Approved by:
ISM University of Managementand Economics
Rector's Order of 21 October, 2026
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**ISM UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS, UAB**

**EXECUTIVE MASTER STUDIES' FINAL THESES DEFENCE AND EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

1. The procedure for defending and evaluating final theses shall regulate the defense and evaluation of the final theses of the Executive Master Degree at ISM University of Management and Economics (hereinafter – University).
2. Executive Master degree studies shall be completed with the preparation of a bachelor or master thesis and its public defence. Only the students who have successfully completed all the assessments provided in the respective study programme, passed all the required exams by the date of the defence and have demonstrated sufficient knowledge and skills are allowed to defend their final thesis.
3. The final theses evaluation commission shall be composed of competent specialists of the study field - researchers, practitioners, professionals, representatives of social partners - according to the requirements of the applicable legal acts for the number and composition of the evaluation commission.
4. The composition of the final thesis evaluation commission is formed for each programme, and is proposed by the Programme Director. The proposal for the final thesis evaluation commission composition is agreed by the Executive School Studies Committee respectively, and approved by the Rector.
5. Recommended requirements for the number of members and composition of the final thesis evaluation commission:
    5.1. For the Executive Master Studies, the final theses evaluation commission consists of at least four members, at least three of them must hold a doctor degree, at least one of them must be a professor, at least one of them must be an academic staff member of the other higher education institution. One of the members of the commission shall be the chairman of the commission.
    5.2. The supervisor of the final thesis cannot be a member of the evaluation commission and / or a chairman of the evaluation commission in cases when the thesis is defended by a student under their supervision.
6. During the final thesis preparation process, the student is allowed to upload the thesis paper to the content matching system and access the content similarity report. Deadlines for uploading thesis paper to the system are set by the Executive School Studies Committee.
7. The supervisor, reviewer, and / or members of the evaluation commission may initiate a thesis plagiarism check on content matching system or request a content similarity report at any time during the preparation or evaluation of the thesis.
8. Upon final submission of theses, the process of identifying and reporting plagiarism is as follows:

8.1. After the submission date, Programme Directors must review the ‘similarity index’ — generated by the plagiarism-detection software that University employs — of each and every thesis in their programme.

8.2. Any final thesis that is identified by the software as containing > 10% of similar material must be closely examined by the Programme Director.

8.3. If any potential plagiarism cases are determined (through similarity report or any other evidence), the Programme Director must prepare detailed plagiarism assessments.

9. At least five days before the public defense of the final thesis, the thesis shall be evaluated in a written form by the thesis supervisor and the reviewer.

9.1. When submitting a written supervisor's review and the automated supervisor's feedback form, the thesis supervisor adheres to the thesis evaluation criteria set forth in the requirements for Bachelor's and International Master's degree programs. The Executive Master's thesis supervisor submits a written manual feedback form and adheres to the thesis criteria set forth in the requirements for Executive Master's degree programs.

9.2. When providing a written review (by completing the reviewer's feedback form), the reviewer adheres to the thesis evaluation criteria set forth in the requirements for Bachelor's, International Master's, and Executive Master's degree programs. The thesis review shall include a written comment identifying the key strengths and weaknesses of the work, an assessment of the thesis with a grade based on individual criteria, and at least three questions. The reviewer is designated by the Programme director.

10. The Programme Director may appoint a second reviewer if:

10.1. The evaluation of the supervisor or reviewer is not sufficient (less than 5).

10.2. The evaluations of the supervisor and the reviewer are sufficient but differ by two points or more.

11. After reviewing the written evaluations of the supervisor and the reviewer, the program director provides a recommendation to the Studies Committee regarding the suitability of the thesis for public defense (whether to allow or not allow the defense). The decision on the suitability of the thesis for public defense is made by the Studies Committee.

12. The Studies Committee meeting may decide to deny the right for the defence of the final thesis if at least one of the following points can be applied to the final thesis or its preparation process:

12.1. Thesis topic or research proposal was not approved by the Programme Director.

12.2. The submitted final thesis is not based on a theme that has been defended and approved.

12.3. The student did not meet the deadlines for work preparation.

12.4. The student fails to submit the final thesis in due time (the student loses the right to defend it in the current semester).

12.5. The work is negatively evaluated by the supervisor and / or reviewer (s).

12.6. Violations of academic ethics have been identified by the Committee on Ethics.

12.7. The final thesis does not comply with the formal requirements (structure, scope of the final thesis or its parts, data of the empirical research are not included in the appendices, etc.).

13. If a student fails to adhere to the established deadlines for thesis writing, the thesis preparation process may be suspended during its course by the decision of the Studies Committee.

14. Executive Master's students in all programs receive the reviewer's feedback via email no later than two days before the scheduled thesis defense. The reviewer's comments are intended solely for the student's independent preparation for the thesis defense; the reviewer's comments are not to be discussed with the thesis supervisor, University academic staff, or other members of the evaluation committee. The questions provided in the review and the identity of the reviewer are disclosed only during the final thesis defense.

15. During the defence of the final thesis the author presents the work briefly, specifying the research problem, aims, objectives, analysis of the situation and / or literature review, research methodology, obtained results, reliability of the applied methods, introduces and justifies the conclusions, makes recommendations. After the summary of the reviewer and / or the supervisor comments, the student answers the reviewer's questions, questions of the members of the final theses evaluation commission and other persons participating in the defence and fulfils other requirements for the defence of the final thesis. If the reviewer and / or supervisor of the final thesis does not attend the defence meeting, their feedback is read by one of the members of the final thesis Evaluation Commission.

16. The members of the final thesis evaluation commission shall follow the same criteria as in the final thesis review when assessing thesis and its defence. In addition, the completeness and validity of the answers to the questions, demonstration of the knowledge of the topic, methods, results, practical applicability, limitations, fluency and clarity of the language are assessed in the defence. A member of the evaluation commission shall provide a single grade summarizing the evaluation of both the final thesis and the defence. Final evaluation mark may be specified to one decimal point.

17. Executive Master thesis and its defence is evaluated by the final grade, which is calculated using the weighted average calculation formula of final thesis supervisor, reviewer and final theses Evaluation Commission, where the evaluation of final thesis supervisor is equal to 20% , reviewer's grade - 20% of final thesis mark, final thesis Evaluation Commission grade - 60% of final thesis mark:

$$G = 0,2 \times SG + 0,2 \times RG + 0,6 \times CG$$, where:

G - final grade;

SG - Thesis supervisor grade (not rounded)

RG - Final thesis reviewer grade (not rounded)

CG - Final thesis evaluation commission grade (not rounded).

18. If the final thesis was evaluated by two reviewers, the arithmetic mean of the evaluations of both reviewers shall be considered when calculating the final mark.

19. The final grade of the final thesis shall be rounded according to the evaluation system established in the Regulations for Bachelor, International Master or Executive Master Degree Studies, respectively.

20. The members of the commission shall have the right to adjust the calculated final grade of the final thesis in the following cases:

    20.1. Not more than one point higher or lower when the commission unanimously decides that the student's final thesis and its defence are worth more or less than arithmetic average, depending on the overall level of the final theses and their defence.

    20.2. Positively arithmetically evaluated work is evaluated negatively when there are reasonable

doubts during the defence about the final thesis originality, or significant ethics violations.

20.3. Significantly downgrade evaluation where formal components of the final thesis are missing or do not meet the requirements, but the reviewer or supervisor did not take this into consideration.

21. On the decision of the programme director, the final theses defence results are announced at the end of one-day defence or at the end of all study programme semester defence. The results of the final thesis are announced to the students individually on my.ism.lt system and / or personally, with advance notice of the publication procedure.

22. The decision of the final thesis evaluation is collegial, final and not subject to appeal.

23. The decisions of the final thesis evaluation commission shall be approved by the minutes, which shall be signed by the chairman of the commission. The minutes of the final thesis evaluation commission are stored in the Executive School department. The evaluations of the final thesis supervisors, reviewers, commission and final evaluations are provided in the appendix to the minutes. The appendix to the minutes shall be signed by all the members of the commission. After the defence, the final theses are stored following the prescribed procedure in the Executive School study departments respectively.

24. The evaluation commission may recommend placing the thesis in the eLABa information system. With the consent of the student, thesis storage and access statuses are determined in accordance with the University‘s Procedure on Uploading ISM Electronic Documents to the Information System of eLABa.

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