

SMK COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES

PREPARATION, DEFENSE AND STORAGE OF THESIS PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION

I. General provisions

1. The description of the procedure for the preparation, defense and storage of final theses (hereinafter - FT) of the SMK College Of Applied Sciences (hereinafter - the SMK) (hereinafter - the Description) determines the general procedures for the preparation, defense, evaluation and storage of the final theses of the SMK.

2. The description has been prepared in accordance with the SMK Statute, the Study Regulations, the procedure for evaluating study results, the description of the procedure for uploading electronic documents of the SMK to the information system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (hereinafter referred to as the eLABa system), and other legal acts of the SMK and the Republic of Lithuania regulating studies.

3. The Head of Study Programs (hereinafter - the Head of the Study Program) and the Committee of the Study Program (hereinafter - the SP Committee) running a specific study program (hereinafter - the SP) can detail the provisions of this Description in accordance with the study results sought by the SP, the established traditions of the study field to the extent that they do not contradict this Description

4. Specific requirements for the scope, structure, and design of the FT are determined in the methodological instructions for the preparation of final theses of a specific field of study (hereinafter - Methodological instructions) and are published in the SMK E-learning environment so that students can familiarize themselves with them before starting to prepare the FT .

II. Preparation of theses

5. FT s are prepared in accordance with the Methodological Instructions.

6. For each study program, the scope and nature of FT credits is determined by the SP committee.

7. The text of the FT must be written in the correct Lithuanian language (except in cases where the study program is in progress and the FT is written in a language other than Lithuanian). The FT summary is written in Lithuanian and English.

8. FT must meet the requirements for the preparation of written works and document management, citation, references to literary sources and their list.

9. The student prepares the FT honestly and independently, without violating the law of copyrights and related rights of the Republic of Lithuania, in compliance with the Code of Academic Ethics of SMK, this Description and Methodological instructions.

10. FT is considered to have been performed independently in the event that it is written in whole or in part by another author (rewritten another author's work or part of it without references (appropriated authorship)), as well as does not comply with the Copyright and Related Rights Act of the Republic of Lithuania and/or other legal acts established citation rules), FT the rights of other third parties to their creative results are violated.

11. The fact that the FT is prepared independently, honestly and in compliance with the requirements of this Description, the student must confirm by filling in the Confirmation of the independence of the work performed (Appendix of Methodological Instructions), which is submitted to the Head of SP together with the FT .

12. FT topics can be proposed by the head of SP running the relevant study program, student, teacher, social partners, members of the Study Program Committee.

13. Students can choose FT topics according to the publicly announced and approved study schedule.
14. Individual cases of choosing FT topics must be coordinated with the Head of the Study Program of the specific study program.
15. FT topics and guides are approved by the SP committee of the relevant study program.
 - 15.1. A student with academic debts is not assigned a FT manager and the student must prepare the FT independently until all academic debts are liquidated, but no later than before the preliminary defense. A student who prepares a FT independently must participate in the revisions of the first, second and third parts of the FT and the preparatory defense provided for in the timetable for the preparation of final theses.
16. The student has the opportunity to refine the wording of the FT topic without changing the topic no later than one month before the public defense of the FT .
17. FT topics and FT manuals are changed only for important reasons:
 - 17.1. the student, in order to change the FT topic, submits a reasoned request to the head of SP, coordinated with the head of FT ;
 - 17.2. the student, in order to change the FT manager, submits a reasoned request to the SP manager.
18. The decision on changes (FT topics, FT manager) is made by the SP manager.
19. Informing students about the procedures and deadlines for choosing FT topics is carried out by SP managers.
20. The quality of the FT in terms of content, form, appropriateness and correctness of the language is the responsibility of the student preparing the FT himself - the author of the FT .
21. The head of the FT can be SMK and a guest lecturer from another higher education institution, a social partner of SMK.
22. The head of the FT advises the student preparing for the FT on various methodological and subject-related issues related to the final thesis:
 - 22.1. creating an individual FT preparation plan;
 - 22.2. preparing individual FT parts according to the FT preparation schedule;
 - 22.3. The head of the FT must participate in the revisions of the first, second and third parts of the FT provided in the timetable for the preparation of theses. If there is no opportunity to participate, the head of the Study Program must provide clear feedback about the student's FT .
 - 22.4. preparing the FT text and formulating conclusions;
 - 22.5. preparing to present FT for preliminary and public defense;
23. When preparing the thesis, the student must submit separate parts of the thesis and a properly prepared thesis to the head of the SP for evaluation by the deadlines provided in the final theses preparation schedule:
 - 23.1. all students must participate in the pin revisions of the first, second and third parts of FT . This process is coordinated by the SP head of the specific study program.
 - 23.2. Feedback from the head of the study program to the student regarding the thesis according to the thesis preparation schedule is provided only during the scheduled interim review. A student who did not participate in the mid-term review of the thesis works independently (without the help of the SP supervisor) until the next mid-term review of the part of the thesis scheduled in the timetable for the preparation of final theses.

III. Application of artificial intelligence tools in student theses

24. When preparing final theses, students must precisely follow AI-specific guidelines and rules, which are established in SMK documents, for example, in the policy of the use of artificial intelligence in SMK.
25. Students must follow proper citation procedures for used AI tools that have generated query results, including 3 conditions: include the AI tool in the list of literature sources and properly cite in the text according to the rules; clearly state the purpose of using AI tools; provide a brief description of

the process (the condition of the submitted request and the generated result); these terms must apply even if students have edited AI-generated content or created content that has been edited with AI tools.

26. In cases where factual inaccuracies, incorrect or misleading citations are found in theses prepared by students, such works are recognized as plagiarism, i.e. cases of academic dishonesty, although they are presented with proper citation of the result generated by AI tools. In such cases, the procedures laid down in the activity descriptions of the Academic Ethics and Research Ethics Committee of SMK are applied.

III. Submission of theses for evaluation and defense

27. The evaluation and defense of the student's final thesis (FT) takes place in two stages: the preliminary defense and the final *in the work evaluation commission*.

28. Only students who have fulfilled all the requirements of the study program (who have no academic debts) and only at the time specified in the study schedule are allowed to defend the FT in the preparatory defense.

29. The prepared FT is discussed collegially in the preparatory defense with the participation of the student, the head of the FT , and, if necessary, teachers. Collegial evaluation is applied in order to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation, to help the student prepare for the public defense of FT .During the preliminary defense, the student must be ready to present all the information related to the empirical study (depersonalized if necessary): quantitative survey/qualitative research data.

30. After the preliminary defense of the FT , a decision is made regarding the suitability of the FT for public defense. FT can be:

- *defendable* when the student makes minor corrections, if necessary, and uploads the FT to the eLABa system and SMK E-learning system at the specified time.
- *partially defensible*. In this case, the student is given 3 calendar days to make corrections. After 3 calendar days, the student must send his FT to the head of the FT , the Head of the Study Program and receive an answer as to whether the adjusted FT meets all the requirements set by the FT and is defensible.
- *undefensible* when the FT prepared by the student meets at least one of the criteria in Table 1, due to which the FT is recognized as undefensible. The defense of the thesis is postponed to the next academic year.

31. If the student's FT is defensible, he must further follow the procedures approved by the SMK: the description of the procedure for preparation, defense and storage of final theses of the SMK, FT methodical instructions and other documents.

Table 1. Criteria that must be met by the student's thesis in the preparatory defense

Criteria	DEFENDED	DEFENDED IN PART	UNDEFENDABLE
Compliance with the formalization requirements of the final thesis presented in the methodological instructions of the SMK final theses	Corresponds	Corresponds	Does not match
Grammatical and stylistic errors	The text is prepared without grammatical, syntactic and style errors	The text contains isolated errors of grammar, syntax and style	The text contains many grammatical, syntactic and stylistic errors that make it difficult to understand and read the text

All required parts are ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Summary (Lithuanian and English) Introduction (all structural parts of the introduction) Analysis of scientific literature Research design Research results and their discussion Project (MRK, PRM, KPI, etc.) Conclusions List of used literature Accessories (if provided) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Summary (only in Lithuanian) Introduction (all structural parts of the introduction) Analysis of scientific literature Research design Research results and their discussion Project (MRK, PRM, KPI, etc.) Conclusions List of used literature Accessories (if provided) 	At least one mandatory part is missing
Amount of sources	More than 25 sources	From 20 to 25 sources	Less than 20 sources
Newness of sources (not older than 5-10 years)	Up to 20 percent older literature	20-30 percent older literature	More than 30 percent older literature
Foreign literature (for FT works in Lithuanian)	5 sources and more	3-4 sources	Less than 3 sources
Scope of the thesis	100 percent mandatory volume	Up to 5 pages are missing	More than 6 pages are missing.
Plagiarism percentage	0 percent	0 percent	1 and more percent
Percentage of use of artificial intelligence	No more than 5 percent.	6-8 percent	8 and more percent
Coincidence percentage	The amount of correct citations from one source does not exceed 4 percent. of the entire thesis	The amount of correct citations of one source is from 4 to 8 percent. of the entire thesis	The amount of correct citations from one source exceeds 8 percent. of the entire thesis
Citation, referencing	Cited correctly using APA version 7 citation style (for the APA + Chicago Law Program) https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples	There are occasional citation errors	Citation requirements set by SMK are not followed
The survey sample	The study sample is valid and the justification for the study sample is provided	The study sample is valid, no justification for the study sample is provided	The study sample is not valid, the justification for the study sample is provided or not provided
The aim and tasks of the thesis	The aim and tasks of the final work are clearly formulated and correspond to the topic of the work	The aim and tasks of the thesis partly correspond to the topic of the work	The aim and tasks of the thesis do not correspond to the topic of the work
Topic and problem	The relevance of the topic is justified, the work problem is properly formulated	The relevance of the topic and the work problem are partially justified	Unreasonable topic relevance and work problem
Research methods (design methods for PRM and KŽA study programs)	Appropriate, reliable and reasonable use of them	Appropriate, reliable and partially justified their use	Inappropriate, unreliable and unreasonable
Research ethics	Research ethics are described (4-5 ethical principles) and are intact	Research ethics are described (4-5 ethical principles) and are intact	Research ethics not described and/or violated
The link between scientific literature and the topic of the work	The reviewed scientific literature represents the topic of the thesis	The reviewed scientific literature partially represents the topic of the thesis	The reviewed scientific literature does not represent the topic of the thesis
Work structure	The structure of the thesis is consistent, there are clear	The structure of the thesis is consistent, there are clear connections	The structure of the thesis is inconsistent, the links

	connections between the theoretical and research parts	between the theoretical and research parts	between the theoretical and the research part are unclear
Research part	The investigative part of the thesis is prepared in an argumentative manner, analytical abilities are demonstrated, and summaries are presented.	The research part of the thesis is prepared in a partially argumentative manner.	The investigative part of the thesis is not prepared in an argumentative manner.
Conclusions	Conclusions are reasoned, specific, include and correspond to all work tasks.	The conclusions partially correspond to the tasks of the work.	The conclusions are not presented or do not correspond to the tasks of the work.
Additional requirements for KPI, VKM and MRK study programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of the theoretical analysis and the conducted research are applied in a creative project. • The idea of the creative project is original, evocatively conveying communicative content. • The methods, tools and technologies chosen for the implementation of the creative project are reasonable and advanced. • The creative project was implemented by realizing the creative idea, achieving all the set goals. 	FT partially meets these criteria	FT does not meet these criteria
Additional requirements for PRM and KŽA study programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design methods are suitable and reliable. • The project part of the thesis is prepared with arguments, analytical abilities are demonstrated, generalizations are presented. 	FT partially meets these criteria	FT does not meet these criteria
FT preliminary defense	The student bases his answers on the scientific literature examined in his thesis, empirical research, prepared project, argues, defends himself with reasonable confidence, and answers the questions presented to him.	The student bases his answers on the scientific literature examined in his thesis, an empirical study conducted, a project prepared, reasoning, reasonably answers some of the questions presented to him	The student does not base his answers on the studied scientific literature and empirical research (prepared project), does not answer the questions presented to him.
Delivery time	5-7 minutes are allocated for student presentations.		
Defense time	7-15 minutes are allocated for the student's answers to questions and feedback.		

32. The head of the FT must participate in the preliminary defense of the FT. If you do not have the opportunity to participate, you must provide the head of the Study Program with clear feedback about the student's FT and indicate the results of the text matching check system.

33. The student must upload the properly prepared FT to the text matching check system specified by the Study Program Manager: the first time - two weeks before and the second time - at least 2 working days before the FT Preparatory Defense. If the FT is not submitted to the text matching verification system 2 working days before the preliminary defense, it is not allowed to defend it in the Preliminary Defense.

At least 2 days before the preliminary defense, after the student uploads the electronic version of the FT to the text matching check system, the head of the FT conducts a computer check of the independence of the FT, confirms for the defense if the FT is not plagiarized.

34. FT s are uploaded to the text match checking system in order to:
- 34.1. to improve the quality of studies and scientific applied research;
 - 34.2. to ensure the independence of the learning process, the objectivity of assessment;
 - 34.3. to develop a culture of academic writing among students and promote honesty;
35. The head of the FT and the head of the SP can perform a computer check of the independence of the FT in accordance with the established procedure. The head of SP has the right to upload the student's FT to the text matching verification system himself, in case of need, in order to check the authenticity of the FT .
36. It is recommended to examine all overlaps and their sources, if the computer verification report indicates overlaps greater than 5 percent, as well as evaluating the parts of text overlaps, insertions, problem areas. A FT is considered to be prepared independently and is considered plagiarism when it is written in whole or in part by using or paraphrasing the text of another author without indicating the real author or source, or indicating it incorrectly (without complying with the citation requirements set by the SMK).
37. Once the fact of plagiarism is established and evidence of plagiarism is present, the FT cannot be defended and assessed, and the Student is subject to a penalty in accordance with the procedure established in the Study Regulations, the SMK Code of Academic Ethics and/or other SMK legal acts.
38. After the preliminary defense of the FT , a decision is made regarding the suitability of the FT for public defense. FT can be publicly defended if it is prepared properly and meets the subject and methodological requirements set by the SMK.
39. Before making a decision to allow or deny the defense of the FT , the head of the FT must familiarize himself with the results of the FT text matching verification system. The FT student is informed about the decision of the head of the FT to allow or not to allow the defense of the FT during the defense of the FT in the preliminary defense session.
40. The content of final theses, which are recognized as suitable for public defense after the preliminary defense meeting of the FT , may be changed before the submission of the FT for evaluation (public defense) at the meeting of the FT evaluation commission. Content changes are made in coordination with the FT manager.
41. FT s are submitted for evaluation (public defense) at least 1 week before the FT public defense dates. The student places the electronic version of the FT in the eLABA system and the E-teaching system for public FT assessment. FT can be publicly defended if its electronic version is timely uploaded to the eLABa system cache and E-learning environment.
42. The student must also upload the FT recognized as suitable for public defense into the eLABA system, providing data about the FT . In the eLABA system, the head of the FT and the member of the FT evaluation commission - the head of the SP executing the SP - must be specified in the eLABA system after finding and choosing from the members of the defense commission registered in the eLABA system ("Defense Commission" in the System field), so that they can familiarize themselves with the submitted FT and receive information.
43. Not later than two working days before the public defense, the FT submits to the head of the SP in writing *Feedback from the thesis supervisor* about the prepared FT , which indicates the recommended FT assessment.
44. If the FT is properly submitted for public defense, SP Headfor at least one week until public defense of the FT , appoints a reviewer to whom the FT is transferred. It is recommended that employees of other academic departments or other institutions, representatives of employers and social partners be invited to review the FT .
45. The list of reviewers evaluating the FT of the students of the respective SP is approved by the specific study program at the SP teachers' meeting.
46. The reviewer submits a written feedback on the FT and whether the FT meets the requirements set out in the Methodological Instructions no later than 2 (two) working days before the defense of the FT . aspects to be assessed), a FT assessment is offered, questions are asked to the student.

47. The evaluations of the FT manager and the reviewer are not published for students until the end of the public defense hearing.

48. The student has the right to familiarize himself with the reviewer's questions no later than 1 day before the FT public defense hearing. This process is coordinated by the SP head of the specific study program.

49. Permission to defend FT, SP at the request of the managers is approved by the director's order.

IV. Storage of work

50. All student DBs and their metadata¹ are provided for storage in the eLABa system²(www.elaba.lt). The loading of the FT is carried out according to the procedure specified in the eLABa cache user guide for the student.

51. Students connect to the eLABa system with a unique SMK network login name and password, which cannot be transferred to other persons, and are authorized to work with the eLABa system according to the rights assigned to them. Any action taken when logging in with the name and password of a particular uploader is considered to have been done by that person.

52. FTs are uploaded to the eLABa system and stored there for purposes to preserve FT and create more favorable conditions for students, researchers and the public to use the possibilities of digital libraries and electronic publishing;

53. Access to the FT provided in the eLABa system is provided:

53.1. for the head of the FT - to the FT, the creation of which he led;

53.2. for the FT author - to the FT documents created by him;

53.3. For the head of SP - to the FT of all the students of the relevant study programs;

53.4. For a library employee - to all SMK electronic documents uploaded to eLABa

system.

54. If necessary, the library employee advises students on uploading FT to the eLABa system and supervises the uploading process, makes the final decision on the completeness of metadata and the suitability of documents for uploading to the eLABa system; has the right to perform the initial description of the document.

55. DBs are stored as intended SMK in the documentation plan and the rules for preparation and management of documents.

56. Everyone SMK the students' FT e-documents uploaded to the eLABa system are stored according to the procedure and deadlines set in the eLABa regulations.

57. The process of placing the FT in the eLABa system is coordinated by the Library staff of the academic units of the SMK, in coordination with the heads of the SP.

58. The uploading author is responsible for the content and authenticity of the uploaded FT.

59. The uploading author and the Library staff of the academic units of SMK have the right to prepare the initial FT description, upload the prepared document files, their attachments, refine and correct the prepared initial description until the data is approved.

60. The FTs of SMK studies hosted in the eLABa system are divided into three categories:

60.1. FTs, which were rated "excellent", "very good" by the FT evaluation commissions, which do not contain non-disclosure material and may be made available for public access;

60.2. FTs, which were rated "excellent", "very good" by FT evaluation panels, but their results cannot be made public on the basis of a confidentiality agreement (after a set period of time they fall into the first category);

60.3. Theses, which are not made public.

¹ Metadata – structured electronic document attributes, properties, etc. description.

² eLABa – the information system of the Lithuanian academic electronic library, which collects and provides public access to scientific and study documents and/or their metadata.

61. The author of the FT , when placing the electronic version of the FT for public protection, indicates the conditions under which the FT will be available in the eLABa search system. At the same time, a license agreement is concluded and approved.

62. After the public defense of the FT , within 3 working days, the head of the SP provides the Library employee of the SMK academic unit with a list of the FT s defended at the FT evaluation committee meeting, indicating the access status of their storage in the eLABa system.

63. After the public defense of FT Library staff of SMK academic departments can submit comments to the FT author and return the FT electronic document to supplement/indicate missing data or clarify already entered data. The FT author may be offered to change the conditions of access in the eLABa system, discussed in the license agreement, by the decision of the FT evaluation commission.

64. Within 3 (three) working days after their defense, the authors of the FT must technically organize the FT metadata and confirm the defense of the FT .

65. The library staff checks the compliance of the data entered by the FT author with the requirements and confirms them by signing the license agreement on behalf of the SMK.

V. Defense and assessment of theses

66. The defense of the thesis is public and takes place at the meeting of the FT evaluation committee. The purpose of the FT evaluation committee is to evaluate the study results achieved by the students, demonstrated in the preparation, presentation and defense of the final thesis.

67. FT evaluation commissions for the FT evaluation of students of different study programs are formed every academic year one month before the FT public defense meetings by order of the Director from at least 4 persons or the description of the relevant field of study approved by the Study Quality Assessment Center. At least half of the members of the commission consist of representatives of employers, social partners, one of whom is appointed as the chairman of the commission, and at least one lecturer who runs the study program. The composition of the FT evaluation committee can be adjusted according to the requirements defined in the descriptions of individual study areas. Separate FT evaluation commissions can be formed for different variants of one study program.

68. The members of the FT evaluation commission have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the students' FT at least 1 day before the public defense hearing.

69. The following documents are submitted to the FT evaluation commission on the day of the FT defense:

69.1. SMK director's order on the formation of the FT evaluation commission;

69.2. SMK director's order regarding permission to defend theses;

69.3. Students graduation works with reviews and feedback from FT managers;

69.4. Evaluation criteria for theses;

69.5. In the form of a report of the chairman of the FT evaluation commission on the defense of FT ;

69.6. In the form of feedback from members of the FT evaluation commission on the defense and evaluation of FT ;

70. If the FT reviewer evaluates the FT negatively, the student has the opportunity to participate in the public defense of the FT and present his work to the evaluation committee.

71. Before the FT public defense, students must settle with the SMK according to the procedure established by it:

71.1. check with the library;

71.2. liquidate financial debts;

71.3. register in the career management information system (KVIS) for students and graduates of Lithuanian higher education institutions at: www.karjera.lt

72. During the defense of the thesis, the author of the thesis presents the work, indicating the relevance of the topic, problematic issues, purpose, tasks, concisely describes the object, research methods, presents the obtained results, introduces the conclusions, makes recommendations. The approved FT topic cannot be questioned during the defense.

73. After the presentation of the FT , the student answers the questions posed by the reviewer and the Commission, which are directly related to the prepared FT .

74. When evaluating the FT , it is recommended to take into account the defense of the FT itself, the author's answers to the questions of the reviewer and members of the Commission, the correctness of the language of the FT , and the evaluation criteria of the FT . The SP committee overseeing a specific SP can detail the evaluation criteria in accordance with the work evaluation traditions of the relevant field of study.

75. The FT is evaluated by the reviewer (who scores the FT on a ten-point system) and by each member of the Commission (who scores separately on a ten-point system for the presentation and defence of the FT). The final score for the FT is the average of 20% of the reviewer's score, 40% of the presentation (average of the Commissioners' scores) and 40% of the defence (average of the Commissioners' scores) (only positive scores are added together). If the final decimal point score is 0.5 or more, it is rounded to the nearest half.

76. If the head of the FT or the reviewer are members of the commission, they, like other members of the commission, evaluate the student's FT presentation and defense of the FT .

77. The final evaluation of the undefended FT is negative.

78. The Commission's decision on the assessment of FT is final and cannot be appealed. Due to procedural violations of the defense of FT , which could have affected the assessment of FT , the student will be notified within 24 hours at the latest. from the publication of the results of the FT defense, he has the right to appeal to the SMK Appellate Commission 1 time, by submitting an appeal according to the procedure established in the regulations of the SMK Appellate Commission. In the appeal, a specific violation of the FT defense procedure must be specified and the circumstances confirming the fact of the violation must be specified. Appeals are not considered regarding the results of the FT assessment.

79. The defense committee announces the evaluations of the works on the day of the FT defense. FT grades for students are published in the academic database.

VI. Final Provisions

80. For students who, due to important reasons (illness, childbirth, accident, death of a close family member, or other) are unable or unable to prepare and defend the FT in the stipulated time, upon their request, submitted no later than one month before the defense of the final thesis in the preparatory defense, by order of the director of the SMK the defense may be postponed until the next meeting of the FT evaluation commission. If during that time there were differences in the study program, they must be liquidated one month before the beginning of the public defense of the FT . In this case, students do not pay any fees.

81. Students who do not prepare the FT at the set time, who do not come to the FT public defense without a good reason, are removed from the student lists. These persons may be allowed to prepare and defend the FT again, but not earlier than one year later. Individuals wishing to re-produce and defend a FT must:

81.1. to submit an application to the director of the SMK for permission to prepare and defend the FT until the last semester beginning;

81.2. must pay the fees set by the SMK Founder for the repeated preparation and defense of the FT;

81.3. must liquidate differences in the study program that have arisen due to essential studies program changes in the group of study subjects of the main field of study. Students pay a set tuition fee for studying such subjects.

82. Taking into account this Description and the established traditions of students' FT preparation and defense, the SP head, together with the SP committee, can clarify the requirements for the final theses of a specific field of study and their evaluation criteria. The changes are announced in the SMK E-learning environment before the beginning of October of the year of final studies, so that students can familiarize themselves with the requirements before starting to prepare the FT .

83. This Description shall enter into force from the date of its approval by order of the Director. SP managers are responsible for presenting the Description to students.