

The Senate of the Faculty of Public Administration of the University of Ljubljana, on the basis of point 9, third paragraph Article 74 of the Statute of the University of Ljubljana (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 4/17, as amended) and Article 30 of the Rules of the Faculty of Public Administration of May 29, 2024, adopted at its 9th regular session, on September 25, 2024

RULES ON BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S THESES

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1 (content and scope of the Rules)

- (1) These Rules regulate the conditions and procedure for the application of the bachelor's and master's thesis (hereinafter: the thesis), the selection of a supervisor, a co-supervisor, approval, preparation, submission, defence and evaluation of the thesis for students at the first and second cycle of study programmes offered by the Faculty of Public Administration (hereinafter: the Faculty) of the University of Ljubljana.
- (2) The provisions of these Rules shall apply equally to all final theses unless the Rules specifically provide otherwise for a particular type of final thesis.

Article 2 (definition)

- (1) The final thesis is an independent piece of professional work, through which the student demonstrates the level of knowledge and skills required by the study programme to apply theoretical and practical knowledge as well as academic and professional literature and sources.
- (2) The bachelor's thesis demonstrates the acquired professional knowledge, critical thinking, independence and competence in the application of research methods in studying, analysing and solving complex professional problems.
- (3) The master's thesis also demonstrates international knowledge of the field or of foreign regulations, theoretical developments, practices, research, etc. The master's thesis should be written using more sophisticated research methods and/or several related research methods. If the student conducts research in organisations, the master's thesis should normally include a range of comparable organisations (e.g. several ministries instead of just one, comparable public and private sector organisations, etc.).
- (4) By completing and successfully defending the final thesis, the student demonstrates that they are able to work independently on a research problem at a specific level of study, both in writing and orally.

II. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE TOPIC AND SELECTION OF THE MENTOR

Article 3 (selection of topic)

- (1) The topic of the final thesis is chosen by the student from the available topics or can be suggested in consultation with the supervisor. The content and methodology must be related to administrative and related sciences or to the content of the study programme that the student is completing.
- (2) The list of topics for each supervisor is decided by the Faculty Senate as part of the adoption of the Annual Work Plan. The topic may also lie outside the list of topics but must correspond to the habilitation field of the supervisor.

Article 4 (selection of supervisor and co-supervisor)

- (1) The request for supervision is usually forwarded by the student to the supervisor by email. The supervisor must be a higher education teacher (assistant professor, associate professor, full professor and lecturer, and in higher professional programmes, also lecturer and senior lecturer), who has habilitated in the field of the chosen topic of the thesis, unless the accreditation of the study programme stipulates otherwise. If the topic of the thesis relates to more than one habilitation field, another higher education teacher, usually from the University of Ljubljana, may be appointed as a co-supervisor in addition to the supervisor, in agreement with the supervisor.
- (2) All provisions of these Rules that refer to the supervisor also apply mutatis mutandis to any co-supervisor. Similarly, all provisions of these Rules shall also apply to the Chairperson of the Thesis Defence Committee.
- (3) Each supervisor is allowed to supervise only a limited number of theses. A supervisor can supervise a maximum of 10 theses per study year at both levels of study. Once the quota has been reached, an individual supervisor may supervise a maximum of 5 additional theses per study year at their own discretion. Approved thesis proposal topics count toward the supervision quota.
- (4) A supervisor who is not employed by the faculty or is a retired higher education teacher may supervise up to 5 theses per study year and may continue to supervise theses for a maximum of one study year after they cease to be involved in the study programme.
- (5) A supervisor may refuse a request for supervision on valid grounds, such as the supervision quota has been reached, or the topic does not fit into their habilitation area. The supervisor shall inform the student of the refusal.

Article 5 (pre-submission of a topic) - deleted

Article 6 **(submission of a topic)**

- (1) A student may submit a topic with the thesis proposal to the competent committee, once they have fulfilled the requirements for admission to the 3rd year of the bachelor's degree programme or the requirements for admission to the 2nd year of the master's degree programme.
- (2) The elements of a thesis proposal are defined in the Guidelines for the Preparation of Thesis Proposals and Writing of Seminar Papers, Bachelor's and Master's Theses of the Faculty of Public Administration.
- (3) The student coordinates the thesis proposal with the supervisor. The supervisor electronically signs the thesis proposal and sends it to the Academic Support Office by e-mail.
- (4) The Academic Support Office checks the conditions for submitting the thesis topic referred to in Paragraph 1 of Article 6 and, in the event of any irregularities, notifies the student and the supervisor by e-mail.
- (5) The thesis proposal is forwarded by the Academic Support Office to the competent committee for consideration.

Article 7 **(topic approval procedure)**

- (1) The competent committee reviews and check the suitability of the thesis proposal and the proposed supervisor.
- (2) If the competent committee considers that the submitted thesis proposal and the supervisor are appropriate, it approves the topic and appoints a Defence Committee.
- (3) If the competent committee considers that the submitted thesis proposal is inadequate, it informs the student and the supervisor of the deficiencies and allows the student 30 days to make corrections. The student resubmits the corrected thesis proposal to the competent committee in agreement with the supervisor. The corrections must be clearly marked.
- (4) If the competent committee determines the revised disposition is still not adequate, it informs the student and the supervisor of the deficiencies and give the student another 30 days to make further corrections.
- (5) If the thesis proposal is rejected a third time by the competent committee, the student can no longer apply for the same topic with the same supervisor. In such a case, the student or the intended supervisor has the right to appeal to the Senate within 15 days of receiving the decision. The decision of the Senate is final.
- (6) If the competent committee determines that the supervisor is not suitable, it does not approve the thesis proposal. A decision will be issued with an explanation and information on the possible legal remedies.
- (7) If, in the case of paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Article, the student fails to submit a corrected thesis proposal within the set deadline, the application shall be deemed withdrawn.

Article 8

(language of work)

- (1) The thesis proposal and the final thesis are usually submitted and written in Slovenian.
- (2) Upon specific request of the student, submitted in agreement with the supervisor at the time of the submission of the thesis proposal, the competent committee may approve the writing of the final thesis in English if the programme or part of the programme has been carried out in this language or if there are valid reasons for this, such as a foreign student, supervisor, committee member, etc. In this case, the student must prepare a longer summary of the thesis in Slovene, which is 5 to 8 pages for a bachelor's thesis or 10 to 15 pages for a master's thesis. The same applies to a thesis written by a student abroad as part of an international exchange.

Article 9

(extension and change of thesis proposal or supervisor)

- (1) The approved thesis proposal is valid for 12 months from the date of approval of the topic by the competent committee until submission of the thesis (i.e. from the supervisor's confirmation of the relevance of the thesis) for the defence procedure.
- (2) Before the expiry of the originally approved thesis proposal, the student may request an extension of the deadline for completing the final thesis or a change of supervisor, but only for justified reasons. Upon the student's request and with their justification for the extension of the deadline, change of the topic, title or supervisor of the thesis, the (appointed) supervisor sends an e-mail to the Academic Support Office for consideration by the competent committee and to the student for information.
- (3) The competent committee may extend the deadline for completion of the approved thesis by a maximum of 12 months, subject to Article 128 of the Statute of the University of Ljubljana in the case of continuation of studies after an interruption and the associated payment for studies.
- (4) The supervisor may request to withdraw from supervision for justified reasons. The decision on the withdrawal is taken by the competent committee.
- (5) After the expiry of the validity of the originally declared thesis proposal, the student may submit the same or a new topic with a thesis proposal (with the same or different topic and supervisor) in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of these Rules.
- (6) If the student wishes to make significant changes to the thesis proposal or title of the thesis, they should coordinate this with the supervisor. The change must be approved by the competent committee in accordance with the same procedure as provided for in Article 7.

Article 10
(composition of the Thesis Defence Committee)

- 1) The Thesis Defence Committee is composed of the Chairperson of the committee and the supervisor and possible co-supervisor.
- 2) The Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs may, exceptionally, for justified reasons, replace the Chairperson of the Defence Committee already appointed by the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs during the defence procedure. The Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs shall inform the student and the supervisor thereof.

III. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS

Article 11
(supervisor and student roles)

- (1) The supervisor must provide the student with appropriate professional support and encourage the student to work independently.
- (2) The student must follow the guidance of the supervisor and submit the thesis for review within the deadlines and in the manner agreed with the supervisor. The supervisor must make specific comments on the submitted thesis or direct the student to correct any deficiencies or errors in content, form, or technique.
- (3) The student must also comply with the current Code of Ethics for Researchers of the University of Ljubljana.
- (4) The submitted versions of the thesis and the final text of the thesis must generally be reviewed by the supervisor within one month of submission (excluding the period from 15 July to 15 August).

Article 12
(structure and format of the thesis)

The thesis must be prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of the Layout and writing of Seminar papers, Bachelor's and Master's Theses of the Faculty of Public Administration and must be technically and orthographically correct.

Article 13
(exception to publication of the thesis)

If the student, in agreement with the supervisor, considers that public publication of the thesis is not appropriate for justified reasons, they may, before submitting the thesis, apply to the Dean for permission to make the content of the thesis temporarily unavailable. The Dean will then decide on the matter. In their request, they shall state the reasons for the temporary unavailability of the content and propose the duration of the temporary unavailability, which may not exceed one year, and enclose appropriate supporting documents. The Dean may grant the request and issue a decision that the content of the thesis is temporarily unavailable. The Dean's decision is final.

Article 14 **(technical inspection)**

- (1) After receiving approval from the supervisor, the student submits the thesis to the Academic Support Office for technical review by email in a single docx document.
- (2) The Academic Support Office shall inform the student and the supervisor of the findings of the technical examination. The student, in agreement with the supervisor, must rectify the deficiencies within 30 days of notification at the latest.
- (3) The student sends the corrected thesis back to the Academic Support Office for technical review. The Academic Support Office informs the student and the supervisor of the findings of the technical review. If, after the second technical review, it is found that the deficiencies have not been rectified, the student must resubmit the thesis proposal in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of these Rules.
- (4) The technically relevant thesis is sent by the Academic Support Office by e-mail to the Chairperson of the Defence Committee for review and to the student and the supervisor for information.

Article 15 **(determining the originality of the text)**

When submitting the thesis for technical review, the Academic Support Office also checks the work using text similarity detection software . If the text similarity report shows:

- 25% or less compliance for Level 1 or 20% or less compliance for Level 2, the thesis is eligible for defence;
- 26% to 40% compliance for level 1 or 21% to 35% compliance for level 2, the Academic Support Office must send the report by e-mail to the supervisor and the student; the student must correct the thesis within the appropriate deadline and correct any deficiencies (incorrect citation, summarising, correcting copied paragraphs, etc.) and resubmit the thesis to the Academic Support Office for review; if the thesis is again deficient, the Academic Support Office must inform the student's supervisor and the Student Disciplinary Committee;
- 41% or more compliance for Level 1 or 36% or more compliance for Level 2, the Academic Support Office must inform the supervisor and the Student Disciplinary Committee.

Article 16 **(review of the thesis)**

- (1) When the Chairperson of the Defence Committee receives the thesis for review from the Academic Support Office, they must determine its adequacy within 10 working days for a bachelor's thesis or within 15 working days for a master's thesis. If the Chairperson of the Defence Committee does not respond within the deadline, it is assumed that they agree with the content of the thesis.
- (2) The Chairperson of the Defence Committee ensures that the thesis is properly readable and understandable (e.g. adding any additional explanations to the text to make it more comprehensible) and checks that the content is correct. Interference with the methodology, hypotheses and/or research questions and structure of the thesis is not allowed. The Chairperson communicates their findings to the student, the supervisor and the Academic Support Office. The student is obliged to comment on the observations in agreement with the supervisor within 30 working days. This period does not run from 15 July to 15 August.
- (3) The student submits a corrected version of the thesis, with visible changes, to the

Chairperson of the Defence Committee as well as to the supervisor and the Academic Support Office for information. If the student has not taken certain comments into account, they are obliged to provide a reasoned explanation. The Chairperson of the Defence Committee is obliged to inform the student and the supervisor (and, for the information of the Academic Support Office) whether they agree with the corrections or, if not, provide further guidance.

(4) If, for justified reasons, the student is unable to submit the corrections to the thesis within the deadline specified in paragraph 1 of this Article, the deadline may be extended, at the discretion of the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs. Their decision must be communicated to the Chairperson of the Defence Committee, the student, the supervisor and the Office of Student Affairs.

(5) If the student does not submit the corrected thesis or does not respond to the comments of the Chairperson of the Defence Committee within 30 days, the silence will be considered as a withdrawal of the application, and the procedure will be terminated without a decision being issued. In such a case, the student must resubmit the thesis in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of these Rules.

(6) If there is a difference of opinion between the Chairperson of the Defence Committee and the supervisor that cannot be resolved in the thesis review process, the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs must be informed and, after obtaining information from both sides, shall make a decision.

(7) The student is obliged to resubmit the revised version of the thesis to the faculty for a technical review and, for information, to the supervisor and the Chairperson of the Defence Committee.

(8) The defence may proceed once the Defence Committee has agreed that the thesis is suitable for defence, or upon the decision of the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs.

Article 17

(submission of documentation for defence)

(1) The student submits the final version of the thesis as a PDF/A file to the Academic Support Office by email.

(2) The Academic Support Office stores the e-version of the thesis in the student information system and after a successful defence it is submitted to the University of Ljubljana Repository.

(3) The student receives an email with a link to a questionnaire on the implementation of the study programme in which they are enrolled.

IV. DEFENCE OF THE BACHELOR'S OR MASTER'S THESIS

Article 18 (call for the date of the thesis defence)

- (1) The Academic Support Office, in cooperation with the Defence Committee, shall schedule the defence of the thesis once it has determined that all requirements have been met, including the completion of the questionnaire referred to in the previous Article. The thesis defence shall normally be scheduled within 30 days of the Defence Committee's approval or upon the decision of the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs that the thesis is suitable for defence. As a general rule, the thesis defence shall not be scheduled between July 15 and August 15.
- (2) The date for the defence will be communicated to the student, the supervisor and the Chairperson of the Defence Committee by email.
- (3) If a student does not attend the scheduled defence without a valid reason, the defence is considered failed. In this case, the student shall be granted a maximum of one further attendance, otherwise they must re-apply for the defence in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of these Rules.

Article 19 (introduction to the thesis defence procedure)

- (1) The thesis is normally defended at the Faculty before the entire Thesis Defence Committee. The defence is chaired by the Chairperson of the Defence Committee.
- (2) The student must defend the thesis in public, unless it is a thesis for which temporary non-accessibility has been ordered.
- (3) The defence shall take place in Slovenian or, if the thesis is written in English, in English.
- (4) The thesis Defence Committee first determines whether all requirements for the student's participation in the thesis defence have been met. The Chairperson of the thesis Defence Committee shall begin the defence by first introducing the student and establishing that the student has completed all the study requirements set out in the programme. The Chairperson then explains the procedure for the defence to the student.

Article 20 (Bachelor's thesis defence)

- (1) After an introductory presentation by the Chairperson of the Defence Committee, the student presents their thesis. The presentation normally includes:
 - a presentation of the reasons for choosing the topic,
 - an explanation of the research problem, the hypotheses and/or research questions, and research methods,
 - a demonstration of limiting factors and possible difficulties in the research,
 - a presentation of the most important findings and results,
 - suggestions for further research or usefulness of the results.
- (2) The student's presentation of the thesis lasts up to 10 minutes.
- (3) Following the presentation, the Defence Committee members ask the student up to three oral questions related to the content of the thesis, to which the student immediately responds. The Chairperson of the Defence Committee then invites the public present to ask any additional questions they may have, while the defence continues up to 20 minutes.

Article 21 **(Master's thesis defence)**

- (1) The student's presentation of the master's thesis lasts up to 20 minutes.
- (2) The student's defence focuses on:
 - an explanation of the reasons (motives) for choosing the topic,
 - an explanation of the research problem, the hypotheses and/or research questions, and research methods,
 - a demonstration of limiting factors and possible difficulties in research,
 - a clear presentation of the most important research results,
 - the contribution of the work to the profession,
 - suggestions for further research or usefulness of the results.
- (3) The members of the thesis Defence Committee shall each ask the student up to three oral questions related to the content of the thesis, to which the student immediately responds. The Chairperson of the thesis Defence Committee then invites the public to ask any additional questions they may have, while the defence continues up to 45 minutes.

Article 22 **(evaluation of work)**

- (1) For the purpose of the evaluation of the thesis, the supervisor and the Chairperson of the Defence Committee will complete the assessment form for the thesis, which is attached to these Rules as an annex.
- (2) The sections are evaluated with descriptive grades of below average (0 points), average (1 point) and above average (2 points). The final grade must correspond to the grades awarded. If the student has carried out a documented activity prior to the thesis defence (publication or an editor's confirmation of acceptance for publication in the student publication FU-TURA, presentation at a faculty research forum, conference contribution, journal article, etc.), the final grade may be increased by the Defence Committee.
- (3) After the defence, the Chairperson of the Defence Committee announces the grade and the professional title awarded to the graduate. The Chairperson of the Defence Committee shall enter the grade on the evaluation form, which shall be signed by all members of the Defence Committee.
- (4) If the thesis defence is assessed as unsatisfactory by the Defence Committee, the thesis defence may be repeated up to once. If the evaluation after the second defence is not positive, the student may not defend the same thesis again.
- (5) If the student does not agree with the grade of the defence, they may appeal to the Faculty Senate within three days of the thesis defence.

Article 23
(issuance of temporary certificate)

- (1) After the successful defence, the Academic Support Office issues the student with a temporary certificate of completion of studies, which is valid until the diploma is issued.
- (2) When the certificate of successful completion of studies is issued, the graduate provides the Academic Support Office with current personal data, if they differ from those held by the Faculty. The graduate is also invited to join the Alumni Club.

V. PUBLICATION OF AWARDED DEGREES AND PLAGIARISM

Article 24
(publication of theses)

- (1) Theses are published in the University of Ljubljana Repository in a protected format intended for reading only, unless a decision has been issued on the temporary unavailability of the content of the thesis in electronic form at the request of the student and the supervisor, for up to one year from the date of completion of studies.

VI. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISION

Article 25
(validity of the Rules)

- (1) When these Rules come into force, the Rules on Bachelor's and Master's Theses dated April 27, 2024, shall cease to apply. Procedures already initiated in accordance with these Rules shall be terminated in accordance with their provisions.
- (2) These Rules will be published on September 26, 2024, on the website of the Faculty of Public Administration and on the Staff Information Portal and will enter into force on October 1, 2024.

Mirko Pečarič PhD, Full
Professor
President of the Senate

Number: 014-1/2025-2
Date: 13 May, 2025