

**VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS**  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR THE COMPLETION, PRESENTATION, DEFENCE**  
**AND EVALUATION OF FINAL THESES**

**CHAPTER I**  
**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Description of the Procedure for the Completion, Presentation, Defence and Evaluation of Final Theses (hereinafter referred to as the “Description”) of Vilnius Academy of Arts (VAA, “Academy”) sets out the general requirements and procedures for the preparation and defence of final theses at the Academy for undergraduate, graduate, and integrated studies.
2. The Description has been prepared in accordance with the Description of the General Requirements for Provision of Studies approved by Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 30/12/2016, other legal acts<sup>1</sup>, Study Regulations and other documents of the VAA<sup>2</sup>.
3. The Study Programme Committees (SPCs) may set specific requirements for the thesis related to the specific characteristics of the study programme.
4. Depending on the study level and the qualification sought, the thesis is either a bachelor’s or a master’s thesis. The same requirements apply to the final thesis for the integrated master’s degree in architecture as for the master’s degree in Art.
5. Depending on the field of study of the first cycle, the bachelor’s theses at the VAA are as follows: bachelor’s thesis in the field of fine arts, design, media art, restoration of art objects, art history.
6. Depending on the field of study of the second cycle, the master’s theses at the VAA are as follows: master’s thesis in the field of fine arts, design, media art, restoration of art objects, architecture, and art history.
7. By presenting his/her thesis in a public defence, the student demonstrates that the results of the study programme have been achieved and that his/her attitudes, skills and knowledge are sufficient for the award of the qualification degree.
8. The thesis topics must be clearly related to the field of study of the programme.
9. The student is responsible for the decisions made in the thesis, the independence and originality of the thesis, the data and other materials presented, the accuracy of the research and the conclusions.
10. Terms used in the description:

---

<sup>1</sup> Description of the Study Field of Fine Arts, approved by Order No. V-390 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 15/03/2022; Description of the Study Field of Design, approved by Order No. V-410 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 18/03/2021; Description of the Study Field of Media Arts, approved by Order No. V-717 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 05/05/2021; Description of the Study Field of Art History, approved by Order No. V-1710 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 27/10/2022; Description of the Study Field of Restoration of Art Objects, approved by Order No. V-1865 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 11/10/2021; Description of the Study Field of Architecture, approved by Order No. V-158 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 13/02/2023.

<sup>2</sup> The Description of the VAA Procedure for the Crediting of Study Results; the Description of the VAA Procedure for Informal Studies; the Statutes of the VAA Study Programme Committees; the Description of the VAA Procedure for Uploading Electronic Documents to the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Information System; the VAA Code of Academic Ethics; the VAA Intellectual Property Management Regulations.

10.1. **Bachelor's explanatory essay advisor** is a teacher-researcher or a doctoral student at the VAA who advises a student writing an explanatory essay for his/her bachelor's thesis.

10.2. **Bachelor's thesis** is an independent research or creative work prepared by a student at the end of the study programme, complying with the requirements of university studies, demonstrating the student's independent ability to link the competences provided by individual study subjects, to understand and apply the acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills, to carry out a research work, and to present conclusions and proposals.

10.3. **Final thesis supervisor(s)/thesis supervisor(s)/supervisor(s)** is/are teacher(s), researcher(s) and/or recognised artist(s) working at the VAA, or doctoral student(s) studying at the VDA, who is/are guiding the preparation of the thesis and is/are advising the student who is working on the thesis, in relation to the thesis, on the methodological and subject-related issues.

10.4. **Thesis advisor** means an expert in his/her field who advises the student on specific issues related to the expert's work experience.

10.5. **Thesis reviewer(s)/reviewer(s)** is/are a researcher(s) or doctoral student(s) in a specific field of science, a recognised artist(s), a teacher(s), or a social partner(s), who gives/give an opinion on the thesis.

10.6. **Thesis Defence Committee** is a committee of not less than five (5) members, nominated by the Dean of the Faculty and approved by order of the Rector of the Academy. The requirements for the composition of the Thesis Defence Committee are detailed in paragraph 64 of the Description. The Thesis Defence Committee is chaired by the Chair of the Committee.

10.7. **eLABa** is the information system of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library, which collects and makes available for public access research and study documents and/or their metadata.

10.8. **Master's (integrated studies) thesis** is a creative research work in art or science, carried out independently by the student(s) of the second cycle, which meets the requirements of university studies and demonstrates the ability to systematise the theoretical and practical knowledge and to carry out a research work.

10.9. **Plagiarism** is the appropriation of someone else's authorship, i.e., the representation/use of a copyrighted subject-matter or part of a copyrighted subject-matter without attribution to the true author and source of the work, or with improper attribution to the true author or source of the work, and in breach of the requirements for citation – rewriting a part of another author's work without a reference, providing a misleading reference, or rewriting a part of one's own earlier text without a reference. The elements of plagiarism in a thesis are determined by the supervisor, the reviewer and the Thesis Defence Committee.

10.10. The **study programme coordinating unit** is either a department or a faculty, depending on the organisational management structure of the VAA.

## CHAPTER II THESIS PREPARATION

11. The final thesis is prepared under the supervision of the supervisor(s). The supervisor:
  - 11.1. advises on the formulation of the thesis topic and the problem to be addressed.
  - 11.2. advises on the preparation of the work plan and work schedule.
  - 11.3. advises on the relevance and appropriateness of the sources used.
  - 11.4. advises on the appropriateness of research methods and the validity of arguments.
12. On the nomination by the SPC, the bachelor's thesis supervisors are approved by the study programme coordinating unit (SPCU) not later than the second week of the eighth semester of studies. The student chooses the thesis supervisor. The choice of the supervisor must be agreed with the SPCU. The creative work/project and the explanatory essay of the bachelor's thesis in art studies are supervised by the same supervisor.
13. The master's thesis supervisors are approved by the SPCU before the beginning of the second semester of studies. The student chooses the thesis supervisor. The choice of the supervisor must be

agreed with the SPCU. Both parts of the master's thesis – the creative work/project and the research paper – may be supervised by a single supervisor with a doctorate in art. In other cases, each part of the thesis is supervised by a different supervisor.

14. The bachelor's creative work/project may be supervised by a teacher-recognised artist. The master's creative work/project may be supervised by a teacher-recognised artist with the title of Associate Professor or higher. The supervisor of the research part of the thesis must hold a doctorate in art or science, or a licentiate in art, or be enrolled in a doctoral programme.

#### **Final thesis topic.**

15. The bachelor's thesis topic and the method of execution are chosen by the student in consultation with the thesis supervisor and the SPC and are approved by the SPCU.
16. The master's thesis topic is formulated by the student based on the individual theses for master's studies in consultation with the thesis supervisor(s). In the case of arts studies, the topic of the master's research essay must be directly related to the creative work/project.

#### **The process of completing a thesis.**

17. The final thesis is prepared according to a timetable prepared in advance by the student and the supervisor. The student must consult regularly with the supervisor and prepare the thesis in accordance with the deadlines set.
18. The thesis topics are approved before the beginning of the eighth semester of the bachelor's degree programme and before the beginning of the second semester of the master's degree programme.
19. The final (revised) thesis topics are approved during the period of permission to defend the thesis in the semester's study timetable and are recorded in the minutes of the SPCU meeting.
20. The final thesis topic may be revised upon the student's written motivated request and with the approval of the supervisor(s) and the SPC, but not less than four (4) weeks before the public defence of the final thesis.

### **CHAPTER III PURPOSE, SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

#### **Bachelor's thesis.**

21. The bachelor's thesis in art studies consists of a creative work and an explanatory essay.
22. The creative part of the bachelor's thesis (final creative work or project) in the field of art studies is an independent creative work(s) of the student(s) to be prepared at the end of the study programme, which meets the requirements of university studies. It is intended to demonstrate the competences acquired during the study. The final thesis(es) must demonstrate the student's independent ability to relate the competences acquired in the individual subjects, to understand and apply the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired.
23. Students of the study field Restoration of Art Objects carry out conservation and restoration work of minor complexity on a movable object of cultural heritage or on the valuable properties of immovable objects of cultural heritage, or a fragment thereof, which corresponds to the third or the second qualification category of a restorer of movable cultural properties in the State Certification for Restorers.
24. The explanatory essay for the bachelor's thesis in the field of art studies (hereinafter, the explanatory essay) is a part of the thesis in which the student describes the topic, idea, problem, and relevance of the bachelor's creative work/project, and, reflecting on it contextually, justifies the idea, the chosen strategy of development and the method of execution of the creative work. The length of the bachelor's explanatory essay in the field of art studies, excluding appendices, is between 1500 and 5000 words. Appendices are submitted separately.
25. An explanatory essay consists of a title page (Annex 1 to the Description), a summary in Lithuanian and in a foreign language, an introduction, the main text, conclusions, or a summary

(recommendations, if needed due to nature of the work), illustrations, a list of illustrations, appendices (if necessary), and a list of literature, sources and electronic data used.

26. The final thesis/project of the bachelor's degree in art studies is a research work based on the knowledge and skills acquired during the studies, independently applied/conducted research, which must demonstrate the student's ability to apply appropriate methods and/or theories, to search for information in various sources, to evaluate, process, analyse, compare, organise, and interpret it. The length of the thesis is between 12,000 and 18,000 words (35–55 pages, not including title pages, summaries, and appendices).

**Master's thesis.**

27. The master's thesis in art studies consists of a final creative work or project and a research paper. The master's thesis, which consists of two parts, is considered to be the sum of creative activity and methodical knowledge management.
28. The final master's creative work or project is the student's independent work(s), the creation or realisation of which is based on the theoretical and practical knowledge and professional skills of artistic expression, technology and professional skills acquired and deepened during the study. In implementing the creative idea, the student draws on his/her research.
29. The scope of the creative work or project is determined in consultation with the supervisor of the creative part of the thesis, taking into account the specific requirements, if any, set by the SPC.
30. Students of the study field Restoration of Art Objects carry out conservation and restoration work of moderate complexity on a movable object of cultural heritage or on the valuable properties of immovable objects of cultural heritage, or a fragment thereof, which corresponds to the second or the first qualification category of a restorer of movable cultural properties or the category of specialist in the conservation of immovable cultural heritage in the State Certification for Restorers.
31. In the research paper, the student critically reflects on his/her creative practice through targeted analysis of life and art phenomena, processes and objects, by exploring purposely selected conceptual, technological and/or aesthetic aspects of the form, and by linking them to the historical contexts and theoretical discourses of the field of study in order to develop new art products, processes, methods and systems, improving solutions to cultural and societal problems, and formulates research conclusions in accordance with the methodological principles of the research paper. The length of the master's research paper in the field of art studies, excluding appendices, must be at least 9,000 words.
32. The research paper must comply with the requirements of the structure of an academic research paper and must include:
  - 32.1. Summary in Lithuanian and English (500 words).
  - 31.2. Introduction. It should state the research problem, define the object of the work, the aim, the objectives, and the research methods. It should address the relevance of the topic. It should also provide a review of literature and sources.
  - 31.3. The text of the thesis, the headings and content of the chapters of which must relate to the objectives set out in the introduction, the course and results of the research, the interpretation of theoretical sources, and the research of other authors.
  - 31.4. The conclusions present the results, observations and recommendations of the work, showing how the aim of the work has been achieved and the objectives of the work have been accomplished.
  - 31.5. A list of references, sources and electronic data used, using the Chicago citation style. Its principles are set out at [https://leidykla.vda.lt/Files/file/Gaires\\_principai\\_ir%20kt/CCS\\_bibliografijos\\_metodas\\_AAAV.pdf](https://leidykla.vda.lt/Files/file/Gaires_principai_ir%20kt/CCS_bibliografijos_metodas_AAAV.pdf)
  - 31.6. List of illustrations and illustrations (provided if used). An example of a list of illustrations is set out in Annex 2 to this Description.
  - 31.7. Appendices containing additional information relevant to the research: questionnaires, survey data, tabular data, charts, documents, etc.
33. The master's degree programme in art history is completed with a final thesis/project, which must be based on independent scientific research or applied research, the application of knowledge, or prepared as a project demonstrating competences in line with the programme objectives. The final

thesis/project must demonstrate the student's level of knowledge and understanding, the ability to analyse the chosen topic, to evaluate previous work by other scientists in the field, to carry out research, and to formulate the results of the research in a clear and reasoned manner. The length of the thesis is between 20,000 and 25,000 words (60 pages), excluding footnotes, bibliography, appendices, and a summary of up to 2,500 words (up to 6 pages).

34. The master's thesis in art history must comply with the requirements of the structure of an academic research paper and must include:
  - 34.1. Abstract in Lithuanian and English (500 words).
  - 34.2. Introduction, which discusses the research problem and relevance of the thesis, the research motives and novelty of the thesis, and formulates the research hypothesis. It defines the object of the research, sets out the aim and lists the objectives. It also discusses the resources of the research – sources (i.e., the material interpreted in the paper) and literature (other authors' interpretations used in the research); describes the research methodology; and identifies and justifies the limits of the research (1,500–2,500 words).
  - 34.3. An analytical text with chapter headings and content related to the objectives and methods set out in the introduction. The content of the chapters is a search for answers to the set objectives and formulated methodological questions by interpreting the sources and drawing on one's own and other authors' research.
  - 34.4. Conclusions, which set out whether and how the research hypothesis has been confirmed, as well as solutions to each of the objectives set out in the introduction and examined in the chapter. The recommended length of conclusions is 1,000–2,500 words.
  - 34.5. A list of references, sources and electronic data used, using the Chicago citation style. Its principles are set out at [https://leidykla.vda.lt/Files/file/Gaires\\_principai\\_ir%20kt/CCS\\_bibliografijos\\_metodas\\_AAAV.pdf](https://leidykla.vda.lt/Files/file/Gaires_principai_ir%20kt/CCS_bibliografijos_metodas_AAAV.pdf)
  - 34.6. List of illustrations and illustrations (provided if used). An example of a list of illustrations is set out in Annex 2 to the Description.
  - 34.7. Appendices containing additional information related to the research: data tables, graphs, charts, survey and interview questionnaires, survey data, copies and/or translations of documents, and other resources to support the argumentation of the paper.

## **CHAPTER IV FORMATTING AND TEXT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FINAL THESIS**

### **Language of the final thesis.**

35. The final thesis shall be written in the correct official Lithuanian language. Terms, place names, surnames of foreign persons, names of companies shall be spelled in accordance with the current resolutions of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. If the foreign language terms used in the text are not officially translated, are common in Lithuanian usage, or the student uses an author's translation of the terms, the term in the original language is given in parentheses. The need for these terms and their substance are justified in the introduction to the thesis.
36. International students may write their thesis in English in agreement with the SPC and the supervisor.  
**Final thesis text.**
37. On the title page, the title of the Academy, the Faculty and the thesis shall be written in Times New Roman 14 pt font, the font of the title shall be in bold, and the author's name shall be written in Times New Roman 11 pt font (Appendix X).
38. The main text of the thesis shall be written on A4 sheets, on one side of the page, in Times New Roman 12 pt font, with 1.5 line spacing.
39. Headings for the table of contents shall be in Times New Roman 14 pt font, in capital letters and in bold. Headings of chapters and sub-chapters shall be in Times New Roman 14 pt font, those of sections shall be in Times New Roman 12 pt font, in bold.
40. Footnote text size is 10 pt.

41. The text of the entire paper shall be justified on both sides (except the title page). Individual words in the text can be highlighted in bold or underlined depending on their importance.
42. Margins shall be 30 mm wide on the left-hand side and 20 mm wide on the right-hand side, top and bottom. The first paragraph of each structural part of the paper shall be indented 10 mm from the left-hand edge of the page.
43. The pages of the text shall be numbered consecutively, starting with the Declaration of Authenticity, and ending with the appendices (page numbers on the title page and table of contents pages are not to be written). The page number shall be written in Arabic numerals at the bottom of the text in the blank margin on the right-hand side. Font size of page numbers is 10 pt.
44. The SPC may decide to change the font size and resolution in order to improve the quality of the final thesis, but this decision must be compatible with the text authentication software.
45. The main body of the thesis is divided into chapters, sub-chapters and sections, numbered in Arabic numerals. For example: Chapter 1; Sub-chapter 1.1; Section 1.1.1. A new chapter starts on a new sheet, and sub-chapters and sections on the same sheet. Chapter headings shall appear at the top of the page and sub-chapter and section headings shall be separated by single line spacing in the text preceding and following them. Each appendix shall be identified separately, and individual appendices shall be printed on separate sheets.
46. The thesis must contain the correct spelling of the en and em dashes, as well as Lithuanian quotation marks („...“). If a long name or term is repeated frequently in the text, abbreviations may be used. The full title is used first, the abbreviation is given in parentheses, and only the abbreviation is used thereafter.
47. References to sources shall be inserted at the bottom of the text page and shall be numbered in Arabic numerals on a continuous basis. For the first citation, the full bibliographic description of the source or piece of literature is included in the footnote. If the following quote is from the same source in the same footnote, the word “Ibid” (Latin for “in the same place”) is used. If the same publication is referred to again (after other works have been incorporated into the references), the author’s surname, the abbreviation “op. cit.” (Latin for “the work cited”) and the page cited are indicated.
48. An alphabetical list of the literature, sources and electronic data used is provided at the end of the thesis. The author’s surname should appear first, followed by his/her name.

#### **Bibliographic layout.**

49. Quotation is the verbatim use of another author’s work or part of a work with the author’s name. Any use of another author’s thoughts and ideas in the thesis must be attributed to the author. The Law on Copyright and Related Rights of the Republic of Lithuania provides that reproduction, publication and communication to the public without the permission of the author of the work or any other copyright holder and without payment of royalties, but with acknowledgement of the source and the author’s name, if possible, is permitted (including making available to the public on computer networks (the internet) a small part of a lawfully published or released work, whether in the original language or translated into another language, as a quotation (for the purposes of criticism or review) in another work, provided that such use is fair and does not exceed the extent necessary for the purpose of the quotation). For more information on citation guidelines for VAA students’ theses, see: <https://leidykla.vda.lt/acta-academiae-artium-vilnensis/informacija-autoriams>. This is an adapted version of the CMS, which is recommended to authors by the editors of the periodical Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis. It is important to maintain the same method of citation throughout the work.
50. When quoting, it is necessary to indicate the source of the quotation: the name, surname of the quoted author and the work quoted, other information about the work (year of publication, publishing house, etc.). This is done through the use of textual footnotes in the main body of the work, i.e., bibliographical references at the bottom of the page.
51. Quotes must be in quotation marks. If a quote does not start at the beginning of a sentence, it starts with a lower-case letter and is enclosed in brackets (<.....>). If the end of the quote is not included, the ellipsis is used in square brackets. If punctuation (full stop, comma, etc.) is needed after a quote, it is placed after the quotation marks.

#### **Binding of the research paper.**

52. The research paper shall be bound in the following order:
  - 52.1. Title page, indicating the name and surname of the author of the thesis, i.e., of the student, the title of the thesis, the study programme, the supervisor of the thesis (his/her pedagogical and/or scientific degree, name, surname), the advisor (his/her pedagogical and/or scientific degree, name, surname, and the institution, if he/she is not employed by the VAA), and the year in which the thesis was written (Annex 3 to the Description).
  - 52.2. Table of contents (linked to pages of text) (Annex 4 to the Description).
  - 52.3. summary in Lithuanian and in English (on separate pages).
  - 52.4. Declaration of Authenticity for the Thesis (Annex 5 to the Description).
  - 52.5. Introduction.
  - 52.6. The main text.
  - 52.7. Conclusions.
  - 52.8. List of references, sources and electronic data used.
  - 52.9. Illustrations and list of illustrations (Annex 2 to the Description).
  - 52.10. Annexes.
- Presenting visual material.**
53. The research paper may use illustrations and/or figures (all illustrative material must be directly related to the text, discussed and analysed in the text).
54. Illustrations refer to all photographic images: photographs, scanned images. Figures refer to graphical material such as tables, charts, diagrams, etc. Illustrations can be inserted into the text, placed at the end of the text, or part of the illustrations can be inserted into the text (as appropriate) and the rest placed at the end of the text. In any case, illustrations must be numbered in Arabic numerals, followed by the abbreviation “Illus.”, a full stop and an abbreviated metric: title, author’s name, surname, year (no full stop after the abbreviated metric). The numbering of the illustrations shall be continuous and shall correspond to the numbering in the list of illustrations. A list of illustrations with full metrics must be provided at the end of the text: title, author’s name, surname, year of creation, source, photographer’s name, surname, year of taking the photograph. The list of illustrations, with full metrics and matching numbering, shall be provided on a separate page immediately following the illustrations section.
55. Figures are inserted into the text, but it is not recommended to insert figures that take up more than one page. Such figures should be included in the appendices. The fonts and font sizes used in the figures may differ from the font used in the overall text. Figures in the text are numbered in Arabic numerals, with the number preceded by the abbreviation “Fig.” and the title of the figure (e.g.: Fig. 1. Distribution of exhibitions of Lithuanian and foreign artists held at Meno Parkas Gallery in 2010–2015). Where figures are included in appendices, they shall also be numbered, with the number preceded by the abbreviation “Fig.” and followed by the title. Figures in the text and in the appendices must be numbered separately. The numbering of illustrations and figures must also be separate.
56. Text information used on the tablets must be written in the correct official Lithuanian language. The top or bottom of the tablet must contain: the author’s name, the title of the thesis, the year of creation, the supervisor of the thesis (his/her pedagogical and/or scientific degree, name and surname).
57. The tablet design must meet the requirements approved by the SPCU and the SPC.
58. The label must contain the following information: the author’s name, surname (in the case of a single-author exhibition, the author does not need to be indicated on the label, but must be mentioned in the annotation), the title of the work, the year of creation, the technique used, the dimensions.
59. Labels must be legible and easy to read (see Annex 6 to the Description for an example).

## CHAPTER V ACADEMIC ETHICS

60. Students are obliged to follow the Code of Academic Ethics approved by the VAA Senate in the preparation of their final theses. In case of violations of academic ethics, the Code of Academic Ethics of the VAA and the Regulations of the Academic Ethics Committee of the VAA are followed.

61. AI tools (e.g., AI programs) can be used for the final thesis, but the introduction of the thesis must indicate which parts of the text and/or visual solutions are generated by the AI tools.

## **CHAPTER VI FINAL THESIS DEFENCE**

### **Permission/recommendation to defend the final thesis.**

62. Bachelor's and master's theses are examined at the meetings of the curriculum committees in accordance with the annual schedule of the Academy's spring semester approved by the Vice-Rector for Studies and on the dates set by the SPCU at least one (1) month prior to the date of defence. If all the requirements are met and there are no major deficiencies, the thesis is approved in the minutes of the meeting as suitable for defence. In the event of substantial deficiencies and in the event of a decision by the SPC not to recommend the student to defend the thesis, a justification for this decision shall be recorded in the minutes. The assessment must be justified by indicating the level of competence demonstrated by the student in relation to the requirements of the specific study programme.
63. Final year students with academic failures are not allowed to defend their thesis.

### **Thesis Defence Committee.**

64. The bachelor's and master's thesis shall be defended in public before the Thesis Defence Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee). Its composition shall be approved by the Rector on the recommendation of the Dean of the Faculty. Nominations for members of the Committee, including the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Committee, shall be submitted by the SPC to the SPCU. The Secretary of the Committee shall be one of the members of the Committee. The Committee shall be constituted according to the principle of impartiality. The Committee shall be composed of at least five (5) members. Members of the academic community of the VAA, lecturers from other Lithuanian or foreign higher education institutions, institutes, scientists, renowned artists, social partners, and practitioners from business and the public sector are invited to chair the Committee and participate in it. The Committee must include one (1) representative of the social partners of the study programme who is not employed by the VAA. At least one (1) member of the Committee for art study programmes must be a researcher with a doctorate in art or science (or a doctoral student). The majority of the Committee for humanities study programmes must be academics. The supervisors of the theses being defended may not be members of the Committee.
65. Separate Committees shall be set up for each faculty or group of study programmes/fields.
66. A meeting of the Committee shall be valid if at least 2/3 of its members are present. The meeting of the Committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee (or, in his/her absence, by a member of the Committee). The minutes of the Committee meeting shall be drawn up by the Secretary of the Committee. The minutes of the Committee meeting shall be signed by all members of the Committee.
67. The Secretary of the Committee shall submit to the meeting of the Committee: the Rector's order authorising the defence of the theses; the theses and appendices thereof; the references of the supervisors and reviewers; the thesis evaluation criteria.

### **Preparing to defend final thesis.**

68. The defence of a bachelor's or master's thesis is subject to the following documents being submitted to the Committee: submission of the SPC with the approval of the SPCU for the defence of the bachelor's or master's thesis, feedback from the thesis supervisor(s) and reviewer(s), the final thesis.
69. Depending on the nature of the creative work, the presentation of the thesis may take different forms, in agreement with the SPCU.
70. At least one (1) printed and bound copy of the explanatory essay to the bachelor's thesis prepared for the defence shall be submitted to the SPCU not later than 5 calendar days before the defence.
71. The explanatory essay is kept for 3 months after the public defence at the SPCU. Printed theses in the field of humanities are stored indefinitely in the VAA Library.



72. At least one (1) printed and bound copy and an electronic copy in pdf format of the research paper for the master's thesis prepared for the defence shall be submitted to the SPCU not later than 10 calendar days before the scheduled date of the defence. Printed theses for Master of Arts and Integrated Studies are stored in the VAA Library for 3 years if the access conditions of the uploaded theses in the eLABa repository are "documents unavailable" or "documents available on the VAA Intranet".
73. Students' final theses (in the case of art studies – the creative and written part) must be uploaded to the repository of the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Information System (eLABa). The uploading of theses to eLABa is the responsibility of the students' thesis supervisors.
74. Final theses shall be uploaded to the eLABa information system at least 10 calendar days before the scheduled defence date. If the final thesis consists of two parts: a creative and a written part, they are uploaded to the eLABa system together (one or more files), creating a single eLABa document description. Theses that have not been uploaded may not be defended. The supervisors of final theses in the field of art history and the advisors of explanatory essays of bachelor's theses in the field of art studies (in their absence – the supervisors of final theses) and the supervisors of research parts of master's theses shall get acquainted with the originality (text match) reports of final theses and approve the works as fit to be defended (send e-licence agreements to authors for signing/printing in eLABa repository) at least seven calendar days prior to the defence of the final thesis. Authors of the final theses shall complete the uploading process (approve the electronic licence agreements and submit the theses for defence in eLABa) at least 5 calendar days before the defence of the final thesis. Final theses are uploaded in accordance with the current VAA procedure for uploading documents to the eLABa repository.
75. The final creative work of the bachelor's or master's thesis must be on public display on the day of the defence. The student may choose the venue offered by the SPCU, or may propose the venue himself/herself if he/she has arranged the venue independently. The venue for the display of the final creative work must be approved by the SPCU at least one (1) month prior to the date of the public defence and the Dean's Office of the Faculty must be informed.
76. The date, time and place of the final thesis defence shall be determined at the meeting of the SPCU. The schedule of defences shall be approved by a decree of the Dean of the Faculty. The composition of the Committees, the places and the schedule of the defences shall be made public at least five (5) working days before the first meeting of the Committee at the Faculty.
- Public defence of final theses.**
77. The public defence of the final theses in the field of arts starts with an introduction of the members of the Committee (by the Chairperson of the Committee or the Secretary of the Committee). Following the introduction of the Committee, the procedure for the defence of the final theses is explained and the start of the defence of the final theses is announced. The Secretary of the Committee shall announce the name, surname of the student defending the thesis, the title of the thesis, the supervisor(s), and the advisor(s), stating his/her/their name(s) and academic and/or teaching degree.
78. The student presents the substance of his/her thesis: the subject, the problem, the aim and the objectives of the thesis, the results obtained, the conclusions; if the nature of the thesis makes it necessary, also the recommendations. Students shall have 10–15 minutes to present a bachelor's thesis and 15–20 minutes to present a master's thesis. If the student exceeds the time allowed for the presentation of the substance of the thesis, the Chairperson of the Committee has the right to terminate the student's presentation after a warning remark.
79. After the student's speech, the floor is given to the thesis supervisor(s) to present the feedback. The time limit for the feedback is 5 minutes for a bachelor's thesis and 10 minutes for a master's thesis. The supervisor(s) shall provide written feedback to the Committee. If the supervisor(s) is/are unable to attend the session, his/her/their written feedback shall be read out by the Secretary of the Committee.
80. The Secretary of the Committee then introduces the reviewer(s), stating their name(s), surname(s), academic and/or teaching degree(s). The reviewer's time limit is about 5 minutes for a bachelor's thesis and about 10 minutes for a master's thesis. If the reviewer is not present at the defence, the

- review(s) submitted in advance shall be read out by the Secretary of the Committee. After the presentation of the review(s), the student responds to the comments and questions of the reviewer(s).
81. The members of the Committee ask questions and make comments, to which the student responds. Other persons present at the defence may also ask questions and/or make comments to the student. The recommended time per defence is about 30 minutes for a bachelor's thesis and 45 minutes for a master's thesis.
  82. In the public defence of a master's thesis in the field of arts, both parts of the thesis are presented and defended: the creative work (project) and the research essay.
  83. The reviewer of the final thesis in the field of art history shall submit one (1) review. The reviewer's speech shall be allowed up to 10 minutes.
  84. Foreign students studying in English in the study programmes registered at the VAA must defend their final theses in English. During the defence, translation from English into Lithuanian and from Lithuanian into English is provided if needed.
  85. Students with individual needs arising from a disability are provided with the conditions necessary for their defence.

**Feedback from the thesis supervisor(s).**

86. The thesis supervisor(s) shall provide the Committee with their feedback on the student's subject-specific and general competences, their changes during the thesis preparation, comment on the objectives set by the student in the thesis, discuss the process of the thesis preparation and the results achieved.

**Thesis reviewers.**

87. The reviewer of the final thesis may be a person with at least a master's degree or a person with the status of a recognised artist or a scientific degree.
88. Parts of the master's thesis in the field of art may be reviewed separately by one (1) or two (2) reviewers.
89. The reviewer of the research part of the master's thesis in the field of art may be a person holding a degree of Doctor of Science or Doctor of Arts or Licentiate of Arts, an art researcher, or a doctoral student.
90. The supervisors of other theses in the same group and members of the Committee may not be reviewers. To ensure impartiality and a qualified evaluation of final theses, thesis reviewers shall be appointed by the SPCU.
91. The representative of the unit shall contact the reviewer directly and inform him/her where the thesis under review is available and when the public defence of the thesis under review is scheduled. The SPCU representative shall also provide the reviewer with the reviewee's e-mail address to which the review should be sent. The reviewer, based on the criteria for the assessment of the final thesis formulated in the description of the study programme subject – the final thesis description, argues the compliance of the thesis with each of the assessment criteria, analyses the thesis, draws conclusions, and provides a final assessment (positive or negative). The reviewer does not grade the thesis.
92. The reviewer shall inform the Committee in writing if he/she notices any breach of academic ethics. The student and the supervisor shall be informed of the review at least two (2) working days before the scheduled date of the defence.

## **CHAPTER VII FINAL THESIS EVALUATION**

**Final thesis evaluation.**

93. The Committee evaluates bachelor's and master's theses in a closed session. The minutes of the session shall be taken by the Secretary of the Committee. The members of the Committee comment on each student's thesis and its presentation. The theses are evaluated according to formulated and pre-announced criteria, which are defined in the descriptions of the specific study programmes. The

Committee shall grade the results, presentation and defence of the thesis. The grading by the Committee is collegial.

94. Decisions on the final grading shall be taken by a simple majority of the Committee by open vote. In the event of a tied vote, the vote of the Chairperson of the Committee shall determine the final grading.
95. The final thesis grade shall be handed to the student personally in a sealed envelope. Once the results have been announced, the Committee's decision is final and may not be appealed. Appeals can only be lodged for breaches of the procedure for the defence of the final bachelor's thesis.
96. The minutes of the Committee's sessions, signed by the Chairperson, the Secretary, and all members of the Committee, shall be kept at the Dean's Office of the Faculty at which the thesis was defended. The signed minutes, accompanied by the supervisor's and reviewer's feedback, shall be submitted by the Secretary of the Committee to the Dean's Office of the Faculty not later than 10.00 a.m. on the next working day after the Committee's session.

**General criteria for the assessment of final theses.**

97. The bachelor's and master's thesis must reflect: the student's acquired general and subject-specific competences, creativity, individual expression, critical thinking, and the ability to reflect on the professional field.
98. The assessment criteria are defined in the final thesis descriptions for the specific study programmes.

**Formal criteria for the assessment of final theses.**

99. A ten-point criterion-referenced proportional grading system is used to assess students' achievement in terms of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.
100. Grading of bachelor's theses: 70% for the creative part of the thesis, 20% for the explanatory essay and 10% for the presentation of the thesis at the defence.
101. The following shall be assessed on a ten-point scale: the quality of the presentation of the creative part of the thesis; the ability to describe the topic, idea, problem and relevance of the thesis; the ability to present the chosen strategy for the development of the thesis and the method of its execution; the ability to present the research carried out; the completeness of the list of the references, sources and electronic resources used for the thesis (knowledge of the historical contexts of art or other fields relevant to the research); the ability to formulate and present conclusions; the ability to debate the thesis-related issues.
102. Grading of master's theses: 60% for the creative part of the thesis, 30% for the research paper and 10% for the presentation of the thesis at the defence.
103. The following shall be assessed on a ten-point scale: the artistic expression, quality of execution and presentation of the creative part; the ability to justify the topic, idea, problem, relevance of the thesis/creative work; the ability to justify the chosen strategy for the development of the thesis and the method of its execution; the ability to draw on one's own creative practice to explore selected conceptual, technological and/or aesthetic aspects of form; the completeness of the list of the references, sources and electronic resources used for the thesis and the level of research carried out (the ability to draw on historical contexts and theoretical discourses in the field of art or any other field relevant to the research); the ability to formulate and present conclusions; the ability to debate the thesis-related issues in a reasoned manner.
104. Grading of bachelor's and master's theses in the field of humanities: 80% for the final thesis, 20% for the presentation of the final thesis at the defence.
105. The following shall be assessed on a ten-point scale: clarity of the problem statement, thoroughness of analysis of literature and sources; the appropriateness of the research method; the depth and comprehensiveness of the interpretation of the research results; the logic of the presentation and the validity of the conclusions; the ability to formulate and present conclusions; the ability to debate the thesis-related issues in a reasoned manner.
106. If a student has not defended his/her thesis, he/she may defend the thesis at the earliest one year later, with the Rector's permission, for a fixed fee.
107. Students who fail to defend their final theses due to illness or other objective reasons and who provide documentary evidence of this are exempted from the fees.

## **CHAPTER VIII APPEAL**

108. Appeals can only be lodged for breaches of the procedure for the defence of the final thesis. The Committee's grading decision is final and cannot be appealed.
109. An appeal may be lodged with the Dean of the Faculty where the thesis was defended by a student (hereinafter referred to as the "appealing student") who reasonably believes that procedural irregularity(s) occurred during the defence of his/her thesis before the Committee. The appeal must be reasoned and clearly state how (by what acts or omissions, with specific circumstances) the established procedures for the defence of the thesis were violated.
110. The appealing student has the right to lodge an appeal not later than within two working days after the date of the final thesis defence.
111. The Appeals Committee shall be convened not later than within three (3) working days after receipt of the appeal.
112. The Appeals Committee shall be composed of at least 5 members and shall be formed by the Dean of the Faculty. If the Dean is a member of the Committee whose decision is being appealed, the Appeals Committee shall be formed by the Vice-Rector for Studies or, in his/her absence, another Vice-Rector. The Appeals Committee must include a member of the Students' Representative Body. A member of the Appeals Committee may not be a member of the Committee whose decision is being appealed.
113. The Appeals Committee shall hear the appeal in an on-site and/or remote meeting (mixed methods are possible; camera must be switched on in the case of remote participation) and shall take its decision by simple majority vote. A meeting of the Appeals Committee shall be valid if two thirds of its members are present.
114. The Appeals Committee shall be guided in its work by the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, the VAA Statutes, the Study Regulation, this Description, and other internal regulations and documents of the VAA.
115. The Appeals Committee shall hear a report by the Chairperson of the Committee on the appeal received, the explanations of the appealing student, the statements, and opinions of the members of the Appeals Committee. After taking all this into account, together with the facts, circumstances and arguments put forward in the appeal, the Appeals Committee shall take one of the following decisions: (1) dismiss the appeal and declare that there has been no procedural irregularity; (2) uphold the appeal and declare that the procedural irregularities were found.
116. The Appeals Committee, having considered the appeal, shall inform the appealing student and the Committee of its decision in writing (by e-mail) not later than within three (3) working days from the date of consideration of the appeal.
117. If the appeal is upheld, the defence is organised again. The repeated defence of the thesis shall be organised without delay, but at the latest within 10 working days from the date of the decision of the Appeals Committee.
118. If the appeal is not upheld, the decision taken by the Committee remains in force.

## **CHAPTER IX PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL THESIS**

119. Once the thesis has been uploaded to eLABa, the thesis data become freely available through the search engine. The system is based on open access principles and enables the dissemination of theses to the scientific, art research community and general public.
120. The creative bachelor's and master's theses are also published in the VAA catalogue of final works. Brief descriptions of the final works, prepared for publication in accordance with the requirements of the exhibition catalogue, are collected by the branch units at the time of permission to defend the thesis, and submitted to the exhibition curator or other person responsible for organising the exhibition. The catalogue contains the topics of the final works, the names, surnames of students and

thesis supervisors and advisors, brief descriptions and illustrations of the works. Information is presented in Lithuanian and English.

## **CHAPTER X FINAL PROVISIONS**

- 121. The Description shall be approved and amended by a resolution of the Senate.
- 122. The regime of authors' (students') property rights in intellectual property objects (final theses) is set out in Chapter V of the VAA Intellectual Property Management Regulations.
- 123. The Description is publicly available on the website of the VAA at [www.vda.lt](http://www.vda.lt).

-----