

**Criteria for master's dissertations, as well as the scope and form of
the "Agri-Food Economics and Trade" diploma examination (graduate studies)
(in effect from the academic year of 2020/2021)**

(adopted by the Agri-Food Economics and Trade Programme Board on September, 29th, 2020, taking into account Ordinance No. 188/2019 of the Rector of the Poznań University of Life Sciences of 23 December 2019 on the introduction of a procedure for awarding university diplomas and issuing dissertation recommendations)

Master's dissertation

1. To be allowed to take a diploma examination, a student must prepare and submit his / her master's dissertation. A master's dissertation is a dissertation prepared by a master's degree student, which corresponds to the graduate's profile defined in the Agri-Food Economics and Trade study programme and meets the relevant course, level of education and general academic profile requirements. The dissertation creation process is implemented based on the faculty diploma examination schedule (Form F1; Appendix No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019).
2. Both the topic and content of a master's dissertation must be in line with the scope of the studies and the learning outcomes specified for the Agri-Food Economics and Trade major. The student's interests, as well as the research area of the given unit and the needs of utility units, must also be taken into account.
3. A dissertation should demonstrate the student's ability to define and solve problems and use research methods in a given field. The subject of a dissertation may consist in:
 - performing a research task,
 - developing or improving a research or measurement method.

A dissertation should be conceptual, scientific and research-based and should prove the candidate's in-depth knowledge concerning the relevant field of education.

Master's dissertation standards

1. The subject, structure and scope of a dissertation must be agreed upon with the dissertation supervisor and included in the diploma dissertation sheet (Form F2, Appendix No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019). After obtaining approval of the Chairperson of the Agri-Food Economics and Trade Programme Board, the Deputy Dean for Student Affairs approves the dissertation topic and appoints a reviewer. A copy of the relevant form is then forwarded to the unit where the dissertation is being prepared. A written form including justification must be submitted before changing the dissertation topic or the dissertation supervisor. To do so, a student must submit a request to the Deputy Dean for Student Affairs (Form F3, Appendix No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019).
2. The structure of a dissertation should include the following elements:
 - **title page** (Appendix 1);
 - **table of contents**;
 - **abstract** (in English and Polish) – should be appropriately structured and must include: a short reference to the subject of the dissertation, the aim and scope of the dissertation, research methods used and the most important results achieved (conclusions); it must not exceed 1000 characters;

- **introduction** – should include: a justification for choosing the dissertation topic, the research problem or question, possible theses or hypotheses, a short description of the dissertation structure and the contents of the individual chapters; besides, the introduction must include the following elements as separate parts:
 - **dissertation scope and purpose**, in which both the primary and secondary aims of the dissertation, as well as the scope of research must be defined (subjective, objective, temporal and territorial scope);
 - **source materials and research methodology**, indicating both the primary and secondary materials used, and the method or methods applied; optionally, a separate chapter on the methodology can be included (it must be the first chapter of the dissertation);
- **dissertation content** – should be separated into chapters and subsections, contain illustrative material in the form of tables and figures, as well as the appropriate literature references (Appendix 2) and discursive footnotes; the first part of the dissertation should contain a reference to the theory of economics, a reference to previous research and a literature review related to the dissertation topic; subsequent parts of the dissertation should contain a resolution of the topic along with the results and interpretation of any empirical research conducted;
- **summary**, which should include: a reference to the main aim of the dissertation, as well as any potential theses or hypotheses and the most important findings and conclusions drawn from the empirical research and analyses conducted;
- **bibliography** (Appendix 3);
- **list of tables** and **list of figures**.

A master's dissertation may also contain an Annex (a set of supplementary appendices).

3. Master's dissertation technical requirements:

- dissertation text – Times New Roman font, 12-pt.;
- line spacing – 1.5;
- margin size: lower and upper – 2.5 cm, outer – 2.0 cm, inner – 3.0 cm;
- the titles of all dissertation parts should be highlighted and included in the table of contents; chapter and subsection titles should be written in bold; chapters should begin on a new page;
- tables and figures (all diagrams, schematics, maps, etc. are considered figures) must be numbered and both their titles and the sources of the data they contain must be provided; table titles must be placed above tables while information on sources must be placed below them; both figure titles and information on sources must be placed below figures;
- discursive footnotes must be written using a 10-pt. font with single line spacing; footnotes must be placed outside the main dissertation text at the bottom of a page and must be numbered consecutively throughout the work.

4. As a standard, dissertations are written in English, with a Polish translation of the title included on the title page under the English title, as well as a summary both in English and Polish placed after the table of contents and before the main dissertation text.

Preparation and acceptance of a master's dissertation

1. MSc seminars are conducted by professors and post-doctoral researchers (Polish: "profesor" and "doktor habilitowany") with proven academic achievements in regard to publishing or teaching in the given study field and profile.
 - 1.1. MSc seminars are meant to enable students to publicly present and discuss the theses contained in their dissertations.
 - 1.2. The MSc seminar supervisor plays an advisory and consultative role.
 - 1.3. The curriculum content, which ensures that MSc seminar-specific learning outcomes are attained, is defined in the curriculum and subject syllabus for the MSc seminar for Agri-Food Economics and Trade studies.
2. The dissertation supervisor directly oversees the preparation of a master's dissertation.
3. Professors, post-doctoral researchers and doctors (Polish: "profesor", "doktor habilitowany" and "doktor") with proven academic achievements in regard to publishing or teaching in the given study field and profile can be appointed MSc dissertation supervisors.
4. As part of the dissertation supervision process, the dissertation supervisor assists the graduate student in choosing the topic, plan and structure of the dissertation, as well as data acquisition and processing methods, and provides substantive guidance on the interpretation of research results and recommendations for editing the dissertation.
5. Students must send their master dissertations to their dissertation supervisors so that the latter may verify them using the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System (Jednolity System Antyplagiatowy – JSA).
6. Degree candidates shall add the following at the end of their dissertations:
 - *The author's statement on the originality, independent preparation and non-infringement of copyrights of the dissertation* (Form F4, Attachment No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019);
 - *The author's statement on the conformity of the electronic version of the dissertation with its printed form* (Form F5, Appendix No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019).
7. Students shall prepare three copies of their master's dissertations and sign them by hand. Dissertations are accepted by the dissertation supervisors, who confirm this with a signature on the title page.
8. Degree candidates are allowed to make any number of copies of their master's dissertations for themselves and should bring their own copy to the diploma examination.
9. Once the dissertation has been accepted by the dissertation supervisor, students shall submit one copy of the dissertation (duplex print, softcover) along with a Report from the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System (JSA), signed by the dissertation supervisor, to the Dean's Office; then students shall also submit an electronic version of their dissertation to the Virtual Dean's Office using their personal accounts. Students shall submit individual copies to the reviewers and dissertation supervisors, together with the diploma dissertation evaluation forms (Form F6, Appendix No. 1 to the No. 188/2019 Order of the Rector of PULS of 23 December 2019), which they shall receive at the Dean's Office. In justified cases, it is also possible for the Dean's Office to provide an electronic copy of the dissertation and the dissertation evaluation form.
10. A dissertation must be submitted at least one week before the planned date of the master's diploma examination. A copy of the multimedia presentation to be presented at the examination must be provided along with the dissertation on an electronic medium (e.g. CD).

11. Master's dissertations are reviewed by professors and post-doctoral researchers (Polish: "profesor" and "doktor habilitowany") with proven academic achievements in regard to publishing or teaching in the given study field and profile.
12. Students have the right to read the reviews, which are submitted to the Dean's Office by the reviewer and the dissertation supervisor no later than 3 days before the date of the diploma examination.
13. The diploma dissertation files in the Virtual Dean's Office shall be accepted by the Deputy Dean for Student Affairs. Dissertations shall be submitted to the National Repository of Written Diploma dissertations (Ogólnopolskie Repozytorium Pisemnych Prac Dyplomowych – ORPPD).

Diploma examination conditions

The conditions for admission to take the diploma examination are as follows:

1. Obtaining the appropriate number of ECTS credits, as specified in the study programme (obtaining credits in all courses included in the study plan).
2. Acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation supervisor and submitting it to the Dean's Office.
3. Obtaining a positive result of the Uniform Anti-Plagiarism System verification (JSA).
4. Obtaining positive dissertation reviews grades from both the dissertation reviewer and the supervisor.

Diploma examination

1. Once the dissertation has been submitted to the Dean's Office, the Deputy Dean for Student Affairs shall set the date of the diploma examination, with all the consequences specified in the PULS Study Regulations that this entails. Diploma examination dates are set in accordance with the faculty diploma examination schedule for the given academic year.
2. The diploma examination takes place before a three-person examination board consisting of a chairman and at least two examiners, which is appointed by the Deputy Dean. In justified cases, with the consent of the Deputy Dean, the diploma examination may take place using synchronous online contact, in which both the examination board and the student participate in the examination at the same time while being in different locations. A diploma examination can be conducted via a video conference, remote learning platforms and other synchronous tools for group work.
3. A diploma examination is an oral examination conducted to verify the student's learning outcomes. The examination is conducted in the following way:
 - The chairman of the committee permits the degree candidate to take the examination by stating that all formal requirements have been met and the master's dissertation submitted by the candidate has received a passing grade.
 - The candidate draws two questions from the list of questions for the Agri-Food Economics and Trade major and answers them. If the candidate is unable to draw questions, it can be done by another person; using a random number generator for this purpose is allowed as well. Obtaining a failing grade for the answers to the questions results in failing the entire examination.
 - After answering the questions successfully, the candidate proceeds to discuss the main theses of his / her dissertation with the help of a multimedia presentation; this is followed by a discussion on the dissertation. Obtaining a failing grade for the answer to the reviewer's question(s) during the discussion on the dissertation results in failing the entire examination.

- The board evaluates the course of the examination and issues a grade in accordance with the PULS Study Regulations.
- 4. Diploma examination grading takes place based on § 41 of the PULS Study Regulations.
- 5. The final study grade is determined on the basis of a grade average of all final grades for the curriculum courses (grade point average), the diploma examination grade and the grade average of the diploma dissertation grades.
- 6. Based on § 52 of the PULS Study Regulations, the final study grade is a sum of:
 - a. $\frac{3}{5}$ * grade point average,
 - b. $\frac{1}{5}$ * diploma examination grade,
 - c. $\frac{1}{5}$ * diploma dissertation grade average.

Retake examination

1. Should a student receive a failing grade for the answers to the questions drawn or the discussion on the dissertation, the Deputy Dean shall set a second, final date for the diploma examination (§ 51 of the PULS Study Regulations).
2. The retake examination may take place no earlier than a month and no later than 3 months after the initial examination date (§ 51 of the PULS Study Regulations).
3. In matters not regulated by this document, the provisions of the Poznań University of Life Sciences Study Regulations shall apply.