of the Master's final thesis and the evaluation procedure.
- 1.2. Preparation and writing of the Master's final thesis shall be conducted throughout the Master's studies. Research knowledge and practical skills shall be acquired during the courses dedicated to research, while the final thesis shall be written and defended in accordance with the procedures laid down in these Regulations in accordance with the time frames set out in the study plan for the writing and defence of the final theses.
- 1.3. The Master's final thesis (hereinafter referred to as the *Thesis*) is an integrated part of the Master's degree programme in Clinical Health Psychology. The aim of the final thesis is to develop students' skills and experience in planning and conducting research, to encourage initiative in the choice of the research topic and task execution, to develop the ability to apply the knowledge pertaining to the specialty to the analysis and solution of the chosen problem or phenomenon.
- 1.4. The Thesis shall be analytical, based on independent scientific or applied research and the application of knowledge, and demonstrate competences in line with the aims of the programme. The Thesis shall demonstrate the ability of the Master's student to analyse the chosen topic in a comprehensive and focused manner, to evaluate the previous work of others on the chosen topic, to explore and carry out independent research on the chosen topic or field of psychology, to describe the own research work by choosing the appropriate methods and instruments, to present the findings of the research and their interpretation, and to formulate clear and valid conclusions from the research.
- 1.5. The final thesis may be on a newly chosen topic or a topic covered in the student's previous defended works. If the Thesis is a continuation of previous work (i.e. it continues to explore a problem analysed in a previous papers by further developing it, looking deeper inside the topic, or introducing new aspects that have not been explored), the parts of the student's previous work already written and evaluated shall not make up more than 20% of the total thesis volume.
- 1.6. A Thesis Committee shall be established to coordinate the process of theses writing, and a Thesis Defence Committee shall be established to conduct the theses defence process.
- 1.7. The Regulations have been drawn up in accordance with the following legal acts:
- 1.7.1. The Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania. The Law on Science and Studies, 30/04/2009, No. XI-242;
- 1.7.2. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania “General Requirements for Execution of Studies”, 07/12/2016, No. V-1168;
- 1.7.3. Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania “On Approval of the Descriptor of the Study Field of Psychology”, 27/08/2015, No. V-923;
- 1.7.4. Resolution of the LSMU Senate. Regulations of Studies of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, 22/04/2021, No. 148-03;
- 1.7.5. Resolution of the LSMU Senate. Regulations of the procedure for writing, submitting for uploading, and uploading of the electronic documents of abstracts of master theses, doctoral dissertations or monographs to the repositories of the electronic document information system of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and for the use thereof, 21/01/2011, No. 5-02;
- 1.7.6. Lithuanian Psychological Association. EuroPsy: European Certificate in Psychology. EFPA EuroPsy Regulations and the appendices. 07/2011;
- 1.7.7. Intellectual Property Management Regulations of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, 20/06/2014, No. 5-4.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

2.1. A Master's student shall be deemed to be a person studying at the University under a second-cycle study programme and writing the Master's Final Thesis. A Master's student's duties in the writing and defence of the Master's Final Thesis shall be as follows:

2.1.1. To choose a topic on time, to initiate meetings with the supervisor;

2.1.2. To draw up an individual plan, including the stages of the literature review, determination of the aim and objectives of the work, and of the choice of methods, the timetable for submission of the research plan, findings, and conclusions;

2.1.3. To obtain approval from the Bioethics Centre to conduct the study and to comply with the principles of research ethics;

2.1.4. To conduct research, analyse, describe, summarise, discuss the research findings, and formulate the conclusions in accordance with the individual plan;

2.1.5. To inform the supervisor periodically about the thesis writing process and, as requested by the supervisor, submit, for review, the materials collected or individual parts of the work in process;

2.1.6. To write the thesis in accordance with the Requirements for Master's Theses in Clinical Health Psychology approved by the Faculty Council;

2.1.7. To cooperate with the supervisor in the writing of the Thesis;

2.1.8. To comply with the deadlines for the completion of the Thesis as set out in the individual plan and these Regulations.

2.2. The supervisor of the Master's final thesis (hereinafter referred to as the *Supervisor*) shall be a person who holds or pursues a doctoral degree. The functions of the Supervisor in the writing of the Master's Thesis shall be as follows:

2.2.1. To help the Master's student to formulate the Thesis topic;

2.2.2. To advise on issues related to the Thesis (its structure, parts, literature exploration and relevance, aim and objectives of the research, sampling, selection of the evaluation and analysis methods);

2.2.3. To provide feedback on the Thesis and make suggestions for improving the Thesis;

2.2.4. To ensure that the research is conducted appropriately with diverse groups of research participants, including vulnerable groups;

2.2.5. To notify the Thesis Committee on the cases of failure by the Master's student to comply with the individual plan, if any.

2.2.6. The Supervisor is entitled to check the primary research material brought by the Master's student (research minutes, completed questionnaires, transcripts of interviews, and other materials related to the research), the data file submitted in an electronic data storage device, and the complete Master's Thesis.

2.2.7. To participate in the Thesis defence meeting.

2.2.8. The Supervisor shall have the right to refuse to supervise a student's Thesis on the grounds of the student's failure to comply with the responsibilities associated with the Thesis writing, as well as on the grounds of failure to comply with essential requirements of personal, professional or research ethics.

2.3. The Master's Thesis Committee (hereinafter referred to as the *Thesis Committee*) shall be a committee of at least five (5) persons approved by the Head of the Department of Health Psychology and the Dean of the Faculty. Functions of the Thesis Committee:

2.3.1. To apply to the representatives of the units of the University regarding the supervision of Master's Theses;

2.3.2. To discuss and approve the Thesis topics and individual plans chosen by the Master's students;

2.3.3. To organise the monitoring and discussions of Theses to ensure the success of the Thesis writing process;

2.3.4. To approve changes to the topics and supervisors of the Master's Theses, if necessary;

2.3.5. Upon assessment of the completeness of the Theses and their suitability for public defence, to submit to the Dean the list of students recommended as eligible to defend their theses;

2.3.6. To appoint the reviewers for the Theses;

2.4. The Master's Thesis Defence Committee (hereinafter referred to as the *Thesis Defence*

Committee) shall be a committee composed of at least 5 persons. The Chairperson of the Thesis Defence Committee shall be from another higher education institution. One member of the Defence Committee may be a representative of the social partners. The Defence Committee shall be approved by the Rector of the University on the recommendation of the Dean of Faculty. Functions of the Thesis Defence Committee:

2.4.1. To participate in the Thesis defence meeting. The meeting shall be considered effective if the quorum of at least four members of the Thesis Defence Committee is present;

2.4.2. To evaluate the Theses and their presentation and defence in accordance with the Thesis defence evaluation criteria.

2.5. The reviewer shall be a person with at least a master's degree, a researcher or a practitioner whose work is closely related to the subject of the Thesis submitted for review. Functions of the reviewer:

2.5.1. To assess the thesis against the requirements for a thesis

2.5.2. Three (3) working days before the date of the Thesis defence, to submit the review of the Thesis submitted for defence, in accordance with the approved review form.

3. Choosing the Supervisor and Topic

3.1. The Thesis Committee shall contact the heads of the respective LSMU units, inviting the staff eligible and able to supervise the Master's Theses in Psychology, and requesting to submit the list of supervisors and their research interests by **1 November** of the 1st (I) semester.

3.2. The Thesis Committee shall provide the Master's students with a list of recommended supervisors for their Theses, including the respective areas of research interests, by **10 November** of the 1st (I) semester.

3.3. The coordinator of the course dedicated to the Master's Thesis shall introduce the Master's students to the requirements, procedure of writing, and Regulations of the Master's Final Thesis by **1 October** of the 1st (I) semester.

3.4. The Master's student, in consultation with the Supervisor from the Department of Health Psychology or another unit involved in the execution of the study programme, shall formulate the proposed title of the topic of the Thesis.

3.5. The Master's students shall submit the information on the chosen topics of the Thesis and the Supervisors to the Thesis Committee by **10 December** of the 1st (I) semester. The Thesis Committee shall approve the topics and Supervisors by **20 December**.

3.6. The Thesis topic may be changed or amended as may be necessary in view of the recommendations of the Supervisor and/or the Thesis Committee, or other objective reasons. Non-essential amendments of the topic may be introduced by the date of submission of the Thesis upon agreement with the Supervisor. Essential amendments of the topic shall be subject to consideration and approval by the Thesis Committee following the agreement with the Supervisor on the topic amendment. The topic amendment is approved by the Thesis Committee within 5 working days. The topic may be amended no later than by **30 November** of the 3rd (III) semester.

3.7. A Master's student has the right to change the Supervisor by submitting a written request to the Thesis Committee and stating the reasons for this decision (e.g., due to changing the topic or communication difficulties). The Supervisor also has the right to refuse to supervise the Thesis if student does not comply with the responsibilities related to the preparation of the thesis, academic ethics or other important circumstances incompatible with supervision of the Thesis.

4. Writing Final Thesis

4.1. Preparation and writing of the Thesis shall be conducted throughout the Master's studies.

4.2. The coordinator of the course dedicated to the Master's Thesis shall introduce the Master's students to the procedure and drawing up of the individual plan, functions and duties of the Supervisor of the Thesis by **15 February** of the 2nd (II) semester, and shall consult the Master's students on any issues related to their individual plans during the writing of the Theses.

4.3. The students shall submit their individual plans of their respective Theses carrying the Supervisor's signature to the Thesis Committee by **25 February** of the 2nd (II) semester.

- 4.4. The Thesis Committee shall consider and approve the individual plans of the Theses by **15 March** of the 2nd (II) semester.
- 4.5. The Master's student, in consultation with the Supervisor, shall write the thesis independently in accordance with the methodological guidelines for the writing of the second-cycle thesis in Health Psychology.
- 4.6. In the case a Thesis implies research on human subjects, the approval of the LSMU Bioethics Centre shall be obtained prior to the commencement of the research. By **31 April** of the 2nd (II) semester, the coordinator of the course dedicated to the Master's Thesis shall arrange sessions for the Master's students with a representative of the Bioethics Centre on the topic of completion of the documents for bioethical authorisation.
- 4.7. The Master's students shall submit an Interim Report carrying the respective Supervisor's signature to the Thesis Committee by **1 November** of the 3rd (III) semester. The Thesis Committee shall consider the Interim Reports by **15 November**. The Thesis Committee shall email the information on the results of approval of the Interim Reports to the respective student and Supervisor.
- 4.8. The Thesis Committee shall reserve the right to hold dedicated meetings in cases where there are essential questions regarding the research, topic, or changes to Supervisor of the Thesis.
- 4.9. The coordinator of the course dedicated to the Master's Thesis shall introduce the Master's students to the procedure of completion and submission of the Final Thesis by **30 April** of the 4th (IV) semester. The information shall also be uploaded to the Moodle system.
- 4.10. The students shall submit draft versions of their Theses to the Supervisor and the Thesis Committee by **15 April** of the 4th (IV) semester, based on which the Thesis Committee shall decide by **25 April** on the permissions to defend. In deciding on the defence, the Thesis Committee shall be guided by the criteria of research performance and the completeness of the overall Thesis, as well as the form completed by the Supervisor on the eligibility of the Thesis for public defence.

5. Preparation for the Thesis Defence

- 5.1. By 5 p.m. Lithuanian time on **20 May** (if it is a non-working day, by the next working day), the students shall submit the Theses as electronic files with author's contribution statements to the Secretary of the Thesis Committee and the Supervisor of the Thesis. Later submissions of Theses will not be registered, and Theses will not be endorsed for public defence. The Supervisor of the Final Thesis shall check the Final Thesis for plagiarism in a plagiarism detection system and submit the certificate of check to the secretary of the Thesis Committee.
- 5.2. The meeting of the Thesis Committee, at which reviewers are appointed for the Final Thesis submitted for public defence, shall be held by **27 May**. The secretary of the Thesis Committee shall email the Paper Writing Manual for the students of Psychology, the review form, the Thesis to be reviewed, and the related annexes to the reviewers. The grade given by the reviewers shall not be disclosed to the students until the public meeting of the Defence Committee. The reviewer shall evaluate the Thesis submitted for public defence by submitting written feedback and giving a grade. If the reviewer has evaluated the Thesis negatively and recommends that the Thesis should not be endorsed for public defence, he/she shall inform the Thesis Committee. In this case, an extraordinary meeting of the Thesis Committee shall be convened to make a decision on the further course of the Thesis writing and defence. The grade of the Thesis be disclosed to the members of the Defence Committee only after the public defence meeting, when the final grade for the Thesis is calculated in accordance with the approved procedure.
- 5.3. The students are informed of the oral feedback provided by the reviewers **3 working days before the defence**.
- 5.4. The coordinator of the course dedicated to the Master's Thesis shall introduce the Master's students on the procedure for the defence of the Thesis and the guidelines for the preparation of the presentation **1 week before the defence**.

6. Final Thesis Defence

- 6.1. Final theses may be defended by the students who have completed the entire study programme and who have obtained the Rector's permission to defend their final Theses at a public meeting of the Defence Committee. The dates of the defence are approved by order of the Rector.

- 6.2. During the defence, the Master's student briefly (up to 15 minutes) presents the Thesis, stating the research problem, aim, objectives, describes the research methods used, presents and discusses the results obtained, and presents the conclusions. This is followed by a public presentation of the reviewers' feedback, after which the student answers questions from the reviewers, the members of the Defence Committee, and other participants in the meeting. The recommended total duration of the defence of one Master's Thesis is up to 25 minutes.
- 6.3. The members of the Defence Committee shall evaluate each work during the meeting according to pre-approved and publicly available criteria. In the event that the Supervisor is a member of the Defence Committee, he/she shall withdraw from the evaluation of the respective Thesis.
- 6.4. The final grade of the Thesis is calculated in a closed meeting of the Defence Committee, by adding together the grades given by the members of the Defence Committee and the reviewers. The final grade of the Thesis shall be calculated according to the cumulative grade formula set out in the description of the Final Thesis course. The grades are published on the same day after the meeting of the Defence Committee.
- 6.5. The proceedings and conclusions of the final theses defence are recorded by the study administrator of the Department of Health Psychology. The minutes shall include the student's name and surname, the topic and Supervisor of the final Thesis, the date of the defence, and the final grade. The minutes of the final thesis defence meeting shall be signed by all members of the Defence Committee present at the meeting.
- 6.6. The electronic register shall be filled in by the study administrator of the Department of Health Psychology no later than 2 working days after the defence.
- 6.7. The minutes of the final thesis defence meeting shall be submitted to the Dean's Office of the Faculty no later than 2 working days after the last thesis defence.
- 6.8. A qualification degree of Master of Social Sciences shall be awarded to the Master's student who has successfully defended his/her final thesis by order of the Rector.
- 6.9. If the Master's student disagrees with the result of the final thesis or the defence procedure, he/she can appeal **within 2 working days after the publication of the results**. On the recommendation of the Dean, an Appeal Committee set up by order of the Rector shall review the final thesis within 3 working days of receipt of the appeal and shall issue a conclusion stating the decision taken in relation to the evaluation of the final thesis. If the Appeal Committee finds the student's appeal to be unfounded, the assessment of the Defence Committee shall remain valid. If the Master's student's appeal is justified, he/she shall be entitled to defend his/her Thesis at the second meeting of the Defence Committee in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Study Regulations.
- 6.10. A student who fails to arrive for defence or to defend his/her Thesis shall be removed from the list of students. A student who has been removed from the list of students may, with the permission of the Rector, be granted the right to defend the thesis no earlier than one year later, upon payment of the prescribed fee for the defence. The defence of the thesis shall not be charged if it is not defended on time because of illness or other important reasons.
- 6.11. If a student is found to have acted dishonestly in the preparation and/or defence of his/her Thesis (dishonesty shall be defined as any attempt by a student to use sources of knowledge in unauthorised ways), the Supervisor of the Thesis, the reviewer, or a member(s) of the Thesis Committee or the Defence Committee shall write an official report to the Dean. The Dean shall set up a three-person committee to adopt the final decision. The student shall also be invited to the meeting of the committee. If the committee confirms the fact of the student's dishonesty, the student shall not be allowed to defend the Thesis or the Thesis shall not be accepted during the defence. At the request of the student, the Rector may authorise the student to defend a new Thesis for a fixed fee not earlier than one year later.

7. Storage of the Final Theses

- 7.1. The student shall upload the electronic version of the Thesis document to the repository of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Information System "ELABa".

7.2. Pursuant to the LSMU Intellectual Property Management Regulations, the non-property rights to the Thesis shall belong to the student, while the property rights – to the University.

7.3. The Master's student shall keep the research data of the Thesis for the period of 3 years upon the defence.