

University-wide criteria for evaluating master's theses in the fields of engineering

The Degree Regulations of Tampere University set out guidelines for the preparation and evaluation of master's theses. Guidelines for writing theses are included in the Student's Guide.

The faculties may adopt more specific evaluation criteria that may not conflict with the University-wide criteria. Separate criteria confirmed by the relevant Faculty Council that are, where applicable, consistent with the University-wide criteria shall apply to the evaluation of master's theses in the field of architecture.

These criteria below may also be applied to the evaluation of bachelor's theses in the fields of engineering.

Grading decision

The grading decision must include the following information:

- the faculty that issued the decision
- the date when the decision was made
- the student's name
- title of the thesis
- grade
- an examination statement that includes reasons for assigning a specific grade to the thesis
- name and contact details of a person who is able to provide more information about the decision

The examiner and student are advised to discuss the student's grade expectations during the examination process. A student may request a copy of the examination statement before his or her thesis is evaluated. The faculty will deliver the grading decision and appeal instructions to the student in writing after the dean has made the decision. The student may appeal the grade by submitting a written appeal to the Faculty Council within 14 days of receiving the decision. (Universities Act 558/2009, Section 82).

Categories

Examiners will consider the main points listed below when evaluating a master's thesis. They will provide a written description of the merits of the thesis in all the categories and, where applicable, assign a numerical grade (1-5).

- Research problem, objectives, scope and level of difficulty
- Theoretical framework
- Methodology
- Analysis and results
- Conclusions, significance and the achievement of the objectives
- Literature and sources
- Writing style, language, structure and readability
- Management of the thesis process and independent work

Examiners may either focus on the categories separately or, if it is justified considering the topic of the thesis, combine the main points when evaluating a thesis. They will propose a grade and provide a written statement of the reasons for the proposed grade. In their written statement, the examiners will assess the thesis as a whole and may bring up points that were not raised earlier. Approved master's theses are graded on a scale of 1-5. As the final grade is based on an overall assessment of the thesis, it is not necessarily determined by calculating the average of all the

grades awarded in the different categories.

Grade descriptions

The written descriptions drawn up by examiners serve to substantiate the grades assigned to the thesis in the different categories. The descriptions may also include the reasons why the examiner is not proposing the thesis to receive the next higher grade in a given category. Students must receive at least a passing grade (1-5) in all the categories. A student who receives a failing grade (0) in any category will fail his or her thesis.

Failing grade (0):

The master's thesis contains serious or several significant omissions or errors. A student will always receive a failing grade if he or she is found to have violated the principles of good scientific practice or committed academic misconduct (such as plagiarism or falsification) while writing his or her thesis.

Sufficient (1):

The thesis is weak and demonstrates a limited understanding of the assignment. The objectives are unclear. The thesis demonstrates only a superficial understanding of the general subject area and contains significant omissions, inconsistencies or errors. The methodological choices made in the study are not substantiated. Both the conclusions and their connections to the theoretical framework and previous research remain vague. The number of the works cited is insufficient and they are of poor quality, or the thesis contains referencing errors and omissions, or the student is not sufficiently familiar with the conventions of referencing. The thesis is difficult to read due to significant grammatical errors and stylistic weaknesses. The thesis demonstrates limited ability for independent work. The student required a great deal of support from the supervisor or examiner to complete the thesis.

Satisfactory (2):

The thesis is passable and demonstrates the student's ability to address a research problem and report the findings. The research problem and objectives are vague or too broadly described. The significance of the findings and their connections to the theoretical framework and previous research remain partly unclear. Methodological choices are poorly substantiated or there are flaws in the application of research methods. There is little critical analysis. Conclusions are limited or contain unsubstantiated assumptions or flaws. The number of the works cited is limited and they are mainly of poor quality, or the thesis contains some referencing errors and omissions. The thesis contains some grammatical errors and stylistic weaknesses but is readable as a whole. The student required a good deal of support from the supervisor or examiner to complete the thesis.

Good (3):

The thesis is of good quality and serves to demonstrate the student's scholarly skills but lacks special scientific merit. The objectives are mainly described clearly and are appropriately narrowed down. The student places the study in the context of the existing body of knowledge and the scope of the topic is appropriate. Methodological choices are sufficiently substantiated and research methods are properly applied. The thesis demonstrates the student's familiarity with the subject area. Conclusions are drawn from relevant data. The number of works cited is reasonable and they are mainly of good quality. The student is familiar with the conventions of referencing. The language and writing style are mainly flawless and the thesis is easy to read. The thesis demonstrates the student's reasonable degree of independence and was completed within a reasonable amount of time considering the specified time frame.

Very good (4):

The thesis is of high quality. The student demonstrates independence of thought. While the study is very well conducted and placed in the context of the existing body of knowledge, it lacks special depth. The objectives are clearly described and challenging. The study is connected to previous research in the field by citing mainly high-quality sources. The analysis and conclusions are based on a sufficiently thorough research process. The student demonstrates in-depth familiarity with the subject area. The works cited are relevant, mainly of high quality and used well. The structure, writing style and language are nearly flawless. The thesis demonstrates the student's ability to work independently and was completed within the specified time frame.

Excellent (5):

The thesis is of outstanding quality. The student demonstrates extraordinary independence of thought, outstanding familiarity with the general subject area and the ability to generate or apply scientific knowledge. The objectives are challenging and clearly described. Each section contributes to the objectives of the thesis to form a balanced, coherent and logical whole. The study is placed in the context of relevant previous research by citing high-quality sources. The results have the potential to attract wider public interest or have significant novelty value (for example, the thesis has been or could be converted into a scientific publication or it produced patentable results). Methodological choices are very well substantiated and research methods are properly applied. The student demonstrates familiarity with key research methods and an exceptional degree of scientific maturity. The analysis is thorough and the choices and conclusions are critically and carefully substantiated. The cited works are of high quality, critically selected and flawlessly cited. The structure, writing style and language are impeccable. The thesis demonstrates the student's extraordinary degree of independence and was completed effectively and within the specified time frame. The grade may be lowered if the student ignores suggestions for improvement provided by the supervisor and examiner.