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**Rules and recommendations for dissertation thesis, dissertation thesis methodology, and literary research for students of doctoral study programmes at FFWS**

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Article 1

**Introductory provisions**

- (1) This Dean's Regulation is valid for the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Sciences (hereinafter referred to as "FFWS") of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague (hereinafter referred to as "CZU") and sets out guidelines for assigning final dissertation theses (hereinafter referred to as "DissT"), the elaboration of DissT assignment, DissT methodology, literature review on the dissertation topic, and the actual DissT for doctoral study fields and programmes (hereinafter "DSP") at FFWS.
- (2) This Regulation is elaborated in particular in accordance with Act No. 111/1998 Coll., On Higher Education Institutions, as amended, the valid Study and Examination Regulations for Study in Doctoral Study Programmes at the CZU in Prague (hereinafter also "SER") and valid Dean's Regulation concerning the Rules and Requirements for DSP at FFWS.

Article 2

**Rules for assigning dissertation theses and elaboration of dissertation thesis assignment**

- (1) The DSP Departmental Board (hereinafter "DB") regularly, at least once a year before the start of the admission procedure, discusses the framework topics or thematic areas of the DissT and the supervisors for these topics.
- (2) These topics or thematic areas are published on the public part of the FFWS webpage. The supervisors may publish the DissT topics via the University Information System (hereinafter "UIS"): <https://is.czu.cz>.
- (3) Upon agreement with the supervisor, a student can write a DissT on a topic that he/she proposes.
- (4) The DissT topic must be related to the profile of the graduate of the relevant DSP.
- (5) The DissT assignment is created and approved via UIS. The supervisor is responsible for formal as well as professional accuracy of the DissT assignment. The DissT assignment must be created within 6 months of the student's enrolment in the study and is valid after approval by the Dean.
- (6) In the event that during the research there are fundamental changes within the DissT assignment, e.g. in the objectives or methodology, the DissT assignment must be modified. The modified DissT assignment must again be approved by the supervisor, the DB Chairman, and the Dean. The assignment content is described in the Methodological instructions for assignment, elaboration and defence of DissT and other papers within DSP at FFWS.

- (7) When writing the DissT, a student follows the valid SER, individual study plan, valid Dean's Regulation concerning Rules and Requirements for DSP, FFWS schedule, instructions of the supervisor, or consultant and DB. When elaborating the DissT, it is recommended to follow the Methodological instructions for the assignment, elaboration and defence of the DissT and other papers within the DSP at FFWS.

### Article 3

#### **Rules for submitting and assessing DissT**

- (1) The deadline for submitting the DissT is governed by the student's individual study plan, the valid SER, and valid Dean's Regulation concerning the Rules and Requirements for DSP at FFWS.
- (2) The student submits his/her DissT in electronic and printed form, according to the valid SER and valid Dean's Regulation concerning the Rules and Requirements for DSP at FFWS.
- (3) After submission of the DissT, a plagiarism check is performed by an independent system and its object is to determine conformity of the student's DissT with the texts of other authors.
- (4) If the DissT match with another author's texts is greater than or equal to 20%, it is the duty of the DissT supervisor to comment on this match in his/her report. The chapter Results is not included in this match if the DissT is in the form of an annotated set of published articles, i.e. if the thesis contains scientific articles where the DissT author is listed in the author's team (also applies to points 5 and 7 in Article 3 below).
- (5) A DissT is also considered unsatisfactory, if the text does not contain proper citations of more than 20% of bibliographic sources which are listed at the end of the DissT in the list of information sources.
- (6) A DissT which coincides with the texts of another author in the range of over 20%, including proper citations, is also considered unsatisfactory, as they are used as a compilation of integral parts of another author's paper.
- (7) A match of the DissT with previously published texts of the author (e.g. diploma thesis) is not considered unsatisfactory. The size of such a match (sum of matches with individual papers) must not exceed 20%.
- (8) The decision as to whether or not a DissT can be considered unsatisfactory ("plagiarism") rests with the Committee during the state doctoral examination (hereinafter "SDE"), before which the student's defence takes place.
- (9) If the DissT is marked by the Committee as plagiarism according to the previous point, the student is given the evaluation "failed" and the whole case is handed over to the relevant FFWS disciplinary Committee.
- (10) A case of plagiarism, defined according to the previous points in Article 2, is handed over to the FFWS disciplinary Committee even if the student's defence before the Committee at the SDE does not take place.

- (11) The actual process of defending a DissT is governed by the valid SER and valid Dean's Regulation concerning the Rules and Requirements for DSP at FFWS, the course of defence according to the Methodological instructions for the assignment, elaboration and defence of the DissT and other papers within the DSP at FFWS.
- (12) The student is informed about the assignment to the SDE Committee via UIS and also by email automatically sent via UIS.
- (13) The date and place of the DissT defence and SDE are published in UIS, on the public part of the CZU website and on the FFWS notice board.

#### Article 4

##### **Elaboration of DissT methodology**

- (1) The DissT methodology must be submitted, signed by the supervisor, within three months of enrolment to study in printed form at the FFWS S&R Department and entered into the UIS system, unless the Vice-dean for Science and Research (hereinafter "S&R Vice-dean") determines different conditions for submitting the DissT methodology in a given year.
- (2) The DissT methodology is approved by the relevant DB (according to the valid Rector's Directive – Rules of Procedure of Departmental Boards). In the event that the DB approves the DissT methodology, the DB Chairman forwards this information to the S&R Department in the form of meeting minutes. The S&R Vice-dean enters the fulfilment of this obligation in the UIS within the student's individual study plan.

#### Article 5

##### **Elaboration of literature review**

- (1) The elaboration of a literature review on the DissT topic must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September of the academic year that the student enrolled in the study. The specific deadline for submitting the literature review is set by the S&R Vice-dean.
- (2) The method of submitting the literature review is determined annually by the FFWS S&R Vice-dean.
- (3) As part of this study obligation, mandatory defence of this research takes place, during which the student can also defend all previous activities during the first year of doctoral studies, based on the Committee chairman's instructions. The Committee is composed of members of the DBs of the individual FFWS study programmes. Committee members are appointed by the Dean. The content of the presentation for literature review defence is given in the Methodological instructions for the assignment, elaboration and defence of the DissT and other papers within the DSP at FFWS.
- (4) The Committee prepares a brief report on the literature review defence, which will include recommendations and opinions for the student and the DB. At its meeting, the DB takes into account the Committee's opinion in its literature review quality evaluation. Subsequently, the Committee decides in the form of (i) the student must rework his/her literature review, re-submit,

and re-defend before the Committee, (ii) the shortcomings of the literature review are not serious and the DB requires a reworking of the DissT according to the DB's comments and submit to the DB for re-assessment, (iii) the literature review meets all requirements, is of high quality and defended before the Committee. In this case, the DB forwards this information to the FFWS S&R Department in the form of meeting minutes. The S&R Vice-dean enters the fulfilment of this obligation in the UIS system within the student's individual study plan.

Article 6  
**Final provisions**

- (1) This Regulation applies and is binding for all DSP students at FFWS.
- (2) This Regulation shall enter into force and effect on the day of its publication on the public part of the CZU website.

Prague, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021

prof. Ing. Róbert Marušák, PhD.  
FFWS Dean

Appendix

**Methodological instructions for the assignment, elaboration, and defence  
of the DissT and other papers within the DSP at FFWS**

(I)

*DissT assignment*

The DissT assignment contains (a) thesis title, (b) thesis objectives, (c) methodology, (d) recommended scope, (e) keywords, (f) recommended sources, (g) supervisor, (h) consultant.

a. Thesis title

It must clearly specify and focus the topic (temporally, spatially, in terms of approach, method used, research sample, etc.). The title should be concise, clear, and unambiguous so that its meaning can be clearly understood. It should contain a technical term or terms from the terminology of the thesis field of study. The DB may permit a change of the thesis title on the basis of the supervisor's request.

b. Thesis objectives

The thesis objectives must be formulated unambiguously and intelligibly. They must be concrete, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Hypotheses can also be stated in this part of the assignment. These are defined as a solution to a problem or a relationship between specified variables.

c. Methodology

The methodology clearly describes the key methodological parts of the thesis: locations of data collection, time period of data collection, set minimum range of number of measurements and samples, used statistical procedures, etc. Part of the methodology is also the schedule of submission of key components of the DissT to the supervisor. The student is obliged to follow this schedule when working on the DissT. The DissT schedule may be adjusted on the basis of the supervisor's instructions, due to objective reasons arising from the course of the work. In the case of modification of the schedule change, on the basis of these circumstances and the supervisor's consent, the assignment does not have to be modified and approved again by the Dean.

d. Recommended scope

The recommended scope of the DissT without appendices is determined for individual DSPs by the valid Dean's Regulation concerning Rules and requirements for DSP at FFWS.

e. Keywords

4-7 keywords that must not be part of the thesis title.

f. Recommended sources

At least 10 sources of scientific literature, the vast majority foreign. The sources must be up-to-date and correspond to the current level of knowledge in the field.

g. Supervisor

For each particular DissT, a supervisor is approved by the DB. The supervisor guides the DSP student throughout the study. In the course of the study, the Dean may change the DissT supervisor after DB discussion.

h. Consultant

If a DissT topic requires the need for specific guidance or professional consultations, which cannot be done by the supervisor, a consultant is appointed who oversees the part of the DSP student's study agreed with the supervisor. The consultant is usually a leading expert with a scientific degree or the academic title of "doctor" and is proposed by the supervisor. After DB approval, the consultant is appointed by the Dean according to the valid SER.

## (II)

### *DissT form*

Pursuant to Section 47, Paragraph 4 of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., the study is duly completed by an SDE and a public DissT defence, which demonstrates the ability and readiness for independent activity in the field of research or development or for independent theoretical and creative artistic activity. The DissT must contain the original and published results or the results accepted for publication.

The dissertation thesis is divided into:

- Introductory part;
- Main text part;
- Appendices;
- Final part.

Only the professional text from the main text part, without references, is included in the minimum scope of the DissT set by the DB.

#### **Introductory part includes:**

- a. Front cover and inside cover
  - the front cover contains the title page essential elements: the name of the university (Czech University of Life Sciences) and faculty (Faculty of Forestry and Life Sciences), type of thesis (dissertation thesis), name of the author and year of elaboration;
- b. Title page
  - contains the name of the university and faculty, the name of the study programme, the title of the thesis in Czech and English, the name of the author, the name of the supervisor, or consultant, number of appendices, place and year of elaboration;
- c. DissT assignment (see above);

- d. Annotation
  - annotation means a brief description of the DissT in terms of its content, methodology, results, and contribution (in Czech, English and some other global language), up to a maximum of one page;
- e. Keywords in Czech and English (see above);
- f. Declaration of independent elaboration and citation of all used sources;
- g. Acknowledgements (optional);
- h. List of contents;
- i. List of used symbols and abbreviations (in alphabetical order);
- j. List of tables and list of figures (together with the number of the page on which they are printed).

**Main text part includes:**

- a. Introduction;
- b. Objectives and hypotheses;
- c. Literature review on the DissT topic;
- d. Methodology describing solutions and research results;
- e. Results;
- f. Discussion (in particular synthesis of results; comparison of DissT results, opinions and recommendations with other studies, etc.);
- g. Conclusion (summary of the most important findings and results; contribution to the scientific field, practice, society, etc.);
- h. List of references.

The form of citations in the text and the form of the list of bibliographic citations and other sources is taken, based on the supervisor's recommendation, from a recognized scientific journal, or the DissT can be elaborated according to ČSN ISO 690 Documentation – Bibliographic citations and ČSN ISO 690–2 Information and documentation – Bibliographic citations – part 2: Electronic documents or parts thereof.

The list of references contains only the sources which the text refers to. It is recommended to sort the list of references alphabetically by authors and year of publication.

If a DissT is in the form of an annotated set of published articles, its necessary part is a professional text of at least 30 standard pages, which includes in particular:

- a. Introduction;
- b. Objectives and hypotheses;
- c. Literature review on the DissT topic;
- d. Methodology describing solutions (only fundamental methodological procedures leading to the fulfilment of the DissT objectives);
- e. Results – copies of scientific articles (they are not part of appendices);
- f. Discussion (in particular synthesis of DissT results; comparison of DissT results, opinions and recommendations with other studies, etc.);
- g. Conclusion (summary of the most important findings and results; contribution to the scientific field, practice, society, etc.);
- h. List of references, or other sources.

## Appendices

Appendices include additional information supplementing the main text, such as explanations of research methods and techniques which are summarized in the text, visual documentation, user manuals and instructions for use, tables, figures, photographs, etc. If the appendices are extensive, they can be bound separately. The individual parts of the appendices must be separated by clear marking. Each individual appendix must start on a new page.

### Final part includes:

- a) Index (optional);
- b) Errata (if needed);
- c) Inside back cover and back cover;
- d) Amendments (CD ROM, samples, etc.).

## (III)

### *SDE and DissT defence schedule*

#### Recommended SDE schedule

- a) SDE is an oral exam conducted in front of a Committee. The SDE is opened by the Committee chairman, who introduces the Committee members, makes a proposal for the appointment of a recorder and a scrutineer, and lets the Committee members vote on them. He/she then gives the floor to the supervisor (not a Committee member), who briefly introduces the student and his/her previous activities, activities within the doctoral study, and the DissT topic. The chairman then gives the floor to the student.
- b) SDE consists of an expert discussion on the researched topic and three professional subjects arising from the DissT topic.
- c) In the form of a presentation, the student briefly introduces the DissT topic (introduction to the SDE part – expert discussion on the researched topic). The presentation should be prepared in PowerPoint or similar programs. The length of the presentation should be 15 - 20 minutes.
- d) Expert discussion on the researched topic is then initiated. The student takes opinions on the researched topic, and answers the Committee members' questions according to the Committee chairman's instructions.
- e) The exam from three professional subjects arising from the DissT topic follows.
- f) After the candidate answers all the Committee's questions (or does not answer some of them), the public part is closed by the Committee chairman.
- g) After closing the public discussion, the chairman shall exclude all guests, including the candidate, from the meeting and open a closed Committee meeting, which may be attended by the Committee members. In this part, the SDE result is decided.



- h) The SDE result with the grade "passed" is conditioned by the result of the "passed" in all SDE subjects. If the student does not pass one or more subjects, or the professional discussion on the DissT topic, the SDE must be repeated in full.
- i) The announcement of the result is public.
- j) The examination Committee issues a record of the SDE on a standardised form and the record of the SDE is registered in the UIS. If the student does not pass the SDE, the SDE can be repeated at the earliest after sixty calendar days from the date of the unsuccessful attempt to pass the SDE.

#### **Recommended DissT defence schedule**

- a) The defence is public. It is opened by the Committee chairman, who introduces the Committee members, makes a proposal for the appointment of a recorder and a scrutineer, and lets the Committee members vote on them. He/she also presents the DissT topic and an overview of the student's important published original scientific papers. He/she then gives the floor to the supervisor (not a Committee member), who briefly introduces the student and his/her previous activities, and activities within the doctoral study. The chairman then gives the floor to the student.
- b) In the form of a presentation, the student briefly introduces the DissT topic and its contribution. The presentation should be prepared in PowerPoint or similar programs. The length of the presentation should be 20 - 25 minutes.
- c) Opponents give reviews; the chairman or another designated member of the defence Committee shall read a report for an absent opponent.
- d) The student takes opinions on the opponents' reports, and answers the opponents' questions according to the Committee chairman's instructions.
- e) After the candidate answers all the Committee's questions (or does not answer some of them), the discussion is closed by the Committee chairman.
- f) After closing the public discussion, the chairman shall exclude all guests, including the candidate, from the meeting and open a closed Committee meeting, which can be attended by the DissT defence Committee members, and also opponents and supervisor with the consent of all Committee members. At a closed meeting, the Committee evaluates the course of the defence. The defence result is decided by secret ballot and evaluated by the words: "defended" or "did not defend". Subsequently, the Committee chairman publicly announces the result to the candidate.
- g) The DissT defence Committee keeps minutes of the DissT defence course and the adopted resolutions, which are signed by the dissertation defence Committee chairman, and a record is made of the voting, which is signed by all voters. The minutes and record are forwarded to the Dean.

## (IV)

### *DissT methodology*

DissT methodology includes:

- a) A brief up-to-date overview of the researched topic;
- b) Established scientific hypotheses;
- c) Objectives;
- d) Selected methods described in detail;
- e) A time schedule.

The scope of the DissT methodology is approximately five standard pages of specialised text, without references.

## (V)

### *Literature review and its defence*

The literature review must provide the student with information about research that has already been conducted on the DissT topic, including errors that were made during this research.

The aim of the literature review is to create a critical overview of current knowledge on the DissT topic. Its basic aim is to give the student an up-to-date overview of current literature on the topic and provide a basis from which it is possible to evaluate the accuracy of the proposed research and methodology. On the basis of the literature review, the student can also find new suitable methods for his/her own research and build on previous research.

The literature review must be of high quality from a professional point of view, and the individual parts must follow on from each other logically. The review must contain relevant bibliographic references in a consistent and appropriate format, use the correct technical terminology, be an unbiased and comprehensive overview of previous research on the topic, and a synthesis of the information presented.

The scope of the review is at least twenty standard pages of specialised text, without references.

The form of citations in the text and the form of the list of bibliographic citations and other sources is taken, based on the supervisor's recommendation, from a recognized scientific journal, or the DissT can be elaborated according to ČSN ISO 690 Documentation – Bibliographic citations and ČSN ISO 690–2 Information and documentation – Bibliographic citations – part 2: Electronic documents or parts thereof.

To defend the literature review, the student prepares a presentation, which should include in particular:

Priority part:

- a brief summary of the literature review focusing on the evaluation of the results obtained so far from scientific studies on the topic in relation to the student's DissT.

Part to be presented only at the invitation of the Committee chairman:

- ISP fulfilment up to now;
- Proposal of the current DissT methodology;
- Previous activities and fulfilment of DissT objectives;
- Previous outputs, including information on the articles in progress and journals they will be sent to, or further presentation of own results (conferences, seminars, etc.);
- foreign trips;
- other planned activities during PhD study.