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A Descriptor of the Order of Preparation, Defense and Storage of Final Theses of PI SMK University of Applied Social Sciences	Confirmed by 05-10-2015 Order No.V-14of the Director	3.27.	6 p.	Valid from 05-10-2015 Not valued
A Descriptor of the Order of Preparation, Defense and Storage of Final Theses of PI SMK University of Applied Social Sciences	Confirmed by 05-07-2022 Order No.V(22-0049) of the Director	3.27.	6 p.	Valid from 01-09-2022

A DESCRIPTOR OF THE ORDER OF PREPARATION, DEFENSE AND STORAGE OF FINAL THESES OF THE SMK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES

I. General provisions

1. A descriptor (hereinafter – Descriptor) of the order of preparation, defense and storage of final theses (hereinafter – FT) of studies of the SMK University of Applied Social Sciences (hereinafter – University) sets the general procedures of preparation, defense, assessment and storage of FT in the University.

2. The Descriptor is prepared following the Statute of the University, Regulation of Studies, Order of Assessment of Learning Outcomes, a descriptor of placing e-documents of the University in the information system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (hereinafter – eLAB system), other legal acts of the University and the Republic of Lithuania, regulating studies.

3. A Department (hereinafter – Department), implementing a certain study programme and a Study Programme Committee (hereinafter – Committee) can specify provisions of the Descriptor in accordance with the learning outcomes aimed at by a SP, the formed traditions of a study field as much as they do not contradict this Descriptor.

4. Certain requirements for the volume, structure, appearance of a FT are determined in Methodical Instructions for Preparing Final Theses (hereinafter – Methodical Instructions) of a certain study field and are published in the University’s e-learning environment so that students can get acquainted with them before starting to write a FT.

II. Preparation of final theses

5. FT are prepared in accordance with Methodical Instructions.

6. A Department and a Committee determines the nature of a FT and its volume in credits for every study programme.

7. The text of a FT must be written in the correct Lithuanian language (except the cases, when a study programme is implemented and a FT is written in a foreign language). Summary of a FT is written in a language other than the text of FT. A FT must conform to the requirements for preparation of written works and document management, quoting, references to literature sources and making their list.

8. A student prepares a FT honestly and independently, not violating the law of the Republic of Lithuania on copyright and related rights, following the Code of Academic Ethics of the University, instructions of this Descriptor as well as Methodical instructions.

9. A FT is considered to be written dishonestly when it is in full or partly written by another author (a work or its part of another author is rewritten without references (a misappropriated authorship)), also when rules of quoting set in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on copyright and related rights and/or other legal acts are not followed), when a FT violates rights of other third persons to their creation.

10. A student must confirm that a FT is prepared independently, honestly and in accordance with the requirements of this Descriptor, completing *A Confirmation of the Independence*

of the Implemented Work (Appendix to Methodical Instructions), which is presented to the Department together with a printed copy of a FT.

11. Topics of FT are suggested by the Department implementing a certain study programme.

A student also has the right to suggest a topic of a FT.

12. Topics of FT are announced in the e-learning environment of the University no later than the beginning of November of the final year of studies.

13. A student has to inform the Department on a chosen topic of FT until the beginning of December of the final year of studies.

14. A Department confirms topics and supervisors of FT.

15. A topic of a FT can be changed no later than during the first month of the final study semester, when the FT has to be defended, and the formulation of the topic of a FT can be specified without changing the topic itself – no later than one month before the defence of a FT in the Department.

16. Topics and supervisors of FT are changed only under important reasons:

16.1. a student, wishing to change a topic of a FT, presents a reasoned request to the head of Department. The request must be coordinated with the supervisor of a FT;

16.2. a student, wishing to change the supervisor of the FT, presents a reasoned request to the head of the Department.

17. Decision on the change (topic of a FT, supervisor of a FT) is made by the head of Department.

18. Heads of departments (heads of SP) and administrators of the Department of Studies inform students of the procedures and terms of choosing topics of FT.

19. A student, preparing a FT – author of a FT takes all the responsibility for the quality of a FT in the approach of its content, form, language suitability and correctness.

20. Lecturer of the Department, implementing a SP, or, on the consent of the Department, lecturer from the department of another study field, as well as an Associated Professor or an invited lecturer can be a supervisor of a FT.

21. Supervisor of a FT consults a student, preparing a FT, on various methodical and subject issues related to the final thesis:

21.1. when making an individual plan for FT preparation;

21.2. when preparing separate parts of a FT in accordance with the schedule of the preparation of a FT;

21.3. when preparing the text of a FT and when formulating conclusions;

21.4. when preparing to present a FT for a public defense in the assessment commission of FT;

21.5. when placing a FT in the eLABa system.

22. When preparing a FT a student has to present separate parts of a FT for the assessment in a Department and an appropriately prepared FT under the terms set in *The Schedule for Preparing Final Theses*.

III. Presentation of final theses for assessment and defense

23. Assessment and defense of FT take place in two stages: in Department and in the Final Theses Assessment Commission (hereinafter – Commission).

24. Only the students, who have fulfilled all the requirements of a study programme and in the time set in the schedule of studies, are allowed to defend FT. Administrators of the Department of Studies present student advance summaries to the heads of Departments (heads of Study Programmes) until the issue of the order of permission to defend FT publicly.

25. A prepared FT is considered in the University in the *sitting of a Department* under participation of a student, supervisor of a FT, lecturers of the Department. Collegiate assessment is applied in order to ensure the objectiveness of assessment, to help the student to get a public defense of a FT. If necessary, shortcomings of the work and the term for correction of a FT are indicated.

26. A student must place an appropriately prepared FT in the eLABa system one week before the defense of a FT in a Department. Electronic document of FT and its metadata are entered to the eLABa system by the student who uses an access granted to him/her. The thesis which is not entered into the eLABa system is not assessed by the supervisor of a FT and it is not allowed to be defended in a Department.

27. After the defense of a FT in a Department, a decision is made on the suitability of a FT for a public defense. A FT can be defended publicly if it is appropriately prepared, corresponds to the subject and methodical requirements of the University.

28. Before making a decision on whether a FT is to be allowed to defend in a Department or not, a supervisor of a FT must get acquainted with a FT computerized check report EPAS and all the information of computerized check of the independence of a FT in the eLABa system. A student is informed of the decision of a FT supervisor to allow or not to allow to defend the FT during a sitting of a Department.

29. The content of Final Theses, which were acknowledged suitable for a public defense after defense in a Department sitting, can be modified until a FT is presented for assessment (public defense) in the sitting of a FT Assessment Commission. Content changes are carried out after coordination with a supervisor of a FT.

30. FT are presented for assessment (public defense) no later than 7 days until the date of public defense of a FT. A student presents one printed copy of a FT for a public assessment of a FT and places an e-version of his/her FT in the eLABa system. A Department will not accept a FT for public defense if its e-version is not placed in the eLABa system.

31. When presenting data on a FT, a supervisor of a FT and a member of a FT Assessment Commission – head of the Department implementing a SP or head of a SP, must be indicated by a student in the eLABa system by finding and choosing from the members of defense commission registered in the eLABa system (the system field “Defense Commission), so that they can get acquainted with the presented FT and get information.

32. When a student places his final e-version of a FT in the eLABa system, a supervisor of a FT once more performs a computer check on the independence of a FT, confirms a FT for defense if the FT is not plagiarized and no later than 1 (one) working day until public defense of the FT provides a Department with a written *Reference of a final thesis* (Appendix 1 to the Descriptor) on the prepared FT.

33. If a FT is suitably presented for a public defense, head of Department appoints a reviewer and refers him/her a FT not later than 5 (five) working days until public defense of a FT. it is recommended that reviewers of FT are invited from other academic divisions or that they are employees of other institutions, representatives of employers, social partners. A list of reviewers, assessing FT of students of a certain SP, is confirmed by the Order of the Director in 3 days after a FT defense in a Department.

34. A reviewer presents a written *Review of a Final Thesis* (Appendix 2 to the Descriptor) on whether a FT corresponds to the requirements set in Methodical Instructions, not later than 1 (one) working day until a FT defense. A reviewer names the Thesis advantages (positively assessed aspects) and disadvantages (negatively assessed aspects), assessment of the FT is suggested.

35. A permission to defend a FT is confirmed by the order of the Director on the provision of heads of Departments.

IV. A Computerized check of Thesis independence and its storage

36. All FT of students and their metadata¹ are presented for storage in the eLABa system² (www.elaba.lt). Placement of a FT is implemented in the guide to the user of the eLABa, aimed at student (Appendix 3 of the Descriptor), in the determined order.

37. Students enter the eLABa system by a unique name and password of the network of the University, which cannot be transferred to other persons and are authorized for the work with the eLABa system by the rights given to them. Any action, which is performed after logging in by the name and password of a certain person participating in the placement process is considered to be performed by the person.

38. FT are placed in the eLABa system and stored there in order to:

38.1. improve the quality of studies and scientific applied research;

38.2. to ensure the independence of learning process and the impartiality of assessment;

38.3. to develop the culture of academic writing of students and to promote honesty;

38.4. to store FT and to provide students, scientists and the society with more favourable conditions to use the possibilities of digital libraries and e-publishing;

38.5. to determine the facts of plagiarism.

39. Access to the FT placed in the eLABa system is given to:

39.1. supervisor of a FT – to the FT that he/she supervised;

39.2. author of FT – to the documents of his created FT;

39.3. head of Department (head of a SP) – to all FT of students of study programmes implemented by a certain Department;

39.4. a librarian – to all e-documents of the University placed in the eLABa system.

40. If necessary a librarian consults students on the placement of a FT in the eLABa system and supervises the process of placement, makes the final decision on the completeness of metadata and suitability of documents to be placed in the eLABa system; has the right to carry out the primary description of a document.

41. After placing a FT in the eLABa system, a computer check of the independence of a FT can be carried out using a System of Electronic Plagiarism Detection (EPAS), which checks the presented thesis by the available databases of document storage.

42. A computer check of the independence of a FT can be carried out by a supervisor of a FT and head of Department (head of a SP), following the order established in the guide to the user of the eLABa repository, aimed at a supervisor of a FT (Appendix 4 of the Descriptor). After a check a report on computer check of a FT is formed, which indicates the size in percentage expression of the correspondence of a FT to other e-documents. The check of a FT can be performed additionally by other means as well.

43. It is recommended to analyze all places of coincidence and their sources if a report of computer check indicates coincidences of more than 5 percent, or if the estimate of plagiarism risk is average or higher. A FT is considered to be performed independently and is considered to be a plagiarism when it all or parts of it are written using or rephrasing the text of another author without indicating the real author or source or indicating it incorrectly (exceeding the permissible limits of quoting and not following the requirements for quoting determined in the University).

44. Having determined the fact of a plagiarism and having evidence of plagiarism a FT cannot be defended and assessed. And a student is imposed a penalty in the order determined in the Regulation of Studies and/or other legal acts of the University.

¹ Metadata – a structured descriptor of e-document features, qualities and etc.

² eLABa – information system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library, which accumulates and presents for a public access scientific and study documents and/or their metadata. These documents are placed in the eLABa following the 5 October 2015 No. V-14 of the Director of the University confirmed by the Descriptor of the order of placing e-documents of the SMK University of Applied Social Sciences in the informatikon system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library.

45. If a student refers to his/her previously written works it is not considered to be a plagiarism.
46. Printed FT are stored in the Departments implementing a study programme no longer than 6 (six) months and then they are transferred to the Archive of the University in the order which is foreseen in the plan of documentation of the University and in the Rules of Document Preparation and Management.
47. All e-documents of FT of students of the University, deposited in the eLABa system, are stored in the order and under the terms set in the provisions of the eLABa.
48. The process of depositing a FT in the eLABa system is coordinated by the Librarians of academic divisions of the University, after coordinating it with heads of Departments (heads of SP).
49. The depositing author is responsible for the content and authenticity of a deposited FT.
50. The depositing author and Librarians of academic divisions of the University have the right to prepare a primary description of a FT, to deposit the prepared files of a document, their appendices, to clarify and correct the prepared primary description until data confirmation.
51. FT of the University studies, deposited in the eLABa system, are divided into three categories:
- 51.1. FT which were assessed by the FT Assessment Commission as “excellent”, “very good”, which do not have a non-publishable material and can be presented for a public access;
- 51.2. FT which were assessed by the FT Assessment Commission as “excellent”, “very good”, but their results cannot be published on the basis of a confidentiality contract (after a set period of time they get in the first category);
- 51.3. Final Theses which are not published.
52. When depositing an e-version of a FT aimed at public defense, the author indicates the conditions under which the FT will be accessible in the eLABa search system. At the same time he/she signs and confirms a license agreement.
53. After a public defense of a FT head of Department (head of a SP) in three working days presents a list of FT defended in the sitting of a FT assessment Commission to the Librarian of the academic division of the University, indicating the status of their storage access in the eLABa system.
54. After a public defense of a FT Librarians of academic divisions of the University can make comments to the author of a FT and return the e-document of a FT so that he/she can supplement/indicate the data missing or clarify the entered ones. Author of a FT, on the decision of Assessment Commission of a FT, can be offered to change the conditions of access in the eLABa system, discussed in the licence agreement.
55. FT authors in 3 (three) working days after their defense must technically adjust FT metadata and confirm defense of a FT.
56. A Librarian checks the correspondence of the data deposited by the author of a FT to the set requirements and approves by signing a license agreement on behalf of the University.

V. Defense and assessment of Final Theses

57. Defense of a Final Thesis is public and takes place in the sitting of a FT Assessment Commission. Aim of a FT Assessment Commission - to assess the learning outcomes achieved by students, demonstrated when preparing, presenting and defending a Final Thesis.
58. FT Assessment Commissions for the assessment of FT of students of different study programmes are formed of at least 4 persons each study year one month until the sittings of FT public defense on the order of the Director. Not less than a half of the members of the Commission (two) are representatives of employers, social partners, one of whom is appointed a chairperson of the Commission, and at least one lecturer implementing the study programme. The composition of a FT Assessment Commission can be adjusted following the requirements defined by descriptors of

different study fields. Separate FT Assessment Commissions are formed for different variations of one study programme.

59. Minutes are taken during the sittings of FT Assessment Commissions. They are signed by the chairperson and the members of the commission. Minutes are stored in the archive of the University.

60. The following documents are presented to a FT Assessment Commission on the day of a FT defense:

60.1. Order of the Director of the University on the formation of a FT Assessment Commission;

60.2. Order of the Director of the University on the permission to defend Final Theses;

60.3. Final Theses of students with reviews and comments of supervisors of FT;

60.4. Final Theses assessment criteria (Appendix 5 to the Descriptor);

60.5. A form of the minutes of the sitting of a FT Assessment Commission (Appendix 6 to the Descriptor);

60.6. A descriptor of the order of preparation, defense and storage of final thesis of the University;

60.7. A form of the report on a FT defense of the chairperson of a FT Assessment Commission (Appendix 7 to the Descriptor);

60.8. A form of a review of the members of a FT Assessment Commission on the defense and assessment of a FT (Appendix 8 to the Descriptor);

61. If a FT reviewer assesses a FT negatively, participation of a FT supervisor and the reviewer in the sitting is necessary.

62. Until the public defense of a FT, students must settle with the University in its established order:

62.1. settle with a library;

62.2. eliminate financial debts;

62.3. to register in the information system of career management of students and graduates of Lithuanian higher schools (KVIS) on: www.karjera.lt

63. During defense of a FT, author of a FT presents his work indicating a problem of his research, its goal, tasks, concisely defines object, methods of research, presents the results obtained, introduces to conclusions, gives recommendations. A confirmed topic of a FT cannot be questioned during defense.

64. After the report of a student members of Commission are introduced to the assessments and comments of a reviewer and supervisor of a FT. After that a student answers the questions given by a reviewer and a Commission, directly related to the prepared FT.

65. When assessing a FT it is recommended to take into account the defense of a FT, answers of the author of a FT to the questions of a reviewer, supervisor of a FT, members of Commission, correctness of the language of a FT, assessment criteria of a FT. A Department implementing a certain SP can specify assessment criteria in accordance with the traditions of assessing works of a certain study field.

66. Each member of Commission assesses a FT: for presentation and defense of a FT. Averages of the assessment of members of Commission are calculated and then the total final assessment grade is calculated including assessments of a reviewer and supervisor of a FT. The entire FT Assessment Commission must agree with the final assessment of a FT. A decision is made in the majority of votes. If there is an equal number of opinions of the members of FT Assessment Commission on the assessment of a FT, the assessment of a FT is determined by the assessment suggested by the chairperson of the Commission.

67. If a supervisor of a FT or a reviewer are members of the Commission, they cannot vote when making a decision on the final assessment of a FT that they supervise or review.

68. The final assessment of a non-defended FT is negative.

69. Decision of a Commission on the assessment of a FT is final and not disputed in the order of appellate. A student *no later than in 24 hours* after the defense of a FT can apply to the

Appellate Commission presenting an appeal in the order established in the provisions of Appellate Commission of the University, if he/she thinks that there were procedural violations in the defense of a FT that could have affected the assessment of a FT. The appeal must include the indicated certain violation of the procedure of a FT defense and indicated circumstances, confirming the fact of making a violation. Appeals are not analyzed on the results of FT assessment.

70. Defense Commission announces assessments of theses on the day of a FT defense. FT assessments are announced publicly only after coordinating with students who defended. If there are students who do not wish their results to be announced publicly, the Commission informs every student individually on the assessment of a FT.

VI. Final Provisions

71. If students cannot prepare and defend FT for serious reasons (an illness, birth giving, an accident, death of a close family member and etc.) on time, on their request no later than one month until the defense of a Final Thesis in a Department, on the order of the Director defense of a FT can be postponed to the other sitting of a FT Assessment Commission. If differences in a study programme occurred during that time, they must be eliminated one month until the beginning of a FT defense. In this case students do not pay any payments.

72. Students who haven't prepared a FT on time, who didn't come to a FT defense without a serious reason, who don't defend their FT, are removed from student lists. These persons can be allowed to prepare and defend a FT repeatedly, but not earlier than in one year. Persons, wishing to prepare and defend a FT repeatedly, must:

72.1. present a request to the Director of the University on the permission to prepare and defend a FT not later than one month until the start of the last semester;

72.2. make payments set by the Founder of the University for a repeated preparation and defense of a FT if there are no fundamental changes in the study programme during that time;

72.3. eliminate differences of a study programme which arose because of fundamental changes in a study programme in the group of course units of the main study field. Students pay an established study price for the studies of such course units.

73. Having taken into account this Descriptor and the formed student traditions of preparing and defending a FT, Departments, implementing a SP together with SP Committees can specify requirements for the final theses and their assessment criteria of a certain study field. Modifications are announced in the e-learning environment of the University until the beginning of October of the final study year, so that students can get acquainted with the requirements before starting to prepare a FT.

74. This Descriptor becomes valid from the date of its approval by the order of the Director. Heads of Departments (Heads of SP), implementing SP, are responsible for the announcement of the Descriptor.
