


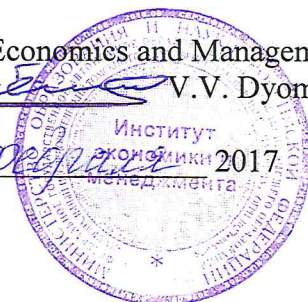
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
NATIONAL RESEARCH  
TOMSK STATE UNIVERSITY

**Institute of Economics and Management**

APPROVED BY:

Director of  
Institute of Economics and Management  
 V.V. Dyomin

« 16 »  2017



**Guidelines for MBA-Thesis Preparation and Defence**  
**Within the Part-Time Executive Programme**  
**“MBA-AGRIBUSINESS”**

Tomsk – 2017

Written by:

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EXAMINED AND RECOMMENDED for using in the teaching and learning process by the Didactic Committee of the Institute of Economics and Management

Minutes of the meeting on « 15 » 02 2017 г. № 4

Didactic Committee chair  V.V. Makoveyeva

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## **1. MAIN GOALS AND TASKS**

Completion of the Thesis is a final stage of the MBA-Agribusiness Programme. It is an independent piece of research.

The Thesis must include a comprehensive cross-functional analysis and solutions to a relevant issue in business administration.

The Thesis aims to systematise, strengthen the knowledge acquired through the Programme, demonstrate a student's ability to identify and formulate problems, plan and conduct research, obtain results and interpret them, and justify recommendations for overcoming the real problem of a company.

Writing their Thesis, students must perform the following tasks:

- to justify the relevance of a problem for an enterprise and strengthening of its market position;
- to conduct a thorough study of the topic in terms of the theory and practice of administration;
- to show sufficient knowledge and practical skills to complete a serious study, draw conclusions and recommendations for action;
- to justify feasibility of recommendations and suggestions, their economic effectiveness;
- to demonstrate the ability to express their thoughts in a correct, logical way, to interpret the results of research, to sum up the information and analyse it, to make calculations, to draw graphs and diagrams based on the obtained data.

The main requirements for the Thesis:

- use the latest legal documents, regulations, methods, and other economic literature relevant to the topic;
- use theoretical and practical approaches of international authors;
- avoid mistakes when writing your Thesis;
- present your Thesis using approaches and techniques studied through the Programme;
- observe the formatting rules.

Students fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum and Educational Service Agreement are allowed to start their Thesis.

## 2. PROCEDURE

The topic of the Thesis must reflect an administrative nature of a student's study.

When selecting a research area students must avoid a theory-only study, since the Thesis is to demonstrate students' ability to solve real managerial tasks of a business entity.

An object of research must focus on entrepreneurship of a real entity, a subject concerns a particular managerial problem of the entity where the student works or whose activity he is familiar with in practice. Temporary relevance of the question must match the terms of research. Outdated issues are not allowed (implemented investment strategies, existing products, etc.). The study is to be made on the basis of scientific knowledge in management and economics.

Students are provided with several options for area and topic of the thesis:

1. Students independently select a research area and topic in accordance with their research and professional interests and agree it with their research supervisors.
2. A research area and a topic can be selected in view of the interests of an employer. In such a case, the subject is an order for research.
3. Students choose their research area and topic with the help of their research supervisors.

According to the selected research area, students have to submit an Application (Appendix A) to the Director of the Programme. The Application serves as a basis for the appointment of a research supervisor in agreement with the student.

After that, a student has to prepare a three-page *Research Proposal* (Appendix B) for the first meeting and start work with the appointed research supervisor.

Final formulation of the topic must contain the description of a research object, reflect a managerial task to be solved, and selected research area.

To approve a Thesis topic and research supervisor (who assists in formulating a particular research topic and making a plan of research), students of the Programme have to submit an Application in accordance with Appendix B of the Guidelines. Then, the topic of research and research supervisor are approved by the Director of the Institute of Economics and Management.

Study, interaction between students and research supervisors and control over the course of Thesis preparation must be agreed with the research supervisor on the basis of the completion terms and defence of the Thesis approved by the Director of the Programme.

***Formatted Theses signed by the student and the research supervisor must be submitted to the Director of the Programme MBA-Agribusiness along with the reference letters of the supervisor and an external organisation 5 days prior to the defence.***



### 3. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

*The Thesis must be structured in the following way:*

Title Page

Table of Contents

Introduction

Section 1. Overview of theoretical aspects of the problem

Section 2. Research methodology

Section 3. Identification of the problem in a studied area and results of research

Section 4. Main recommendations and conclusions based on the research results

Conclusion

Reference list

Appendices

*The content of the components*

Title Page is the first page of the Thesis and is supposed to be formatted in accordance with the rules (Appendix D).

Table of Contents contains names of sections and paragraphs identified with the page numbers where these components begin; a list of names and pages of the tables included into the Thesis; a list of names and pages of all the figures, photographs, illustrations, and diagrams.

Introduction.

The section explains the relevance of the study in terms of improving the company's activities, its goals and objectives, subject and object of research, formulation of research hypotheses. It also sets out the range of issues to be investigated and describes the nature of the factual materials used in the study, information sources, and research methods.

Section 1. Overview of theoretical aspects of the problem.

The section must consider and critically evaluate various theoretical concepts, views, methodological approaches to the solution of the problem.

Students must reveal trends in the development of theory and practice in a particular field and degree of their study in domestic and international scientific and educational literature.

The section is divided into subsections.

Section 2. Research methodology.

The section justifies the choice of a method to study the problem. As a rule, the Thesis must be based on 3-4 different methodological strategies of research. Each methodology must be described in terms of its feasibility, advantages, relevance to the entity, industry, and goals of research, and its limitations in solving the problem.

The section must comprise the following subsections:

Subsection 1 justifies the choice of a research methodology;

Subsection 2 describes the algorithm of research as a whole or the algorithm of each part of research.

Each section is divided into subsections.

### Section 3. Identification of the problem in a studied area and results of research.

The section contains the analysis of current issues and results of all the types of conducted studies. Each section is divided into subsections.

### Section 4. Main recommendations and conclusions based on the research results.

The section suggests a strategy solving the problem of an entity. All recommendations must be based on the research results.

In addition, the section must contain justified conclusions based on the research results. Each section is divided into subsections.

### Conclusion.

It contains a brief overview of the main analytical conclusions of the study.

All sections of the Thesis must be logically related. They must complement and deepen each other.

Reference list. Reference list must be formatted in accordance with the rules (Appendix E). The list of all sources used during the study is paginated and arranged in the alphabetic order.

The alphabetic order implies that references are located by the Russian alphabet. Moreover, the first letter of the initial word of the entry is observed, i.e. author's surname or name of the document if the author is not mentioned. If there are two authors with the same surname, arrange them according to the initial letters of their names. The works by the same author are listed by the year of publication. Descriptions of works published in foreign languages must be given at the end of the list: first, people using the Cyrillic alphabet, then the languages of the peoples using the Latin alphabet, finally, those using a specific script (in the Russian transcription).

Appendices. Illustrations, tables, (especially exceeding one sheet of paper), auxiliary tests can be attached as an appendix.

Appendices are formatted as a continuation of the Thesis following the main parts of it and are located in the order they appear in the text.

Each appendix begins with a new page indicating the word APPENDIX in the centre of the sheet followed by a letter of the English alphabet starting with A. The next line says 'reference'. Each appendix must have its own heading placed in the centre of the sheet. All

appendices must be listed in the table of contents and identified with the headings and page numbers they appear.

In the text all appendices must be referred to, for example ‘...in Appendix A’.

#### **4. FORMAT**

The Thesis must be done without grammar, punctuation, or spelling mistakes and correctly formatted.

The Thesis must be approximately 80-100 pages in length.

The Thesis must be printed out on white A4 sheets of paper. The page format should be single column with one and a half spacing used between lines. Font size is equivalent to 12 to 14 point font in Times New Roman. Large tables and illustrations may be printed on A3 sheets of paper.

Each page must conform to the layout requirements. Margins at the binding (left-hand) edge must be 30 mm, right edge 10 mm, top and bottom edges 20 mm.

Paragraph indentation is 15-17 mm (4-5 letters). 1.25 mm is allowed.

Headings of sections, Introduction, Conclusion, Table of Contents are written symmetrically to the text in capital letters. The number of a relevant section or paragraph is placed at the beginning of the heading. Word breaks in headings are not allowed. Headings are not followed by a period or colon. It is not allowed to highlight headings with other colour, underlying, or separate pages.

Each section – Introduction, Conclusion, Reference List – starts on a new page. Paragraphs continue on the same page.

Heading of paragraphs, points, and first line of the text must be separated from the text by single space. A new heading must be separated from the preceded paragraph by double space.

Sections, paragraphs, and points are numbered with Arabic numerals. Numbers are arranged in the following order: chapter, paragraph, point which are divided by a period. The headings TABLE OF CONTENTS, INTRODUCTION, CONCLUSION, and Reference List are not numbered. There is no period before the name of a paragraph.

Pages must be numbered with Arabic numerals consecutively through the Thesis. Page numbers are given in the top right corner of the page. The Title Page is “1” but this number must not appear on the page.

Numerical data are usually arranged in tables. Each table must have a header located at the same level as the word “Table”. The header must start with a capital letter. Tables must be



located in the text in such a way so that it can be read without turning the paper or turning it clockwise.

Tables are numbered with Arabic numerals. The word “Table” identified with a serial number of the table is located on the left above the table. Tables can be numbered (continuously throughout the text, i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc.) or by sections. For example, Table 3.2 (Table 2 in section 3).

Table 3.2 ABC-Analysis of Commodity Group “Porcelain Ware”

Название коллекции	Доля каждой в общем числе (в %)	Доля нарастающим итогом (в %)	Объем продаж (в шт.)	Доля от общего объема продаж (в %)	Доля нарастающим итогом (в %)	Группа (А,В,С)	Планируемое решение
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TANQUARD	4,17	4,17	58803	31,67	31,67	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
SPIRAL	4,17	8,34	27745	14,94	46,61	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
КОФЕЙНЫЙ КОМПЛЕКТ	4,17	12,50	18900	10,18	56,79	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
DOVE	4,17	16,67	14600	7,86	64,66	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
CAPITAL	4,17	20,84	10322	5,56	70,22	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
Фарфор под нанесение	4,17	25,00	9987	5,38	75,60	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
EXPO	4,17	29,17	9684	5,22	80,81	А	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
ECH	4,17	33,34	7495	4,04	84,85	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
POT BELLY	4,17	37,50	5425	2,92	87,77	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
DOVER	4,17	41,67	3354	1,81	89,58	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
PIPE	4,17	45,84	2896	1,56	91,14	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
MAHARANI	4,17	50,00	2855	1,54	92,68	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
CAMBRIDGE	4,17	54,17	2832	1,53	94,20	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
ЧАЙНЫЙ КОМПЛЕКТ	4,17	58,34	2753	1,48	95,68	В	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
ANNE	4,17	62,50	2283	1,23	96,91	С	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
DIRECTOR	4,17	66,67	2066	1,11	98,03	С	Провести ABC - анализ коллекции
KONIKA	4,17	70,84	956	0,51	98,54	С	Исключить

LILAC	4,17	75,00	930	0,50	99,04	С	Исключить
MONROE	4,17	79,17	573	0,31	99,35	С	Исключить
BALBAN	4,17	83,34	335	0,18	99,53	С	Исключить
MAX	4,17	87,50	283	0,15	99,68	С	Исключить
MUDY	4,17	91,67	236	0,13	99,81	С	Исключить
ЧАЙНИКИ	4,17	95,84	189	0,10	99,91	С	Исключить
GRACE	4,17	100,00	156	0,08	100,00	С	Исключить
<b>ИТОГО</b>			<b>185658</b>				

If columns or rows exceed the margins of the page (i.e. tables split over two or more pages), it must be divided into two parts located one under another or near.

All tables must be referred to.

All illustrations (drawings, figures, graphs, diagrams, photos) are called figures and identified with the word “Figure” followed by the number and the name of an illustration. Illustrations can be numbered sequentially throughout the text (1, 2, 3) or by sections except for illustrations in appendices. In this case the number of an illustration consists of the number of the section and the number of the figure separated by a period.

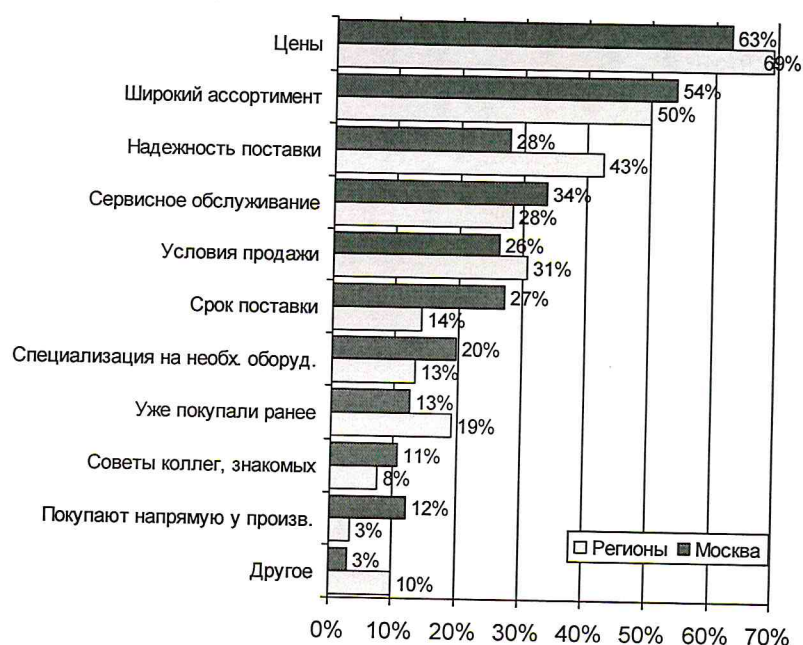


Figure 3.3 – Dealer's criteria for selecting a selling firm.

Source: Survey.

Depending on the text editor, formulae can be typed or written with black ink or paste. They are located in a separate line. Formulae are numbered sequentially throughout the text with Arabic numerals. Arabic numerals are given on the right of the formula at the same level. Numbers are given in parentheses (in the rightmost position on the line). Explanations to the symbols and numerical coefficients must appear immediately under the formula if they have not



been given before. The first line of the explanation begins with the word “where” without colon. Each formula must be single spaced above and below from the main text.

Formulae can be numbered throughout a section. In this case the number consist of the number of a section and the serial number of a figure separated by a period, for example: (2.4).

Formulae located in appendices must have their own numeration. Arabic numerals are used within each appendix preceded by the number of the appendix.

$$CE = SP * OS, (5)$$

where CE is a capital of equity;

SP is a price of a share;

OS is the number of ordinary shares.

Citations from primary sources and presentations must be given references (footnotes) numbered continuously throughout the text with Arabic numerals. References must be also used for digital materials and tables borrowed from other authors or compiled on the basis of statistics data collections.

Requirements to the format are provided by TSU Research Library in section *Bibliographic Description of a Document* <http://www.lib.tsu.ru/win/produkzija/metodichka/metodich.html>. The resource includes the rules of citations, identification of various sources in the Reference List and others.

## 5. DEFENCE

Students who have successfully completed the curriculum and submitted all the required documents are admitted to the defence.

Students must develop and agree with a research supervisor presentation of their thesis, handout.

For admission to the defence students have to submit the required documents to the Director of the Programme 5 days prior to the date of defence. The documents include:

- a bound copy of the Thesis signed by the author and research supervisor;
- research supervisor’s reference letter on the Thesis formatted in accordance with the rules. The reference letter must contain a grade and admission of the Thesis to the defence;
- external reference letter certified with the seal of the organisation where the reviewer works;
- other materials describing research and practical value of the Thesis (publications on the topic of the Thesis, implementation acts, etc.).

The head of an organisation where the student works, heads and specialists from other organisations, authority bodies engaged into agribusiness can be external reviewers.

Higher education is the main criterion for the reviewer.

The reference letter is supposed to provide the following information (Appendix E):

- description of the Thesis revealing its novelty and implementation in practice, and student's independence in research into the problem;
- compliance of goals and tasks, on the one hand, with the content of the Thesis, on the other;
- depth and completion of the study of the main issues of the topic;
- use of modern research methods and techniques;
- recommendations on improving the efficiency of company management;
- overview of the literature, legal acts, and other regulations for 3-5 years.

Before the meeting of the Examination Board students must write down negative remarks of the reviewer, prepare the answers and give them at the defence.

The defence is held at the meeting of the Examination Board. Members of the Board are leading experts – representatives of employers and their associations in a relevant professional sphere and (or) academic faculty of TSU with an academic title and (or) an academic degree.

Members of the Board are approved by the Decree of the Rector of TSU one month before the Board starts work.

Texts of the Thesis are checked for plagiarism and at the request of the Programme Director are published in the e-library of the University in the order established by TSU regulations.

Texts of the Thesis must avoid unauthorised borrowings. Original text must be at least 70%. The author of the Thesis is responsible for misuse of sources.

Student report their results in a 10-15 minute presentation.

Students accompany their speech with a Power Point presentation.

Students may use handout (schemes, tables, graphs) distributed among the members of the Board (5-6 copies), etc.

Students must select the most relevant and actual material. The main attention must be paid to the identified problem and goals, results of analysis and recommendations derived from the study.

Upon completion of the presentation a 10-minute answer-question session is held. The student answers questions of the Board and audience and comments on remarks of the supervisor and reviewers (5 minutes).



Listeners are assessed by the results of the defence at a closed meeting of the Board without unauthorised people. Decision is announced to the student.

The structure of a Power Point presentation:

Slide 1	Title slide
Slide 2	Overview of the company and prerequisites for the problem
Slide 3	Nature of the problem and relevance of research
Slide 4	Research hypothesis and issues
Slide 5	Overview of the literature
Slide 6	Research methodology
Slide 7–11	Research results
Slide 12	Conclusions based on the results of research.
Slide 13	Recommendations based on the results of research
Slide 14	Final slide

Assessment criteria:

- clear formulation of a management problem relevant to the company and solved by the author;
- logical structure of research consisting of a problem, tasks, and issues that must be studied;
- literature overview and conclusions which find their implementation in the research methodology;
- research methodology that determines the order of the search for answers to research questions;
- 2-5 individual studies containing clear methods for conducting them, recording, analysing, and interpreting the results;
- author's recommendations based on the conclusions and aimed at solving the problems;
- evaluation of economic effectiveness in case of implementation of the recommendations offered by the author.

If the Board fail to make a unanimous decision, it is made by the majority vote. The Chairperson of the Board has the casting vote.

According to the results of the defence, the Examination Board make a decision on awarding the student a qualification and diploma in retraining.

Students awarded a satisfactory grade at the defence are expelled from the Programme. In this case they are given a standard certificate.

After the defence Theses are registered and stored in accordance with the order established in TSU.

## APPENDIX A

### Application for Research Area Specification

to the MBA-Agribusiness Programme

\_\_\_\_\_  
student's name and surname

#### APPLICATION

I ask you to appoint a research supervisor of my Thesis.

The name of the company and its brief description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Overview of the managerial problems of the company and/or research area

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject of interest \_\_\_\_\_

Date

Signature

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Of the student of the Part-time Programme MBA-Agribusiness**

---

**Formulation of the problem of a company and its relevance**

**Research goal**

**Research objectives** (i.e. divide general goals into specific tasks and steps. At least one task must imply recommendations, for example “To give recommendations how to improve strategic planning”).

**What conceptual theoretical models are applicable to the topic?**

(these models are presented in the literature on management or marketing, decision-making, diagnostic methods such as McKinsey matrix).

**Working hypotheses**

**What research methods will be used in research?**

Date

Student's signature

Research Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Application for Approval of MBA Thesis Topic

to MBA-Agribusiness Programme Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
student's name and surname

#### APPLICATION

I ask you to approve the topic of my Thesis:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I                      ask                      you                      to                      appoint

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name and surname, academic degree, academic title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
as a research supervisor of my Thesis.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## APPENDIX D

### Title Page Template

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION  
NATIONAL RESEARCH  
TOMSK STATE UNIVERSITY  
Institute of Economics and Management

ADMITTED TO THE DEFENCE BY  
Programme Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
" \_\_\_\_ " \_\_\_\_\_ 2017

### MBA THESIS

TITLE

Part-Time Executive MBA Programme  
Subject area 38.04.02 Management

Name, Surname

Supervisor:

Associate Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
V.M. Kalygina, PhD.

signature

« \_\_\_\_ » \_\_\_\_\_ 2017

Author:

\_\_\_\_\_  
I.S. Lobanov

signature

Tomsk-2017



## AgriMBA

### NATIONAL RESEARCH TOMSK STATE UNIVERSITY RUSSIAN FEDERATION - INTERNATIONAL MBA NETWORK MBA THESIS ASSESSMENT SHEET

**Participant:**

**Title:**

*Please circle the appropriate mark on the questions below and give remark(s) if you find necessary.*

**1. Topic of the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Traditional / local importance</i>		<i>Relatively new</i>		<i>Novelty / very important</i>

Remark(s):

**2. Number of literature reviewed:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>None</i>		<i>Appropriate (20-30)</i>		<i>Large number (over 50)</i>

Remark(s):

**3. Importance of the literature reviewed:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Only domestic sources</i>		<i>A few international articles + textbooks</i>		<i>Mainly from international journals</i>

Remark(s):

**4. Data base of the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Short-term / basic information only</i>		<i>Detailed, but mainly from one source</i>		<i>Long-term / detailed / various sources</i>

Remark(s):

**5. Statement of the objective(s):**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist</i>		<i>Stated, but not clearly described</i>		<i>Clear research hypotheses</i>

Remark(s):

**6. Description of the starting situation regarding the company / phenomenon / procedure, etc.:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear</i>		<i>Fair / not detailed</i>		<i>Excellent description</i>

Remark(s):

**7. Research methodology:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear</i>		<i>Fair / traditional / only one method</i>		<i>Up-to-date / several approaches</i>

Remark(s):

**8. Professional analysis of the existing situation:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear</i>		<i>Fair / not detailed / problematic statement(s)</i>		<i>Excellent analysis</i>

Remark(s):

**9. Suggestion(s) for the improvement / future development in connection with the topic of the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear / not</i>		<i>Some suggestions, but</i>		<i>Clear suggestions</i>

<i>relevant</i>	<i>not necessarily based on the analysis</i>	<i>based on the problem analysis</i>
-----------------	--	--

Remark(s):

**10. Description / calculation of the potential impact of the improvement / future development:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear</i>		<i>Some calculation(s), but not necessarily based on the suggestions</i>		<i>Clear future impact description and detailed calculations</i>

Remark(s):

**11. Conclusion / suggestion chapter:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / not clear / not relevant</i>		<i>Some, but not always relevant</i>		<i>Detailed, clear, relevant conclusion(s) / suggestion(s)</i>

Remark(s):

**12. Summary chapter:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / poor</i>		<i>Fair, but too short / long / not fully relevant</i>		<i>Professional quality summarization of right size</i>

Remark(s):



**13. Writing style / thesis organization:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Poor</i>		<i>Fair, with some problems</i>		<i>Professional quality</i>

Remark(s):

**14. Quality of tables and graphs:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist / poor</i>		<i>Fair, with some problems</i>		<i>Professional quality</i>

Remark(s):

**15. Theoretical importance of the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Does not exist</i>		<i>Traditional result(s) with some interesting establishment(s)</i>		<i>Novelty / challenging / confirming existing theories</i>

Remark(s):

**16. Practical importance of the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Hardly any / only for the examined company on short-term</i>		<i>Some results can be acceptable for the professional area on short-term</i>		<i>Novelty / suggestions for a larger audience / long-term results</i>

Remark(s):

**17. Overall impression on the thesis:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

1. Poor / not acceptable

10. Fair, with some interesting results

20. Excellent work / professional quality

Remark(s):

**Total points (maximum 100):**

**Rating:**

*not acceptable (1): 0 – 39 points*  
*poor (2): 40 – 54 points*  
*average (3): 55 – 69 points*  
*good (4): 70 – 84 points*  
*excellent (5): 85 – 100 points*

**Reviewer questions (no more than 3):**

*Question 1:*

*Question 2:*

*Question 3:*

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Name and signature of the reviewer:</i>