Faculty of Communication Sciences (COMS):
Degree Programme in Information Studies and Interactive Media

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Master’s Thesis Guide

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I The Nature and Objectives of a Master’s Thesis

A Master's thesis is a part of the studies required for a Master’s degree and it is written under supervision. After writing a Master’s thesis, students can

- plan, conduct and evaluate scientific research,
- follow developments in their field and apply research findings to their work,
- determine and solve well-defined research problems,
- report their findings.

A Master’s thesis must meet the following criteria:

- The thesis demonstrates that the student is familiar with previous research on the subject (i.e. the thesis includes a literary review).
- The thesis demonstrates that the student is familiar with the research methods used in the study.
- The student applies the chosen research methods to answer his/her research questions, i.e. in data collection, analysis and reporting the results.
- The thesis demonstrates that the author has a good command of scientific writing. This criterion refers to logical argumentation, adhering to the conventions of scientific writing and correctly using citation and referencing styles.

The purpose of a Master's thesis is not to produce new scientific knowledge, formulate significant new hypotheses or develop new theories. The best theses may of course achieve these objectives, but a Master's thesis is first and foremost a demonstration of the student’s academic skills. Excessively ambitious plans may complicate and slow down the writing process and should therefore be restrained until eventual postgraduate studies. Master's theses can, however, help analyse a topic, introduce a new phenomenon or topic to research, expand on previous studies on the topic, or reduce the number of false conceptions on the subject.

Even the best Master’s theses cannot examine or shed light on more than one small and well-defined scientific or professional problem at a time. When defining the topic of their thesis, students should be wary of problems or needs that arise from working life and are difficult to define as tangible research subjects or to solve using existing literature. Before students choose their topics, they should discuss it with their supervisor: is it straightforward enough to research and is there enough previous research on the topic? If there is no or little literature or source material on the topic, writing the thesis will be too difficult.

Length and Structure

A Master's thesis should be approximately 60–80 pages or 15,000–20,000 words in length and use double line spacing. No definitive length can be given, however, as the research problem and nature of the topic inevitably govern the thesis length; in some cases, 40 pages might well be enough.
A Master's thesis is typically constructed as follows:

- The introduction states the objective of the thesis, justifies the choice of topic and outlines the research subject and research questions (typically roughly two to three pages).
- The theoretical framework defines the key concepts and presents the research approach and main theory or theories. Here, theory means the viewpoint from which the topic is examined. The theory chapter typically covers key or classic theories on the topic and examines how they have been developed later (roughly ten pages).
- The literature review covers previous research on the subject (context, sample, methods and key findings) (roughly ten to fifteen pages).
- The methodology chapter explains the choice of method as well as data collection and analysis methods and procedures (roughly ten pages).
- The analysis describes and reports the findings drawn from the data and illustrates and summarises them, sometimes by using tables or figures (roughly 15–30 pages).
- The findings, conclusions and evaluation compare the findings with results from previous research (introduced in the literature review), highlight new key findings or findings that support previous research, discuss the limitations of the study, and suggest topics for further research (roughly 7–10 pages).

The scope and order of these sections may vary according to the topic. Students do not have to adhere to the suggested page counts – their purpose is to exemplify how a Master's thesis is usually composed. In addition to the sections described above, a thesis must also include a one-page abstract. A prologue may be included if the student so wishes. The abstract should be written in the language of the thesis. A parallel abstract may be written in another language, for example in the language required in the maturity test (please see the University of Tampere’s guideline on theses -> links).

The thesis structure described above is especially typical of research reports in the natural sciences. The structure of a historical-qualitative study can also be used in cases where it is justified by the subject of the thesis. Such structures include the chronological structure where the thesis is divided into chapters according to the chronological order of events. For example, the chronological structure provides an opportunity to examine the developments leading to some change, the change itself and its consequences. The systematic structure is another alternative. In that case, the different aspects of the research topic are examined by providing a freeze-framed picture of a wider cultural phenomenon at a certain point in time. This kind of a thesis may also include an examination of change, but in this case the different aspects of a phenomenon are emphasised instead of the change itself. When writing a thesis by using these alternative structures, the instructions contained in this guide should be observed selectively.

**Writing a Thesis**

Students can write their theses on their own or with another student. Please note that co-authored theses are also evaluated as a whole and that both students receive the same grade. A co-authored thesis must include an account of each author’s contribution unless this is clearly stated in the thesis.

A Master’s thesis can also be article-based, in which case it must include at least two scientific
articles on the same topic. One of the articles must be approved for publication, but the other may still be pending publication. In addition to the articles, the thesis must include a summary. The author must be the first author of all the articles; if some or all of the articles are co-authored, the thesis must include an account of each author’s contribution to the articles, signed by all authors. An article-based thesis must demonstrate that the author is familiar with the entire research process.

Accepted Master’s theses are public documents and should not contain classified information. For a valid reason, classified information may be included in an unpublished appendix to the thesis or in background data. Students should make an agreement about using classified information with their supervisor or with the potential employer or the person commissioning the research.

II The Relationship of the Thesis to Advanced Studies

Essays Related to the Thesis

The Degree Programme in Information Studies and Interactive Media recommends the so called problem-based Master's thesis project model: advanced studies start with a thesis seminar and are tailored to support the thesis process. Within advanced studies courses listed in the curriculum, students familiarise themselves with their chosen research field and related literature. Students will naturally also take courses that are not related to their thesis project; these courses support their professional growth.

The objective of the problem-based thesis process is that students, together with their supervisors, choose literature relevant for their thesis topic for their advanced studies courses. Reading thesis-related literature for other courses breaks the thesis process down into smaller steps.

Students should plan courses containing thesis literature with their supervisor. Students and supervisors should also agree on how the thesis work will be divided into stages, which course components the student will take, and what the reading lists for those courses will be. Students then list these course components in their personal study plan (MA-HOPS).

The background philosophy of a problem-based thesis project and accumulative studies is in discovery learning (for more information, see http://www.mlab.uiah.fi/polut/Yhteisollinen/teoria_tutkiva_oppiminen.html; Hakkarainen, K. Lonka, K & Lipponen, L., 2004, Tutkiva oppiminen: Järki, tunteet ja kulttuuri oppimisen sytyttäjinä [in Finnish]).

Students can write an essay on the theoretical framework they use in their thesis. Another tried-and-tested method is to break down the literature review into sections and write an essay on each section.

If a student’s thesis topic is, for example, ‘A Usage and User Survey on Libraries in City X’, the sections of the literature review will deal with evaluating library services and with usage and user surveys on libraries. A student can then write one essay on evaluating library services (describing the objectives of evaluating library services and different evaluation approaches, and introducing and defining the chosen evaluation approach) and another essay on usage and user research (detailing approaches and research subjects, defining the concepts of library
usage and user, and presenting the most relevant previous empirical usage and user surveys and their results).

Students can also take advanced courses in fields outside their thesis topic to expand their expertise and improve their skills. The key to learning is that the thesis topic forms a reference point around which the student starts to build a gradually deepening knowledge of the field. Problem-based learning encourages student-centred learning and knowledge-building more than examinations on ready-made book lists. Moreover, processing literature by writing essays is considered a better learning method than taking book examinations. A more in-depth knowledge of one field also helps students build new knowledge on top of old. In the thesis project, the research problem formulated by the student offers him/her an individual viewpoint on literature.

**Other Ways to Earn Credits**

During the thesis process, students are advised to attend research seminars, guest lectures and research team meetings in the field of their thesis topic. These attendances will be marked in a study pass and earn students credit. They also help students reflect on their field and gain a better understanding of current perspectives on the topic and of their own progress. Students are also encouraged to attend relevant lectures and seminars across disciplinary borders. Attending seminars or conferences in some other field will also earn students an entry in their study pass as long as the topic is related to their thesis topic.

Students can also receive credits by presenting their findings to a collaboration partner or some other party; these presentations should be well-prepared and creative oral presentations backed up by documentation, such as a Power Point slideshow. A summary report written for collaboration partners on the findings also earns credits, but a published article on the findings (e.g. in a trade journal) will earn the student the most credits.

An oral presentation is the preferred presentation method as the research process will remain incomplete if the findings do not spur dialogue. Presenting findings to other people also allows the author to ponder practical applications and capture the essence of the study; most importantly, it offers the author a better grasp of the expertise and knowledge he/she gained during the thesis process.

**III Supervision and Related Responsibilities**

Supervisors must have a graduate degree or higher. At the start of the thesis seminar, the student and the supervisor sign an agreement on supervision specifying the topic of the thesis and related goals, supervision practices and other details. The supervision agreement template can be found in Appendix 1.

Students

- Write their thesis.
- Draw up a schedule for the thesis project and discuss it with the supervisor.
- Communicate regularly with the supervisor and report on their progress.
- Submit text to the supervisor to read well before a meeting.
- Discuss objectives with the supervisor.
- After completion of the thesis, reflect with the supervisor on the thesis work and their own learning, and provide feedback on supervision practices in order to help developing supervision.

It is vital that students carefully draw up a schedule and adhere to it; once the work progresses, both the schedule and the objectives can be updated and specified. It is also important to bear in mind that employers often value diligence and other skills more than a good grade.

Supervisors

- Help students schedule the work on the different parts of the thesis.
- Provide help and guidance at different stages of the project.
- Give well-timed and clear feedback.
- Inform students of long absences or other changes that affect them, and let students know when they can expect feedback and comments.
- Collect feedback on the supervision process and use it to further develop supervision practices.

Supervision is founded on collaboration and regular communication between the supervisor and the student. The supervisor helps students to divide their theses into smaller components; this helps them progress as they can concentrate on one component at a time.

When students are starting out their thesis work, the thesis seminar and discussions in the seminar group play a crucial role in outlining the thesis and formulating research problems. In the seminar group, every student takes responsibility for promoting each other’s work and supports each other by discussing and commenting on one another’s projects. Students can thus learn not only from their own thesis work but from discussing the problems others have. Seminar discussions illustrate the craft-like nature of research; tangible tips from the supervisor and other students help create a sound understanding of how to write a Master’s thesis.

Students should complete or almost complete their theses during the thesis seminar. The seminar gives structure to the thesis work and it is useful to get feedback from one’s peers in the seminar group. The supervisor typically reads a part of the thesis at a time, comments on the text, and helps the student revise content and structure. When the thesis work has a solid basis, most commenting happens in the thesis seminars. When more supervision is needed, it is practical to use e-mail. In one-on-one meetings, the supervisor and student should discuss new text, a rough draft of the thesis or a chapter, or a progress report including all existing text and an outline of the parts of the text that still need to be written.

Meetings between the student and supervisor are very important if a student gets stuck with his/her thesis. Even in these cases, students should submit a problem report to the supervisor before the meeting, including all existing text and an outline of what type of problems the student has encountered. It is important to submit the paper beforehand and give the supervisor time to reflect on these problems as there may not be any ready answers; this way, the student also gains
the most of the meeting.

If a student has taken a long break from his/her studies, he/she should participate in a thesis clinic seminar or take the thesis seminar again. The seminar group can continue as a peer group either on its own or with the help of the supervisor even after the seminar ends. The more people read the thesis text, the better.

An example of scheduling the thesis work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1st period | Present the topic  
Define the topic  
Find literature and write a progress report  
Outline the table of contents and schedule the writing process of each chapter |
| 2nd period | Write the research plan  
Plan and write the literature review  
Write a detailed plan for data collection |
| 3rd period | Start to compile data  
Write a detailed plan for data analysis |
| 4th period | Write one part of the thesis  
(e.g. part of the literature review, theory chapter, method chapter or analysis chapter) |
| 5th period | Write another part of the thesis  
(e.g. part of the literature review, first chapter, method chapter or analysis chapter) |
| 6th period | Complete the first draft  
Revise the first draft and outline the conclusions  
Complete the conclusions and prepare the thesis for publication |

IV Thesis Process

Students should enter a Master’s thesis seminar after they have completed their Bachelor’s thesis and taken the methodology courses. This way, the research process will still be fresh in their mind. Choosing an interesting topic for the Bachelor’s thesis is important: continuing with the same topic in the Master’s thesis is often a good idea. A small-scale empirical study conducted for the Bachelor’s thesis can act as a pilot study – it teaches students how to successfully phrase and define research questions and how a good method works. Students can also incorporate their Bachelor's thesis into their Master's thesis.

For students who come to study in a Master’s Degree Programme through separate admission, the right time of the thesis seminar depends on their educational background. If the admission decision or the curriculum require a large number of supplementary studies, it is worthwhile to postpone the thesis seminar until the spring semester of the first year or the autumn semester of the second year of studies.

When students are planning to sign up for the thesis seminar, they should ensure that they have
enough time for seminar work. Starting work on the thesis during the seminar requires that the students have sufficient free time from their other studies or employment between the seminar meetings.

A Master's thesis should be completed during the thesis seminar or approximately six months after the seminar ends. Students should start collecting empirical data in the third period of the seminar (see the table above). Students should make an effort to complete as much of their thesis as possible during the thesis seminar as this makes it easy to continue after the seminar; minor subject courses can be taken later. Completing a Master's thesis requires five to six months of full-time work.

Thesis processes are personal so the table above is just one example of the different phases of the thesis work and their timing. If they have reserved enough time, many students are able to complete their theses during the thesis seminar. Thus, a full-time student who studies at the normal pace can expect to complete the thesis seminar (10 credits), the thesis (40 credits) and two other courses (10 credits) in the year he/she takes the thesis seminar.

V Evaluation Process and Grade

Evaluation Process
Supervisors decide when theses are ready to be submitted for print and evaluation. Before this, the supervisor has usually read the second last version of the thesis; the first complete version usually requires at least one revision round before it can be sent to print. When the manuscript is complete, the student uploads it to the Turnitin plagiarism detection software on the Moodle platform. The supervisor interprets the report produced by the Turnitin programme and sends his/her approval to study services. Supervisors add their students to the Moodle platform during the thesis seminar and students may benefit from using the Turnitin software already during the writing process.

Please note that supervisors cannot say what the final grade will be before the evaluation process is complete. The second examiner of the thesis makes his/her independent evaluation and that has an effect on the final grade.

Each thesis will be evaluated by two examiners. One of the examiners is the thesis supervisor who is familiar with the entire thesis process, and the other examiner is usually an expert on the topic. The professor in charge of the Degree Programme or the person to whom the duty has been delegated appoints the examiners. Examiners must have a graduate degree or higher. Examiners base their evaluation on the criteria listed on the thesis evaluation form, but they can also write a free-form report should they wish to do so.

Maturity Test
The purpose of the maturity test related to the thesis is to demonstrate that the student is familiar with his/her thesis topic and has a good command of Finnish or Swedish. The maturity test is either a separate essay or a summary of the thesis replacing the essay. If the student has already written a maturity test in studies on the undergraduate level (i.e. for the Bachelor’s degree), the summary of the thesis acts as the maturity test. The summary should be carefully drafted because its contents will be assessed as a part of the evaluation of the thesis.
Students can sign up for a maturity test after their thesis has been submitted for evaluation. Maturity tests are generally taken on monthly examination dates; students should use an exam envelope to sign up. The thesis supervisor will formulate the questions and evaluate the maturity test.

The maturity test is an essay that should be approximately one examination paper long (about four written pages). The supervisor will assign three topics related to the candidate’s thesis topic from which he/she will choose one to write about. The Language Centre’s maturity test examiners instruct students as follows:

1. Choose one of the assignments. In clear handwriting, write an essay that is approximately one examination paper long (about four pages). Remember to give your essay a title.

2. The maturity test’s purpose is not to test how well you remember details; examiners are evaluating your language skills and your essay as a whole.

3. Make sure that the title and contents of your essay support each other, that your essay is well-structured and logically coherent, and that you clearly indicate where paragraphs start and end.

4. Avoid using excessively long and complicated sentences. Make sure your word order is fluent.

5. Use formal style. Avoid using too many unnecessarily fashionable words or specialised terms. Bear in mind that a highly abstract style will make your essay harder to read.

**Grade of the Thesis**

The choice of topic itself will not affect the grade. Topic choice does, however, determine how well a student can demonstrate his/her skills in different areas (theory building, previous research on the topic, methodology, etc.) The supervisor will make sure the student understands the possible limitations of his/her topic.

The evaluation criteria and evaluated components are explained in Appendices 1 and 2.

If a student is dissatisfied with the grade he/she has received, he/she can write his/her own justifications and ask that the thesis is re-examined. In such cases, students should contact the Head of Study Services at their Faculty.

**Links**

Instructions of the Faculty of Communication Sciences

University of Tampere’s guideline on theses
### SUPervision Agreement for a Master’s Thesis

| Student’s name |  |
| Degree programme and degree |  |
| Specialisation option |  |
| Topic of the thesis |  |
| Language of the thesis |  |
| Credits from the thesis | [ ] 25 ECTS  | [ ] 40 ECTS |
| Supervisor in charge |  |
| The thesis process |  |
| Start date |  |
| Estimated completion date |  |
| The student’s wish concerning the recording of credits | [ ] 1x25 | [ ] 10+10+5 | [ ] 4x10 |
|  | A description of the components is in the appendices |
| The student’s objective | [ ] authoring a passable thesis |
|  | [ ] authoring a good thesis |
|  | [ ] authoring an excellent thesis |
|  | [ ] not known |
| Previous degree at a higher education institution (the institution, degree, date) |  |
| The planned schedule for the supervisory meetings |  |
| Other comments and additional information |  |
| Date | Signature of the student | Signature of the supervisor |
## APPENDIX TO THE SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

### Timetable of the components

#### Thesis studies 1 (10 ECTS)

**Phase:** A realistic plan of the thesis exists including a description of the aims of the thesis, definition of the topic and a plan on how and when the student will work on the thesis. A draft of the literature review exists. There is also a detailed and feasible plan on data collection.

Possible further specifications:

**Target time:**

#### Thesis studies 2 (10 ECTS)

**Phase:** Thesis work has progressed according to the research outline. Data has been collected and structured for analysis. The analysis plan has been specified on the basis of having a more detailed picture of the data. The student has tested the necessary analysis methods and tools.

Possible further specifications:

**Target time:**

#### Thesis studies 3 (10 ECTS)

**Phase:** All of the data has been analysed and the results have been reported. The introductory chapter, literature review, chapter on the methods and chapter on the results have all been written in a way that forms a manuscript of the thesis.

**Target time:**

#### Thesis studies 4 (10 ECTS)

**Phase:** The thesis has been completed contents and language-wise. The text has passed the originality checking with the Turnitin Originality Check software. The student has passed the maturity test and the thesis has been approved in the official evaluation process.

**Target time:**
MORE INFORMATION (for the Degree Programme)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markings by the Degree Programme / Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay in the major subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturity test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of the thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instructions

The supervision agreement is made with the student at the start of the thesis process. The supervisor sends a copy of the form to the instructor in charge of the degree programme and to the Faculty’s Study Services.

With the supervision agreement, the student and the supervisor agree to work within the agreed timetable, attend the supervisory meetings and notify each other of any changes in the work plan. Both parties agree to follow good scientific practices during the supervision process. If the work does not progress within the original timetable and a new timetable has not been agreed upon with the supervisor, the agreement can be considered to become void. The instructor in charge of the degree programme must be notified of any agreements that become void or terminated.

The Other comments and additional information section must indicate if the thesis is supervised jointly by two supervisors, describe the roles of the supervisors, and indicate if the thesis is authored as a pair work or team work or as a commission. Commissioned theses are subject to a separate agreement. A thesis is a public document and it may not include confidential information.

The degree programme keeps a list of all theses in progress and of their supervisors. The list serves as the situation report requested by the management of the Faculty.
Evaluation Criteria of a Master’s Thesis

Grade Formation

The overall grade reflects the entire thesis; it might not be the numerical average value of component grades. The examiners’ report includes a short verbal evaluation describing what the examiners considered essential when determining the overall grade. The verbal evaluation can also highlight matters the components do not express, e.g. the applicability or publishability of the results. In general, the purpose of the verbal evaluation is to link the component grades to the evaluation criteria.

Evaluated Components

1. Topic, objective and aims, research problem and research questions
   - Does the author justify his/her choice of topic?
   - Does the author clearly define his/her objectives?
   - Does the author state and formulate his/her research questions explicitly?
   - Does the author define his/her research approach clearly?
   - Are the research approach and research problem clear, meaningful and logical?
   - Is the topic especially significant or innovative?
   - Is the link between research questions, literature review and results explicit?

2. Literature's suitability for the study, definition of concepts and theoretical framework
   - Does the author link his/her topic to previous research on the topic?
   - Does the author demonstrate a good knowledge of previous research on the topic and summarise that research?
   - Does the author discuss relevant previous research and link it with his/her research problem?
   - Are concepts defined precisely and incisively?
   - Does the author discuss and analyse theoretical approaches in the field?
   - Does the author explain his/her choice of framework?
   - Is the framework built on previous research?
   - Are hypotheses based on possible previous results and the framework?

3. Use of methodology
   - Can the methods be used to answer the research problem?
   - Does the author justify his/her choice of methods?
   - Are data collection methods described precisely?
   - Are the data sufficient and reliable in regard to the research problem and are the criteria for reliability defined clearly?
   - Does the author describe his/her data handling and analysis methods?
   - Is the analysis transparent, clear and reliable?
   - Is the analysis extensive and in-depth enough?
Does the author make good use of tables, figures and summaries?

Does the author discuss the reliability and validity of the results and test their statistical significance?

### 4. Presentation of results and conclusions

- Does the author highlight key findings and examine them in regard to previous research?
- Does the author answer his/her research questions?
- Does the author discuss the nature of the findings (are they surprising, new, or expected)?
- Does the author interpret the findings and discuss their significance (possible scientific novelty value and significance for practical applications and their development)?
- Does the author point out the limitations of the study and discuss topics for further research?
- Does the author evaluate the success of his/her methodological choices?

### 5. Conventions of scientific writing and command of the research process

- Is the argumentation sound and convincing?
- Does the author discuss literature analytically?
- Does the author link theory to empirical evidence?
- Does the author demonstrate a good command of the conventions of good scientific practice?
- Does the author demonstrate an imaginative approach to research?
- Is the language precise, fluent and correct and does the author have a good command of scientific writing?
- Are the citations (in-text citation and references) correct?
- Is the structure of the thesis good and logical?
- Is the work polished (correct layout, no or few typos, etc.)?

### Grades

5 = Excellent, 4 = Very good, 3 = Good, 2 = Satisfactory, 1 = Sufficient

### Failed

To pass, a Master's thesis must be coherent at least to some extent, cite at least some scientific literature and demonstrate that the author has a good command of at least some of the evaluated components.

### 1 Sufficient

The thesis is well-written enough to pass as an academic thesis, but the research question is unambitious or poorly phrased or the thesis is too constricted. A sufficient thesis usually meets the following criteria:

- The author discusses previous research very little.
- The author cites very few and mostly Finnish sources when contextualising the topic.
- Literature consists mainly of other sources than scientific literature, e.g. textbooks, journalistic articles or professional texts.
- The author defines the concepts, research problem and research questions poorly or fails to define them at all.
- There are gaps in the definition of methods, which are also scarce.
- Empirical data is scarce or the author uses it poorly.
- The author does not interpret the results much or link them with literature, and the conclusions are either too brief or missing.
- The author’s command of the conventions of scientific writing is weak.
2 Satisfactory

The thesis forms a relatively functional whole. However, the thesis is fairly brief or the author approaches and discusses the topic in a routine manner. A satisfactory thesis usually meets the following criteria:

- The topic is common or well-researched but clearly aligned with previous research.
- Contextualisation describes the theories and research results related to the studied topic; however, they are presented in a list-like or mechanical way.
- Contextualisation should be more closely linked to the research questions.
- The starting points of the study have been described and the research questions have been defined.
- The sources are mainly relevant but not all of them are relevant enough or some essential sources are missing.
- The author shows good mastery of methodology but relies too much on summarising methodological literature when reporting his/her choice of methods, or reports data handling and analysis insufficiently.
- The author presents findings stereotypically or interprets them slightly superficially.
- The link between the findings and previous research is limited, and the critical evaluation of results is also restricted.
- The language of the thesis is quite good.
- There are no grave shortcomings in the structure of the thesis or other such technicalities.

3 Good

The thesis is good and logically coherent. It is well-written, proceeds logically and concludes with clearly stated results. Scientific presentation is suitable and clear, and the author has a good command of the study as a whole. A good thesis usually meets the following criteria:

- The author contextualises the topic well and discusses key studies nicely.
- The author defines his/her research questions precisely and explains why he/she chose that approach and defined the topic the way he/she did.
- The author explains his/her theoretical framework.
- The author discusses his/her choice of methods well.
- The author presents his/her analysis and findings clearly and objectively.
- Conclusions clearly state how the findings relate to previous research and the study’s theoretical background.
- The language is good and the thesis has a proper structure.

4 Very good

The thesis is better or more extensive than an average thesis. In some areas, the study produces new knowledge or demonstrates the author's ability to handle the topic more competently and extensively than the average student. A very good thesis usually meets the following criteria:

- The topic is interesting, important or new, or the viewpoint is of interest (for example, the author may conceptualise the research subject in a new way).
- The author defines his/her research problem precisely and links it with previous research.
- The author devises and develops the research problem himself/herself.
The introduction, theoretical framework and research questions demonstrate a familiarity with the field, and the contextualisation of the study reaches a synthesis with previous research to at least some extent.

- The author defines concepts precisely.
- Sources are relevant to the field and topic.
- The choice and discussion of sources mostly demonstrates critical research.
- The author demonstrates a good command of methodology.
- Conclusions and the interpretation of findings are logical and well-reasoned.
- The author has a good command of the conventions of scientific writing.
- The language is good and the thesis is finished and polished coherently.

5 Excellent

The topic is significant or clearly more demanding than the average thesis topic. The author masters the research process excellently. The author uses an innovative approach or extensive and thoroughly analysed data. The thesis demonstrates independent thinking and self-contained points of view. The author demonstrates he/she can handle extensive sets of problems. An excellent thesis usually meets the following criteria:

- The author demonstrates an in-depth knowledge of the topic or of the theoretical background of the field.
- Contextualisation creates a synthesis with previous research.
- The author defines his/her starting points and research questions explicitly and justifies them well.
- The author has an excellent command of methodology.
- Methodological choices have been justified and their use has been carefully documented.
- Data analysis and interpretation of findings is insightful.
- The results may have independent scientific value.
- The author successfully evaluates his/her findings in relation to previous research, and the evaluation and discussion of findings are logical and critical.
- The language of the thesis demonstrates excellent scientific writing skills.
- The thesis could be published as such or its summary could be published in a scientific publication in the field.
## Master’s Thesis Evaluation Form

**Author:**
**Thesis title:**

**Type:**
- ☐ Master’s thesis in major subject
- ☐ Master’s thesis in minor subject

### 1. Topic and Research Problem

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<tr>
<td>- Scientific, social or practical significance of the topic and research problem</td>
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<td>- Justification of the research topic</td>
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<td>- Definition of research problems and research approach</td>
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### 2. Literature Review

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Presentation and evaluation of previous research</td>
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<td>- Scope and relevance of source literature</td>
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<td>- Precision of concept definitions</td>
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<td>- Building a theoretical framework</td>
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### 3. Methodology

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<tr>
<td>- Presentation and justification of methodological solutions</td>
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<td>- Appropriateness of methodology for the research questions</td>
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<td>- Validity, sufficiency and reliability of data</td>
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<td>- Command of methods and the quality of the analysis</td>
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<td>- Discussion of reliability and validity, and critical evaluation of the study</td>
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### 4. Results and Conclusions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Presentation of results</td>
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<td>- Use of tables, figures and summaries</td>
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<td>- Interpretation of results (in regard to previous research and answering the research questions)</td>
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<td>- Discussion of the scientific and practical significance of the results</td>
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### 5. Conventions of Scientific Writing and Presentation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Argumentation and analytical approach</td>
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<td>- Conformity of theory and empirical evidence</td>
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<td>- Structure and logical progression</td>
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<td>- Language</td>
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<td>- Meticulousness in using citations and completing the thesis</td>
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### Summary

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<tr>
<td>- Command of methodology</td>
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<td>- Familiarity with the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conventions of scientific writing</td>
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**Grade proposal:**

**Place and date:**

______________________________

**Signatures:**

______________________________  ________________________________

Name in print  Name in print

**Grade scale:** sufficient = 1, satisfactory = 2, good = 3, very good = 4, excellent = 5