



**LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University**

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

Master's thesis defense Guideline

### **1. The purpose of the Master's Thesis**

The purpose of the Master's Thesis is to systematize the knowledge gained during the study process, reveal the field-specific knowledge, and demonstrate research, creative, or practical skills. The paper should reflect the theoretical and practical knowledge relevant to the given level of education; in particular, such deep and systemic knowledge of the field, including specific methods/issues, the main part of which reflects new research-based knowledge and/or professional practice.

**A Master's Thesis is the work performed individually by the student.**

In the Master's Thesis, the student should be able to find new, original ways of solving complex problems using the latest methods and approaches and should demonstrate the ability to conduct research independently. The Thesis should demonstrate that the student can synthesize and evaluate the data-based information innovatively and form reasoned conclusions through the critical analysis of complex information and recent research.

### **2. Selection of the Master's Thesis Topic**

In the fourth/final semester, an MA student registers on the electronic learning platform <https://uni.tsu.ge/> for the study course: "Master's thesis" within the deadline set by the academic registration.

Within 14 calendar days from the beginning of the academic semester, the MA student by the head(s) of the Master's program agrees on the tentative title of the Master's Thesis and the name of the thesis supervisor(s). The head of the Master's program will submit the agreed option to the educational process management service.

Information about the prospective titles and supervisor(s) of Master's degree programs is uploaded to the Faculty website.

### **3. Master's thesis supervisor(s).**

An MA student may have more than one supervisor. The supervisor of the Master's Thesis can be an academic staff of the faculty and/or a guest teacher of a specific master's educational program. In one academic semester, an academic staff/guest teacher can guide no more than 5 MA students. The supervisor of the Master's Thesis must advise the student in determining and selecting the research topic, forming the Research design, planning the research activity, and formatting the paper structurally, stylistically, and academically.



LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

#### **4. Language of the Master's Thesis**

The Master's Thesis must be written in the Georgian language (except when the language of instruction is foreign). Students of the foreign language Master's program present their work in the target language of instruction.

#### **5. Structure of the Master's Thesis**

The Master's Thesis consists of the following components (see Appendix №2):

- Title page;
- Annotation (in the Georgian and foreign languages, including the title of the Thesis);
- Table of contents (content);
- Introduction;
- The central part ( body) of the text;
- Conclusion;
- List of used literature;
- Appendices (if any).

The Master's Thesis must be accompanied by an English translation of the title page as an annex.

#### **6. Commission for preliminary defense and defense of Master's Thesis**

The commission for the preliminary defense and the defense of the Master's Thesis is approved by the order of the dean of the faculty. The commission consists of at least five members. Members can be academic and guest staff implementing the relevant educational program. A member of the Master's thesis defense commission does not participate in evaluating the Master's student under his supervision.

#### **7. Preliminary defense of Master's Thesis**

The schedule of the preliminary defense of the Master's Thesis is approved by the order of the dean of the faculty. Preliminary defenses are scheduled at least 45 calendar days prior to the date of the public defense and are held within six working days for all Master's programs. The preliminary defense commission decides whether to admit the MA student to the defense.

At the preliminary defense session, the reviewer of the Master's Thesis is determined, who may be an academic staff member of the faculty and/or an invited teacher.

The minutes of the preliminary defense session are sent to the educational process management service within two working days.

#### **8. Submission of Master's Thesis**

The Master's Thesis is submitted electronically and in printed form 14 days before the public defense. If the student fails to meet the deadlines for submitting the paper, he or she will not be admitted to the defense.



## LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

The Master's Thesis is checked using the electronic program "Turnitin." Before defending the Master's Thesis, the MA student uploads the electronic version of the finished Thesis to check the originality of the Thesis on a particular link attached to the e-learning portal of Tbilisi State University: <https://e-learning.tsu.ge/>. The Thesis is checked by the educational process management service, which is guided by the "Academic integrity policy document of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University" ([https://tsu.ge/assets/media/files/71/academic/372020\\_d1.pdf](https://tsu.ge/assets/media/files/71/academic/372020_d1.pdf)). The service sends the electronic version of the papers to the reviewer and the commission nine calendar days before the defense. In case of the detection of flaws in the originality of the work, the educational process management service will inform the defense commission in writing to react accordingly.

In case of detecting any cases of academic dishonesty in the paper, the members of the commission are entitled to make the following decision:

- a) the MA student will be admitted to the defense, and the shortcomings will be reflected in the assessment of the Master's Thesis;
- b) the MA student will not be admitted to defense;
- c) The Ethics Commission should consider the issue of MA students.

Within five calendar days of submitting the Master's Thesis, the student's supervisor must send written consent to admit the MA student to the Educational Process Management Service.

To review the Master's Thesis, the program staff of the Master's program will select a reviewer.

The reviewer will submit a report two days before the public defense with questions and recommendations.

### 9. Public defense of Master's Thesis

Master's thesis defense is held publicly for all Master's programs within six working days, no later than seven calendar days before the end of the educational process.

The public defense procedure includes a Master's report (minimum 15 minutes), Public reading, and review discussion.

**The Master's Thesis is assessed once, with a final assessment with a 100-point system.**

*The Assessment system allows five types of positive ratings:*

- (A) Excellent - 91-100 assessment points;
- (B) Very good - 81-90 points of the maximum assessment;
- (C) Good - 71-80 points of the maximum assessment;
- (D) Satisfactory - 61-70 points of the maximum assessment;
- (E) Sufficient - 51-60 points of the maximum assessment.

In the scientific-research component of the Master's educational program, in case of receiving the grade - (FX) (No pass), the MA student is allowed to submit the revised scientific-research component during the next semester, and in case of receiving the grade - (F) (fail), the MA student loses the right to submit the same scientific-research component.



LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

The decision of the commission is final.

Within 2 working days after the defense, the Master's thesis defense Minutes will be submitted to the faculty's educational process management service to enter the evaluation score in the Master's student's study card. The Master's Thesis and review are kept for a specified period.

Appendix No. 1

**Assessment criteria of the Master's Thesis:**

- a) *Relevance – 5 points*
- b) *Research methodology – 20 points*
- c) *Literature review and theoretical component – 20 points*
- d) *The ability to analyze and argue -30 points*
- e) *The formal, linguistic, and stylistic aspects of the paper- 10 points*
- f) *Visual appearance of the work, presentation, and communication skills of the speaker – 15 points*

Total: 100 points

<p><b>a) Relevance - 5</b></p> <p>(The urgency and novelty of the topic are evaluated)</p>	<p>Maximum 5 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0% ;</li> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors -1-25%;</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>
<p><b>b) research methodology - 20</b></p> <p>(Appropriacy of goals and objectives, soundness of the research question/hypothesis, and correctness of establishing relationships between dependent and independent variables are assessed (if necessary). Structured and appropriate research design that is relevant to the research purpose (a comprehensive presentation of empirical data analysis)</p>	<p>Maximum 20 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors – 1-25%</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>
<p><b>c) literature review and theoretical component - 20</b></p> <p>(the comprehensiveness of processing relevant, up-to-date, and diverse literature, including foreign</p>	<p>Maximum 20 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0% ;</li> </ul>



LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

<p>language sources and critical analysis of theoretical material, is assessed)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors -1-25%;</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>
<p><b>d) the ability to analyze and argue -30</b>  (the consistency of the author's reasoning, the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships and draw adequate conclusions, the connection of the conclusions with the main text, and their logicity are evaluated)</p>	<p>Maximum 30 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0% ;</li> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors -1-25%;</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>
<p><b>e) The formal, linguistic, and stylistic aspects of the paper- 10</b>  (the linguistic fluency of the presented work, academic style, completeness and correctness of references to sources, compliance of the maps, tables, and figures with the given standard of paper formatting and the quality of their observance, adherence to APA/Turabian style)</p>	<p>Maximum 10 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0% ;</li> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors -1-25%;</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>
<p><b>f) Visual appearance of the work, presentation, and communication skills of the speaker - 15</b>  (the visual (technical and aesthetic) side of the demonstration of the content and results of the work, availability of visual aids, their Adequacy and quality, use of modern presentation technologies, such as PowerPoint, digital maps, tables, graphs, etc.); MA student's answers to the questions and notes are assessed)</p>	<p>Maximum 15 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Component/feature does not meet qualification requirements - 0% ;</li> <li>• Component/feature includes significant errors -1-25%;</li> <li>• Components/features include minor errors -26-50%</li> <li>• Component/feature includes non-essential errors -51-75%</li> <li>• Component/feature is flawless- 76-100</li> </ul>

**Note:** The reviewer is guided by the criteria outlined in Appendix No. 1 - except point f -when issuing a recommendation.



LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Appendix No. 2

## Designing a Master's Thesis

### Master thesis structure

1. title page;
2. Annotation (in the Georgian and foreign languages, including the title of the Thesis);
3. Table of contents (content);
4. Introduction;
5. The central part ( body)of the text;
6. Conclusion;
7. List of the references used;
8. Appendices (if any).
9. The Master's Thesis must be accompanied by an English translation of the title page as an annex.

Cover page (title page) – is completed according to a strictly defined rule:

- ✓ The full name of the higher educational institution where the Master's Thesis was completed must be indicated in the header of the paper (font size 18)
- ✓ Below the name of the higher educational institution, the name and surname of the MA student are written at a distance of 2-3 cm (in Common Case, font size 16);
- ✓ The title of the Master's Thesis is centralized (font size 16) (the word "Thesis " is not written next to it, and it does not need to be enclosed in quotation marks);
- ✓ After the title, the name of the Master's program is written (font size 14);
- ✓ Below the name of the Master's program, the academic degree to be awarded is written (font size 14) (e.g., the Master's Thesis was completed to obtain the academic degree of Master of Sociology);
- ✓ The name, surname, scientific degree, title, and academic position of the supervisor of the Master's Thesis are indicated on the lower right side of the title page;
- ✓ The place/city and year of completion of the Master's Thesis are written in figures in the lower center of the page.

**Annotation:** This reflects the relevance of the topic, goals, tasks, research subject, object, primary results, and novelty. It should be 300 words long and written both in Georgian and English, indicating the title of the Thesis. The foreign language version should include the title of the Thesis, the author's last name, and initials. When performing a group project, the annotation should outline and indicate each participant's contribution.

**The table of Contents (Contents)** shows the exact names of all chapters and paragraphs of the full text of the Master's Thesis, sequentially indicating their page numbers on the right side. Pages should be numbered from the next page of the table of contents, considering the number of pages of the title page, annotation, and content.

**Introduction**—This represents the general part of the paper, which should feature the substantiation of the relevance of the chosen topic, the purpose, the content of the tasks, the statement of the research subject and object, the method used for the research, and the material-technical base; comparative analysis—how this Master's Thesis differs from previous studies.



## LEPL- Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Depending on the specificity of the research question, the author can segregate the research methodology/research design, which alongside the methodological approaches, the purpose of the research, the content of the objectives, the statement of the research subject and object, the method used for the research and the limitations of the research are outlined.

**The central part (body) of the text**—the main text—is divided into chapters and sub-chapters, and their numbering and structuring are determined according to the research requirements.

**Conclusion**—This section includes the main theoretical and practical results of the Master's Thesis research, in which the theoretical significance, practical value, and prospects of application of the research findings are briefly discussed.

**References** – The Master's Thesis must be formatted according to the APA citation style of the American Psychological Association (see link: <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/guidance/referencing/apa>). Turabian style is allowed for international relations programs.

### Formatting standard

- Master's Thesis should be typed on A4 size standard paper;
- The electronic version should be presented in Microsoft Word format (with doc. extension);
- The name of the document should be MA Thesis and the surname of the author (e.g., MA Thesis. Kapanadze);
- Possible typeface – Sylfaen; font size – 12;
- The introduction, each chapter, and the conclusion should start on a new page. The chapter name is written in 16-size font;
- Line spacing - 1.5 intervals;
- The margins: from the left - 3 cm, from the right - 1 cm, from the top 2.5 cm, from the bottom- 2.5 cm;
- The text should be formatted according to the alignment –"Justify."
- Length of the paper- minimum of 40 pages. The number of pages includes the text from the introduction to the conclusion, excluding the reference page, graphs, tables, and other visual material.

*A master's Thesis, the length of which is less than the established standard, is not admitted for defense.*

*Amendments were made at the session of the Council of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences on March 1, 2024 (Minutes No. 1)*