

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 Organisation 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 adopted the following at its meeting n 3 March 2025

## **RULES ON FINAL THESIS IN SECOND CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMMES**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### Article 1

The rules on final thesis regulate the application, organisation, preparation, and evaluation of final theses in first and second cycle study programmes.

#### Article 2

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

#### Article 3

The study programme may indicate that a final thesis, as well as 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 by the study programme.

#### Article 5

A final thesis can be a written assignment, or a different product as defined by the study programme.

#### Article 6

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

#### 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 using the listed sources, must be linguistically appropriate, and must be 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.

When submitting their final thesis, a student submits an electronic version of the author's declaration on a special form (the form prescribed by the UL), which is stored in the student informatics information system.

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

The scope of final thesis is determined by the study programme. As a rule, a master's thesis should be no

shorter than 45 pages and no longer than 80 pages (15,000–20,000 words), not including an index, a list of sources and literature used, and other possible attachments.

#### Article 9

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

## II. SELECTION AND PROPOSAL OF FINAL THESIS

#### Article 10

Unless otherwise stipulated in the study programme, the topics of the final theses are adopted by the chair responsible for the study programme at the proposal of the main lecturers of particular courses. The call for topics for the next academic year is defined by each department separately, no later than 15 June for the next academic year. The list of topics approved by the chair is delivered to 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 or assessment, unless otherwise specified in the study programme.

The student usually chooses among the available topics, but may, after consultation with their mentor, also propose their own topic. The proposed topic for the final thesis in second cycle programmes must be approved by the programme administrator. The student must propose their final thesis during their final year, by March 15 at the latest, on the Final Thesis Proposal form, which is stored in the Student Informatics IT system. A student who does not propose their final thesis by 15 March of their final year cannot subsequently propose, defend or submit it for assessment in the current academic year. In this case the student may propose the topic of their final thesis after 1 October of the following 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 programme, the student's thesis proposal must determine the following:

- a. the relevance, goals, and importance of the thesis, with references (200–400 words),
- b. research questions and/or hypotheses (50–150 words),
- c. the research plan and methodology used (50–150 words),
- d. the foreseen structure of the 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 the thesis proposal, it is reviewed and confirmed by the second cycle programme coordinator.

#### Article 12

If a student wishes to replace their mentor, they must submit a new proposal in accordance with the previous articles of these Rules.

#### Article 13

As a rule, a student selects their final thesis topic from within the study programme to which they are enrolled. If a student wishes to select a final thesis topic from within a different study programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences, they may select a mentor from another study programme, doing so with the consent of the programme coordinator. With the consent of the head of the department or the programme coordinator, a 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 programmes, they must complete the final thesis for each programme separately. In order to create one single final thesis, the student must propose a thesis that will simultaneously meet the requirements of both programmes, both in terms of volume and content. Such proposals are handled by the programme coordinators for second cycle programmes.

### **III. MENTORSHIP**

#### Article 15

The mentors for 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 programme. 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 second cycle students. The vice dean decides on students' appeals against refusals of mentorship and co-mentorship, and on possible exceptions. The mentor is obliged to check the number of theses already registered, either using the online system or with Professional Services. If the mentor agrees to mentor an additional student despite already reaching the maximum number (16) of students, Professional Services will decline that student. It is not possible to appeal against such refusals.

#### Article 17

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

#### Article 18

In case of a disagreement between the mentor and the student during thesis preparation that 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 then submit a new thesis proposal in accordance with Article 11. Professional Services informs the mentor about the student's resignation from the selected final thesis. The mentor must substantiate their resignation in writing and submit it to Professional Services. The decision on the resignation of the mentor is taken by the vice dean, and Professional Services informs the student in writing.

#### Article 19

When the student submits their thesis to their 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 a maximum of three times. If the thesis does not meet requirements, the mentor or possible co-mentor may decline 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 and at the top in capital letters. In the middle of the page, the name and surname of the student should be written, followed by the title of the final thesis, and under the title it should be written: master's thesis. 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 the same as 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 (e.g. Prof. Dr. Janez Novak). 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),
- on one page, with single-line spacing, the title, summary (150–250 words), and keywords (3–5), in Slovenian and English,
- table of contents,
- introduction,
- main text,
- conclusion,
- a list of references and other sources,
- possible attachments.

No header or footer should be used in the final thesis.

##### Article 23

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

- a description of the selected topic;
- A clearly defined objective of the work and a 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). The student must submit a request to write their final thesis in English 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 500-1000 word summary written in Slovene which 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 a final thesis written in English, the title on the cover and the inner page of the thesis should be written in both English and Slovenian.

## **V. THESIS SUBMISSION**

### Article 25

The mentor confirms via the Online Office that the thesis is appropriate in terms of content, language, and form, and that it is aligned with the study programme in which the student is enrolled. The mentor may require that the final thesis be proofread before confirming its suitability. A member of the commission may also require the thesis to be proofread before confirming the date of the defence. Professional Services carry out a technical review and, in accordance with the requirements for the completion of studies by final thesis prescribed by the individual study programme, confirm that the thesis complies with the instructions that apply at the faculty and that the student has fulfilled all the prescribed obligations that are a prerequisite for thesis defence or for the assessment of the final thesis.

The rules for checking 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 options regarding 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 of the FSS. The final thesis in electronic format is checked for similarity of content with other works via software for checking the similarity of content linked to the study information system. When submitting the final thesis, the student gives their consent to the use of an electronic format of the written final thesis in checking the similarity of the content.

The mentor must check, at the latest within ten working days, the percentage of identical or similar content, and if the mentor fails to do so, the vice dean is informed. If the mentor requests corrections regarding the quoting of similar content, 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 the final thesis and proposes appropriate assessors – members of the commission for defence evaluation.

If the mentor confirms the relevance of the similarity of the content, this date will be considered as the date of submission of the thesis for the assessment process in accordance with these rules. For final thesis submission dates that are by the 15th of the current month or by 1 September, the defence is considered to be completed by the end of the following month or by the end of September. For members of the commission who wish to receive the thesis in printed form, printed copies shall be provided by Professional Services.

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

### **Article 26**

The vice dean, on the proposal of the mentor, shall appoint a thesis defence commission no later than 5 working days after the mentor's confirmation that the thesis is appropriate or that the corrections are appropriate. The Professional Services associate, in agreement with the mentor and the members of the commission, shall schedule the date of the defence. The members of the commission must communicate any disagreement with the suitability of the thesis for defence before the date of the defence is confirmed. If they do not do so and confirm the proposed date of the defence, the thesis is deemed suitable for defence. The entire process can last up to a maximum of 45 days. The commission shall be composed of three members, including the mentor and, if applicable, the co-mentor who are members of the commission by virtue of their respective functions. At least one member of the commission must be from a chair, programme, department, or faculty other than the one in which the student defending the thesis is enrolled, and should have the appropriate habilitation. The final thesis must be available to all members of the commission for defence evaluation in electronic form via the Online Office. No later than by the date of the defence or at the defence, the mentor must submit a formal and substantive assessment of the thesis on a special form. The members of the commission confirm their agreement with the assessment, which is stored in the Student Informatics IT system.

### **Article 27**

If one of the members of the committee finds that they cannot perform the function of an assessor, they may apply for a replacement, and this application must be substantiated in writing. The vice dean decides on such a request, and the commission for study affairs decides on any appeal to the vice dean's decision. 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 then take into consideration. No later than one month after receiving the comments, the student must submit the improved thesis. If the student fails to do so, they are 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 appeal to this decision shall be decided by the commission for student affairs. A student cannot defend a 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 the documentation on the student.

### **Article 29**

The defence begins with the conclusion that the student has completed all obligations prescribed in the study programme. 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 the final thesis. The student has the right to present their work within 10 minutes. The student can use various audio-visual tools. 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 30 minutes. 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 are proposed in the following order: mentor, member of the commission/co-mentor, then chairman of the commission, but only those who are higher education teachers. An agreement must be reached on the assessment. If there is no assessment consensus, a special record shall be drawn up, in which the separate opinion of any 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 an excellent final thesis, the committee also assesses whether the thesis can be included in the list of nominated works for the 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:

- the clarity of the definition of a research problem and methodological approach,
- scientific excellence or useful value,
- the 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,
- the autonomy, penetration, originality, creativity, and impact of the task (possible publication in scientific or professional literature), and
- the ability to create text in accordance with linguistic culture and standards.

#### Article 32

The committee evaluates the thesis and its defence jointly, according to one of the following assessments: exceptional knowledge without, or with negligible, errors (10), very good knowledge with minor errors (9), good knowledge with individual disadvantages (8), good knowledge with 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, along with any possible nomination for a student award, is read by the president of the commission to the student and all others present at the defence. Everybody stands. Questions 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. APPEAL AGAINST THE ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL THESIS**

#### Article 35

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

## **VIII. ARCHIVING**

### Article 36

The final thesis is a public document.

Through the Jože Goričar Central Library of Social Sciences (ODKJG), the electronic form of the thesis is available to the public on the World Wide Web via the UL Repository and FSS Works with the student's consent, which is signed with an electronic declaration.

## **IX. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

### Article 37

The amendments shall enter into force on the date on which the Rules are adopted by the FSS Senate.

### Article 38

On the day these rules enter into force, the Rules on final thesis in first and second cycle study programmes, adopted by the Senate of the Faculty of Social Sciences at its sessions 9 October 2017, 12 November 2018, 1 July 2019, 9 January 2023 and 4 September will be terminated.