



## Guidelines for the preparation of a master's thesis

### at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Vincent Pol University in Lublin

#### 1. General Information

The master's thesis is prepared independently by the student under the supervision of a supervisor. The topic of the thesis should be related to the student's field of study and specialisation. The thesis should draw on current literature from academic and popular science journals and publications, legal acts relevant to the subject matter, reports and/or statistical analyses. The master's thesis constitutes an independent research project or an examination of a **practical** issue based on a methodology agreed with the supervisor. The master's thesis is subject to peer review and forms the basis for discussion and assessment during the final examination.

The master's thesis should:

- have a clearly formulated aim and main research problem and/or hypothesis,
- present the current state of knowledge relating to the thesis topic based on the latest bibliography,
- contain an independent analysis of the research problem,
- demonstrate the author's ability to take a critical approach to the research problem,
- contain creative elements demonstrating the student's own ingenuity,
- include a description of the research methodology,
- include a statistical analysis of the results,
- present the results in a clear and legible manner, together with their interpretation
- include a discussion, i.e. a reference to the research results of other authors,
- include conclusions drawn from the research,
- include a list of references.

A well-structured master's thesis is characterised by:

- simplicity and clarity, i.e. the thesis has a clearly defined direction and method of achieving

- its objective, and contains no superfluous information (e.g. commonly known facts);
- conciseness (a compact structure), which prevents repetition;
- harmony achieved by maintaining the correct balance between the individual chapters of the thesis.

In a master's thesis, as in academic papers, the following two principles must be observed: the principle of logical progression and the principle of hierarchical structure. The first principle requires that the next chapter or subchapter of the thesis be linked to the previous one, and that the previous one provide a foundation for the next. The second principle highlights the need to establish a hierarchy among the various sections of the thesis, such as chapters and subchapters.

The following stages can be identified in the completion of a master's thesis:

**Choosing a topic.** At this stage, one should first and foremost familiarise oneself with general, monographic literature. A thorough review of the literature will facilitate the choice of topic and significantly speed up the completion of the subsequent stages of the thesis.

**Formulating the research problem.** Attention should be paid to solutions already employed and to the search for better solutions to a specific task or problem. Publications outlining the current state of scientific knowledge relating to the research topic are particularly useful here.

**Development of the research methodology.** It is essential to familiarise oneself with the methodology described in scientific publications. The supervisor's involvement is crucial in the development of the research methodology.

**Conducting the research.** Publications containing information on research techniques, as well as knowledge gained during student work placements or professional work, are useful here.

**Presentation of research results.** Research results should be presented descriptively and in the form of tables, graphs, diagrams, etc. They should include a formulation of the observed patterns and relationships, as well as conclusions.

## **2. Components of the master's thesis**

The thesis should be at least 60–70 pages long and should contain the following elements:

- title page,
- declaration,
- table of contents,

- introduction,
- aim and scope of the thesis,
- analysis of the current state of knowledge (i.e. literature review),
- research materials and methods,
- research results and their analysis,
- conclusions,
- bibliography,
- abstract in Polish,
- list of figures, tables, photographs, etc.,
- list of appendices (if included in the thesis),
- appendix (if included in the thesis)

### **2.1. Title page**

It should contain information regarding:

- the name of the University and the name of the University department where the thesis was written,
- the degree programme and specialisation,
- the author of the thesis, including their student number,
- the title of the thesis in Polish and English,
- the first name and surname, and the academic title or degree of the thesis supervisor,
- the place and year in which the thesis was completed.

The title of the paper should be grammatically correct and clearly indicate the content of the study.

### **2.2. Declarations**

Declarations in accordance with the University's templates must be signed by the author and the supervisor.

### **2.3. Table of contents**

The table of contents should be placed at the beginning of the thesis. It should list all sections of the thesis, specifying the page on which each section begins. Arabic numerals should be

used for chapter numbering (it is not recommended to use both Roman and Arabic numerals simultaneously). The method of numbering chapters in the table of contents must be the same as in the text.

#### **2.4. Introduction**

In the introduction, the author should explain the background to the thesis topic, justify its choice and outline the scope of the thesis.

#### **2.5. Aim and scope of the thesis**

The aim of the thesis should specify what the author intends to achieve in the thesis. Where justified, there may be more than one aim. This section of the thesis should provide a concise overview of the temporal and spatial scope of the facts, phenomena and processes under investigation.

#### **2.6. Review of the current state of knowledge (literature review)**

This analysis should include references to the current state of knowledge regarding the problem being addressed, based on the latest literature on the subject. This section of the thesis should be divided into subsections. The literature review should discuss the theoretical foundations of the thesis – do not provide basic information such as definitions of key terms, what tourism is, what a hotel is, etc.

#### **2.7. Research materials and methods**

Research methods and materials should include information on the methods used in the research and a description of them. A description of the subject of the research, the characteristics of the object(s) (population) covered by the research, a description of how the research was conducted and data collected, the method of data processing, and a description of the statistical methods used in analysing the results should be included.

#### **2.8. Research results and their analysis**

This section of the paper should present and analyse the results of the author's own research. The results should be analysed using statistical methods (as described in the methodology). Results may be presented in descriptive form, graphically, or compiled in tables. It is recommended to present quantitative data graphically, as this allows for a better illustration of the identified relationships. In the analysis of the research results, reference should be made to the results obtained by other authors (discussion).

## **2.9. Summary and/or conclusions**

Conclusions must be formulated in a clear and comprehensible manner, providing answers to the objectives set out in the thesis. Conclusions should include a formulation of the general patterns observed, the author's own judgements, proposals for solving problems and, where appropriate, suggestions for further research.

## **2.10. Bibliography**

The bibliography should include all the references cited by the student in their work. The bibliography should be arranged in alphabetical order by the authors' surnames. Online sources should be listed separately. The web address must be complete, including all its components. The date on which the information was retrieved from the specified website (date of access) must also be provided. Detailed rules for citing source materials are set out in section 2.13.

## **2.11. List of tables/figures/photographs**

If tables, figures or photographs have been included in the thesis, they must be listed in the list. The number of the table/figure/photograph, the title and the page number on which it appears must be provided. Separate numbering is used for tables, figures and photographs. The source of the illustrations (including website addresses) must be provided.

## **2.12. List of appendices**

These may include: questionnaire forms, procedural guidelines, photocopies of legal acts, documents, drawings, etc. Appendices must be numbered.

## **2.13. 2.13. Rules for citing references**

The bibliography is an integral part of the thesis. All references should be listed in alphabetical order in accordance with the following general rules:

- the bibliographic entry begins with the author's surname, followed by the first letter of their first name, the year of publication, and the title of the work;
- for books, the publisher's name and place of publication are given; it is not necessary to specify the total number of pages;
- for journals, the title, issue number and page numbers of the article are given;
- for websites, the full address and date of access are given, and these are also listed in

alphabetical order.

**Examples:**

1. Books by a single author.

Żarska B., 2003: *Ochrona krajobrazu*. SGGW Publishing House, Warsaw.

2. Books by a group of authors where authorship of individual chapters is not specified.

Pawłowska K., Swaryczewska M., 2002: *Ochrona dziedzictwa kulturowego. Zarządzanie i partycypacja społeczna*. Wydawnictwo UJ, Kraków.

3. In books where individual chapters have their own authors and the whole volume is edited by one or more people, the name of the author and the title of the specific chapter to which the author is referring should be listed first, followed by the title of the entire volume and the name of its editor.

Matykowski R., 1988: *Badania struktury przestrzennej miast średniej wielkości*, [in:] T. Czyż (ed.), *Problemy metodologiczne analizy przestrzennej w geografii społeczno-ekonomicznej*. UAM Seria Geografia nr 38, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań, 128–156 ← Note: these are the page numbers on which the article appears in the publication

Mierzejewska L., 1998: *Podsystem przyrodniczy miasta i jego kształtowanie*, [in:] J. Williams, H. Rogacki (eds.), *Przemiany społeczne Polski lat dziewięćdziesiątych*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Bogucki, Poznań, 197–208.

4. Books edited by a single author leading a team of authors without authorisation of individual chapters.

Maik W. (ed.), 1999: *ABC of the WORLD. Africa II*, Kurpisz Publishing House, Poznań.

5. Books without clearly identified authors.

Cypr (2007): *Podróże marzeń*, [in:] *Biblioteka Gazety Wyborczej*. Mediaprofit Publishing House. Warsaw.

6. Journals.

Kondracki J., 1960: *Tymczasowy wynik dyskusji nad podziałem regionalnym Polski*. *Czasopismo Geograficzne*, T. 17, z.3, 296–298. ← Note: these are the page numbers on which the article appears in the publication

Nadulski, R. 2013. *Opportunities for utilising the culinary traditions of Roztocze in promoting the region*. Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Społeczno-Przyrodniczej, Vol. 9, 233–240.

7. Atlases, statistical yearbooks.

*Regionalny Atlas Polski dla gimnazjum*, 2000, PPWK, Warsaw.

*Raport o stanie środowiska przyrodniczego województwa lubelskiego w roku 2001, 2002*, Biblioteka monitoringu środowiska, Lublin.

8. Internet – full website address:

[www.mojairlandia.pl/muzyka/muzyka.php](http://www.mojairlandia.pl/muzyka/muzyka.php) (accessed on 30th November 2023)

9. Brochures without editors – such as atlases and statistical yearbooks. If the year of publication is not specified:

*Lubelszczyzna zaprasza*, no year of publication, Wschodni Bank Cukrownictwa, Lublin. If the title of the brochure is long – as a rule, the first word is written:

*How Happy .....*, no year of publication, Tourist Information, Lublin.

It is recommended to avoid literature with incomplete or unclear bibliographic details.

Alternative citation formats are permitted, but they must be consistent throughout the work and comply with accepted academic standards.

### **2.11. Additional notes**

The reference list should include only those publications to which the author refers in the text. All sources used in the work must be cited, including website addresses. When citing a reference in the text, the author's name(s) should be given in parentheses; if there are more than two authors, the first author's name should be followed by 'et al.' and the year of publication, e.g. (Błądek, 2012); (Wojtasik and Trauber, 2007) or (Kowalski et al., 2011). When citing several items simultaneously, separate them with a semicolon, e.g. (Kowalski, 1997; Nowak et al., 1999). Another way of citing sources is: according to Kowalski et al. (1995), as reported by Martin (2014), etc.

All tables, figures and photographs should be relevant to the subject matter of the paper and bear titles. **They should be referred to in the text.** Table titles are placed above the table. They should be preceded by the word 'Table' followed by a number. Figure titles are placed below the figure and marked 'Fig.' followed by a number; the same applies to photographs ('Photo' followed by a number). The word 'Chart' or the abbreviation 'Ch' should not be used in

captions. The source of tables, figures and photographs must be cited.

### **3. Formatting of the thesis**

1. Format: A4 – single-sided pages, justified text, text layout: portrait, left margin: 3.5 cm, right margin: 2.0 cm, top and bottom margins: 2.5 cm each.
2. Text typed using Microsoft Word, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1.5 line spacing (30 lines per page of approx. 70 characters).
3. Chapter titles should appear on a new page, separated from the main text by a two-line space. Subchapter titles should be separated from the main text (above and below) by a single-line space. The font size and type for chapter and subchapter titles should differ, e.g. 16 and 14 points (bold).
4. The text should be divided into paragraphs, each containing at least a few full sentences, but occupying no more than half a page. Paragraphs should be indented by 1.25 cm.
5. Page numbers should be placed at the bottom of the page, either in the centre or on the right-hand side, with no numbering on the title page.
6. The grammatical form should be consistent throughout the text: in the impersonal form – e.g. ‘was done’, ‘was carried out’ (recommended form); in the third person – e.g. ‘The author stated’, ‘analysed’. The second-person plural form – e.g. ‘we divide hotels into...’ – should not be used, although this is a common mistake.