BAU International University, Batumi

**Standard for Master Thesis**

2025

# **Chapter I. General Provisions**

## I. Purpose and Objectives of the Master's Thesis

The primary purpose of the Master's Thesis defense is to assess the student's ability to conduct independent research, critically analyze data, and present their conclusions. This process allows the student to demonstrate his/her academic and professional growth and to ensure that his/her thesis meets the high standards of Georgian higher education. Accordingly, the successful defense of the thesis will become a prerequisite for granting him/her the academic degree of Master.

The defense of the Master's Thesis is held publicly, at the end of the final semester of the Master's Program, at a time determined by the School, before the Master's Commission. Other persons may attend the defense of the Master's Thesis without restriction.

**Chapter II. Persons Involved in the Evaluation of the Master's Thesis**

## II. Master's Thesis Defense Commission

To ensure an objective assessment of the master's thesis, a master's thesis defense commission is established consisting of at least three members, excluding the supervisor, one of whom is an external invited professional in the field.

The activities of the master's thesis defense commission serve the following purposes:

1) To assess the student's ability to conceptualize, design, and carry out a significant part of the research.

2) To assess the student's ability to effectively communicate research results and respond to scientific criticism.

3) To assess the originality and academic integrity of the thesis.

When evaluating the master's thesis, the commission is guided by the criteria established in the relevant educational program and the master's thesis syllabus.

## III. Master's Thesis Supervisor

The master's thesis supervisor is responsible for guiding the student's thesis throughout the entire process, it is mandatory to provide critical feedback and ensure high quality of work performance. In turn, the student is also obliged to take into account the reasoned feedback of the thesis supervisor throughout the entire process.

The selection of the supervisor of the master's thesis is carried out at the stage of choosing the title of the master's thesis, at the beginning of the final academic semester.

The supervisor's competence, academic, scientific and/or professional experience should allow him to correctly see the problems of the relevant narrow direction, support the master's student in developing a research design, and implement the research in accordance with the academic standards of the university.

The scientific supervisor should be a person who has:

Academic experience - should have the appropriate academic education and experience that will allow them to effectively manage and develop the research. Such a person should be well versed in the theoretical knowledge in the relevant field and research activities based on it.

Practical work in the field - the supervisor should have practical experience in the field, which will help him/her to manage and develop the research in a way that is focused on the real requirements and challenges of the research. This experience may include work directly in the field within which this research is being carried out, or work in organizations related to this field.

Expert activity in the field - it is important for the scientific supervisor to be an expert or advisor in the relevant field, which allows him to determine the latest trends and needs in the field. Expert activity may include consulting, scientific research or other activities through which he makes a significant contribution to the field.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the work, it is possible for more than one person from the program implementing staff to supervise the work.

A change of supervisor is permissible only in the presence of objective circumstances, with the consent of the school and the master's student, if the said change is necessary within the research period, or to implement it to a certain degree.

If necessary, the program provides for the involvement of a co-supervisor or consultants, especially in cases where the content of the research requires a multidisciplinary approach or the presence of additional specific knowledge. Co-supervisors may be:

• Specialists in other scientific areas (for example, experts in economics, law, public administration);

• Practicing managers or professionals involved in education policy formation who will provide the student with practical insights based on real examples.

## IV. Master's Thesis Reviewer

A master's thesis reviewer is a representative of the university's academic corps or invited personnel who critically evaluates the academic quality, originality, relevance and coherence of the work, the clarity of the research problem, objectives, hypothesis and research questions, the relevance, justification and correct use of the methodology, the validity and significance of the conclusions, as well as their contribution to the field.

A master's thesis is assigned to at least two reviewers.

Along with feedback, the reviewer is obliged to highlight the strengths and areas for improvement of the work (at least one each), as well as present 3 questions that the master's student must answer at the defense of the master's thesis.

## V. School

After the supervisor, the Master's School provides an additional assessment of the thesis work on the quality of academic writing, compliance with the standards established by the university, assesses the clarity of figures, tables and appendices, adherence to the required format in citation and reference to sources, and also assesses the academic integrity of the work, by assessing the absence of plagiarism and violations of academic integrity.

# **Chapter III. Research Ethics and Academic Integrity**

## **VI. Research Ethics and Academic Integrity**

The student must maintain academic integrity throughout the research process. All sources must be properly cited, as any form of plagiarism will result in rejection of the master's thesis and academic sanctions.

The work completed by the student must represent the student's original work. The permissible scope and rules for using non-original text are determined by this standard. Plagiarism of any kind (including self-plagiarism) is strictly prohibited and may become the basis for both academic and disciplinary liability of the student.

## VII. Determining the Amount of Authentic Text

Turnitin: The University requires that all papers be evaluated using Turnitin plagiarism detection software.

Turnitin Submission: All master's theses must be checked using Turnitin's plagiarism detection tool to ensure originality. A Turnitin report must be submitted with the thesis.

According to Turnitin, the maximum allowable amount of text similarity is 20%. With the student's argumentation and approval of the supervisor, it is permissible to increase the limit of similar text, but not more than 2%, depending on the specifics of a particular topic.

In case of exceeding the maximum allowable amount of similarity, the student is offered to rework the draft thesis text. If the revised text does not meet the maximum allowable number of similar texts established by this article, the said work will not be admitted to defense.

The alteration of a similar (non-authentic) text of a work by a student, in violation of the rules of citation and use of sources, with the aim of misleading the person determining the authenticity of the text, may be considered plagiarism.

## VIII. Citation

Proper citation: All sources used in the work must be properly cited to avoid plagiarism. Citation should include direct quotes, paraphrases, and ideas that do not belong to the student.

Citation of literature, scientific articles, websites, and other sources must be done in accordance with APA style.

Violation of the citation formatting rules is a basis for refusing to submit the work to the committee. The student must correct the citation within the deadline set by the school for this purpose.

If the tables or figures used in the work are borrowed from other sources, they must be properly cited in APA format below each table or figure.

Using the source directly or in the form of a paraphrase without citing it in the work may be considered plagiarism.

## IX. Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to the use of another person’s work, ideas, or expressions without proper attribution. This includes:

Direct copying of text without quotation marks or citation.

Paraphrasing another person’s ideas or work without citation.

Using artificial intelligence-generated content or external sources without proper citation and acknowledgement.

Reusing one’s own past work (self-plagiarism) without proper citation.

Any instance of plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) will result in rejection of the work, academic and disciplinary sanctions.

# Chapter IV. Scope of Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research

## The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into academic research, including master's theses, is becoming increasingly common. Artificial intelligence tools can assist students in various aspects of their thesis writing, such as literature review, data analysis, academic writing, and formatting. However, it is important that graduate students understand how to use AI responsibly before and during their research to ensure that the research and writing process adheres to ethical principles, including originality and respectful use of the work of others—without plagiarism.

## X. Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence

Originality:

The main ideas, arguments, and analysis should be original. Artificial intelligence tools should only support the student’s original work and not replace his or her intellectual efforts.

Transparency:

The student should be transparent and clear about the use of AI tools. Acknowledge their contribution in the methodology and literature review section.

Proper citation:

All external sources of information, including content or data generated by AI, should be properly cited using appropriate citation styles. The source of the content or data analysis generated by AI should always be indicated.

Avoiding self-plagiarism:

The student should avoid presenting previously used work as new research or reworking it with the help of AI.

Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence:

AI tools can simplify the research and writing process, but they must be used ethically. AI should not be used to plagiarize or present work that is not the student's intellectual property.

XI. Citing Text Created by AI

When using AI-generated content, data, or concepts that are not the original work of the student, the same citation principles apply as for the work of other authors.

Any AI-generated content must be properly cited, even if the ideas are original to the AI ​​tool.

### Use of Generated Text

The use of text generated by large language models (ChatGPT, Jasper, Gemini, Grok, Deepseek, Perplexity, etc.) based on user-created prompts is recommended for the purpose of collecting, evaluating, and analyzing ideas.

Since AI-generated content can be considered the “work” of the AI ​​tool, proper citation is required for the generated text.

Example: Citation for AI-generated content:

OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large Language Model]. https://chat.openai.com/

Relying on AI in the text of the thesis without proper reference may be grounds for cancellation and identification of plagiarism without a review of the student's work.

### Data Analysis

When using AI tools for data cleaning, analysis, and visualization, the student must ensure that all data and results are original to their research. The methods used to analyze the data using AI should be explained in detail, and the AI ​​tool used should be described.

The AI ​​tool used for data analysis can be described as follows:

IBM Corporation. (2022). IBM Watson Analytics (Version 5.3) [Software]. https://www.ibm.com/watson

XII. Preventing the Unethical Use of Artificial Intelligence

The University implements the following practices to prevent, control and detect unethical use of artificial intelligence in master's theses:

### Awareness raising:

Students are informed about the appropriate and inappropriate scope of AI use:

This standard

The syllabus' academic integrity standard

By studying these issues in the scientific writing course.

### Reporting

Within the framework of the research carried out on the master's thesis, the student is required to keep a research diary and submit a progress report in accordance with the research plan. The progress report is an additional source of information for the evaluator on how independently the research activity was carried out.

The master's student, upon request, also undertakes to submit primary research information, which is an additional source of assessment of the validity and ethics of its acquisition and processing.

## XIII. Assessment of Original/Authentic Work

If the student is expected to use a generative text without citation, he/she will be asked probing questions, for example about the content of the sources used. The student should describe the content of the source in a more extensive manner than is indicated in the master's thesis.

The student may be required to elaborate on the findings, recommendations, and other issues related to the topic of the work beyond the information provided in the work.

The absence of a reliable explanation of the research methodology, the content of the sources, the adequacy of the selection, as well as the inability of the student to substantiate the validity of the research data, may become the basis for imposing sanctions for plagiarism.

## **Chapter IV. Thesis Defense Process**

## XIV. Pre-Defense Requirements:

The student must submit the thesis to the Master's Committee two weeks prior to the defense date. This gives the committee members adequate time to review and provide feedback on the thesis.

Turnitin Report: The student must submit a Turnitin plagiarism report along with the thesis prior to the defense to demonstrate academic integrity.

Reviewer Feedback: The reviewer reviews the thesis and sends a written evaluation to the student and the thesis supervisor in a pre-established format. If significant revisions and changes are required, the student may be asked to postpone the defense date. The thesis should be sent to the reviewer for evaluation no later than 3 weeks prior to the defense date so that the student has adequate time to correct minor errors.

## XV. Scheduling the Defense of the Thesis

The defense date must be communicated to the student and the committee at least one month before the proposed date.

The student must share the completed thesis with all members of the committee at least two weeks before the scheduled defense.

## XVI. Presentation

The student will have 30-45 minutes to present a paper that includes the research question, methodology, conclusions, and findings.

The presentation should be clear, concise, and well-structured. Visual aids such as PowerPoint slides may be used to enhance the presentation.

The committee should pay attention to the following key aspects:

Clarity of the research question and hypothesis.

Adequacy of the research methodology and data analysis

Strength and originality of the findings.

Relevance of the conclusions and recommendations.

## XVII. Questions and Discussion

After the presentation, the committee will hold a discussion and the committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions that focus on the research process, conclusions, and the student's ability to justify his or her approach.

The student must demonstrate critical thinking and the ability to defend his or her research decisions, as well as respond to constructive criticism.

## XVIII. Post-Defense Procedures

## In case of a positive assessment, the student is assigned the appropriate grade, in accordance with the syllabus of the master's thesis.

## In case of receiving an Fx grade, the student must rework the master's thesis and submit it in the next academic semester.

## In case of receiving an F grade, the student loses the right to submit the same thesis

## Along with the assessment, the commission will explain to the student in which component his/her assessment was carried out with the appropriate indicator.

## The student is entitled to submit a substantiated appeal, taking into account the feedback of the commission, within 3 days from the announcement of the assessment. The school will consider the student's appeal and issue a substantiated decision within 7 days.

XIX. Award of Degree:

Upon successful completion of the defense and submission of the final thesis, the student will be awarded a Master's degree.

## Chapter VI. Rules for the Presentation of the Thesis Paper

## XX. General Requirements

A master's thesis is an extensive research project that demonstrates the student's academic abilities, research skills, and contribution to the professional field.

The thesis must be original, well-structured, and formatted according to established standards.

The thesis must be submitted both electronically and in print.

## XXI. Structure and Components of the Thesis

A master's thesis should contain the following components in this order:

Title Page - 1 page

Summary / Abstract in Georgian - 1 page

Summary / Abstract in English - 1 page

Table of Contents - 1 page

[List of Tables and Graphs - 1 page]

Introduction (3-5 pages)

Literature Review (10-20 pages)

Methodology (10-15 pages)

Results and Analysis (10-15 pages)

Findings (5-10 pages)

Conclusions and Recommendations (3-5 pages)

[Appendices 5-20 pages]

### Title Page

### The title page should include:

### Title of the thesis: in Georgian and English

### Student's first name, last name

### University name: Full name of the institution.

### Department/Faculty: The main educational unit within which the thesis is submitted.

### Degree: Expected degree (prepared to obtain a [degree name] Master's degree)

### Thesis supervisor: First name, last name

### Submission date: Date, month, and year of submission.

### Abstract

### A brief summary of the research (approximately 200-300 words), including the problem statement, research objectives, methodology, main findings and conclusions. The summary should be written clearly, concisely and intelligibly, without complex terminology. The abstract of the paper should be presented in Georgian and English.

### Table of Contents

### A list of all chapters, sections, or subsections of the work, along with the corresponding page numbers.

### List of Tables and Graphs (if desirable)

### A list of all graphs and figures used in the paper, including their titles and page numbers.

### Introduction

### Introduction to the research problem, research objectives, significance of the research, and structure of the paper. The introduction should set the context and provide an overview of the research.

### Literature Review

### A comprehensive review of existing research and theory related to the topic of the paper. This section should demonstrate the student’s understanding of key concepts and identify gaps in existing research. The literature review should also reflect the theoretical framework that guides the research.

### A complete list of all sources cited in the paper, in APA 7th edition style. Each source should be properly cited according to APA rules.

### Methodology

### A detailed explanation of the research design, including the research question, hypothesis (if applicable), data collection methods, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. Data collection instruments and procedures used to conduct the study.

### Results and Analysis

### Presentation of the research results, including tables, graphs, and charts (if applicable).

### This section should analyze the data in relation to the research questions and hypotheses (if applicable), using appropriate statistical methods or qualitative analysis techniques.

### Findings

### Interpret the research findings, relating them to the existing literature discussed in the literature review.

### Discuss the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and possible avenues for future research.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

### A summary of the main findings, conclusions drawn from the study, and practical or policy recommendations (if applicable). This section should also briefly discuss the contribution of the study to the field and its broader implications.

### Annexes

Any additional material, such as raw data, interview transcripts, survey instruments, or additional diagrams, that supports the research but is not included in the main body of the thesis.

XXII. Rules for the Formation of the Text of a Thesis

The length of the paper should be a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 70 pages excluding the title page, abstract and table of contents of appendices.

**Page size**: A4 (210 x 297 mm)

**Margins**: 1 inch (2.54 cm) on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)

**Font**: Times New Roman, 11-point font for the main text

**Headings**: 12-point Times New Roman for headings, subheadings

**Line spacing**: 1.5 spacing throughout the paper, except for the title page, references, appendices and block quotes, which are single-spaced.

**Paragraphs**: The first line of each paragraph should be indented by 0.5 inches (1.27 cm). There should be no extra space between paragraphs.

Page numbers should be given in the upper right corner of the page and start from the introduction, excluding the title page, abstract, and table of contents.

Each section of the paper should fit within the page range specified in the structure above. For example, a literature review can be 15-30 pages, while a methodology is generally 10-15 pages.

**Citation**

References should be listed alphabetically by the first author's last name.

**Books**:

Author(s). (year). Book title (edition, if available). Publisher.

For example: Smith, J. (2020). Research Methods in Education. Oxford University Press.

**Journal articles:**

Author(s). (year). Article title. Journal title, volume (edition), page range. https://doi.org/xxxx

For example: Brown, L., & Green, K. (2021). The impact of social media on student engagement. Journal of Educational Research, 34 (2), 145-160. https://doi.org/10.1234/abcd5678

**Websites**:

Author(s). (year, month, day). Web page title. Site name. URL

Example: Johnson, M. (2021, April 1). Understanding Academic Plagiarism. Academic Integrity Website. https://www.academicintegrity.com

**Reports and Conference Materials:**

Author(s). (Year). Title of the report or paper (report number or conference proceedings no.). Name of publisher or conference. DOI or URL (if available)

Example: Harris, L. (2019). Annual Report on Student Performance. National Institute of Education. https://www.educationreport.org

**Text generated by artificial intelligence**

Example: OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large Language Model]. https://chat.openai.com/

Data processed by artificial intelligence:

IBM Corporation. (2022). IBM Watson Analytics (version 5.3) [software]. <https://www.ibm.com/watson>

**Tables:**

Each table should be numbered (e.g., Table 1, Table 2), with a clear title above the table. Tables should be presented in a compact format and should not exceed the page margins.

**Figures:**

Figures (graphs, diagrams, images) should be numbered consecutively (e.g., Figure 1, Figure 2), with the title and caption below the figure.