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Polytechnical
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Approved by:

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RULES

ON THE PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

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I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1. These Rules on the preparation and defence of master/bachelor theses in the European Polytechnical University, hereinafter referred to “the University”, sets out:

1. The procedure for admission, giving terms of reference and nominating a master/bachelor thesis advisor;
2. The obligations, rights and responsibilities of the master/bachelor thesis advisor;
3. The content and the scope of the master/bachelor theses;
4. The general principles and requirements for the preparation of master/bachelor theses;
5. The review of master/bachelor theses;
6. The defence of master/bachelor theses before the state board of examiners;
7. The assessment of the master/bachelor thesis and the defence;
8. The retention of master/bachelor theses.

Article 2. (1) The master/bachelor thesis and its defence are aimed at assessing the graduate’s ability to cope, at the level of the respective education degree, independently and as a member of a team, with professional and/or scientific assignments that they are expected to be given in their future work as a specialist.

(2) The master/bachelor thesis is supervised by an advisor nominated by the leader of the respective Academic Standard. The master/bachelor thesis advisor may be assisted by consultants – specialists in different areas of the master/bachelor thesis.

(3) The master/bachelor thesis is assessed by a reviewer nominated by the leader of the respective Academic Standard. The reviewer may be:

1. A lecturer from another higher education establishment in Bulgaria or in another country providing education to students in the same or similar specialties;
2. A foreign partner to the standard;



3. A specialist from the practice.

(4) The master/bachelor thesis is defended before at least three-member state board of examiners comprising habilitated lecturers and representatives of the business within the respective academic standard, and if possible – a foreign partner to the standard.

II. PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

Article 3. (1) Any student who has failed to achieve not more than 15 credit points of the total number of credit points as set out in the curriculum of the specialty is allowed to prepare a master/bachelor thesis.

(2) A student allowed to prepare a master/bachelor thesis has the right to sit for first, second and liquidation session within a period of one year as from the taking of the last semester examination.

(3) Within one week after the end of the last examination session under the curriculum, the student fulfilling the requirement under paragraph 1, is obliged to register in the Education Technology Department thus being given an official status of a graduating student, and upon receiving the terms of reference approved under the respective procedure, they are given the status of a graduate to the respective department.

(4) A student who has successfully passed all semester examinations under the obligatory and the required minimum number of elective disciplines as per the curriculum and has carried out the required academic practices is allowed to defend a master/bachelor thesis.

Article 4. (1) Within three weeks after the beginning of the last semester of the course of study, the Program Council announces the themes for master/bachelor theses and their advisors, and if necessary – the consultants in terms of different parts of the master/bachelor thesis. The themes of the master/bachelor theses and the advisors are defined and nominated by the respective departments. Themes may be also proposed by an external institution or a business organisation. The number of the themes for master/bachelor theses may not be less than the number of graduates.

(2) A graduate may propose a theme on their own, which may not be included on the list of announced themes. After discussion with the lecturer, it may be approved or modified.

(3) The consultants consult and support the graduate during the preparation of the respective part of the master/bachelor thesis, provided the master/bachelor thesis advisor is not a specialist in this area.

(4) In case of difficulties in terms of the choice of an advisor and/or theme, the student may refer to the leader of the respective academic standard.

Article 5. (1) Advisors and consultants of master/bachelor theses may be lecturers from the University, external lecturers from other higher education establishments or external specialists from Bulgaria and from another country with minimum education and qualification degree master.

(2) The number of graduates one advisor may advise in one academic year, respectively one consultant may consult, is defined by the Program Council.

Article 6. (1) In order to be admitted to preparation of master/bachelor thesis, students submit an application to the leader of the respective academic standard where they state the theme and the advisor of the master/bachelor thesis.

(2) A graduating student who has failed to submit an application for master/bachelor thesis in accordance with the established procedure for no good reason, suspends their student rights until the next master/bachelor thesis semester and these rights will be recovered by order of the rector in return of payment of a tuition fee for this semester.

Article 7. (1) Graduates, themes of their master/bachelor theses and their advisers are announced by order of the rector upon proposal of the leader of the respective academic standard.

(2) The following deadlines, in accordance with the annual schedule of the study process are also announced by order of the rector:

1. preparation of master/bachelor theses;
2. defence of master/bachelor theses.

Article 8. (1) After the order of the rector under article 7, paragraph 1, the master/bachelor thesis advisor, in coordination with the graduate, develops an assignment for the master/bachelor thesis (Annex 1).

(2) The terms of reference clearly formulate the theme of the master/bachelor thesis, the input data for its preparation and its content (explanatory note and graphic materials). During the preparation of the master/bachelor thesis, as an exception, the terms of reference may be modified.

(3) Terms of reference contain a serial number, full name, faculty number, specialty and education degree of the graduate, date of assignment, deadline for submission of final version of the master/bachelor thesis ready for review, the names of the master/bachelor thesis advisor and the consultants in different areas of the master/bachelor thesis, where such consultants are required. Terms of reference are archived in the respective departments.

(4) The terms of reference are signed by the graduate, the master/bachelor thesis advisor and the consultants, and the final version – also by the head of the department, and are approved by the leader of the academic council.

(5) Terms of references that do not meet the requirements are returned to the advisor for corrections.

(6) Officially, two copies of the master/bachelor thesis terms of reference are verified – one for the graduate and one for the department, which are retained for a period of five years in the department records.

Article 9. (1) The themes for education degree “bachelor” and “master” are in compliance with the curriculum of the respective bachelor or master academic standard.

(2) The themes for education degree “master” are mainly of research nature. The requirements thereto are set out in details herein below in section III “Requirements to Master Theses”.

(3) Themes should allow to further develop the required students’ skills for solving specific assignments of complex nature independently, which they will be expected to solve in their future work as specialists in the respective fields and according to their qualification description, as well as to expand their knowledge in a specific area.

(4) The themes should allow to demonstrate the knowledge and applicable skills acquired during the course of study in terms of the major disciplines, including fundamental knowledge and



terminology, skills to apply this knowledge and to make decisions being feasible in knowledge-based economy.

(5) One and the same theme may be chosen and prepared by more than one graduate, without breaching the requirements under paragraph (3) and (4) for each of the graduates.

Article 10. (1) The respective Program Council of each academic standard defines the obligatory main parts of the master/bachelor thesis, the volume and the technical requirements thereto, as well as the additional requirements to the members of the state board for defence of master/bachelor theses.

(2) By decision of the advisor, the terms of reference may specify in details other parts too allowing to demonstrate the fundamental knowledge of the graduate in other disciplines included in the curriculum of the respective qualification degree.

(3) The content and the volume of different parts of master/bachelor theses are set out in the terms of references by the advisors in coordination with the consultants, if such are required.

(4) The leader of the academic standard has the right to allow the preparation of a master/bachelor thesis in a volume other than the volume approved by the Program Council or with content not comprising all obligatory parts under paragraph 1 upon provision of motivated written report from the advisor.

Article 11. The graduates prepare their master/bachelor theses independently and use the recommendations of the advisors and the consultants on different parts.

Article 12. Copyrights of the master/bachelor thesis results belong to the graduate and the advisor and are regulated under the Copyrights and Neighbouring Rights Act (SG no. 56 of 1993).

III. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE ADVISOR AND THE CONSULTANTS

Article 13. The master/bachelor thesis advisor is obliged:



1. to explain to the graduate the objectives of the master/bachelor thesis and the graduation-related procedures;
2. to organise regular preparation of the master/bachelor thesis and to provide systematic consultation and to control the graduate;
3. to inform the head of the department in timely manner and in writing about their continuous absence due to justified reasons (business trip abroad, disease, or similar) that could delay or impede the fulfilment of their obligations to the graduate;
4. to become familiar with the master/bachelor thesis after being completed and if needed to ask the graduate to make the required corrections;
5. before the defence of the master/bachelor thesis, to submit their written opinion about the graduate's work to the state board of examiners. The master/bachelor thesis advisor's opinion is considered for defining the mark;
6. to make the graduate familiar with the requirements to the brief presentation during the defence, the nature of asked questions and the requirements to the manner of answering such questions;
7. to attend the defence of the master/bachelor thesis .

Article 14. The consultant for the respective part is obliged:

1. to clarify the graduate the scope and content of the master/bachelor thesis in the respective part;
2. to supervise and consult the graduate during the preparation of the text and non-text part of the master/bachelor thesis in the respective part;
3. to require regularity in the graduate's preparation.

Article 15. For the purposes of ensuring the fulfilment of the requirements under article 13, paragraph 2 and article 14, paragraph 2, the master/bachelor thesis advisors and consultants fix hours for consultations as follows:

1. advisors – not less than four hours a week;

2. consultants – not less than two hours a week.

Article 16. In case the advisor and the consultant are external to the University they are entitled to remuneration for the advisory work in relation to successfully defended graduates in an amount approved by the president of the University, and if they are lecturers of EPU, this work is part of their academic load.

IV. REQUIREMENTS TO MASTER THESES

Article 17. (1) Within one week after the announcement of the themes for master/bachelor theses under article 4, paragraph 1, by order of the academic standard leader a seminar with the participation of all lecturers who have proposed themes for master/bachelor thesis and of the graduating students is organised.

(2) During the seminar the lecturers make presentations to make the graduating students familiar with the nature of their research work.

Article 18. (1) Within one week after the seminar under article 17, the graduating students submit an application to the leader of the respective academic standard to receive master/bachelor thesis terms of reference specifying the respective theme and advisor.

(2) If the capacity under article 5, paragraph 2 of the master/bachelor thesis advisor chosen by the student is full, the leader of the academic council nominates another advisor;

Article 19. (1) The theme of the master/bachelor thesis should reflect modern trends and innovations in the respective scientific and applied field and/or to be of specific interest for the practice.

(2) The theme of the master/bachelor thesis should be in compliance with the topics in the main trends taught during the course of study and to correspond to the desire and interests of the graduates.



Article 20. Graduates, themes and master/bachelor thesis advisors are approved by order of the rector of the University within 7 days after the expiration of the deadline for submission of the applications under article 18.

Article 21. By virtue of the rector's order under article 20, the master/bachelor thesis advisors give each graduate terms of reference for preparation of a master/bachelor thesis in compliance with the requirements of article 9.

Article 22. Graduates prepare their master/bachelor theses independently while consulting with their advisor according to a time schedule agreed by them, however not less than once a week during the period of the master/bachelor thesis as set out in the terms of reference as "date of assignment" and "date of submission".

V. REVIEW OF THE MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

Article 23. (1) The advisor and the consultants for the respective parts (if any) check the material prepared by the graduate for printing and make the respective comments and recommendations.

(2) After the final completion and outlining of the master/bachelor thesis in accordance with the requirements, it is signed by the graduate, by the advisor and by the consultants (if any) and is submitted for review.

(3) The deadline for submission of the prepared final version approved by the master/bachelor thesis advisor to the department is two weeks before the date of the first meeting of the state board of examiners nominated by the order of the Rector under article 29, paragraph 2.

Article 24. (1) The review of the master/bachelor thesis is aimed at verifying whether the assignments and general requirements to master/bachelor theses as set out in the master/bachelor thesis terms of reference are performed and met and at proposing the graduate to be/not to be admitted to the defence of the master/bachelor thesis with the respective mark.

(2) The list of reviewers is discussed and adopted at a meeting of the respective Program Council upon proposal of the Department Councils and is announced by order of the University academic standard leader not later than 2 weeks before the deadline for submission of master/bachelor theses.

(3) The following individuals may be proposed for advisors:

1. specialists from the practice;
2. lecturers from other higher education establishments in Bulgaria and in other countries educating students in the same or similar specialties;
3. specialists from scientific institutions in Bulgaria and in other countries;
4. foreign partners of the academic standard.

(4) Reviewers enter into agreements for preparation and payment of reviews in a specific form.

(5) A reviewer may be assigned up to five master/bachelor theses during one academic year.

Article 25. (1) Reviews are made within one week after the submission of the master/bachelor theses for review in the specific form (Annex 3). The main requirements to the content of the reviews are as follows:

1. Analysis of different parts specifying both the positive aspects and the weaknesses of the master/bachelor thesis and giving the respective recommendations to the graduate including the application of the results.

2. General conclusion in terms of the correspondence of the volume and content of the master/bachelor thesis to the terms of reference, assessment of the master/bachelor thesis' qualities and proposal to the state board to award the respective education and qualification degree.

(2) Reviews are made and submitted in A4 sheets of paper in two identical counterparts – one for the secretary of the state board and one for the graduate.

(3) Reviews that do not fulfil the requirements are not subject to acceptance and payment.



Article 26. The decision for not allowing a student to a defence is made by the department council and/or by the head of the department on the basis of negative written opinions of the advisor and the reviewer after being discussed in the presence of the graduate, the advisor and the reviewer.

VI. DEFENCES OF MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

Article 27. Defences of master/bachelor theses are public. They are carried out during sessions as set out in the curricula and the study process schedule.

Article 28. (1) By their order, the rector of the University, upon proposal of the respective academic standard leader, appoints a state board for defence of master/bachelor theses.

(2) The order for the defence of master/bachelor theses is announced publicly not less than 3 days before the respective date of the defence and such order specifies the date, place and time of the defence, the name of the graduates and the members of the state board of examiners.

Article 29. (1) State boards for defence of master/bachelor theses comprise three to five main members in compliance with article 45 of the Higher Education Act, including a chairman, deputy chairman and secretary. Members of the boards may be:

1. Lecturers in the major profile disciplines in the curriculum of the respective bachelor or master academic standard;

2. Representatives of the business for the respective academic standard;

3. If possible – a foreign partner of the academic standard.

(2) The board is appointed by an order of the rector for a period of one academic year.

(3) The meetings of the boards are valid if held in the presence of all members. In case of absence of a main member for good reason, their place is taken by a substitute member.



(4) For the participation in the state boards each member has the right to remuneration in an amount fixed by the president of the University upon proposal of the respective academic standard leader in coordination with the rector.

Article 30. (1) The terms and conditions for defence of master/bachelor theses are as follows:

1. The graduate presents the most important results of the master/bachelor thesis for not more than 10 – 15 minutes.
2. The review is being read preferably in the presence of the reviewer.
3. The graduate answers only to the comments in the review they disagree with.
4. The members of the state board ask questions to the graduate related to the master/bachelor thesis.
5. During the defence questions that are not relevant to the master/bachelor thesis may be asked in order to judge the theoretical and practical knowledge of the graduate.
6. In their answers the graduates are allowed to make references in their master/bachelor thesis.
7. The chairman of the state board of examiners announces the end of the defence upon completion of all questions.

Article 31. The defences of master/bachelor theses for the two degrees (bachelor and master) should be held separately.

VII. ASSESSMENT OF THE MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

Article 32. After the end of each defence, the state board meets in private to make an assessment, and the meeting is attended by the master/bachelor thesis advisor, and if they wish so – by the reviewer.



Article 33. The marks are assigned according to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System in higher education) and according to the six-point marking system in compliance with the requirements of the *Rules on holding examinations and making assessment of students and graduates in EPU*.

Article 34. (1) The mark of the master/bachelor thesis is based on its content and outline, on the review, the opinion of the advisor and the defence before the state board.

(2) The following should be taken in consideration for the assessment of the preparation of the master/bachelor thesis:

- The complexity and volume of studied matters;
- The profoundness of proposed solution;
- The feasibility of master/bachelor thesis' results;
- The graduate's ability to work independently;
- The weight of admitted errors and irregularities;
- The technical and graphic outline of the master/bachelor thesis.

(3) The following should be taken in consideration for the assessment of the defence of the master/bachelor thesis:

- The profoundness and correctness of answers to raised questions;
- The quickness and ability to apply acquired knowledge;
- The use of professional language (terminology).

Article 35. (1) The respective employee from the Education Technology Department submits the ledger and protocols to the secretary of the state board of examiners after careful verification of the academic status of the graduates.

(2) The protocols from defence of master/bachelor theses are filled in and kept by the secretary of the state board of examiners.

Article 36. (1) Each member of the board suggests a mark of the master/bachelor thesis. Final marks are approved by the board with consensus.

(2) Upon failure to reach consensus for the mark, the decision is made by simple majority.



Article 37. (1) The mark of the master/bachelor thesis is entered in the protocol for defence of master/bachelor theses and in the ledger, which are signed by all members attending the meeting of the state board of examiners.

(2) The results from master/bachelor thesis defences are announced to the graduates in public after the end of the board meeting for the day by the chairman in the presence of all members of the board.

Article 38. (1) Upon failure to attend or in case of failed defence of their master/bachelor thesis during the regular master/bachelor thesis session, the graduate has the right to sit another defence of the same master/bachelor thesis during the next master/bachelor thesis session.

(2) In case of repeated failed defence, the graduate has the right once, within three years after the end of the last academic semester, to prepare new master/bachelor thesis, with new advisor and new reviewer. The graduate pays the semester tuition fee for the newly subscribed master/bachelor thesis semester.

(3) If and within the preceding paragraph, the graduate fails to defend the master/bachelor thesis successfully, they lose the right to graduate on the grounds of the education they have already obtained and leave the University.

(4) The graduates have student rights for the period from being enrolled for the regular master/bachelor thesis semester as per the curriculum until the first master/bachelor thesis defence. After the expiration of this period, the students do not have student rights and may only prepare the master/bachelor thesis and defend it pursuant to paragraph 1 and paragraph 2.

(5) The state board may propose to the rector of the University the best master/bachelor theses to be awarded.

VIII. REPORTING THE RESULTS FROM MASTER/BACHELOR THESIS DEFENCES

Article 39. Within two weeks after the end of the defences, the chairman of the state board of examiners reports the work of the board and the results from the defences to the program council of the respective bachelor or master academic standard.



Article 40. The report may have the following model (not obligatory) structure:

1. Number of all students subject to graduation, number of students who have received master/bachelor thesis terms of reference, number of students who have sat for the defence, the reasons for non-sitting for the defence by students who have received terms of reference.
2. Marks of master/bachelor theses during defences. Analysis of the result and comparison to previous years.
3. Analysis of terms of references – updating, volume, complexity, reality.
4. Analysis of master/bachelor theses – level and quality of preparation of the terms of references, outlining the master/bachelor theses, etc.
5. Analysis of reviews – completeness, criticism, objectivism.
6. Analysis of the work of the state board of examiners during the defences – discipline, activity, objectivism, unanimity.
7. Analysis of defences of master/bachelor theses – reporting, answering the questions, presentation, etc.
8. Nominating the excellent students and master/bachelor theses with most interesting themes.
9. Proposals for improvement of the work.

IX. RETENTION OF MASTER/BACHELOR THESES

Article 41. (1) Master/bachelor theses are submitted to the departments on hardcopy and digital carrier and are registered with inventory number. The retention period of hardcopies is 5 years, and the digital carriers – forever.

- (2) Protocols for defence of master/bachelor theses are retained for a period of 5 years.

Article 42. After the expiration of the retention period, master/bachelor theses on hardcopy may be destroyed with protocol issued by a commission nominated by the department council.

The Rules on the preparation and defence of master/bachelor theses is adopted at a meeting of the Academic Council of EPU on 09.05.2012 and enters into force at the time of its approval.

The Rules are amended and supplemented by resolution of the Academic Council of the University on 03.11.2016.



Date of assignment: _____201__

APPROVED BY:

Date of submission: _____201__

Academic Standard Leader:

(title, degree, name, surname)

Education degree: bachelor/ master

Specialty:

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MASTER/ BACHELOR THESIS

No/ ____201

of student:, faculty No

Theme:

1. Input data

1.1.

1.2.

1.3.

2. Input literature references and other sources:

2.1.

2.2.

3. Content of the master/ bachelor thesis

3.1. Explanatory note



3.1.1.

3.1.2.

3.1... References

3.2. Graphics part

3.2.1.

3.2.2.

3.2.3.

Advisor:

(title, degree, name, surname)

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, name, surname)

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, name, surname)

Student:

(name, surname)

Head of Department “.....”

.....

(title, degree, name, surname)



MASTER/ BACHELOR THESIS

OF

....., ID

Specialty:

Education and qualification degree:

Theme:

.....

Advisor:

.....

(title, degree, full name and employment)



Consultants:

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, full name and employment)

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, full name and employment)

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, full name and employment)

Consultant for Part “.....”:

(title, degree, full name and employment)



style: command of terminology:

correctness of designations: justification of solutions and conclusions:

5. Reviewer's opinion about the preparation of the master/ bachelor thesis according to the terms of reference

6. General assessment of the master/ bachelor thesis:

.....

7. Comments, weaknesses and admitted mistakes in the master/ bachelor thesis:

.....

21. Proposal for admission to defence and mark:

(.....)

Date:

Reviewer:

(.....)