

On the basis of Article 74 of the Statute of the University of Ljubljana, Article 33 of the Study Rules of the University of Ljubljana and Article 71 of the Rules on the Organization and Functioning of the Faculty of Social Sciences (hereinafter as FSS) at the University of Ljubljana (herein after as UL), the Senate of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at its meetings on 9 October 2017 and 12 November 2018, adopted the following

## **RULES ON FINAL THESIS IN FIRST AND SECOND CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMS**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### Article 1

Rules on final thesis regulate the application, organization, preparation and evaluation of final theses in first and second cycle study programs.

#### Article 2

The term student, author, applicant, candidate, graduate student, associate, lecturer, teacher, examiner, assessor, head, president, member, mentor, co-mentor, administrator, vice dean and dean are written in male form and are understood as neutral naming, used for both sexes. The notion of a vice dean is applied to a person who, according to the organizational rules of the Faculty of Social Sciences, is responsible for first and second cycle study programs.

#### Article 3

The study program may indicate that the final thesis and its defence is one of the study obligations.

#### Article 4

The procedure for selecting, applying, producing, submitting, defending and evaluating the final thesis is determined by the provisions of these Rules and the study program.

#### Article 5

Final thesis can be a written assignment or a different product, defined by the study program.

#### Article 6

In the final thesis, the student must demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a theoretical or practical social science question or field, use appropriate methods of social science research, use domestic and foreign sources, and demonstrate the ability of professional verbalization.

#### Article 7

The final thesis must be the result of the student's own work. The final thesis can also be the result of the work of several students, in which case the contribution of each student must be clearly shown, and each student's share must correspond to the quantity and quality requirements of the final work.

The final thesis must be prepared independently and with the sources that are listed, linguistically appropriate and regulated in accordance with these Rules and the Instructions for writing and designing final professional-scientific works at FSS, with a special emphasis on respecting the principle of academic honesty. The final thesis must be accompanied by a signed statement of the author on a special form (a form prescribed by the UL).

#### Article 8 (scope of final thesis)

The scope of final thesis is determined by the study program. As a rule, a Master's thesis should not be shorter than 45 pages and no longer than 80 pages (15,000-20,000 words) without index, list of sources and literature used and possible attachments.

#### Article 9

Unless otherwise specified in the individual study program, the final thesis can be accepted and evaluated after the student has completed other study obligations prescribed by the study program.

## II. SELECTION AND PROPOSAL OF FINAL THESIS

#### Article 10

Unless otherwise stipulated in the study program, the topics of the final theses are defined by the relevant department, at the proposal of main lecturers of particular courses. The call for topics for the next academic year is defined by each department separately, not later than 15 June for the next academic year. The list of topics approved by the chair is delivered to the professional services. Each student has the right and the obligation to have a mentor and may also have co-mentors. Mentors and co-mentors are members of the committee for thesis defence, unless otherwise specified in the study program.

The student usually chooses among available topics, but may, after consultation with the mentor, also propose his or her own topic. The proposed topic of the final thesis must be approved by the head of the department for first cycle programs or by the program administrator for second cycle programs. The student must propose the final thesis in the last year, by March 15 at the latest, on the *Final thesis proposal* form.

A student who does not propose the final thesis in the last year by 15 March, cannot propose or defend it in the current academic year. In this case the student may propose the topic of the final thesis after 1 October of the next academic year.

The proposed final thesis is valid for three years from the date of confirmation. After this deadline, the student must propose it once again.

#### Article 11

Unless otherwise stipulated in the study program, the student's thesis proposal must determine the following:

- objectives and meaning,
- hypotheses, theses, research question,
- methodology or method of study and
- the structure of thesis.

Thesis proposal at the end of first cycle study is signed by mentor and possible co-mentor and reviewed and confirmed by the head of the department.

In thesis proposal at the end of second cycle study, the student defines:

- a. relevance, goals and importance of thesis with references (200-400 words),
- b. research questions and/or hypotheses (50-150 words),
- c. planned research plan and methodology used (50-150 words),
- d. the foreseen structure of final thesis in the form of table of contents (50-150 words) and
- e. basic literature and basic sources (15 units).

If the mentor and potential co-mentor agree with thesis proposal, it is reviewed and confirmed by the second cycle program administrator.

#### Article 12

If a student wishes to replace his or her mentor, he or she must submit a new proposal in accordance with the previous articles of these Rules.

#### Article 13

As a rule, the student selects the final thesis topic in the enrolled study program. If the student wishes to select the final thesis topic in another study program of the Faculty of Social Sciences, he or she may select a mentor from another study program do so with the consent of the head of the department for first cycle programs or the program administrator for second cycle programs. With the consent of the head of the department or the program administrator, the student may also select mentors at higher education institutions outside the Faculty of Social Sciences.

In the final thesis the elementary disciplines taught at the Faculty of Social Sciences must prevail.

#### Article 14

If the student wants to complete studies in two or more study programs, he or she must complete the final thesis for each program separately. In order to create one single final thesis, the student must propose thesis that will simultaneously meet the requirements of both programs, both in terms of volume and content. Such proposals are handled by the heads of the appropriate chairs for first cycle programs or program administrators for second cycle programs.

### **III. MENTORSHIP**

#### Article 15

Mentors of final theses should be higher education teachers or researchers in the field of the topic of the final thesis, while co-mentors may be higher education teachers, researchers, or experts in the field with at least the same level of education as a graduate of this study program. Only higher education teachers can participate in the evaluation of the final thesis.

#### Article 16

The proposed mentor may not refuse counselling unless he or she has a legitimate reason for refusal. In one academic year, one mentor may accept up to 8 students of the first and up to 8 students of second cycle programs. The vice dean decides on students' appeals against the refusal of mentorship and co-mentorship and possible exceptions.

Each mentor is obliged to check the number of mentorships. If the mentor agrees to mentor an additional student despite already reaching the maximum number (16) of students, the professional services refuse such a student. It is not possible to appeal against such refusals.

#### Article 17

Mentor and possible co-mentor are obliged to provide the student with appropriate professional assistance.

#### Article 18

In case of disagreement between the mentor and the student during thesis preparation which makes further cooperation impossible, both the mentor and the student have the right to terminate the cooperation. A student can exercise the right under this article only once and submit a new thesis proposal in accordance with Article 11. The professional services inform the

mentor about the student's resignation from the selected final thesis. The mentor must substantiate his resignation in writing and submit it to the professional services. The decision on the resignation of the mentor is taken by the vice dean, and the professional services inform the student in writing.

#### Article 19

When the student submits the thesis to the mentor, the mentor and possible co-mentor should review and return it to the student with instructions for completion and corrections, usually within 15 days but no later than one month after the submission.

The mentor and possible co-mentor are obliged to check the final thesis for a maximum of three times. If the thesis does not meet the requirements, the mentor or possible co-mentor may reject further cooperation.

### IV. FORM OF FINAL THESIS

#### Article 20

The UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA and the FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES must be written on the cover of the final work in the middle above in capital letters. In the middle of the page, the name and surname of the student should be given, followed by the title of the final thesis, and under the title it should be written: final thesis (first cycle programs) or Master's thesis (second cycle programs). Below, in the middle of the page, the place and year should be indicated (e.g.: Ljubljana, 2017). The first internal page of the work should be equal to the cover page, and under the name of the student the name of the mentor and the possible co-mentor should be written, together with their full professional titles. The inside cover must be printed in black letters on white paper and cannot contain pictures, logos, photographs, etc.

#### Article 21

From the introductory chapter on, the final thesis must be printed in a two-sided manner on A4 format sheets and bound in soft binding. Spiral binding is not allowed.

#### Article 22

After the front cover and the first inner page the following segments of the thesis should follow, in the order shown below:

- thank you note, optional,
- statement of authorship (fill out the form and print it upon the electronic submission of the thesis in the online system),
- on one page, with a single line spacing, the title, summary (150-250 words) and keywords (3-5), in Slovenian and English,
- table of contents,
- introduction,
- main text,
- conclusion,
- list of literature and other sources
- possible attachments.

Header or footer should not be used in the final thesis.

#### Article 23

If the study program does not specify otherwise, the final work must include:

- the description of the selected topic;
- clearly defined objective of work and work hypothesis, thesis or research questions;

- conceptual-theoretical starting points;
- evaluation of the starting points or hypotheses;
- conclusions of theoretical and/or empirical nature;
- list of literature used.

The literature used must be correctly bibliographically indicated, in accordance with the Instructions for writing and designing final professional-scientific works at FSS.

#### Article 24

The final thesis is written in the Slovene language. Exceptionally, the candidate may write the final thesis in the English language if there is a valid reason for this (for example, a foreign mentor or co-mentor, a foreign student). The student must submit a request for the final thesis in English language via the online system. The vice dean decides on such requests. If the final work is not written in the Slovene language, in addition to all the elements of the structure referred to in Article 22, it must include a longer summary in the Slovene language in the range of 500 - 1000 words and should, as a rule, describe all essential parts of the final thesis: the research problem, the question or the hypothesis, task objectives, methodology and structure, and key findings. This summary must be bound together with the text of the final thesis (before the list of literature and sources).

In final thesis written in English, the title on the cover and the inner page of the thesis should be written in English and Slovenian.

## V. THESIS SUBMISSION

#### Article 25

Prior to submission, the student submits an unbound version of the text to the professional services for technical inspection. The professional services shall determine whether the work is prepared and arranged in accordance with these Rules and the Instructions for writing and designing the final scientific-scientific works at the FSS. Technical inspection is carried out in person.

In the online system, the mentor confirms that the work is appropriate and in accordance with the study program. The professional services, in accordance with the requirements prescribed by the individual study program, confirm that the thesis has been technically examined and is in accordance with the instructions that apply at the faculty, and that the student has fulfilled all the prescribed obligations, which are a prerequisite for thesis defence.

The rules on the verification of the similarity of the content of the electronic form of the final thesis and the conditions for the temporary unavailability of the content of the final thesis determine the procedures for verifying the similarity of the content of the electronic form of the final thesis and the conditions for the temporary unavailability of the content of the final thesis

The student submits the thesis in electronic form in PDF-A format via the online system. Final thesis is then checked for similarity of content via software for checking the similarity of content that is enabled by the online system. The student agrees on this upon submission.

The mentor must check, at the latest within ten working days, the percentage of identical or similar content, in case the mentor fails to do so, the vice dean is informed. If the mentor requests corrections regarding the quoting of similar contents, the student must re-submit the corrected final thesis within 10 working days via the online system. The mentor may also decide to initiate a disciplinary procedure.

Upon confirmation of the adequacy of the similarity of content, the mentor also confirms or changes the title of final thesis and proposes appropriate assessors - members of the committee for defence evaluation.

When the mentor confirms the adequacy of the similarity of the content, the student must submit printed copies of his or her thesis for all members of the evaluating committee (one for each) to the professional services staff within 3 working days, until the 15th day of the current month, so that the defence will be scheduled by the end of the following month, or by 1 September for September defence dates. After the defence, the chairman of the committee is obliged to return one intact copy, which should not be written on or otherwise damaged, to the professional services staff, which shall forward the copy to the faculty library.

## **VI. DEFENCE AND ASSESSMENT OF FINAL THESIS**

### **Article 26**

If the study program prescribes public defence and assessment of the final thesis, the vice dean, on the proposal of the mentor, officially confirms the final thesis as appropriate no later than 5 working days after the confirmation of the mentor. The vice dean also appoints a committee for defence evaluation. In agreement with the mentor and members of the committee, professional services issue the date of the defence. Members of the committee must declare their disagreement about the suitability of the thesis to be defended before the date of the defence is confirmed. If they fail to do so and confirm the proposed date of the defence, the thesis shall be deemed appropriate for the defence. The entire process can last up to 45 days. In addition to the mentor and possible co-mentor, the committee shall have at least one other member. The mentor and co-mentor are the members of the committee by default. At second cycle programs, at least one member of the committee must be employed on a chair, program, department or faculty different from the one where the student is enrolled and should have adequate habilitation.

The final thesis must be available to all members of the committee for defence evaluation in electronic form via the online system. Additionally, a printed copy of the final thesis is available in the academic reading room. Not later than the date of the defence or at the defence, the mentor must submit a formal and substantive evaluation of the thesis on a special form. The members of the committee confirm the assessment with their signatures.

### **Article 27**

If one of the members of the committee finds that he or she cannot perform the function of an assessor, he or she may apply for a replacement, and his application must be substantiated in writing. The vice dean decides on such request, and on the appeal to his decision the commission for study affairs.

A member of the committee may propose that, for substantive or linguistic reasons, the committee rejects the thesis or asks for corrections or amendments to the thesis. In the case of necessary corrections and/or amendments to the thesis, the committee shall notify the student in writing of their observations, which the student must take into consideration. Not later than one month after receiving the comments, the student must submit the improved thesis. If the student fails to do so, he or she is deemed to have withdrawn from the thesis topic and must report a new one. If the committee proposes to reject the thesis by a majority of votes, the decision on this proposal shall be taken by the vice dean. Any possible appeal to this decision shall be decided by the commission for student affairs. The student cannot defend the rejected thesis and must propose a new one by using the prescribed form.

#### Article 28

Before the defence, the committee must review the documentation on final thesis submission and on the student.

#### Article 29

The defence begins with the conclusion that the student has completed all obligations prescribed in the study program. The conclusion is given by the chairman of the committee, while the members of the committee, the student and the audience stand. The mentor then presents the report on final thesis. The student has the right to present his work within 10 minutes. The student can use various audio-visual gadgets. During the presentation, the student can respond to the comments of the members of the committee. Then the members of the committee have the opportunity to ask questions, and afterwards, with the approval of the president, the audience can also ask questions. Questions should be asked in such a way that the student can answer them within 20 minutes on first cycle programs or 30 minutes on second cycle programs. Before answering the questions, the student has the right to prepare for 10 minutes.

#### Article 30

After the defence has been delivered, the committee meets separately to discuss the performance of the defence and the evaluation of the final work, whereby the evaluation and grade is proposed in the following order: mentor, member of the commission/co-mentor and chairman of the commission, but only those who are higher education teachers. An agreement must be reached on the assessment. If there is no consensus assessment, a special record shall be drawn up, in which the separate opinion of a member of the commission who did not agree with the assessment is recorded. A member of the committee who does not agree with the assessment has the right to request the revocation of the assessment. The dean decides on the annulment of the assessment.

In the case of excellent final thesis, the committee also assesses whether the thesis can be included in the list of nominated works for Prešeren student awards in accordance with the applicable rules.

#### Article 31

In the final grade of the final thesis and defence, the committee shall consider the following criteria:

- clarity of the definition of a research problem and methodological approach,
- scientific excellence or useful value,
- breadth and depth of the theoretical design of the task and the methodological correctness of the implementation,
- knowledge of domestic and foreign literature and consistency in its presentation,
- pragmatic thoroughness,
- autonomy, penetration, originality, creativity and impact of the task (possible publication
- in scientific or professional literature) and
- ability to create text in accordance with linguistic culture and standards.

#### Article 32

The committee evaluates the thesis and its defence jointly, by one of the following assessments: exceptional knowledge without or with negligible errors (10), very good knowledge with minor errors (9), good knowledge of individual disadvantages (8), good knowledge of more deficiencies (7), knowledge only meets the minimum criteria (6), knowledge does not meet the minimum criteria (5).

#### Article 33

The decision on the assessment of the final thesis shall be recorded in the record of the defence, signed by all the members of the commission. This decision and possible nomination for student award is read by the president of the commission to the student and all others present at the defence. Everybody stands. The questions that have been asked during the defence are also recorded.

#### Article 34

If the commission assesses the defence as unsatisfactory, it determines a new deadline for defence, at the latest within 3 months of the defence. This deadline is not counted in the deadline for interrupting study.

### **VII. ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL THESIS**

#### Article 35

If the study program envisages the evaluation of the final thesis without a defence, the vice dean, on the proposal of the mentor and no later than 5 working days after the confirmation of adequacy of thesis by the mentor, also appoints a committee for thesis evaluation. The mentor is the first assessor. If the student also has a co-mentor, the mentor and co-mentor assess the thesis together.

The evaluators must submit separate reports in which they provide an assessment of the final work with a professional justification (in 50-150 words) to the professional services within 10 working days of the appointment. Failure to comply with this provision is considered a serious breach of working discipline. The final grade is the average of both grades, rounded up.

If the evaluations of the evaluators differ by more than two grades, the vice dean appoints the third evaluator within three working days after the evaluators submit their reports. The final grade is the average of the grades of the three evaluators, rounded up.

#### Article 36

If one of the evaluators finds that he or she cannot perform the duty of an evaluator, he or she may apply for a replacement. His or her application must be substantiated in writing. The vice dean decides on the request.

The evaluator may propose that, for substantive or linguistic reasons, the final thesis should be improved or completed, or may assess that the knowledge does not meet the minimum criteria (5).

If the evaluator requests corrections or amendments, he or she shall submit his or her comments in writing to the professional services. A written decision is issued to the student with an indication of the remarks that the student must take into account when correcting or completing the thesis. The student must submit an improved or completed work no later than one month after receiving the decision. The original evaluators reassess the thesis.

If one evaluator assesses the thesis with a negative grade, the vice dean appoints the third evaluator within three working days after the evaluators submit their reports. The final grade is the average of the grades of the three evaluators, rounded up. In the event that at least two out of three evaluators assess the thesis with a negative grade, the vice dean adopts a decision on the refusal of the final thesis. Any possible appeal to this decision shall be decided by the commission for study affairs.

The student cannot submit the rejected thesis for reassessment and must propose a new one by using the prescribed form.

#### Article 37

The criteria for the design of the assessment shall be in accordance to the provisions of Articles 31 and 32 of these Rules.

#### Article 38

The decision on the joint assessment of the final thesis shall be recorded in the record. Student receives a certificate of completion of study. The certificate is issued in Slovene, but may be additionally issued in English and is valid until the issue of the official graduation certificate.

### **VIII. APPEAL AGAINST THE ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL THESIS**

#### Article 39

The student has the right to appeal against the evaluation of the final thesis. A written complaint must be submitted within 24 hours after defending or receiving an evaluation of the final thesis. The dean decides on the appeal.

### **IX. ARCHIVING**

#### Article 40

Final thesis is a public document.

After successful defence, the professional services send a printed copy of the final work to the Jože Goričar Central Social Sciences Library. The library staff archives the printed copy of the work and the electronic form is made available to the public on the internet with a signed consent of the student.

### **X. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

#### Article 41

Until the expiration of valid one-year second cycle programs, the deadline for thesis submission in these programs is 15 May. All other provisions stipulated in Article 10, which are also bound to this deadline.

#### Article 42

These Rules shall enter into force on the day they are adopted by the Senate of the Faculty of Social Sciences. On the day these rules enter into force, the Rules on graduation thesis, adopted by the Senate of the Faculty of Social Sciences at its sessions of 9 June 2008, 6 April 2009, 4 April 2011, 2 April 2012, 4. Nov 2013, 7 April 2014, 11 May 2015 and 9 Jan 2017 will be terminated, as well as the provisions related to the Master's thesis, which were written in the Rules on study on second cycle programs adopted by the Senate of the Faculty of Social Sciences at its sessions of 7 Sept 2009, 9 Nov 2009, 12 April 2010, 4 April 2011, 2 April 2012, 4 June 2012, 3 Sept 2012, 6 Jan 2014, 3 March 2014, 7 April 2014, 5 April 2014, 1 Sept 2014, 2 Feb 2015, 11 May 2015, 7 Sept 2015 and 9 Jan 2017.