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Thesis at TAMK (student 's guide)

1 Introduction

1.1 Thesis

The thesis is an independent study performance in your studies. Its scope within bachelor's degrees is 15 credits (cr) and 30 cr in master's degrees. The thesis is graded separately on the degree certificate.

The thesis process includes contact teaching, seminars, thesis supervision and independent work. The content requirements are further specified within each degree programme.

The thesis may be written by one student or by two students in cooperation. The degree programme specific guidelines and appropriateness have to be considered. Multidisciplinary theses covering two or more degree programmes are also possible. In case assessments will be made separately for the students, the independent share of each student must be reported in a field- or thesis-specific way.

In some special circumstances, it is possible for a thesis to be partially or fully transferred. Credit transfer is agreed upon separately on a degree programme basis and is subject to its own set of rules.

1.2 Degree objectives

The objective of the bachelor's degree is to develop and demonstrate your capabilities in applying your knowledge and skills in practical expert tasks pertaining to the professional studies. The objective of the master's degree is to develop your professional skills and ability to apply research information in demanding specialist and management assignments of your field.

The thesis requirement levels have been stipulated within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules (FINQF). Thesis guidelines are also available in TAMK's Degree Regulations.

2 Thesis topic, objective and purpose

At universities of applied sciences thesis topics are usually based on working-life needs. They can be related to TAMK's projects, be given by an outside commissioner or you may suggest the topic yourself. The topic is good when you find it interesting, it answers practical needs, is

relevant to the professional field and its potential development, takes into account your capabilities, is financially interesting and of current interest. Courage, creativity and originality are assets when choosing the thesis topic.

The objective is that every student learns to gather information independently, analyse data critically, solve problems, reason and debate, study and develop work practices and communicate in writing as well as orally in an articulate manner.

The thesis always has a research or development objective. The objective can be, for example, to develop the workplace orientation practices for new staff. The practical measures to reach the above-mentioned objective are called the purpose of the thesis. Construction of an orientation file and mapping of different orientation practices are examples of thesis purposes. Further field-specific examples of the thesis objective and purpose will be given within each degree programme.

Questions for structuring, framing and directing the thesis implementation need to be posed. In the context of quantitative research these questions are generally called research problems. In the context of qualitative research they are called research tasks.

Good information searching skills help you in the thesis process. You can update your skills in the trainings organized by the library.

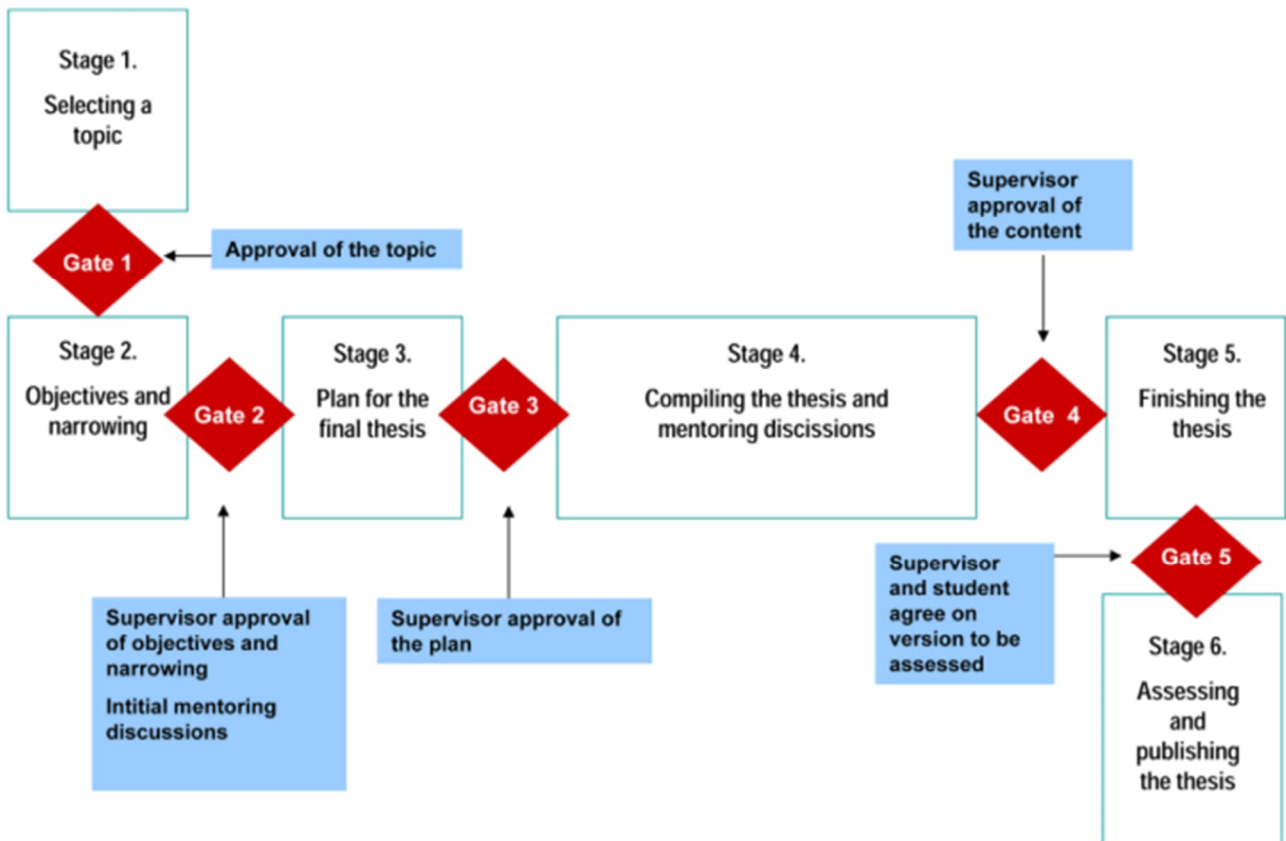
3 Thesis process

3.1 Steps in thesis process

The thesis advances by stages from topic selection to assessment and publication of the finished thesis. The main features of the process are described in the figure below (figure 1), gate model for the thesis. Reaching each stage makes it possible to pass through the gate and to proceed to the next stage. Details of the thesis process will be specified in the process chart (in Finnish), following subchapters and course implementation plans of each degree programme.

Gate model for the thesis

FIGURE 1. Gate model for the thesis



The thesis supervision and management system Wihi was introduced at TAMK on 1 January 2021. Theses which are begun in 2021 or later are documented on Wihi. Thesis communication and file exchange mainly take place through it. Students have credits at phases 3, 4 and 5 (courses 1-3).

To complete the phase 3 or the Thesis Planning course (5 cr), students must have an approved thesis plan, thesis contract or permit and possibly other study performances defined by the degree programme. The phase 4 (Thesis Implementation course) calls for implementation of the empirical, theoretical and/or functional part. As the thesis progresses, the two above-mentioned courses are automatically entered from the Wihi system to the study register with a temporary marking (s).

The thesis process phase 5 or the Thesis Reporting course calls for written reporting, plagiarism check, publication, maturity test and possibly other study performances required by the degree programme. When the thesis and process are ready, they are assessed numerically (1-5) as a whole based on the thesis assessment criteria. The final grade is automatically transferred to the study register to all the three completed courses.

3.2 Thesis types

There are various types of theses, including research, functional theses, projects, theoretical theses, art project theses or case-like theses. Theses may consist of various reporting, planning, manufacturing and development tasks performed for the needs of the society and practical working life.

In bachelor's degrees there is possible choose different kind of thesis types, they are research, practice-based, portfolio, artwork or diary theses. The form of the thesis may vary from degree programme to degree programme, and it is always good to discuss your interest with the thesis supervisor before making the final choice of the method. In master's degrees, the form of the thesis is typically research-based and the aim is to develop working life. The thesis typically includes careful examination of prior research, literature and other materials.

A research thesis produces researched, new knowledge for working life by answering a limited research problem or research task. The data is collected either empirically or theoretically. The material is analyzed and the results are reported in the thesis report. Depending on the field of study, the thesis can be qualitative (e.g. analysis of interviews), quantitative (e.g. analysis of an electronic survey) or a literature review based on systematic information retrieval.

In the practice-based thesis, the starting point is a concrete task arising from working life, which is answered by developing operations in the target organisation. The end result of development is often an output, which can be, for example, a product, service, instructions, plan, event, game, code or modelling. In addition to the output, the thesis includes a thesis report and evaluating the development of operations.

A portfolio-based thesis is a portfolio of samples describing the student's own learning and development from project work or other outputs. Students can also further develop their previous project work. In the portfolio, the student critically evaluates work samples and professional development. In addition to text, the electronic portfolio may contain images, video and other multimedia elements. The portfolio thesis includes a thesis report that backgrounds, explains and evaluates the portfolio development process. As part of the thesis, the author prepares evaluation criteria for the outputs presented.

An artwork thesis is possible in cultural degrees. It consists of an artistic or production-technical project and a thesis report. The artistic or production-technical part is, for example, a composition, concert, film, production, commissioned work, stage work, script, artwork, exhibition, sound work, performance or experiment. The written report of the thesis creates information and deepens and reflects on the project part so that the thesis is a coherent and coherent whole. From the perspective of the needs of the professional field, the work of art is relevant and innovative. It also develops the student's artistic and professional-technical skills.

A diary-based thesis is a planned and scheduled way to implement the thesis by developing one's own work or the practices of one's own workplace. It consists of a diary part, in which the student describes and analyzes his activities, and a thesis report part, which consists of the goals and purpose of the work, a description of the diary method, a summary and reflection of the results of the activity. The work turns out to combine theory and apply it to practice. In his/her diary, the student describes his/her daily activities and cooperation with stakeholders, analyses these weekly and reflects the activities and cooperation to theory. In the diary form thesis, the period during which the diary is written is clearly defined. Typically, the duration of diary work is 10-15 weeks, and it can be completed in one semester.

3.3 Topic approval, supervision and thesis plan

The topic of the thesis is approved by a person appointed by the head of the school or manager of a degree programme. The topic must be approved before you start doing the thesis.

A supervisor is always appointed for the thesis. You always agree on personal thesis supervision with the supervising teacher. The supervision is especially important at the initial stage as the objective, purpose, extent and structure are considered and specified. Supervision gives you advice on acquiring relevant literature and selecting a proper approach, working procedures and potential methods for acquiring necessary material.

The thesis supervisor is bound by professional secrecy and prohibition of use regarding the student's thesis idea drafts, thesis plans, research data and all classified information during and after the thesis process.

A thesis plan is drawn up for every thesis. The thesis plan includes the topic, literary background, objective, purpose of the thesis, implementation plan and schedule. The objective of discussing the plan is to specifically assist in setting of a proper framework for the thesis as well as in method solutions. The plan is enclosed to the thesis contract (see the thesis contract section 5.1).

3.4 Method studies and thesis seminars

The thesis process includes method studies, orientation studies and seminars. If needed, you may also complete method studies as free-choice studies or optional advanced studies in master's degree programmes. You may update and deepen your information search skills in courses arranged by the library.

To back up the thesis process, seminars and negotiations are organised with the thesis supervisor and commissioner, as agreed within each degree programme. As a student, you

will present your work and receive feedback and development suggestions from both supervisors and other students at these meetings. Between these discussions you will work on your thesis. You are responsible for keeping in touch with the supervisor and commissioner and, if necessary, you will receive individual, group or online supervision. The ready thesis is presented as agreed on in the degree programme. See instructions for thesis presentation in section 6.2.

3.5 Thesis and data protection

RDI and thesis projects must be carried out in compliance with the requirements set out in the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Under the GDPR, processing is a broad concept that refers to all operations performed of personal data, such as collection, processing, storage and disposal.

When students process personal data in connection with their thesis, they are responsible for the lawful processing of personal data. Although students generally serve as data controllers and are responsible for data protection compliance when processing personal data in connection with their thesis or other assignment, the thesis supervisor must advise students on the appropriate processing of personal data. TAMK students follow the common instructions of Tampere University and TAMK.

3.6 Peer review

Peer review offered by another student serves to support you by offering constructive feedback and development suggestions with relation to the thesis. Peer review takes place through joint meetings, seminars or online. Each degree programme offers further instructions on peer review.

Working as a peer reviewer during the thesis process trains you to have a critical attitude to contents, discern the essential, analyse as well as comment. It also helps to develop your capability to accept criticism and respond to thesis-related questions in an argumentative manner. In seminars peer review often produces ideas and perspectives useful for all team members.

4 Theses in double degrees

If you complete the thesis of a double degree at the other higher education institution, it will be published in accordance with TAMK's thesis guidelines regardless of its language. In this case you will also complete the maturity test in accordance with TAMK's guidelines.

5 Working life cooperation

The thesis must conform to the needs of working life and develop professional practices, knowledge and skills. Working life representative can represent a company, a public organization, or TAMK's development project.

5.1 Thesis contract

The thesis project always involves a thesis contract.

The thesis contract is concluded between the working life partner, university of applied sciences and you. Some cooperation partners require a thesis permit or research permit. Degree programmes provide more detailed guidelines on it.

You can request all parties' digital signatures on the contract by using the AtomiSign. Sign in with Microsoft. Click "New signing request", fill in the requested information, add the thesis contract to be signed and enclose the thesis plan. At Options, select "SMS authentication" as the authentication method. At "Participants", enter the contact information of the thesis author(s) (including yourself), the supervisor and the working life partner. Send the request.

Save the signed thesis contract or thesis permit form on Wihi for archiving with the heading Thesis Contract.

A research permit usually means the organisation's permission to contact its staff or members in matters related to the thesis or other research. Each organisation has its permit policies. Some organisations have specific permit forms which must be filled in. The target organisation can also grant the permit to the thesis author by email. In this case, the permit applies in accordance with the thesis contract (attached to the email).

5.2 Working-life representative's role in thesis process

With commissioned theses, the commissioner appoints a contact person to represent the commissioner. The company, organisation or community representative together with you and

thesis supervisor participate in defining the thesis objectives and planning the implementation.

The working-life representative is responsible for potential thesis cooperation within the enterprise or institution. If possible, the representative will offer content supervision and information needed for writing the thesis and will be responsible for other matters stipulated in the thesis contract. The representative will also provide you with a written statement on the thesis.

5.3 Research ethics guidelines

Universities of applied sciences are committed to the guidelines for research ethics, issued by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics. They apply to all theses made at universities of applied sciences. A prerequisite for ethical acceptability, reliability and credibility is that the thesis has been conducted in accordance with good scientific practice. All authors are personally responsible for following these instructions in their work.

Good scientific practice is that you

- Respect honesty, general diligence and accuracy in research, saving and presentation of results and evaluation of research and its results.
- Apply ethically sustainable information gathering, research and evaluation methods and implement the open nature of scientific knowledge when publishing your research results. Responsible and ethical use of AI (artificial intelligence) applications means that you must always describe the use of AI and how you have used it. Instructions for reporting the use of artificial intelligence in a thesis can be found in TAMK's report guide.
- Take due account of the work and achievements of other researchers by respecting their work and giving their achievements the value and importance they deserve in your research and publication of your results.
- Make sure your thesis is planned, implemented and reported in detail to meet the requirements for scientific information.
- Make sure the position, rights, responsibilities and share of the authorship of the members of your research team, as well as the issues of ownership and retention of research results are defined and recorded prior to initiation of the research or recruitment of a researcher into the group.

An obstacle to high-quality research may be lack of professional ethics of the researcher. This can manifest itself as violations of good scientific practice. They can be categorised as disregard for good scientific practice and fraud in scientific activity. Disregard for good scientific practice is manifested by gross negligence and recklessness in conducting the research. Disregard may occur in understatement of others' efforts in a publication,

inadequate reference to previous research results or negligent reporting of the used methods. Fraud in scientific activity and theses implies misleading which can be accomplished by forging, distortion, unauthorised borrowing or stealing.

In the thesis, plagiarism may lead to rejection of the entire thesis. An anti-plagiarism software (eg Turnitin) can be used to search for possible plagiarism during the thesis process.

The instructions above have been compiled from the Finnish National Board of Research Integrity's website. For more information on ethical issues in the health care sector, see also the National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health Care Ethics' publication Shared values in health care, common goals and principles (2001).

[Research Integrity \(RI\) | Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK EteneENG](#)

Arene updated ethical recommendations for theses at universities of applied sciences on 9 January 2020. [Opinnäytetöiden eettiset suositukset - Arene](#)

Ethical Recommendations for Theses in Universities of Applied Sciences (webpage in Finnish, publication also in English).

In completing your thesis, you have to follow the guidelines on data protection in studies – general instructions for students and teaching staff. The guidelines written in the spirit of the Privacy Protection Act specify data protection responsibilities of supervisors and students as regards theses. Both supervisors and students have to follow the guidelines.

5.4 Thesis and copyrights

In the thesis process, copyright issues are relevant firstly when using existing material (source material) and evaluating the conditions for using the material and secondly when estimating what rights are generated for author(s) of the thesis and the potential need for transfer of these rights. In addition to or instead of copyright, use of material may also be restricted by regulations concerning protection of privacy, business or professional secrecy, trademarks, contractual encumbrances or good scientific practice.

Although theses made at universities of applied sciences are often commissioned from the outside, the copyright of the thesis mainly remains with the student and normally it is not necessary to transfer it to the commissioner. The commissioner naturally has the opportunity to utilise information and development suggestions of the thesis without copyright. If the thesis itself or its attachments include material that the commissioner needs to use in a copyright-relevant manner (edit or distribution rights), the transfer of rights must be agreed separately. Such material may for example be a separate guidebook, educational material, computer program or programming work, visual material, drawings and sound or image recordings. In this case, the parties (ie the student and commissioner) must on a case-by-

case basis consider the form of the contract, extent of the transfer of rights and potential compensation.

TAMK has a collective licence by Kopiosto (national copyright organisation) for use of digital material for educational purposes (teachers and students), for example in theses.

Further information: [Lisenssien käyttöohje – Creative Commons Suomi](#) Continued use of the Creative Commons licence (in Finnish). Notes on using the Creative Commons licence

6 Thesis reporting

6.1 Written thesis report

A written report is always made on each TAMK thesis. In Finnish-language degree programmes, the thesis may be written in some other language than the language of instruction when appropriate and when TAMK's supervisor has a command of the language. In foreign-language degree programmes the language of instruction must be used when writing the thesis (see Degree Regulations). The report includes essential matters as regards choice of the topic, theoretical bases, method or implementation, results and conclusions. The contents emphases of the report may vary within each degree programme.

Thesis reports are compiled in a uniform manner at TAMK. Its wording must be explicit and in accordance with good matter-of-fact style. The instructions for writing are available in a separate Report Guide, in which you can also find the thesis report template with specific settings.

It is possible to present the thesis as a poster in addition to the written report. A poster is a placard consisting of text and graphic presentations which depict the key points of the thesis.

6.2 Oral thesis presentation

You present your thesis at a public thesis presentation seminar or another agreed event. It can also be presented at an event agreed on with the commissioner. The presentation practices vary between the degree programmes. Virtual presentation is also possible.

Prepare for the oral thesis presentation by clarifying the following:

- who are the listeners?
- what do the listeners already know about the subject?
- where is the presentation held?
- which presentation tools do you need and how much time do you have for your presentation?

Prepare the structure of your presentation carefully. It includes:

- an interesting start (background, 5-25 % of the available time)
- structured and carefully selected main content (70-80% of the time)
- ending (conclusions or summary, 5-10% of the time)

Prepare concise and interesting illustration material and learn how to use the technical visualisation devices in advance.

The presentation situation is led by a chairperson selected from the student group or by the supervising teacher. At the beginning of the presentation, you and your subject will be introduced to the audience. As a performer, you engage listeners by asking questions, telling examples or asking for comments. As a performer you speak to the audience. Prepare to answer questions.

6.3 Thesis publicity

A thesis report is a public document and as a rule it should not contain any classified information. The publicity guarantees objective and equal thesis assessment.

If your thesis includes classified information, it may not be included into the thesis report to be assessed. See separate instructions for this.

6.4 Thesis publication

As the author you determine the means of thesis publication: electronically either in open Theseus or in restricted Theseus.

Before publishing your thesis, you should check that the title is spelled correctly and in the same way both on the cover page and in the abstract. You need to have your Finnish abstract and the foreign-language abstract checked by a language teacher, as defined in the degree programme. Check also that you have the same title in Wihis thesis data as in the final thesis version on Theseus. The title is transferred from Wihis to the transcript of records. Make sure that there are no extra dots, lines or colons in the title on Wihis. If there are two clauses in the title, the main title and the subtitle are separated by >> characters without any spaces in between (eg Professionals' interaction skills>>Qualitative research).

Tampere Universities recommends that you submit your thesis in the open collection of Theseus Open Repository in PDF/A format.

Theseus is a joint open internet-based library for theses made at universities of applied sciences, created to allow easier access to theses. You are responsible for saving your thesis into Theseus. If the thesis has several authors, one saves it on behalf of the others.

You (students) have all copyrights to all parts of the saved thesis. If the thesis includes parts that cannot be saved to Theseus (for example a CD), deliver them to the library. Saving and publishing a thesis in Theseus requires that it has been approved and you allow it to be published. More information on submitting the thesis to the Library can be found in the Library's guide.

If the commissioner doesn't allow your thesis to be public, you can also submit your thesis to the restricted collection of Theseus. Those theses are readable only from certain computers in the library.

Making paper copies for personal use

You can make hardcover paper copies of your thesis, for example, to the commissioner or yourself. You pay the costs for binding your thesis.

Please, print the thesis one-sided. The covers are hard, dark grey and include the text "Thesis" and Tampere University of Applied Sciences' logo. You can purchase the covers from the CampusRavita CampusCafe and DeliCafe on the Kuntokatu campus. The binding machine needed to attach the covers is located in the Teiskontie lobby, immediately to the left of the entrance. Note: library will not accept printed versions.

6.5 Archiving a thesis

Theses are permanently archived documents in accordance with the Archive Department's decision (16.9.2014). Universities of applied sciences must ensure that theses are retained in accordance with good information management practice and ensure their availability also in the future. Theses are permanently archived in TAMK's document management system.

You have to submit your thesis for publication and archiving before you receive your degree certificate.

Archiving of theses takes place when the thesis is published. If the thesis is saved in Theseus, no separate archive copy is needed. Archive copies of bound theses are entered into TAMK's document management system. When the thesis is received, the library informs the Study Services.

You can find guidelines on submitting the archive copy on the library's website.

See also Archive Department's decision on permanent thesis retention (in Finnish).

7 Thesis assessment

You and the thesis supervisor agree on when the thesis is ready for assessment. The finished thesis is submitted to the supervisor and commissioner to be examined in accordance with the guidelines of the degree programme.

The supervisor gives the written assessment within the period stipulated in the Degree Regulations. It is good to have a second thesis assessor. Approved theses are graded on the scale 1-5 by using TAMK's assessment criteria and assessment form when all thesis performances have been approved.

Each form of the thesis has its own assessment criteria (you can find the forms in the new guide):

Research

Practice-based

Portfolio-based

Artwork

Diary-based

Master's thesis assessment criteria

Emphases on the assessment criteria may vary between degree programmes.

You should become familiar with the assessment criteria in advance in order to take them into account from the very beginning. In order for the thesis to be approved the minimum grade for all assessed sectors must be 1. When two authors are involved, the contribution of each must be clearly discernible if they are to be assessed separately. If the student is dissatisfied with the grade, the student may request an amendment as stipulated in the Degree Regulations. The teacher should store the assessment statement and study performances for a year at the minimum after the results have been published.

8 Maturity test

You must, in order to graduate, write a maturity test on the field of the thesis. The thesis is to demonstrate your language and text skills needed in expert work and communication.

8.1 Maturity test and its language

The maturity test can be taken in English if you have received your school education in some language other than Finnish or Swedish or completed his/her school education abroad. As

regards Finns, the language of school education is the language in which the person has completed the comprehensive school or the general upper secondary school, if the person has completed the general upper secondary school. If the person has completed a vocational upper secondary qualification, the language of school education is however determined based on the comprehensive school leaving certificate. (TAMK Degree Regulations) In Double Degree programs, the student writes a maturity test even if the thesis is accepted.

8.2 Writing the maturity test

In the bachelor's degree, you write a maturity test most often as a bulletin, but an article draft is also possible. Agree with your instructor beforehand about whether you are writing a bulletin or an article draft. Master's degree students write a maturity test as a draft article, as agreed upon in each degree programme.

The length of the bulletin is between 3,500 and 4,000 characters, including spaces. Write the text in good style with full sentences. Create the text for a wide audience. Avoid special terminology and explain the terms or abbreviations you use. The bulletin does not use pictures, figures, tables or bullet-point lists. Think about the most important results of your thesis and focus on presenting them. Note that the bulletin is not the same as the summary of the thesis. Think about what readers are interested in or what is touching in your thesis. What's new and contemporary? What is impressive?

Plan your bulletin so that it presents things in order of priority. More detailed information about the structure and writing instructions for the bulletin and the article drafting guide are at the end of this page.

The response time is up to 115 min. The supervisor of the thesis will provide more detailed instructions.

Thesis instructor will create the maturity test as a personal exam in TUNI EXAM system (grading scale Pass/Fail and partial course grade). The length of the maturity test is 115 minutes. The code of the course in EXAM is NN00GB64-3001. A student can take the maturity test only as a personal exam created by their instructor.

General EXAM instructions: [Electronic exams](#)

You can write the maturity test in any of the Tampere Universities' EXAM facilities or as a EXAM visit in another university's EXAM room (please see EXAM's page for possible cities for visiting).

Note! In spring 2025, if completing the maturity test in EXAM or through an exam visit is not possible, the thesis supervisor will arrange an alternative method of completion with the student.

8.3 Assessment of the maturity test

The thesis supervisor assesses the factual content and the language of the maturity test. The language is assessed by the teacher of the language in question. The test is graded either approved or failed.

The grading of the language of the maturity test is based on the following criteria:

- Structuring (including the overall structure of the text, paragraph division, titles)
- Comprehensibility (including text independence, argumentation, arguments and justification, word choice)
- Clarity (including the structure of sentences, use of professional terms, word choices)
- Style (proper style) and language (including proper grammar, spelling, guideline-based layout).

The characteristics of accepted and rejected maturity tests are described in attachment. The supervisor marks the numerical evaluation of the thesis in the study register after the maturity test and other partial studies agreed in the degree programme, including the authenticity of the text, have been approved.

News As Maturity Test (see the instructions in the new guide)

Article Draft As Maturity Test (see the instructions in the new guide)