

APPROVED by
Decision No. 3-1 of 22 May 2013 of
Vytautas Magnus University Senate
(version of Decision No. SEN-019 of 14
May 2020 of Vytautas Magnus University
Senate;
version of Decision No. SEN-N-50 of 12
October 2022 of Vytautas Magnus
University Senate)

GENERAL ORDER ON THE PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF THE FINAL THESES

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. General Order on the Preparation and Defence of Final Theses (hereinafter – the Order) describes the general requirements for the preparation and defence of the final theses of first- and second-study cycle integrated and non-degree studies at Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter – VMU).

1.2. Special requirements for the preparation, formatting and presentation for the defence of the final theses shall be defined by the subdivisions, namely, Faculties, Academies or their units (departments, institutes, groups of programmes). In accordance with a particular study programme, they shall define the requirements for the final theses, including the requirements for the preparation, defence and special evaluation criteria.

II. PURPOSE AND NATURE OF THE FINAL THESES

2.1. A final thesis (final art project) is an independent scientific research, project or creative work performed at the end of the study programme and intended for acquiring analytical, research, artistic, and other cognitive and functional competencies.

2.2. The preparation and defence of the Bachelor's degree thesis shall consist of at least 15 credits.

2.3. The preparation and defence of the final thesis (project) or final thesis (project) and final exams (as defined in the legislation) of integrated studies shall consist of at least 30 credits (unless otherwise defined in the course description).

2.4. The preparation and defence of the Master's degree thesis shall consist of at least 30 credits.

2.5. The preparation of the final thesis of vocational (pedagogical) studies shall consist of at least 3 credits.

III. PREPARATION OF THE FINAL THESES

3.1. Topics for final theses shall be provided by departments, institutes, social partners and students; the topics shall be approved by the Faculty Dean or the Chancellor.

3.2. Upon the Order of the Dean or the Chancellor, the topics of the final theses may be distributed and approved with regard to research areas.

3.3. Topics for final theses shall be announced publicly on the websites of the Faculty or the Academy, indicating the teachers working on these topics. If the topic for the final thesis has been proposed by the social partners, this information shall be indicated next to the topic.

3.4. The suggested topics for final theses shall be announced by the departments not later than the beginning of studies annually. The Special Requirements for the Preparation and Evaluation of Final Theses prepared by the unit may provide a detailed schedule for the announcement of the topics and the deadline for students' choices.

3.5. The proposed thesis topics shall be announced by the unit not later than 1 year before the defence. The Special Requirements for the Preparation and Evaluation of Final Theses drawn up by the academic unit conducting the studies may include a detailed schedule for the announcement of the topics and the deadline by which the students may make their choice of topics, but not later than 1 October of the final year of studies. If the thesis is to be defended in the autumn semester examination session, the student must choose the topic not later than by 1 March. If the thesis topic is not chosen in time, the student cannot register for the final thesis.

3.5. The chosen topic and the title of the thesis formulated according to it shall be agreed with the supervisor.

3.6. The chosen and agreed topics and supervisors shall be approved by the Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Head of the Group of Programmes or the Dean/Chancellor at the latest by the end of the first month of the final semester.

3.7. The revised topics of the final theses (titles must be submitted in Lithuanian and English) shall be approved by the Chancellor or the Dean on the recommendation of the Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Head of the Group of Programmes not later than a month before the public defence. The titles of the final theses approved by the order shall not be changed.

3.8. When carrying out the research of the final thesis, the student shall follow the requirements of research ethics which are specified in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation prepared by the unit of studies.

3.9. The student shall prepare the thesis independently in accordance with the methodological requirements of the Department, the Institute, the Faculty or the Academy, under the guidance of the supervisor.

IV. STRUCTURE AND FORMATTING OF THE FINAL THESES

4.1. The following structural parts of the final theses shall be obligatory for all VMU programmes:

– Title page (Annexes 1, 2 and 3).

– Table of Contents.

– Summary in two languages – Lithuanian (1 page) and one of the working languages of the European Union (English, French or German) (1 page). Requirements for the summary are introduced in Annex 4.

– Introduction which introduces the research problem and presents the following research parameters: research object, aim, objectives and hypotheses (2–3 pages).

- The main part of the thesis, the structure and contents of which shall be governed by Special Requirements for Preparation and Evaluation of Final Theses set at each unit of studies of the University.
- Conclusions and recommendations.
- A list of references and other information sources.
- Appendices.

4.2. Formatting of the final theses shall be as follows:

4.2.1. The final theses shall be written in a correct Lithuanian language, without mistakes; the ideas shall be developed clearly, coherently, understandably and systematically. The theses shall be typed by computer without corrections and erasures. In specific instances, for example, in the case of joint-degree study programmes or due to the specific nature of the study programme, the final theses may be written in a foreign language.

4.2.2. The recommended length of the final theses shall be the following:

Bachelor theses: from 35 to 45 pages excluding appendices.

Master theses: from 50 to 70 pages excluding appendices.

Papers for non-degree studies: from 20 to 25 pages excluding appendices.

4.2.3. With regard to the study field, the length of the final theses may be changed. Such cases shall be defined in the Special Requirements for Final Theses Preparation and Evaluation prepared by the units of studies.

V. PREPARATION FOR DEFENCE OF THE FINAL THESES

5.1. The final thesis can be defended by students only after completing the study programme. The Department, the Institute or the Faculty, the Group of Programmes responsible for the study programme shall decide whether the study programme has been completed. The units may organize the interim defence of the final theses before the start of the public defence (examination session). The procedure for defence shall be determined by the academies or faculties.

5.2. The Faculty Dean or the Academy Chancellor, upon the recommendation of the Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Head of the Group of Programmes, shall approve, at the latest 1 month prior to the commencement of the public defence, the Certification Commission for the interim defence of Master final theses, consisting of three teachers, who shall review and assess the submitted final theses.

5.3. The main function of the Certification Commission for Master final theses is to assess whether all obligatory requirements for the structure, content, volume, and formatting have been fulfilled and to indicate any drawbacks that need to be corrected. After the interim assessment, the student may, by the specified date, correct only the drawbacks indicated by the Commission.

5.4. The conclusion of the session of the Master Thesis Certification Commission shall be recorded in the certificate, which shall be submitted to the Master Thesis Defence Commission (Annex 5).

5.5. At least 10 days before the start of the public defence of the final theses, students of all study cycles and study modes shall upload an electronic version of their final thesis to the CRIS Repository (<https://vdu.lt/cris>) in accordance with the *Description of Procedure for Collection and Storage of Electronic Documents (ETD works) of Final Thesis, Doctoral Dissertations and Their Summaries at VMU*.

5.6. The supervisor of the final thesis shall submit a report (the recommended form is provided in Annex 7) to the Secretary of the Commission not later than 7 days before the public defence. The supervisor's participation at the public defence shall be desirable.

5.7. The Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Head of the Group of Programmes shall appoint the reviewer of the final thesis not later than 10 days before the public defence. The thesis shall be presented to the reviewer not later than 5 days before the public defence.

5.8. For the public defence of the final theses, a 3–5-person defence evaluation Commission (hereinafter – the Commission) shall be formed from experts in the study field (fields) – scientists (artists), practicing professionals, social partners – by the Rector's Order or the Chancellor's Order upon the recommendation of the Faculty Dean or the Head of the Group of Programmes.

5.9. If the topics of the final theses are approved according to the topic areas (research areas) upon the Order of the Dean or Chancellor, several evaluation Commissions for theses defence may be appointed under the permission of the Vice-Rector for Studies.

5.10. The Chairperson of the Commission or at least one member of the Commission must be from another institution (social partners, alumni representative or researchers from other universities and research institutions).

5.11. For programmes for which the regulations of the study fields have been approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, the composition of the final thesis Commissions shall comply with the requirements of the regulations.

5.12. If the supervisor's report and/or the Commission's certificate (for Master final theses) state that the thesis does not meet the requirements and is not recommended for public defence, the student has the right to apply to the Commission for permission to defend his/her thesis, explaining the motives in writing. The application and the thesis shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Commission not later than 5 days before the appointed date of the public defence. Having considered the student's application, the Commission shall decide whether the student can defend his/her thesis.

5.13. The reviewer shall submit the review of the thesis to the Secretary of the Final Thesis Public Defence Commission not later than the day of the final defence and to the student – not later than 2 days before the public defence (the recommended review form is provided in Annex 6). The review shall be sent to a student by email. The reviewer's participation in the public defence of the final theses shall be desirable.

5.14. If a case of plagiarism is suspected/detected, the Secretary of the Defence Commission shall be informed about the transfer of this case for consideration to the Plagiarism Prevention Commission in accordance with VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works. If the Plagiarism Prevention Commission does not identify any violations, the thesis defence can be organized, if possible, after the decision has been made. If violations are found, the final thesis shall be prepared anew and may be defended not earlier than half a year later, if a group of defenders of the final theses is formed in accordance with the procedure established by the Study Regulations.

VI. DEFENCE OF THE FINAL THESES

6.1. The defence of the final theses shall be public and take place at the session of the Commission appointed by the Order of the Rector.

6.2. The public defence of the theses shall proceed during the examination session.

6.3. The defence of final theses (including final exams) in the art study field shall take place in pre-approved premises.

6.4. The following documents shall be submitted to the Defence Commission:

6.4.1. Rector's Order on the Formation of Qualification Commission.

6.4.2. Dean's Order on the Permission to Defend Final Theses.

6.4.3. The agenda for the public defence session of the Defence Commission.

6.4.4. Protocol forms for the defence of final theses (sample form is provided in Annex 9).

6.4.5. Students' final theses in e-format.

6.4.6. Reviews of theses and supervisors' reports (the recommended forms are provided in Annexes 6 and 7).

6.4.7. A certificate of the Commission of the Department, Institute or Group of Programmes on the conformity of the final theses to the obligatory requirements (Annex 5).

6.5. The Secretary of the Defence Commission or a person appointed by the Dean or the Chancellor shall be responsible for presenting the documents to the session of the Commission.

6.6. Upon request of the supervisor, the Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Head of the Group of Programmes, the student, or the institution in which the thesis has been prepared, the thesis may be defended at closed Commission session if secret data have been used and the results of the thesis should not be publicized. In such a case, the Commission shall announce that part of the session as closed. In addition to the members of the Commission and the student, the thesis supervisor and the reviewer may attend the defence session. Participants in the closed defence shall sign the Confidentiality Commitment (Annex 9).

6.7. The Commission shall follow the procedures of final theses defence laid down in the Study Regulations and specified in this General Order.

6.8. During the public defence, the author of the final thesis shall present his/her work, indicating the problem of the research, the aim, objectives; shall describe the research object, the results obtained, the reliability of the methods applied; shall provide the conclusions and ground them, as well as shall provide recommendations. The presentation of the Bachelor final thesis shall take up to 10 minutes; the presentation of the Master final thesis shall take up to 15 minutes.

6.9. After the presentation of the final thesis, the members of the Commission and other persons participating in the public defence may ask questions. After this discussion, the student shall answer the questions provided by the reviewer.

6.10. If the supervisor and the reviewer cannot participate in the defence session, their reviews shall be read by the Secretary of the Commission.

6.11. Upon successful defence of the thesis, the Commission shall suggest awarding the student a degree and/or qualification provided for in the study programme.

6.12. The Chairperson of the Commission shall enter the evaluation into the protocol of final theses defence.

6.13. The protocol of final theses defence shall be signed by all members of the Commission participating in the defence.

6.14. The protocol of the final theses defence shall be presented to the Department, the Institute or the Group of Programmes not later than 1 working day after the defence.

6.15. The decision of the Commission shall not be subject to appeal. Appeals for procedural violations shall be considered in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Study Regulations.

6.16. The Department, the Institute or the Group of Programmes shall present the protocols of final theses defence, reviews, and supervisors' reports to the Study Department (by uploading the documents to the student's e-file) not later than within 2 working days after the defence.

6.17. A student who does not defend or fails to defend the final thesis shall be expelled from the University.

6.18. The undefended thesis may be defended for the second time after making an agreement with the University. This may be done during the examination session not earlier than half a year if a group of defenders is formed in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Study Regulations (at least 5 students). If the final thesis is not defended a second time, a new thesis must be prepared after concluding the relevant agreement.

6.19. The final thesis may be defended externally not later than in two years after signing the Agreement of External Studies if the thesis was prepared, submitted, and recommended to be defended during earlier study years.

VII. PREPARATION FOR DEFENCE OF FINAL THESES AND DEFENCE OF FINAL THESES REMOTELY

7.1. Not later than 10 days before the public defence of the final theses, students of all study cycles and study modes shall upload an electronic version of their final theses to the CRIS Repository (<https://vdu.lt/cris>) following the *Description of Procedure for Collection and Storage of Electronic Documents (ETD works) of Final Thesis, Doctoral Dissertations and Their Summaries at VMU*.

7.2. The Head of the Department, the Director of the Institute or the Dean, or the Head of the Group of Programmes shall appoint the reviewer of the final thesis not later than 10 days before the public defence of the final theses. The thesis can optionally be sent to the reviewer by email, made accessible via the CRIS Repository link or accessed in the virtual learning environment Moodle (hereinafter – Moodle) not later than 5 days before the public defence.

7.3. The reviewer shall submit the review of the thesis to the Secretary of the Defence Commission and the student by VMU email (hereinafter – email) or shall upload it to Moodle (ensuring that the reviewer's review is available only to the author (student) and the members of the Defence Commission) not later than 2 days before the public defence. The reviewer's participation in the public defence of the final theses shall be desirable.

7.4. The supervisor shall submit his/her report to the Secretary of the Defence Commission by email or shall upload it to Moodle not later than 5 days before the public defence. The supervisor's participation in the public defence shall be desirable.

7.5. All documents required for the defence specified in Clause 6.4 shall be submitted to the members of the Defence Commission in Moodle or by email. The final theses can be accessed by providing a link to a particular student's work in the CRIS Repository.

7.6. The defence of the final theses shall be carried out using the VMU video conferencing tool. In exceptional cases, when the defence of the final theses cannot take place using this tool, the Secretary of the Defence Commission or the session administrator shall contact VMU Innovative Studies Institute for the selection of another video conferencing tool used by VMU to organize the defence process.

7.7. Information about the defence of the final theses, the time of the session and the requirements for joining the session shall be published on the website of the Academy, the Faculty and the Student Portal.

7.8. The session of the thesis defence (video and sound) shall be recorded, if necessary, and with the consent of all participants.

7.9. The final theses shall be evaluated after the defence at the closed session of the Commission in a video conference room. At the end of the session, the Chairperson of the Commission shall read the Protocol of the session and all members of the Commission shall approve it by open vote, if necessary.

7.10. The Chairperson shall summarize the final theses and the defence procedure. Each person who has defended his/her thesis shall be informed about the evaluation in writing individually by email.

7.11. The Protocol of the final theses defence signed by the electronic signature of the Chairperson of the Commission or as a scanned copy, shall be presented to the Department, the Institute or the Group of Programmes not later than 1 day after the defence.

VIII. EVALUATION OF THE FINAL THESES

8.1. The final theses shall be evaluated after the defence in a closed session of the Commission which shall be minuted.

8.2. Each member of the Commission shall evaluate the final thesis individually. The final evaluation of the final thesis shall be equal to the arithmetic mean of all Commission members' evaluations rounded off to the nearest whole number. In the case of disagreement on the evaluation, the final decision shall be made by the Chairperson of the Commission. The Commission shall also take into consideration the opinion of the reviewer and the supervisor's report. If the supervisor is the member of the Commission, his/her evaluation shall not be included when calculating the arithmetic mean.

8.3. The Chairperson shall summarize the final theses and the defence procedure. Each person who has defended his/her thesis shall be informed about the evaluation personally in writing.

8.4. The evaluation of the final theses shall be recorded in the Protocol of Commission Session and recorded into the summary table of the final grades, on the basis of which a Diploma Supplement shall be prepared.

8.5. The members of the Commission shall evaluate the final thesis taking into consideration the requirements provided in the present Order and the criteria defined in the Special Requirements for Preparation and Evaluation of Final Theses.

IX. STORAGE OF THE FINAL THESES

9.1. The defended final theses shall be stored in the CRIS Repository (in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Description of Procedure for Collection and Storage of Electronic Documents (ETD works) of Final Thesis, Doctoral Dissertations and Their Summaries at VMU approved by the Rector's order) following the Procedure for the Final Theses Storage and Archiving.

9.2. Conditions for accessing the final thesis in the CRIS Repository (freely accessible on the internet, accessible only on the University intranet or not publicly accessible) shall be established by the student considering the recommendations of the supervisor and the Commission of the Department/Institute.

9.3. The thesis defended at the closed session shall be stored at the institution which has initiated a closed defence. Only a summary of such a thesis shall be stored at the University.



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY¹

ACADEMY/FACULTY OF² _____

DEPARTMENT/INSITUTE/GROUP OF PROGRAMMES OF² _____

Student's name, surname³

TITLE OF THE FINAL THESIS⁴
(in Lithuanian)

Bachelor final thesis ³

_____ study programme, state code _____⁵

Study field⁵ _____

Supervisor _____⁵
(degree, name, surname) (signature) (date)

Defended _____⁵
(Dean of Faculty/Director of Institute/Head of Group of Programmes) (signature) (date)

Kaunas, 20...⁵

¹Times New Roman, 14 p., capital letters
²Times New Roman, 12 p., capital letters
³Times New Roman, 14 p.
⁴Times New Roman, 14 p., capital letters, bold
⁵Times New Roman, 12 p.



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY¹

ACADEMY/FACULTY OF ²_____

DEPARTMENT/INSITUTE/ GROUP OF PROGRAMMES OF ²_____

Student's name, surname³

TITLE OF THE FINAL THESIS⁴
(in Lithuanian)

Master final thesis³

_____ study programme, state code _____⁵

Study field _____⁵

Supervisor _____⁵
(degree, name, surname) (signature) (date)

Defended _____⁵
(Dean of Faculty/Director of Institute/Head of Group of Programmes) (signature) (date)

Kaunas, 20...⁵

¹Times New Roman, 14 p., capital letters

²Times New Roman, 12 p., capital letters

³Times New Roman, 14 p.

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⁵Times New Roman, 12 p.



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY¹

ACADEMY/FACULTY OF ²_____

DEPARTMENT/INSTITUTE/GROUP OF PROGRAMMES OF ²_____

Student's name, surname³

TITLE OF THE FINAL THESIS⁴
(in Lithuanian)

Final thesis of non-degree studies³

_____ study programme, state code _____⁵

Study field _____⁵

Supervisor _____⁵
(degree, name, surname) (signature) (date)

Defended _____⁵
(Dean of Faculty/Director of Institute/Head of Group of Programmes) (signature) (date)

Kaunas, 20...⁵

¹Times New Roman, 14 p., capital letters

²Times New Roman, 12 p., capital letters

³Times New Roman, 14 p.

⁴Times New Roman, 14 p., capital letters, bold

⁵Times New Roman, 12 p.

Name, surname. TITLE OF THE FINAL THESIS: Study programme Final thesis / Supervisor
Supervisor's name, surname / Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty, Department. – Kaunas, 2020. –
p.

SUMMARY

The text shall be written in Lithuanian or one of the working languages of the European Union (English, French or German) and shall contain main summarized methodological information about the performed research. The summary shall provide written information that does not cite authors, does not indicate document titles, does not provide interview quotes and does not provide empirical digital information.

The summary shall introduce methodological parameters as follows: research problem, research question(s) (or hypothesis(es)), research object, aim, methodology and/or methods, results, conclusions¹.

The names of the research parameters shall be written in *bold*.

The summary shall be one A4 page. The summary in Lithuanian and foreign language is presented on separate pages.

Line spacing in the summary text shall be 1.5. The text shall be *Times New Roman*.

At the end of the summary, there are 5–7 keywords in the Latin alphabetical order.

¹ The special requirements for the preparation and assessment of final theses prepared by the unit conducting the studies may provide other summary parameters, supplementing or reducing them, but the aim of the research, research methods, results and conclusions are mandatory.

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

ACADEMY/FACULTY OF
 DEPARTMENT/INSISUTE/GROUP OF PROGRAMMES OF.....

Study field.....

Study programme, state code.....

CERTIFICATE NO.
ON THE FINAL MASTER THESIS OFSTUDY PROGRAMME

Date:

No.	Student's name, surname	Topic of the final thesis	Conclusion of the Commission on the conformity of the final thesis to the obligatory requirements (meets/partly meets/does not meet)	Recommendations of the Commission (recommended for public defence/recommended to correct/not recommended for public defence as the requirements are not met)
1.				
2.				
3.				

Head of the Department/Director of Institute/Head of the Group of Programmes.....
 (Degree, name, surname) (Signature)

Commission:

..... (signature) (degree, name, surname)
 (signature) (degree, name, surname)
 (signature) (degree, name, surname)

RECOMMENDED REVIEW FORM OF A FINAL THESIS

FINAL THESIS REVIEW

Study programme.....
Author of the thesis.....
Title of the thesis.....

Length of the thesispages; entries in the list of references. In the thesis, there are.....
tables, pictures, and appendices.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE FINAL THESIS

(Scientific level of the thesis (topicality and significance of the topic; topic formulation; clarity of the research aim, objectives, and hypothesis(es); author's familiarity with literature on the subject; suitability of methods; data significance and statistical reliability. The level of interpretation of results; correspondence between objectives and conclusions and their grounding).

(Unity of the thesis and completeness of the content: it is assessed if there are all obligatory structural parts of the thesis, if the length is suitable, if the length of the structural parts is balanced, and if the titles and subtitles correspond to the text).

(Quality of the thesis formatting: quality of layout and visuals; academic language, its correctness, coherence, laconicism, absence of grammatical and stylistic mistakes, appropriate presentation of tables and pictures, appropriate presentation of questionnaires, interview participants, and statistical data; accuracy in referencing; quality of the list of references)

ADDITIONAL REVIEWER'S COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1.
2.
3.

GENERAL CONCLUSION ABOUT THE CONFORMITY OF THE THESIS TO THE REQUIREMENTS

(reviewer's name and surname) (signature) (date)

(reviewer's institution and position)

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

Name, surname, personal code

**VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
CONFIDENTIALITY COMMITMENT**

_____ (day) _____ (month) 20_____
Kaunas

Being a member of the Defence Commission at Vytautas Magnus University or a member of the defence session, I hereby promise the following:

1. To preserve and use the confidential information gained while evaluating the thesis and/or participating in the closed final thesis defence session only in the cases indicated by law and other legal acts.
2. To store the data and the results of the final thesis with confidential information so that no third party could have a possibility to access and use them.
3. Not to store any copies of the documents provided.

I am aware of the fact that confidential information refers to all information related to the final thesis, which should not be publicized, the content of the thesis, and the information the confidentiality of which was indicated by an accredited person of Vytautas Magnus University or the person or institution, having provided the request.

(signature)

(name, surname)

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

ACADEMY/FACULTY of _____

Department/Institute/Group of Programmes.....

Study programme (state code)

**DEFENCE COMMISSION PROTOCOL OF BACHELOR/MASTER FINAL THESIS
NO. _____**

Student (NAME, SURNAME)

Topic of Bachelor/Master final thesis (topic of the thesis)

Supervisor (name, surname)

Reviewer (name, surname)

Commission:

Chairperson (name, surname)

Secretary (name, surname)

Members: (name, surname)

(name, surname)

(name, surname)

Provided for defence:

1.

2.

3.

The defence of Bachelor/Master thesis took place _____(dd/mm/yy)

Beginning of the session: _____(hours) _____ (min)

End of the session: _____(hours) _____ (min)

The Bachelor/Master thesis assessed _____

Defence Commission of Bachelor/Master Final Theses proposes that the student _____

_____ should be awarded the

Bachelor's/Master's degree.

Commission

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____