

Methodological enlightenments regarding the bachelor and dissertation thesis

According to REG 26, the bachelor exam consists of two examinations (Test 1 – Evaluation of fundamental and specialized knowledge and Test 2 – Presentation and defense of the bachelor's thesis), and the dissertation exam consists of a single examination, namely the presentation and defense of the thesis dissertation¹.

The bachelor / dissertation thesis therefore have a particularly important role in completing each of the two university study cycles (bachelor's and master's).

The present methodology includes a series of specifications regarding the stages to be completed for the elaboration of the bachelor / dissertation thesis, as well as the form and content requirements that must be respected by the students of the Faculty of Economics.

1. Choosing the scientific coordinator and the bachelor / dissertation topic

The bachelor /dissertation thesis is a scientific work and is developed under the coordination of a scientific supervisor. This is specialized teaching staff, having the scientific title of doctor.

Collaboration with the coordinating teacher directly influences the quality of the bachelor / dissertation thesis and, implicitly, the final result obtained by the student on the occasion of defending the thesis. In collaboration with the coordinating teacher, the student has a series of duties, such as²:

- To collaborate with the teacher to choose the most suitable topic;
- To establish together with the teacher the plan of the thesis and a calendar for its elaboration;
- To choose, in agreement with his thesis coordinator, the methodology for the realization of the thesis so that it proves the practical values necessary for a bachelor / dissertation thesis;
- To take into account the guidelines of the coordinating teacher;
- To hand over to the teacher a copy of the thesis in the final version, in order to approve, grade and draw up the report with the proposal for oral defense in front of the examination committee.

The choice of the bachelor / dissertation topic is made from the list of indicative topics proposed by the teaching staff, but students can also propose other topics from the specialization in which they take the exam and by mutual agreement with the scientific coordinator.

¹Valahia University of Targoviste, Regulation on the organization and conduct of the bachelor and dissertation exam, REG 26, 24.03.2022.

² Ristea A.L., Franc V.I., Popescu C., Metodica în cercetarea științifică, Expert, București, 2017, pp. 119-120.

In choosing the theme for his bachelor / dissertation thesis, the student must orient himself according to several criteria such as:

- The student's interest in the respective topic;
- The practical experience previously acquired by the student in relation to the respective topic;
- The access to sufficient information sources for documenting the thesis;
- The student's ability to put into practice the research methodology required by the respective topic;
- The specific calendar for the realization of a certain topic.

The choice of the scientific coordinator and the bachelor / dissertation topic must be followed by the completion by the student of a standard form (F 035.2010.Ed.2, Application regarding the elaboration of the bachelor / dissertation thesis).

2. Establishing the work plan and the structure of the thesis

The development of a work plan is done by mutual agreement with the coordinating teacher and has the role of guiding the student in his approach to the completion of the thesis. This plan includes the (provisional) title and (provisional) content of the paper, both of which can be modified as the student progresses in applying the chosen methodology.

On this occasion, it is clarified what is sought to be achieved within the bachelor / dissertation thesis (respectively the subject that will be treated, but also those that will be left aside, since not all the issues of a certain field can be addressed), as well as the methodology of research (respectively the working methods and tools that will be used by the student).

The structure of the bachelor / dissertation thesis must include:

- Contents
- Introduction
- Theoretical part (1-2 chapters)
- Practical part (1-2 chapters)
- Final part (proposals, recommendations)
- Conclusions
- Bibliography
- Appendices

The theoretical part of the paper has the role of highlighting the state of existing theoretical knowledge regarding the topic addressed in the paper and substantiating the chosen research tools. For the student, it is an opportunity to demonstrate the theoretical knowledge acquired during the years of university study, as well as the information collected and processed starting from the consulted bibliographic sources. The weight of the theoretical part may differ from one paper to another, depending on the nature of the chosen theme.

The practical part allows the student to demonstrate his ability to apply research methods learned during university studies. The student can select a qualitative or a quantitative method, depending on the nature and objectives of the chosen topic.

In determining the size of the chapters it is recommended to ensure a certain balance so that there are no very large differences between chapters (for example, one chapter is 7 pages and another chapter is 30 pages).

The final part is the one that gives the student the opportunity to prove his professional skills as a graduate of university studies. Depending on the topic, the part of proposals and recommendations can be expressed together with the conclusions of the paper.

The appendices usually contain details regarding the informational material used (for example, statistical data), the research instruments used (questionnaire, interview guide), the detailed results of some field investigations, the syntheses of some point of view belonging to some specialists, extracts from texts or laws. Each appendix will indicate the source of information incorporated. Also, in the text of the paper, express references will be made to the annexes, by indicating the number of each annex.

3. Layout of the bachelor / dissertation thesis

The bachelor / dissertation thesis is written in **A4 format** (21 x 29,7 cm), **with margins of 2,5 cm (top, bottom, right) and 3 cm (left** – this margin being larger to allow binding the paper without affect the text or appearance of the work).

The recommended font for writing the paper is **Time New Roman**, and the font size is **12 points**. **Text alignment is done on both sides** (left – right, corresponding to the **Justify** command in English). Chapter / subchapter headings can be Justify aligned or centered, provided that the chosen solution is applied similarly throughout the thesis.

The structure of the thesis, made up of chapters and subchapters, must be clearly highlighted in the paper. As a result, each chapter (as well as the bibliography and appendices) must start on a new page. It should be avoided that the last page of a chapter contains only a few lines (for examples, 3-4 lines) and the rest of the page remains empty.

In the paper, an important role is assigned to the division of the text into **paragraphs**. These are parts of a subchapter, which express a particular theme addressed by the author. Within a paragraph, usually several **indents** are included, which highlight each of the ideas expressed by the author.

Spacing between lines, as well between indents or paragraphs is 1.5 points, with no other spaces before or after the respective text.

Page numbering is preferably done at the bottom of the page with Arabic numerals. All pages are numbered, even if the number will not be visible on all. The bibliography and appendices are numbered in continuation of the pages of the body-text of the paper, respecting the requirement that they start on a new page. When printing, it will be considered that the first page of the paper (the cover) does not have the page number visible.

The recommended **size** of the bachelor thesis is **about 50 pages**, and of the dissertation **about 40 pages** (excluding appendices).

Cover and title page:

The first page (cover) will include the following information: the name of the university, the name of the faculty, the study program, the type of paper (Bachelor Thesis or Dissertation Thesis), the name and surname of the student, the teaching degree, the name and surname of the scientific coordinator, the month and year of submission.

The title page will include the following information: the name of the university, the name of the faculty, the study program, the full title of the paper, the name and surname of the student, the teaching degree, the name and surname of the scientific coordinator, the month and year of submission.

4. Writing the bachelor / dissertation thesis

The writing of a bachelor / dissertation thesis must follow both formal and content rules. Content requirements refer to the correctness of the use of concepts, methods and scientific information. The form requirements have the role to ensure the readability, clarity and harmony of the paper, as well as the ***grammatical correctness of the expression (compliance with the rules of morphology and syntax)***.

The text of the thesis is written in the form „***black on white***”. The use of other colors is not recommended in the text, and highlighting of certain keywords or ideas can be done using italics, bold, or a combination of bold and italics.

The numbering of chapters and subchapters is recommended to be done on a maximum of three levels (1, 1.1, 1.1.1 or 1, 1.1, A).

Tables and figures must be numbered and have the title mentioned above and the source below the image, being written in the same font as the rest of the paper.

Citing the sources:

There are two ways to cite sources in the paper:

- a) The „author-date” citation system (or the „Harvard system”) which involves placing bibliographic sources in the text by indicating, in parentheses: the name of the author, the year in which the cited paper appeared and, as the case may be, the page where the information was found. In this case, the cited source will be written in the same font size as the rest of the text (TNR 12).
- b) The numerical citation system, which involves placing the quoted source at the bottom of the page, as a footnote. In this case, the source will be written in a smaller font size (preferably, TNR 10).

Example of citing sources:

On the page no. 1 of this document, two bibliographic sources are cited, both in the numerical system, as footnotes.

If, instead of the numerical system, we had opted for the author-date system, then the sources would have been included in the text, as follows:

- ”According to the REG 26, the bachelor exam consists of respectively the presentation and defense of the dissertation” (VUT, 2022).
- ”In collaboration with the coordinating teacher, the student has a series of duties, such as” (Ristea A.L., Franc V.I, Popescu C., 2017, pp. 119-120).

To avoid repeating data on the same bibliographic source, the following notations can be used:

- Op. Cit. – when the paper was previously cited
 - Ex.: M.Popescu, op. cit., page 153.
- Idem – when all the elements of a paper cited immediately before correspond
 - Ex.: Idem
- Ibidem – when all elements correspond to a paper cited immediately before, only the page being different
 - Ex.: Ibidem, page 12.

Diacritics: the bachelor / dissertation thesis written in Romanian must be written with diacritics.

The bibliography is compiled in alphabetical order of the authors (by the authors' names), respectively by the name of the first author, if a paper has several authors. In the case of collective papers (where the names of the authors are not mentioned), statistical yearbooks, laws, etc. the alphabetical order will be made according to the first letter of the title of the bibliographic source, the space usually affected by the author's name being marked with distinct signs (***).

In the case of books, the following information must be specified in order: name and surname of the authors), book title, edition number (if there were several editions), publisher, place where the book was published, year of publication and total number of pages.

In the case of journal articles should be indicated: the name and surname of the author, the title of the article, the name of the journal, the volume and number of the journal, the month and year of publication, the pages on which the article is located.

In the case of online sources, which can be books, book chapters, articles from journals, articles from online platforms, information from websites or social networks, in addition to the information specific to a book/article, their full url address will be indicated and the date of the last access by the student. When the cited online source does not have an identified author, its name will be replaced by three asterisks (***), and sources without an author will be indicated after exhausting sources with a known author.

4. Requirements regarding originality

To enroll for the bachelor / dissertation exam, the thesis must be accompanied by a **declaration** of responsibility from the candidate **regarding the originality** of the thesis (form F 038.2010.Ed.2). This declaration, available on the faculty's website, is completed by the candidate, signed and bound together with the paper.

Also, in order to register for the bachelor / dissertation exam, it is mandatory that the thesis pass **the anti-plagiarism check**. For this verification, the candidate sends the final form of the thesis to the teaching coordinator who, in turn, forwards it to the person in charge of anti-plagiarism verification at the faculty.

The similarity report resulting from the anti-plagiarism check allows the evaluation of the originality of the analyzed paper, respectively the extent to which the text was compiled or copied. In this report, the similarity coefficients 1 (which takes into account all the phrases discovered by the verification system in other documents) and 2 (which calculates the percentage of the text containing similar fragments exceeding 25 words) are indicated. The accepted thresholds for the checked papers are 50% (coefficient 1) and 20% (coefficient 2) in the case of the bachelor thesis and 40% (coefficient 1) and 10% (coefficient 2) in the case of the dissertation thesis³.

For bachelor students, the first and second plagiarism check are free, while for master students only the first plagiarism check is free.

³ Valahia University of Târgoviște, Operation anti-plagiarism verification procedure, PO 07.27, 27.04.2017.

5. Assessment of the bachelor / dissertation thesis before submission

Self-assessment by the student

Before handing in the paper, the student can proceed to a self-assessment of the quality of his paper in terms of form and content. Among the criteria that he can consider we mention:

- a) To evaluate the content:
 - The content of the paper corresponds to the stated title;
 - The paper respects the recommended structure;
 - Theoretical aspects, notions and concepts are presented clearly;
 - There is a clear connection between the theoretical part and the practical part of the paper;
 - The chosen methodology is clearly explained;
 - The bibliographic sources are rich and well indicated in the paper and in the bibliography;
 - The data presented are current and relevant for the chosen topic;
 - The formulated ideas are accompanied by appropriate evidence and examples;
 - The novelty and usefulness of the views expressed and the significant personal contribution of the author.
- b) For form assessment:
 - Page layout is respected;
 - The formal requirements for drafting the paper are respected;
 - Grammatical rules are respected;
 - The bibliography is correctly drawn up;
 - The general appearance is neat, the paper is easy to follow.

If the self-assessment is carried out in sufficient time before the submission of the thesis, it can be an opportunity to improve the final form of the thesis.

An important role belongs to the *assessment carried out by the coordinating teacher*, which has as a reference a standard form at the faculty level (Form F 328.2011.Ed.2). The criteria considered by the coordinating teacher are the originality, the rigor and the theoretical and applied significance of the paper; they form the basis of the grade that the coordinating teacher proposes to the examination committee of the bachelor / dissertation thesis.

6. Oral defense of the bachelor / dissertation thesis

The defense of the bachelor / dissertation thesis is public.

On the occasion of the defense of the bachelor / dissertation thesis, the candidate can use a power point presentation, the duration of which will be determined by the bachelor / dissertation committee. In the case of a visual presentation (power point), the criteria to be considered are: clarity, readability, scientific correctness of the information.

In the structure, the visual presentation must include a plan of the presentation (which does not mean taking over ad litteram the content of the bachelor / dissertation thesis), the presentation of the methodology used, the results obtained, the proposals and conclusions of the author. The first page of the visual presentation must contain the name and surname of the author and the coordinating teacher, the title of the paper, the date of submission, the institution and the study program followed by the candidate.

From an aesthetic point of view, the candidate can use a color combination consistent with the presented theme, taking care to ensure a good contrast, visibility of information from a distance and not to overload the presentation.

The use of graphs, images and statistical data allow the candidate to better highlight the research activity carried out and the results obtained.

The evaluation of a candidate's oral defense depends, in addition to the scientific content of the paper, on the extent to which the candidate knows how to present his paper, respects the assigned time and answers the committee's questions.

7. Sources that can be consulted regarding the bachelor / dissertation exam and the elaboration of the thesis

- Gruba Paul, Zobel Justin, How to write your first thesis, Springer, 2017.
- Lipson Charles, How to Write a BA Thesis: A Practical Guide from Your First Ideas to Your Finished Paper, 2nd edition, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2018.
- Ristea A.L., Franc V.I, Popescu C., Metodică în cercetarea științifică, Expert, București, 2017.
- Valahia University of Târgoviște:
 - Regulation on the organization and conduct of the bachelor and dissertation exam, REG 26, 24.03.2022.
 - Regulation regarding the organization and conduct of the bachelor / dissertation exam, Faculty of Economics - 2022, REG 26, 4.05.2022.
 - Operation anti-plagiarism verification procedure, PO 07.27, 27.04.2017.