

# GUIDELINE FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY BACHELOR'S THESES

## Introduction

This School of Arts, Design and Architecture guideline for Bachelor's degree theses has been approved by the Academic Committee for Arts, Design and Architecture on 13 December 2017. The entry into force of this thesis guideline is flexible as the Bachelor's Programme in Arts, Design and Architecture major subjects may adopt it any time starting on 1 January 2018 but no later than on 1 August 2018.

The guideline includes instructions on the requirements for theses and the thesis process for all the school's major subjects. Major subjects can, where necessary, give more detailed instructions in addition to this guideline.

Completing a thesis is a mandatory part of a Bachelor's degree.<sup>1</sup> A thesis is assessed as a study attainment and currently valid rule on study attainment and the student's legal protection are applied to it.

### The thesis process in a nutshell

#### Writing a thesis. thesis seminar and guidance

- When beginning to work on your thesis, sign up for a thesis seminar.
- Plan the topic of your thesis with the responsible teacher-in-charge or your thesis advisor. Seek approval for your topic from the teacher-in-charge appointed to you.
- Utilise the support you are given during the seminar while working on your thesis.
- Keep the thesis evaluation criteria in mind while working.
- Attach an abstract of your work in the language the main body of text is written in on the first page of your thesis.

Completion of written and spoken language workshops as part of a seminar (maturity essay and in the fields of technology a maturity essay and mother tongue studies)

- Arts students: sign up for the written language workshop to complete your maturity test.
- Technology students: sign up for the written and spoken language workshops to complete your maturity test and your mother tongue studies.

#### Presentation and examination of work

- Present your thesis at the presentation event held during thesis seminar and submit your thesis for evaluation in PDF format by the deadline stipulated by your major subject. Also submit possible other parts of your thesis for evaluation.
- Use the eAge system to save your thesis in the Aaltodoc database.

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<sup>1</sup> Government Decree on University Degrees (1039/2013).

## **1. Before writing a thesis**

### **Objective of the thesis**

The aim of a Bachelor's thesis is to demonstrate:

- learning in a major subject and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills that have been learnt
- the capacity for research-oriented thought and research-oriented work method in artistic, theoretical and applied research on your topic and
- good communication skills and language proficiency in their own field's assignments.

### **Thesis length and timetable**

The scope of a Bachelor's thesis and seminar is 10 credits which is equal to around 270 hours of work. For students in the fields of technology, the thesis and related seminar (10 credits in total) also includes mother tongue studies. As a rule, a thesis is written over the course of one semester. The student agrees with their thesis advisor on a more precise timetable for completing the thesis.

### **Types of theses**

Depending on the practices in place, a Bachelor's thesis completed by a student at the School of Arts, Design and Architecture is a written work or a work consisting of a written portion and a production portion. The recommended length for the written portion of the thesis is 15 to 30 pages (30,000 - 40,000 characters). The appropriate length depends on whether the thesis includes a production portion and the length or size of the production. An abstract in the language of the thesis will be attached to the thesis.

### **Thesis language**

The written portion of a thesis is written in Finnish or Swedish. A thesis can also be written in English for justified reasons with the approval of the teacher-in-charge. The language used in the thesis should be formal and error-free as well as in accordance with the field's practices.

### **A thesis as a group project**

With the approval of the teacher-in-charge, a thesis can be completed as a group work between two or more students. It is important that each participant's portion can be assessed individually. The method for reporting on a joint thesis will be agreed on with the teacher-in-charge.

## **2. During the thesis writing process**

### **Thesis process and supervision of the thesis**

A thesis is an independent work. The student receives guidance and instruction during the thesis seminar from the teacher-in-charge or a thesis advisor. A student begins their thesis by signing up for a thesis seminar. A seminar may have one or more teachers-in-charge. Each student will be appointed one teacher-in-charge. In addition to the teacher-in-charge, another person can also be appointed as the student's thesis advisor. Each major subject provides more detailed instructions on appointing a teacher-in-charge and possibly a thesis advisor.

A thesis advisor or teacher-in-charge is tasked with helping a student progress in the thesis process, supporting the student in choosing a topic and framing it, selecting a methodology and content focus areas as well as learning how to write a research paper and referencing sources.

### **Approval of a thesis topic and its framing**

The student must seek approval on their thesis topic and its framing. The student may be asked to draw up a thesis plan in order for their topic and its framing to be approved. The purpose of a thesis plan is to provide an outline on the objective, content and structure of the thesis and the coming process for the student and to make these visible for the teacher-in-charge, the thesis advisor and the other students participating in the thesis seminar.

The teacher-in-charge then approves the topic of the thesis and its framing on the basis of the plan presented by the student.

### **Handling of confidential information**

The thesis will be published when it has been assessed. A thesis may not include confidential information. If confidential information is handled during the completion of the thesis, for example because the student receives funding for the thesis from a private company, the financier's trade or professional secrets may not be included in the final work – they must be left as part of the background materials. The handling of any possibly confidential information must be discussed with the teacher-in-charge at the beginning the thesis process or at latest when the student finds out that the thesis process will include the handling of confidential information.

### **Layout requirements for the thesis**

The following information must be included on the title page of the written portion of a thesis: the author of the thesis, the type of thesis (arts: Bachelor of Arts thesis or technology: Bachelor's thesis), degree programme and major subject, school, university and the year the thesis was published.

### **Good scientific and artistic practices**

When writing a thesis, the student must comply with [the Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity](#) : Aalto University guidelines [on the use of visual resources in a thesis](#).

## **3. Grammar and spelling, written and spoken language workshops and maturity essay**

As part of the process of completing a Bachelor's thesis, a student must write a maturity essay. The maturity essay, which is part of Bachelor's degrees in arts and technology, demonstrates a command of the field which the thesis represents and the student's language of education (Finnish or Swedish).<sup>2</sup> The maturity essay is written in the student's language of education.<sup>3</sup>

### **Written and spoken language workshops**

As part of the thesis seminar, the student participates in a written language workshop (arts) or a written and spoken language workshop (technology). The written language workshops include the completion of exercises and examination of text examples, the examination of students' text samples and the person holding the workshop will provide personal feedback and support for writing. By participating a written language workshop, the student completes the maturity essay required of a thesis. Students of technology complete both the maturity essay required for their thesis and the mother tongue studies included in their degree programme by participating in lectures and written language and spoken language workshops.

The grammar and spelling portion of the maturity essay includes participation on written language workshops and the processing of one's own text as well as an approved text sample. The teacher-in-charge assess the actual command of the field from the actual thesis.

The language in which a maturity essay was written (if it was written in Finnish or Swedish) can be separately specified on the degree certificates of students who have completed their comprehensive education in languages other than Finnish and Swedish.

A maturity essay must be approved before a student's thesis is assessed.

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<sup>2</sup> The language studies required as part of degree programmes are based on the Government Decree on University degrees (794/2004, Section 6, Language skills). Pursuant to the Government Decree on the Demonstration of Proficiency in the Finnish and Swedish Languages in State Administration (481/2003): "a person is deemed as having received an education in the language in which they received a passing grade in Finnish or Swedish as their native language, as stated in the diploma, in accordance with or equivalent to studies stipulated in the Basic Education Act (628/1998) or Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998)".

<sup>3</sup> A student's language of education is determined according to primary and secondary education. A student's language of education is Finnish or Swedish, if the student has completed comprehensive school and/or upper school in the language in question. If the student's language of education is something other than Finnish or Swedish, the maturity test is, as a rule, written in Finnish or Swedish at the student's preference.

### **Other support for academic writing and enhanced support**

The mother tongue studies included in Bachelor's studies support the writing of a thesis. It is possible for students to apply for other Aalto University Language Centre courses to support their academic writing skills as well as for clinics organised to support writing. The school annually publishes information on the courses offered by the Language Centre.

If a student feels they need enhanced support in drafting their thesis, the student can if they so wish contact the Accessibility Contact Person to discuss the possibilities for various support measures.

## **4. After completing your thesis**

### **Presentation event and evaluation of thesis**

The student presents the completed thesis in a presentation event. The thesis is submitted for evaluation before the thesis presentation event. In the presentation the student presents their work, its objectives and results. The thesis advisor and/or teacher-in-charge gives a verbal assessment of the work and the thesis writer is given the opportunity to respond to the assessment and possible questions. The presentation event can also include a portion where the student defends their thesis and one or two other students, who have participated in the seminar, act as opponents. On the basis of given feedback, the student may finalise their work within a week from the thesis presentation event.

The thesis is submitted for evaluation in PDF format in the manner determined by the major subject. Any other parts of a thesis are submitted for evaluation in the manner agreed on with the teacher-in-charge.

The teacher-in-charge will decide on the grade for a Bachelor's thesis. If a separate thesis advisor has been appointed, the advisor will give a suggestion on the grade for the thesis. If there are numerous teachers-in-charge involved in the seminar, they can work together on the thesis evaluation, but the final assessment will be given by the teacher-in-charge appointed for the student in question. During the evaluation, a plagiarism check can be run on the written portion of the thesis.

The thesis is evaluated on a scale 0 to 5. A thesis can be failed or left unassessed, if it does not fulfil the requirements laid down for Bachelor's theses, or the student has used fraudulent methods such as plagiarism in completing the work.

A student graduating with a Bachelor's degree must be prepared to submit their thesis for evaluation approximately two months before their expected date of graduation. Major subjects will give more detailed information on the timetables for the evaluation of theses.

### **Saving of the thesis in the Aaltodoc database**

The student also saves information on their thesis and the electronic version of the thesis in Aalto University library's Aaltodoc publication archive. The thesis is saved as a PDF file, and in addition to a written portion it can include attached images. The school has the right to publish information concerning theses in its publication archive (e.g. the title of the thesis, the language of the thesis, key words and the thesis advisor). The thesis must be saved in the Aaltodoc publication archive before the thesis is assessed. Saving the thesis is part of the study attainment for the thesis.

### **Appeal**

A student who is dissatisfied with the evaluation given for one of their study attainments, can submit an appeal either verbally or in writing to the teacher-in-charge who has been responsible for grading the attainment in question. A request for rectification concerning the assessment of a study attainment must be submitted within 14 days of the date on which the student could have been notified of the assessment results and the application of the assessment grounds in their case.

The teacher who has given the assessment must give their decision concerning the request for rectification in writing. A student who is dissatisfied with a decision made by a teacher regarding a request for rectification may appeal to the Academic Appeals Board within 14 days of being notified of the decision.

Aalto University Academic Appeals Board  
Registry  
PO BOX 11000  
FI-00076 AALTO  
[kirjaamo@aalto.fi](mailto:kirjaamo@aalto.fi)

**General instructions related to graduation**

A thesis is related to the completion of a degree programme. The student must check well in advance before graduation whether they have completed all the study attainments required for graduation. At latest one month prior to the handing out of degree certificates, the student will order their degree certificate with an electronic certificate request form. This deadline is unequivocal. If the student leaves the submission of the request any later, they will correspondingly graduate on a later date.