**Procedure of holding the final exam**

**at 1st- and 2nd-cycle studies**

**at the Institute of Sociology**

**of the University of Wrocław**

**(including a description of standards to be met by the final thesis)**

# General description

1. The final exam (in sociology, economic sociology and sociology of dispositional groups) both at 1st- and 2nd-cycle studies, is the final part of the studies. The exam is held in the form of a discussion concerning the master or bachelor thesis. During the discussion, the student presents their knowledge, skills and competencies matching the learning outcomes assigned to the curriculum at the major and cycle in question.
2. As a general rule, theses developed for the final exam at both cycles of sociologic studies should be of empirical nature. This does not mean that theoretical theses are no allowed, however, the possibility to prepare and defend such theses is reserved for M.A. students and depends on the consent of the Council of the Institute of Sociology. The supervisor of such a thesis seeks approval of its preparation and defence from the Council no later than during the first term of the Master seminar.
3. The theses concern sociology in its broad understanding as a discipline within social sciences.
4. When verifying knowledge, skills and competencies of the student, the Commission refers to selected learning outcomes. The commission members ask questions based on the curriculum concerning practical courses (methodology) and substantive courses (sociology). It is recommended that in the process of verification of knowledge, skills and competencies, the content of the final thesis, its object, methodology and analytic results are taken into account.

# SEMINARS – SUPERVISORS – REVIEWS

1. Bachelor and master theses are prepared within seminars of thematic content defined by instructors. Students select a seminar they want to attend from among propositions submitted by instructors, provided that the final list of seminars to be delivered for students’ choice is set by the Deputy Director of the Institute in charge of teaching based on provisions regulating limits of students per seminar group, as well as teaching burden structure. When choosing seminar proposals, the Deputy Director of the Institute in charge of teaching follows the following criteria: firstly, necessity to balance the structure of teaching responsibilities of particular employees, secondly – prior teaching expertise of employees in holding seminars, thirdly – seminar themes proposed by employees.
2. Seminar proposals for the 1st- and 2nd-cycle studies must be submitted by instructors no later than by 10th June for seminars starting in the winter term and by 10th November for seminars starting in the summer term. Within a single year, the lecturer must hold no more than three seminar groups, regardless of the major and cycle of studies.
3. Preparation of final theses at seminars does not preclude individual supervision. A student interested in individual supervision by a selected lecturer employed at the Institute of Sociology should obtain approval from the lecturer themselves during the process of registering for thematic seminars, and then the consent of the Deputy Director of the Institute for Teaching no later than two weeks before commencement of the term when the seminar is planned (at 1st- or 2nd-cycle studies).
4. Preparation of bachelor and master theses differing in structure or assessment criteria from the present “Procedure…” approved at the Institute of Sociology, requires an individual application by the supervisor to the Deputy Director for teaching and opinion of the Council of the Institute of Sociology. The application should include detailed grounds for the listed deviations from the “Procedure…” and, if applicable, proposed alternative assessment criteria. The application should be submitted on terms defined in item 2.
5. Supervisors in charge of individual mode of preparation of theses do not hold seminar groups (at 1st- or 2nd-cycle studies) planned for the particular academic year at the major in question.
6. Subjects of bachelor and master theses are determined by the supervisor in charge of the thematic seminar in question. The individual mode of setting a subject by the concerned student is possible, if the supervisor in charge of the seminar or the individual supervisor consents. Theses’ subjects must be finally approved on terms and at dates defined by study regulations.
7. Registration for seminar groups is organised electronically (and so are registration corrections). In a week before the registration, each lecturer who submits a seminar proposal sets one hour of contact consultations to allow students to learn more about the seminar proposals.
8. Theses are assessed by parameters. Points are translated to grades based on thresholds defined herein. Each case of allocation of points by the supervisor and reviewer should be justified and the grounds should refer to respective fragments of the thesis.
9. **If a thesis does not meet the below formal parameters or it is substantially incorrect, it acquires a negative grade. Substantive grounds and failure to meet the parameters should be indicated.**

# ORGANISATION OF THE FINAL EXAM

The final exam, either at 1st-or 2nd- cycle studies, is held before a Commission appointed by the Dean and it includes two stages:

1. The first stage involves presentation of the final thesis at which the student uses the presentation prepared before the defence. Legibility, completeness, as well as the content of the presentation are elements of the grade for the final exam. The time provided for the presentation is 15 minutes maximum and it is enough to present all planned topics.
2. The second stage of the final exam focuses on discussion of assumptions, theses, conclusions presented in the thesis, as well as research and analyses by the student. The discussion concerns both issues referred to the thesis, and the Commission’s selection of literature sources used in the thesis. During the discussion, Commission members ask questions to verify the level of the student’s achievement of knowledge, skills and competencies described in the selected learning outcomes for the major in question. The time devoted to the discussion and the number of questions are unlimited.

# LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE SENT TO THE APD system

1. Text of the thesis in the \*.pdf format along with an annex including tools and materials used to collect data (e.g. survey questionnaires, sampling frames, randomisation paths, interview scenarios, lists of research questions, respondent cards, illustrative materials etc. – only theoretical theses are released from this obligation).
2. Other documents packed in a compressed directory (\*.rar, \*.7z, \*.gzip, \*.zip) – as required:
   1. Empirical material used in development of the final thesis at the 1st- and 2nd- cycle studies, e.g., collection of transcripts, visual materials, texts or other organised empirical material documenting qualitative research and database for quantitative research. All data should be anonymised and described so that they are understandable to any user. This also involves selection of a clear way to index particular elements in the thesis containing empirical data, so that the reviewer can easily combine the specific scope of empirical data with analyses which should include references to the empirical material (only theoretical theses are released from this obligation).
   2. Declaration of maintaining copyright and of awareness of potential legal and financial consequences arising from incorrect anonymisation of the empirical material (if applicable).
   3. List of all files, presenting names of the enclosed files and descriptions of their content in a table.

NOTE! documents described in item 2 are attached only electronically as separate files; their content is not copied into the thesis itself.

# Formal parameters of the theses

1. Final theses, either empirical (quantitative and qualitative) or theoretical, are submitted in written form. They should be prepared according to the following structure (which should not be mistaken for a content list; the latter may be extended):

1. TITLE PAGE

1. ABSTRACT of no more than 300 words, including key words (max. 5).

## III. CONTENTS LIST

1. CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE THESIS. This part of the thesis contains justification of choosing the subject based on analysing adequate sources. The set of sources is determined by the type of the thesis. It is a good practice for this part to include a current review of specialist literature.

* 1. In the case of bachelor theses in the form of a study report, the introduction includes a description of the research problem and a review of studies related to the problem in question (or similar problems) carried out by other scholars along with studies which contain interpretation of research results and recommendations.
  2. In the case of empirical master theses, sources include specialist literature of theoretical or empirical nature (or theoretical only, respectively to the type of the thesis). The references listed by the student should include only the literature used to construct their own research concept/scheme, conceptualisation and operationalisation of terms, building research questions, data interpretation and discussion of original results (which should be also documented with relevant references in the thesis itself).

1. METHODS and METHODOLOGY. Depending on the specific problem, research and thesis itself, this part should be used by the author to describe, respectively to the thesis, the right elements of the following set:

* 1. Characteristics of the set of information sources (people, material objects, symbolic objects etc), considering especially their structure (in theoretical theses: elements of theory or fragments of theoretical works to be analysed).
  2. Research tools and techniques applied in the research; in theoretical theses, the form of a free essay is not allowed.
  3. Description of the course of study and / or analysis of the empirical (or theoretical) material including all categories of research activities taken by the author.

It is not allowed for this part of the thesis to include definitions of research activities derived from manuals (e.g. definitions of the research problem, interview, research method etc.). The author independently describes particular elements of the research process in accordance to the methodology of social science and methods of empirical research (or theoretical analyses).

1. RESEARCH RESULTS and ANALYSIS thereof. Regardless of the thesis’ nature, this part covers about 70% of its content. In this part, the author presents results of analyses understood as processing of empirical data according to the selected models of analysis. Preparation of data for analyses should involve:
   1. for quantitative research: data listing, their comparison, sorting, hierarchisation, categorisation, application of taxonomy techniques, grouping and combining, reduction, scaling etc.;
   2. for qualitative research: coding, building code hierarchy (code trees / code keys), comparative analyses, interpretation keys;
   3. in the case of a theoretical thesis, in this part the author develops the conceptual apparatus allowing solution of the set problem concerning sociological or social theory, including in particular a discussion of specialist literature, which must reflect the student’s knowledge of the state of the art, relate and assess the existing theoretical opinions, analyse them in order to formulate conclusions: to synthesise in the selected area of sociological or social theory, compare the analysed authors or concepts, solve a theoretical problem discussed in specialist literature, develop knowledge in a specific area.

1. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS and ANALYSES. In this part, the author should include a bullet list of practical and/or empirical and/or theoretical conclusions from the research and analyses, describing the effects of the completed research in the context of research concepts presented in the introduction: expected cognitive results and hypotheses. This is also the place to express research directives, if any, for future work found by the student in their research.

1. LISTS (including references)

1. Empirical data in empirical theses (e.g. tables, graphs, charts, photos, schemes, screenshots, quoted statements and interviews or documents used in analyses) should be uniformly and clearly numbered (excluding quoted statements of respondents or field notes) and described. At the end of the thesis, the author should include a separate list for each category of data (lists).
2. Citing: Harvard style
3. Notes: footnotes
4. The references list in the thesis should include only sources used in the work, as documented by references and quotations in the thesis.
5. Other parameters

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| **PARAMETER** | **BACHELOR THESIS** | **MASTER THESIS** |
| Size | Optimally 50 pages of standard print, i.e. 1800 to 2000 characters per page (including spaces) plus references and annexes. | Optimally 80 pages of standard print plus references and annexes |
| Form of the thesis | Research report | Problem elaboration of cognitive nature, exploring new areas of sociological themes or verifying areas of knowledge known to sociology |
| Nature of the thesis | Applied or research (empirical or in exceptional cases theoretical) | Research: empirical or theoretical |

# Formal parameters of the presentation

## 1ST HALF OF THE PRESENTATION

Conceptualisation of the subject, including the practical or cognitive justification of the subject, and:

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| --- | --- |
| QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH | QUALITATTIVE RESEARCH |
| Full operationalisation arising from nominally defined terms used in hypotheses: indicators, method of their registration (in quantitative research: indication of scales with justification of their selection and association with further analytical methods), criterion of occurrence of phenomena referred to hypotheses. | Description of the research method: concerning definition of the sample and selection of empirical units, method of implementation of the research, characteristics of the tool used to collect data, preparation of the data for analysis and applied method of data analysis. |
| Description of the research method: concerning definition of the sample and selection of empirical units, implementation of the study and characteristics of the tool    Description of ethical questions involved in data analysis within the selected subject | Description of ethical questions involved in data collection and analysis within the selected subject |
| Social and demographic structure of the sample |  |

## 2ND HALF OF THE PRESENTATION

For research performed with quantitative methods, the presentation covers main conclusions related to hypotheses, and – in empirical theses – each conclusion must be evidenced by specific data, referring to the applied operationalisation (with potential changes included during the analysis as a result of development of new indicator variables), considering the social and demographic characteristics of the sample and resulting limitations of general conclusions.

In the case of research applying qualitative methods, main conclusions are presented based on analysis of qualitative data, with reference to the set research problem and specific questions and with reference to codes, code hierarchies develop during the analyses (if such methods were applied in analysing the empirical material).

In the case of theoretical theses, the main conclusions are presented allowing assessment whether the author has solved the problem within sociological or social theory, along with a substantive justification why the problem was chosen and short description of subsequent steps taken and conceptual procedures applied, description of the state of the art based on specialist literature and association of the conclusions to the existing opinions.

# Review template and assessment process

Both the reviewer(s) and the supervisor assess particular elements of the thesis, assigning the number of points within the set range (as they find adequate to the level of the element in question). Points are added up and serve as a basis to set the final grade according to the number of points (according to the enclosed categories).

An integral element of the assessment template included in the APD system, is the part of the document which describes the thesis’ formal parameters. This part serves as auxiliary material for the reviewers and supervisors in assessing the thesis.

## A. FORMAL ASPECTS OF THE THESIS (obligator)

1. It meets the formal parameters
2. It meets the formal parameters with slight irregularities
3. It does not meet the formal parameters (specific justification indicating particular irregularities)

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1. TYPE OF THE THESIS (obligatory)
   1. It is entirely consistent with the field of studies
   2. It is partially consistent with the field of studies
   3. The thesis lacks sociological elements (specific justification indicating particular reasons for such assessment of the thesis)

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1. CONTENT ASSESSMENT (obligatory). The assessment concerns each element of the thesis in the context of the chosen subject. For each element, the number of points is assigned. Separate assessments concern the basic level, which is related to correctness of the thesis, and the advanced level related to assessment of the creative conceptualisation and/or above-average analytical skills and/or innovative approach to the subject. Points for the advanced level can be assigned only if the student has obtained at least a half of the maximum points at the basic level. The justification is synthetic and it is expressed *en bloc*, referring separately to the advanced level (if there were points assigned for this level).

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| **ASSESSED ASPECT** | **POINT RANGE** | | | **NUMBER OF POINTS** | | | **JUSTIFICATION** |
| BASIC LEVEL | ADVANCED LEVEL | TOTAL | BASIC LEVEL | ADVANCED LEVEL | TOTAL |  |
| Conceptual framework | 0-25 (13) | 0-5 | 0-30 |  |  |  |  |
| Methods and methodology | 0-25 (13) | 0-5 | 0-30 |  |  |  |  |
| Analyses | 0-50 (25) | 0-15 | 0-65 |  |  |  |  |
| Conclusions | 0-20 (10) | 0-5 | 0-25 |  |  |  |  |
| Total | 0-120 | 0-30 | 0-150 |  |  |  |  |

The below table shows thresholds of total points obtained in all reviewed aspects and their translation to grades:

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| --- | --- |
| **POINT RANGE** | **GRADE** |
| 0 - 60 | Fail [2.0] |
| 61 - 80 | Satisfactory [3.0] |
| 81 - 100 | Satisfactory plus [3.5] |
| **POINT RANGE** | **GRADE** |
| 101 - 120 | Good [4.0] |
| 121 - 140 | Good plus [4.5] |
| 141 - 150 | Very good [5.0] |

1. COMMENTS (facultative). In this section both the supervisor and the reviewer may add any comments which are not included in the templates, e.g. recommendations for the student taking the final exam.

1. It is not allowed to assign any points for methods and methodology, if the thesis contains fundamental mistakes, such as:

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| --- | --- |
| QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH | QUALITATIVE RESEARCH |
| Selecting statistics against the assumptions imposed on data and distributions | No analysis of empirical material |
| Sample parameters that do not allow statistical description | No definition of the method of analysing the empirical material and/or inconsistent application of the method |
| Conclusions based on incorrectly developed analyses | |

1. Conformity of the reviews by the supervisor and reviewer with the above rules is assessed by the Vice-Dean for Education.

# General provisions

1. The present regulations are binding for students who start final thesis seminar no later than in the summer term of 2022/2023.