



**Approved by the decision of the Scientific Council of Azerbaijan University
dated 14 September 2021, No. 01.**

**Rules for Writing, Methodology, Preparation and Defense of the MASTER'S
THESIS**

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SELECTION OF THE MASTER'S THESIS TOPIC

The final stage of higher education at the Master's level is the defense of the Master's Thesis. The Master's Thesis is an independent research (creative) work carried out by the student under the supervision of an academic advisor. The preparation and successful defense of the Master's Thesis is a mandatory requirement for the completion of the Master's program. Only those students who have fully completed all courses specified in the curriculum and have achieved a passing grade are eligible to defend their Master's Thesis.

The proper definition of the topic plays a decisive role in the successful completion of the thesis. The formulation of the topic should clearly reflect the main content and direction of the research.

The student may select a thesis topic from the list of Master's Thesis topics proposed by the department or may propose a topic not included in the list. If difficulties arise in choosing a topic, the student may consult course instructors or the relevant academic department.

When selecting a topic, special attention should be paid to its relevance, as well as to the extent to which the topic has been addressed in the scientific literature and the degree to which it has been explored by other researchers. The topic's specificity, relevance, and scientific significance should be considered among the primary criteria.

The selection of the thesis topic is carried out at the initial stage of the Master's program, during the first semester (**September–December**). Departments should predefine the Master's Thesis topics, regularly update them, and discuss them at departmental meetings. When defining the topics, the contemporary and prospective directions of scientific and educational development, current challenges in education, educational reforms, the state's education policy, as well as the main directions of the department's research activities, should be taken into account. Students should be provided with highly qualified academic supervisors. The Master's Thesis topics assigned to students are formalized at the Faculty Scientific Councils.

Once the topic has been selected, the student must clearly define its essence, main idea, objectives, and tasks for themselves. The student should conduct a systematic analysis of the topic's relevance, scientific novelty, practical significance, and the extent to which it has been addressed in pedagogical literature, and carry out the corresponding scholarly work.

2. STRUCTURE AND PLANNING OF THE THESIS

The structure of the thesis refers to the systematic and sequential organization of its main sections, chapters, subchapters, and paragraphs from the first to the last page of the research work.

- This structure also includes the research findings, the list of references, and the appendices. The structure of the Master's Thesis should generally follow the sequence outlined below:
 - Title Page
 - Contents
 - Introduction
 - Main Body of the Thesis (Chapters, Subchapters, Paragraphs, Sections)
 - Conclusion
 - References - Appendices
 - List of Abbreviations and Symbols (if included in the thesis)

2.1 The Title Page is considered the first page of the thesis and should be prepared in accordance with **Appendix 2**.

2.2 Contents - On the second page following the Title Page (the page number “2” is placed in the top right corner, and pages are numbered consecutively), the heading “Contents” is centred. The Contents should list the titles of the structural sections of the thesis along with their corresponding starting page numbers.

2.3 Introduction - In the Introduction, the word “Introduction” is used as the heading and is not numbered. The following subheadings in the thesis Introduction should be written in bold and should begin with a new paragraph:

- Relevance and degree of study of the topic; - Extent of research on the topic.
- Objectives and tasks of the research.
- Subject and object of the research.
- Research method
- Scientific and practical significance of the research
- Research methods and methodology - Approval/Validation of the research.
- Structure and scope of the research.
- Theoretical and practical significance of the research;

In the Introduction of the thesis, the relevance of the topic is justified first. This is followed by a presentation of the research objectives and tasks, object, subject, scientific novelty, practical significance, and subsequently, the methods, methodology, and validation of the research are described.

- In explaining the relevance of the thesis, the importance and significance of the topic are justified;
- The objectives of the topic and the research tasks derived from these objectives are explained;
- The subject of the research (which defines the topic of the study) and the object (which is the phenomenon, process, fact, or event being examined) are clearly indicated
- A concise commentary on the works related to the topic is also provided, along with an assessment of them.

The Introduction of the thesis is a very important and responsible section. It allows the reader to gain a clear understanding of the content, significance, and scope of the research. The Introduction section of the thesis should be a minimum of 4 pages.

2.4. Main Body of the Thesis

(chapters, paragraphs, subchapters, sections)

The main body of the thesis is divided into chapters and paragraphs. Paragraphs may further be subdivided into sections.

- The titles of chapters should be written in uppercase letters and numbered using Roman numerals. Each chapter begins on a new page. For example: Chapter I
- The titles of subchapters should be written in lowercase letters (except for capitalised initial letters) and numbered using Arabic numerals. For example: 1.1 – the first subchapter of the first chapter.
- Sections within a subchapter are numbered as follows. For example: 2.1.2 – the second section of the first subchapter of the second chapter.

- Chapter titles should be centred, written in uppercase letters and in bold, while paragraph titles should begin on a new line, written in sentence case (except for the initial letter) and in bold;

- In chapter titles, words should not be hyphenated or split between lines. No underlining or period should be used at the end of chapter or paragraph titles. Each chapter should contain at least two subchapters;

- If chapter or paragraph titles consist of two or more sentences, a period should be placed between them;

- From the first chapter of the thesis, the general aspects and main directions of the research should be clearly presented;

- In the second chapter of the thesis, the specific resolution of the problem, the main content of the work, and even ways to improve it are presented. This chapter has a more advanced analytical character and includes the results of studies conducted based on specific facts, events, and experiences, as well as the findings of experiments and observations.

2.5. Conclusion - The thesis concludes with the “Conclusion” section.

- Consequently, the word “Conclusion” is presented as a heading and is not numbered.

- In this section, the research is summarized, and the results of the conducted studies are presented;

- The main scientific innovations should be identified and their significance should be justified;

- The innovations introduced by the author in the research are identified, and recommendations are provided for the further development and improvement of the problem.

It is advisable that the conclusions and recommendations be presented clearly in the form of items or theses.

After the “Conclusion” section, a list of the references used is provided.

2.6. The list of references is an essential component of a dissertation, reflecting the sources used by the author during the research process. To a certain extent, the list of references represents the scientific culture and ethical standards of the research. The level of the dissertation and the researcher’s awareness of the problem are evident from the bibliography.

- In the list of references, the heading “List of References” is presented as a title and is not numbered;

- In the list of references, sources in Azerbaijani are listed first, followed by sources in Turkish, Russian, English, and other languages; within each language group, the sources are arranged in alphabetical order and numbered consecutively.

- The list of references must be genuine. Only the sources actually used are included in the list;

- The references listed are numbered, and the citations in the dissertation text correspond to these numbers;

- Sources consulted during the preparation of the dissertation may also be included in the list of references;

- The list of references should primarily include literature published within the last 10 years.;

- Bibliographic information is arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name, first name, and patronymic, or by the title of the publication;

- In the bibliographic descriptions of sources used in the dissertation, the following punctuation marks are employed: period (.), comma (,), hyphen (-), dash (–), colon (:), slash (/), double slash (//), parentheses (), and square brackets [].

2.7. Appendices - The “Appendices” of the dissertation are provided after the list of references. Appendices are included when necessary for the content of the dissertation.

- The word “Appendices” is presented as a heading and is not numbered.
- Appendices should be paginated continuously as a continuation of the main text.
- All appendices must be referenced in the dissertation text.
- Each appendix should start on a new page, with the top right corner indicating “Appendix 1”, “Appendix 2”, and so on.
- If there are numerous appendices, they may be presented separately in a folder or bound volume under the title “Appendices to the Dissertation”.
- All appendices must be cited in the dissertation text.

Appendices may vary in content. They can include the cover page of any pedagogical document, part of a report, a sample plan, program, protocol, guideline, or other similar materials.

Appendices are an integral part of the dissertation’s main text, with additional significance. They complement the content of the dissertation and appear at the final pages of the work.

2.8. Figures, Graphs, and Tables

- Figures, tables, and graphs used in the dissertation text should be presented at the place where they are first cited, on the following page, or in the appendices.
- Figures, tables, and graphs should be positioned so that they can be viewed comfortably without turning the dissertation, or only by rotating it clockwise.
- Figures, tables, and graphs must be numbered consecutively.
- If only one item of a particular type is included in the dissertation, it is not numbered; only the word “Figure”, “Table”, or “Graph” and its title are provided
- The word “Figure”, “Table”, or “Graph”, along with its number and title, should be placed below the corresponding object.
- The word and title of a figure, table, or graph should be written in sentence case (only the first letter capitalized), in bold black font, without underlining. Numbering should reflect the chapter, paragraph, and object sequence, separated by periods. For example, Figure 1.2.3 – the third figure in the second paragraph of the first chapter.
- Figures, tables, and graphs included in the dissertation must be of high quality.
- Only figures, tables, and graphs created using computer graphics or original sources should be used in the dissertation.
- Figures, tables, and graphs smaller than A4 format should be affixed to a standard white sheet of paper.
- Every figure, table, and graph presented in the dissertation text must be cited in the text.

2.9. Abbreviations and Symbols

- When uncommon abbreviations, symbols, specific terms, new signs, or other analogous expressions are used in the dissertation, a corresponding list with explanations should be prepared.;
- The list should be organized in column format: abbreviations, symbols, specific terms, and signs are arranged alphabetically in the left column, while their exact definitions and meanings are provided in the right column;
- If a particular abbreviation, symbol, specific term, or sign is used fewer than three times in the dissertation, a separate list is not required; in this case, its precise definition and meaning should be provided at the place where it is first used in the text.

3. PREPARATION AND MAIN REQUIREMENTS OF A MASTER'S DISSERTATION

- The introduction should be approximately 4–5 pages in length, depending on the overall volume of the dissertation, and should present the research objectives and tasks, relevance, scientific novelty, practical significance, methods and methodology, position in the scientific literature, and other relevant issues
- The main body should consist of chapters, subchapters, and sections. As a rule, a dissertation should include two or three chapters, each comprising at least two subchapters. Attention should be paid to maintaining proportional volume between chapters.
- The conclusion should be 3–4 pages long, presenting the obtained results clearly, and, if necessary, providing recommendations;
- The list of references must be authentic and correspond to the content of the research; additionally, supplementary readings and internet sources should also be included;
- The “Appendices” section may contain tables, document samples, guidelines, and other materials related to the topic.
- The dissertation text must be typed on one side of A4 paper (210×297 mm) using Times New Roman, Times Roman AzLat, or Alk-Az-Tmsl font, size 14, with 1.5 line spacing, and should be bound;
- The text should be printed observing the following margins: left – 30 mm,
 - right – 10 mm,
 - top and bottom– 20 mm.
- Each line should contain no fewer than 60–65 characters, and each page should have 29–31 lines;
- The spacing between chapter or subchapter headings and the main text should be 2.5 line spacing;
- All lines, letters, numbers, and symbols in the dissertation should be clear and of uniform darkness;
- After typing, if additions are necessary, 2–3 words or symbols may be neatly added by hand in black ink. After printing, no more than two manual corrections per page are allowed for computer errors;
- The author must cite all sources and authors of materials used. In-text citations should indicate, in square brackets, the number of the work in the reference list, the volume (for multi-volume works), and the corresponding page(s). Examples: [54, p.162], [155, vol.2, pp.82–83], [54, p.162; p.23].
- The “list of abbreviations” should be formatted in columns: abbreviations in alphabetical order in the left column, with full explanations in the right column. If a term, abbreviation, or symbol is used fewer than three times, a separate list is not required; its definition should be provided where it first appears in the text;
- Systematic numerical material in the dissertation should generally be presented in tables, with each table provided with an appropriate title. Tables with many rows and columns may be divided into sections and presented over multiple pages;
If a table spans two or more pages, the word “Table” and its number should appear only on the first page in the top right corner; subsequent pages should include the word “cont.” in the appropriate locations. If multiple tables are continued, the continuation should indicate the table number (e.g., continuation of Table 1.2).
- The title and number of a table should be placed at the top of the table, with the number printed in the top right corner. The font size for column and row headings, as well as the table content, should be 12, with single line spacing.

- All information presented in the dissertation text must be clear and legible
- The total length of the dissertation should be 70–75 pages.
- The dissertation should be submitted bound in a thick hardcover.

4. RULES FOR PREPARING THE ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S DISSERTATION

The author must prepare an abstract reflecting the content of the master's dissertation.

- The abstract should be 5–6 pages in length. (It should be typed on A4 paper, leaving margins of 30 mm on the left, 10 mm on the right, and 20 mm at the top and bottom, using Times New Roman font, size 14, with 1.5 line spacing.)
- The title page of the abstract should be the same as in the dissertation, with the word "DISSERTATION" replaced by "ABSTRACT" (**Appendix 2**).
- On the back of the title page, the department where the work was carried out, as well as the scientific degree, title, first name, patronymic, and last name of the supervisor, should be indicated;
- The academic titles and full name (first name, patronymic, last name) of the reviewer who evaluated the dissertation should also be indicated
- The date and location of the dissertation defense should be specified;
- The introduction of the abstract should be approximately 2–3 pages in length, reflecting the relevance of the topic, the problem posed and its current state of study, the objectives and tasks of the research, methods used, information base and period covered, research limitations, main findings, scientific novelty of the results, application areas, and practical significance;
- The abstract should also include the author's published articles, theses, presentations at student scientific societies or conferences, and awards related to the topic;
- The abstract must clearly present the main idea of the dissertation, a concise overview of the chapters, research results, the author's proposals, and innovations. If necessary, a brief summary of related scientific works may also be included

5. PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF A MASTER'S DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The defense of a master's dissertation is usually conducted at the end of the academic year according to the approved schedule.

After the completed dissertation is bound and the abstract is prepared, the master's student submits it to the supervisor. The advisor forwards it, along with their evaluation, to the relevant department. The department sends the dissertation to a specialist with a scientific degree for an official review, in accordance with the thematic focus of the research. Once the official review is received, the dissertation is discussed within the department, and the student conducts a preliminary defense before the department. After the departmental discussion, the dissertation, abstract, reviews, individual study plan, and an extract from the department's discussion protocol are submitted to the dean's office. Based on the materials provided by the department, the dean's office decides on the student's eligibility to proceed to the formal defense.

The following documents of a master's student authorized to defend the dissertation are submitted by the dean's office to the Secretary of the Specialized Council.

1. Master's dissertation (bound) – 1 copy
2. Abstract – 1 copy

3. Supervisor's evaluation
4. Official reviewer's evaluation
5. Extract from the departmental discussion protocol
6. Student's individual study plan
7. Printed copies of the student's published articles and theses related to the dissertation topic
8. Electronic version of the dissertation (on disk)

The Secretary checks the documents, makes notes, organizes them, and submits them to the Specialized Academic Council

The defense of the dissertation is conducted at a meeting of the Specialized Council established by the order of the Rector of the educational institution. The procedures for establishing Specialized Councils are determined by the Ministry of Education and formalized by the Rector of the institution. The master's student defends the dissertation before the Specialized Council according to the approved schedule. Each student is allocated 30 minutes for the defense, with 15 minutes designated for the student's presentation.

The structure of the master's student's presentation during the defense consists of three parts:

First part – materials from the introduction of the dissertation, which the student presents concisely to the commission members, including relevance, scientific novelty, practical significance, subject, object, methods, methodology, sources, approvals, and other related aspects

Second part – a sequential explanation and commentary on the chapters of the dissertation. In this section, the work performed and the results obtained in each chapter are discussed. The student may use technical aids such as posters, diagrams, tables, and charts to support and illustrate their arguments.

Third part – dedicated to the conclusions of the dissertation. In this section, the obtained results, summarized findings, recommendations, and key sources used are presented to the commission members.

Following this, the reviews are read and comments or objections are raised. The student may respond to the comments or agree with them.

The Supervisor and the official reviewer may participate in the dissertation defense.

At the closing session of the Specialized Council, the Chairperson, together with the council members, evaluates the student's defense through a simple open vote. The Chairperson then announces the student's defense grade to the participants.

A master's student who has not defended the dissertation for certain reasons is granted the right to defend it only once, and no earlier than one year later.

If the final grade for the master's dissertation defense is 51 points or higher, the Specialized Council awards the student a master's degree. If the final grade is below 51 points, the student may be allowed to defend the dissertation again after at least one month, provided that the deficiencies identified in the work are corrected.

If a negative decision is issued again regarding the dissertation, the student may be allowed to defend a dissertation on a new topic (no more than twice) during the period established for dissertation defenses of the next academic year's graduates.

After the defense of the dissertation, a decision is made regarding the issuance of a diploma (either standard or with distinction) to the master's student, based on the grades obtained and in accordance with the student's field of study.

Thus, the defense of the dissertation marks the completion of the master's program at the higher education institution. The successful outcome of the dissertation and the corresponding diploma confirm that the student has been trained as a specialist and has acquired the necessary professional knowledge in their field.

Note: This section applies only to dissertations that have successfully passed the plagiarism check.

APPENDICES

Appendice 1

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN
AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY**
All rights reserved

Master's first name, patronymic, last name

title

Specialization Code and Name: _____

MASTER'S DISSERTATION

Supervisor: _____

First name, patronymic, last name. Academic degree and academic title

BAKU– YEAR

Appendice 2

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
AZERBAIJAN
AZERBAIJAN UNIVERSITY**

All rights reserved

Master's first name, patronymic, last name

title

Specialization Code and Name: _____

Abstract for the Master's Degree Dissertation

Supervisor: _____

First name, patronymic, last name. Academic degree and academic title

BAKU – YEAR

Appendice 3

The master's dissertation was completed at the Department of Economics and Management, Azerbaijan University

Supervisor: Associate Professor, PhD
in Economics, N.B. Büyukkishi
Official Reviewer: Associate Professor, Doctor of
Economic Sciences, E.M. Yusifov

Thesis defense “ _____ ” on ____ 2021 at _____

It will be held at the meeting of the Specialized Academic Council established under Azerbaijan University for awarding the master's specialization and academic degree.

Address: 71 Jeyhun Hajibeyli Street, Nasimi District, Baku, Azerbaijan

The dissertation is available for review at the library of Azerbaijan University

Secretary of the Specialized Council: _____

Chair of the Master's and PhD Programs Department: _____