The background of the cover is a teal color with a subtle, repeating pattern of white, fluffy flowers, likely cotton or wool, which are slightly out of focus. The flowers are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and texture.

LAPIN AMK⁷

Lapland University of Applied Sciences

THESIS GUIDE

MASTER'S DEGREES

This Thesis Guide has been compiled by the Working Group on Master's Degree Programmes at Lapland University of Applied Sciences. The Guide draws on the information provided by the national project 'Development Network for Master's Degree Programmes'.

Lapland University of Applied Sciences
Working Group on Master's Degree Programmes

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THESIS GUIDE

MASTER'S DEGREES

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1. The Master's Thesis

1.1 Objectives for Master's Degree Studies

Master's degree studies at universities of applied sciences include advanced professional studies, elective studies and a thesis.¹

The general objective for studies leading to a polytechnic Master's degree is to provide students with:

1. Extensive, in-depth information and the theoretical knowledge needed to work as a developer of the labour market through demanding expert and leadership positions
2. An in-depth vision of the professional field in question and its position in the labour market and in society, and the ability to follow and understand the development of research and professional practices in the field
3. The necessary abilities for lifelong learning and continuous development of their own professional competence
4. Good communication and language skills for use in their professional field and when operating and collaborating internationally.

The applied research and development carried out in universities of applied sciences supports the teaching given and contributes to the development of the professional field in question, as well as the employment it offers.

1.2 Objective of the Thesis

The aim of the thesis is to develop and demonstrate the students' ability to apply research data, to use selected methods for analysing and solving workplace problems and to carry out demanding specialist tasks independently.

In Master's degrees, the thesis process contributes to the development of the student's competence from the very start of the studies. The thesis is a research or development task based on ongoing studies, existing theoretical data in the field of expertise and empirical data acquired in the workplace. The objective of the thesis is to generate, produce and develop competence for the needs of the workplace and for other development projects.

The Master's thesis encompasses 30 credits and includes a research dimension and a practical development dimension. The premise is to form a knowledge-generating process that combines documented evidence-based data created through

development efforts with a research-oriented approach. The thesis could be described as a research-oriented development project.

The knowledge arising from Master's theses can be structured in terms of:

- The descriptive level (knowledge in practice), where descriptions of the purpose, objectives and process of the research and development task take centre stage;
- The explanatory level (knowledge of practice), where analyses based on theories, methodologies and careful documentation are the focal point; and
- The developmental level (knowledge for practice), focusing on developing work and the work community, generating new knowledge and fostering the development of the field.

All three levels are combined in Master's theses. Descriptive approaches to the task are not enough; it is essential to carry out development work, analysing its theoretical foundations and evaluating the process through careful documentation.

1.3 The Thesis Process

The thesis is a gradual learning process, passing through the following stages:

- Analysis stage, characterised by familiarisation with the phenomena at hand, information gathering and processing, and justification of the topic choice. The topic must be closely linked to developing the student's personal competence, job, career or workplace. It should also aim to produce new knowledge for broader use in the field.
- Planning stage, which examines the significance of acquired information through reflection, interpretation and comparison with prior experiences. Careful and systematic planning forms an essential part of development work. At the planning stage, an overall plan is drawn up for the development process, including the approach, methodology, implementation process and evaluation methods for the process and its results.
- Implementation stage, where the research and development task is carried out in accordance with the plan. Students evaluate and monitor the development process and share their experiences. The process may also involve a reassessment of the targets and methodologies chosen

¹ General regulations regarding the objectives of Master's degree studies and the Master's thesis are given in the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003, Sections 7a (16.6.2005/423) and 10 (16.6.2005/423)). Government Decree 546/2013 on amendments to the Polytechnics Decree.

for the development work. Optimally, the research and development task should be completed as a shared process by a community.

- Evaluation stage, which examines the usability, transferability, reliability and ethics of the development process. The final evaluation may also consider the commercialisation or business opportunities of the results, and bring up further challenges identified through the process.
- Publication stage, where the thesis or project report is delivered and presented.

The thesis process involves research and development methodology studies and seminar work. All the other studies included in the Master's degree also support the thesis project. The objective of seminars is to discuss the topics under analysis in the development projects and further the progress of the thesis.

The Master's thesis may be completed individually or by small teams of students. A responsible supervisor who has completed a postgraduate degree is appointed by the university of applied sciences for each thesis. Depending on the topic, the thesis may also involve a subject-specific supervisor and a representative of the stakeholder/workplace in question.

Working on a thesis develops the students' professional knowledge and competence, fosters a developmental and research-oriented approach to work and improves cooperation, interaction and networking skills.

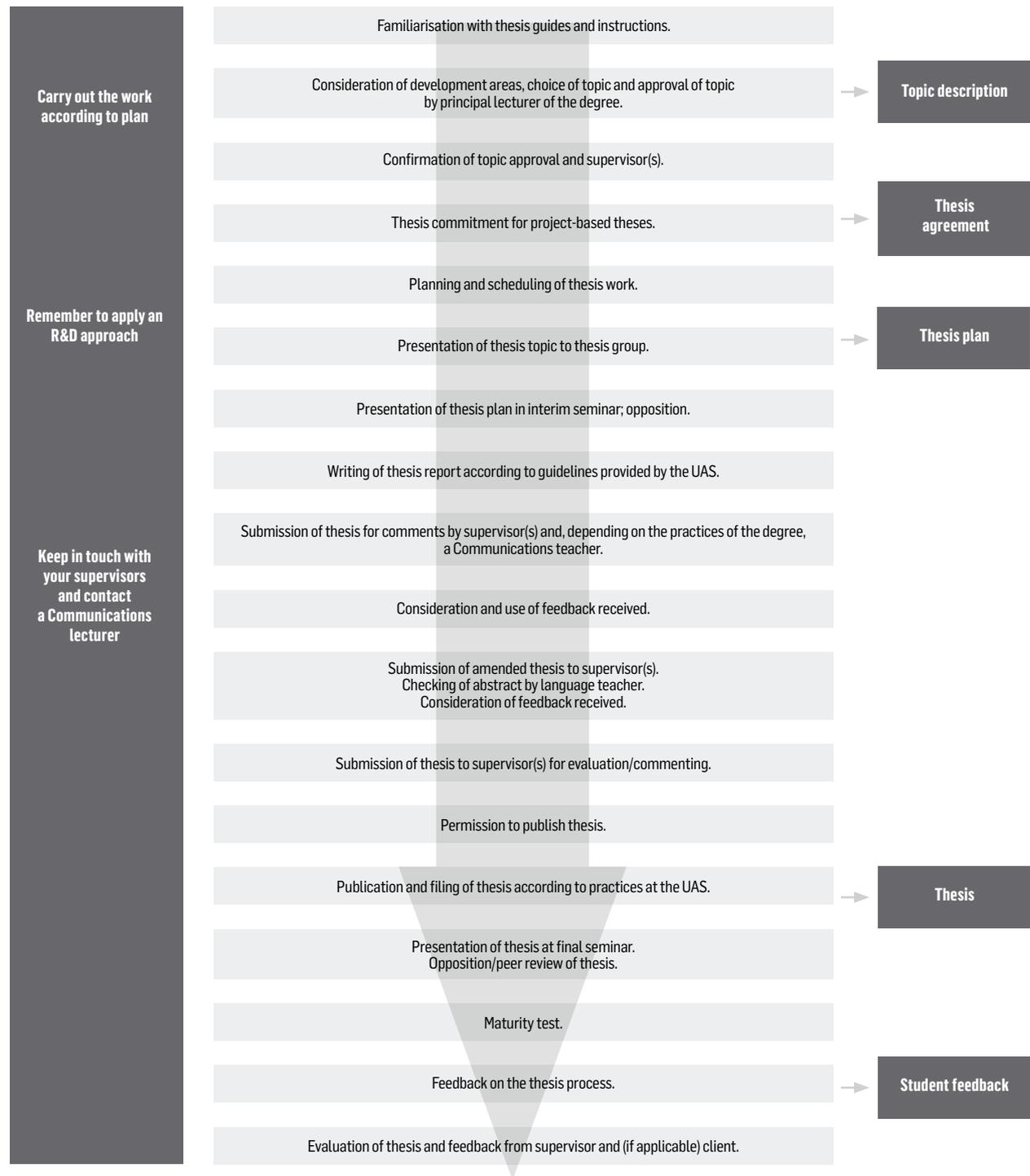
As their development competence evolves, students learn to:

- Acquire and handle in-depth information in their field of expertise and in other related fields, evaluate it critically, see things holistically and generate new knowledge
- Master research and development methods and independently carry out r&d projects to develop the field
- Carry out creative and innovative problem-solving in the changing workplace, applying existing data in the field
- Take initiatives and adopt a developmental approach to work
- Know the elements of project work, participate in and manage projects.

Through the development of societal and organisational and competence, students learn to:

- Know the operating environment and actors in their field, and understand the significance of social influence
- Know the rules and practices of the workplace and participate in coordinating, developing and managing organisations' activities
- Critically evaluate new applications and solutions in the field
- Plan, organise and develop operations in changing practical situations
- Understand the widespread connections and causal relationships between things and work with limited information in situations requiring multidisciplinary competence in the field.

Progress of the thesis process



1.4 Project-Based Theses

Theses carried out for an employer are known as project-based theses when one or more of the following criteria² are fulfilled:

1. An employer pays the university of applied sciences or the student for completing the thesis, as agreed in writing before the thesis begins
2. A workplace representative has been appointed as a thesis supervisor
3. An employer has commissioned the work with the express aim of utilising its outcomes in the employer's operations³.

A bilateral agreement (Appendix 1) must always be drawn up in writing of project-based theses.

1.5 Rights to Thesis Outcomes

Some of the aspects of theses that are regulated by law include the various rights that arise to the outcomes of the student's work, including copyrights, patents and design rights. These must be agreed upon specifically between the student and the client of the thesis when making the thesis agreement.

1.6 Disclosure of the Thesis

Theses form a part of higher education degrees which is publicly evaluated. Theses accepted with a Pass grade become public immediately, and this fact cannot be changed even by agreement. The public nature of theses helps to guarantee their objective and fair evaluation. Certain kinds of content included in theses – such as companies' business secrets – may in exceptional cases require the confidentiality of sections of a thesis. In these cases the thesis must be structured so that the confidential information is included in background data that is kept separate from the main text and only disclosed to the client. The disclosure and storage of the background data must be agreed separately in the thesis agreement (Appendix 1). The author and supervisor(s) of the thesis are bound by a duty of non-disclosure towards confidential information.

²⁾ Publication Data Collection Manual 2011 of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

³⁾ A thesis may also be related to the internal innovation work conducted at the university of applied sciences and form part of the institution's own R&D operations.



2. The Thesis Process

At a university of applied sciences, the Master's thesis is an independent task carried out by students individually or in small teams. The students are supported by one or more supervisors and a Communications lecturer from the university of applied sciences, as well as, possibly, a representative of an external client of the thesis. The principal lecturer of the degree programme appoints the supervisor(s) of the thesis. In project-based theses, the organisation that commissioned the work appoints a contact person who will represent them.

2.1 Parties and Responsibilities

The student

- Identifies a thesis topic and has it approved
- In the case of a project-based thesis, makes an commitment with Lapland university of applied sciences and the client (appendix 1)
- Makes a thesis plan, including (if there are several authors) a division of the related tasks
- Formulates a schedule and abides by it
- Keeps in touch with the thesis client and supervisor
- Attends thesis seminars in accordance with the degree programme's practices and schedules
- Discusses any changes with the supervisors
- Carries out and documents the work in accordance with general thesis reporting guidelines from the university of applied sciences
- Books seminar times
- Takes a maturity test
- Asks the client for a statement on the thesis (appendix 2)
- Provides feedback on the thesis process (appendix 3)
- Hands in the archival copy/ies of the completed thesis and appendices 2 and 3 to the supervisor.

The thesis supervisor

- Familiarises him/herself with the general requirements for a polytechnic master's thesis
- Familiarises him/herself with good supervision practices and the general thesis guidelines of the university of applied sciences
- Discusses the topic and objectives of the thesis with the principal lecturer of the degree programme, to ensure they fulfil the criteria

- Informs the student(s) and client(s) of procedures in the case of the background data containing any confidential material
- Approves the thesis plan together with the principal lecturer
- Directs the learning process, assists in any problems and guides the ethical decisions taken at any stage of the work
- Ensures the work is checked with a text comparison tool
- Formulates a maturity test and evaluates its content
- Evaluates the thesis together with the principal lecturer
- Provides evaluation feedback to the student
- Collates all the materials related to the evaluation (appendices 2 and 3, seminar feedback, and the thesis and maturity test evaluations)
- Supervises the publication of the thesis in line with practices at the university of applied sciences.

The Communications lecturer

- Guides the student in research-related communication
- Evaluates the linguistic aspects of the maturity test
- A lecturer in english communication evaluates the linguistic aspects of the abstract in english.

The principal lecturer of the degree programme

- Approves the thesis topic and appoints a supervisor
- Approves the thesis plan, including any confidentiality aspects, together with the supervisor
- Signs the agreement related to project-based theses with the client and student (appendix 1)
- Organises the seminars
- Gives the final grade to the thesis together with the supervisor.

A representative of the client

- Signs the agreement related to project-based theses with the principal lecturer and student (Appendix 1)
- Works with the student to set targets for the work
- Ensures that the necessary work can be carried out in the company or organisation
- Provides a written statement on the thesis (Appendix 2).

The student affairs office or campus office

- Is in charge of archiving copies of the thesis.

2.2 Thesis Topic and Description

The thesis topic must be significantly linked to the student's studies and work. The student formulates a topic proposal (two to three A4 pages) for the thesis. The topic proposal is used for approval of the topic, as a basis for the presentation to the seminar group, and as an aid in further work. The proposal is a preliminary plan for the thesis, indicating what the student intends to do, how and why, including:

- Names and contact details of author(s)
- Thesis topic and preliminary working title
- Name and contact details of clients
- Names of other parties involved
- Reasons for topic choice
- Explanation of how the topic is linked to workplace development
- Objective of the thesis
- Preliminary plan of methodology
- At least three written sources of information related to the thesis topic (prior research papers or journal or expert articles, of which one must be in a foreign language)
- Schedule.

The topic proposal must be handed in to the principal lecturer of the degree programme, who will confirm receipt. Having approved the topic, the principal lecturer will appoint one or more supervisors from the university of applied sciences.

2.3 Thesis Plan

A thesis plan with a specific content structure must be drawn up for each thesis:

Introduction

- Presentation and justification of thesis topic
- Explanation of links between the topic, the student's Master's studies and the development of the workplace and the region
- Description of the client's practical problem or development need
- Justification of the topic choice from various points of view, using bibliography
- Presentation and recording of division of tasks, if there are several authors.

Aim, objectives and questions

- Presentation of the aim of the thesis as concisely and accurately as possible (in one sentence)
- Setting of the thesis objectives: whom the thesis will benefit and how, and what can be achieved through the thesis
- Description of the question(s) that the thesis will seek to answer, based on the aim and objectives.

Information sources appropriate to the profession and the development task

- Definition of the main concepts related to the topic and the chosen perspective
- Description of the operating environment for the development task
- Presentation of the theoretical framework, analysing previous studies, theses and literature on or around the topic
- Presentation and justification of data collection process and methods
- Reasoned explanation of the links between the theoretical and methodological portions of the thesis.

Methodology

- Description of the research or development method that will be used
- Presentation of the desired results, development plan or other outcome, and how they will be reported

The thesis plan is approved by the thesis supervisor. After this, the student presents it to other students at the interim seminar and receives peer feedback.

2.4 Reporting

Students are recommended to begin writing their reports as early as possible during the thesis process. Advice on reporting is provided by the Communications lecturer and the thesis supervisor. The report must be submitted for comments to the supervisor and (if applicable) the client in accordance with the agreed schedule.

The written report of the thesis must be made in accordance with the reporting instructions given by the university of applied sciences (www.lapinamk.fi).

2.5 Seminars

Seminar work is a central form of supervision and guidance in the thesis process. Explaining and justifying one's own work to others furthers learning. By preparing well for their seminars, students can further the progress of their theses. In addition to comments from the thesis supervisor, students receive peer mentoring from their opponents and other students. Feedback from the client can also be discussed in seminars.

Seminars are arranged in at least three stages. At the start of the thesis process, students present their topics to their thesis group and receive feedback, according to which they can fine-tune the topic in line with the degree programme's accepted practices.

At the interim seminar, students discuss questions posed by the authors, opponents and supervisor together. An opponent for the interim and final seminars is set for each thesis by the student, the supervisor and the principal lecturer in collaboration. The thesis author must agree on a schedule and hand in the interim seminar presentation and any supporting materials to the supervisor and the opponent in good time, to allow them to prepare.

The final seminar is for completed works. The final seminar is an open and public event. Because the seminars are public, students must take into account any confidential matters that may be related to the work and will not be published in the final thesis. The student must submit the completed work to the thesis supervisor and the opponent one week before the final seminar.

The student must invite the thesis client to the final seminar.

The final seminar comprises the following elements:

- Opening of the session
- Presentation of the work (approx. 30 minutes)
- Opposition (approx. 15 minutes)
- Statement by the client (if applicable)
- General discussion
- Statement by the supervisor
- Closing of the session.

The student must present:

- The purpose, objectives and delimitations of the project
- A summary of the information sources, data collection and methodology of the work
- The outcomes of the work.

The emphasis of the final seminar is on presenting the results and outcomes of the thesis or development project, and on the evaluation of the process. Use of a pictorial summary is recommended in the presentation.

After the presentation, the opponent carries out the opposition. The opponent's job is to evaluate the thesis, not to criticise it. The opponent should prepare a few critical questions and provide an overall assessment of the work (Appendix 4).

The opponent's presentation is followed by words from the client (if applicable) and general discussion. To conclude, the supervisor gives a verbal statement on the work.

The total duration of the final seminar is around one hour.

In addition to the verbal statement given at the seminar, the supervisor must make a written statement on the thesis (Appendix 4) to give to the student.

2.6 Publication of the Thesis

Permission to publish the thesis is given by the supervisor, after which the student will publish and file the thesis according to practices at the university of applied sciences.

If the work was done for a client, the student must hand in the work to the client.

3. Evaluation

3.1 Evaluation Practices

The thesis evaluation is done by the supervisor. Theses are graded on the scale Excellent (5) – Good (4 or 3) – Satisfactory (2 or 1). The evaluation should only cover the public elements of the thesis and be based on the written report, the process, the student's seminar presentation, the information obtained by the supervisor on the student's progress in the topic during the process, and the written statement obtained from the client.

The client who commissioned the thesis provides feedback on the success of the thesis from their point of view, on a specific form (Appendix 2), upon request by the student.

The supervisor requests written feedback on the thesis process from the author of the thesis (Appendix 3). This is used for continuous development of the thesis and supervision process. The student submits the forms to the supervisor and the feedback is handled and filed according to the practices at the university of applied sciences.

Students who are dissatisfied with their grades may request a review. Reviews are regulated by law in the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003).

3.2 Characteristics of a Good Thesis

Choice of topic and fulfilment of set objectives

- The thesis topic or the R&D project is topical and significant in terms of workplace or regional development
- The development needs were identified based on a careful analysis, which is evident from the purposeful setting of appropriate research questions
- The handling of the topic proves the significance and usability of the data and outcomes for the labour market
- The set objectives were met and the work is structured logically and according to plan
- The thesis was completed according to schedule or, if the schedule was changed, it was done for a good reason and in collaboration with the client.

Data collection and analysis

- The methodological choices were appropriate for the R&D task at hand
- The development process was theoretically structured
- Skilled use was made of R&D methods
- The data collection covered the topic comprehensively
- Information was obtained independently, making critical use of diverse sources
- Various sources of information, including international ones, were used
- R&D methods were adapted to apply to new and changing situations.

Presentation and usability of results and conclusions

- Results are presented clearly and logically
- The results are explained and have been thought through
- The conclusions are logical
- The conclusions critically evaluate problems and various options for solving them
- The information generated by the project is a significant benefit for the labour market
- The solutions are generally applicable
- The thesis proposes different considered alternatives to suit various situations and circumstances.

Linguistic and textual aspects and interactive presentation of the thesis

- The written report progresses coherently, with a logical structure
- The questions related to the thesis topic have been presented expertly and appropriately to different target group, both verbally and in writing
- Linguistically the report is correct, precise and clear
- The text is fluent, faultless and professional
- Information sources have been appropriately used and referenced.

3.3 Evaluation Criteria

Areas of evaluation	Excellent (5)	Good (4)
Management of topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of topic is significant, topical and innovative from the point of view of workplace development. The handling of the topic demonstrates the breadth and excellent development of the student's professional expertise. The process was conducted in a self-directed, logical manner, with carefully considered choices in its various stages. The student's actions during the process were highly systematic and target-oriented, and process was carefully brought to a conclusion. The objectives set for the thesis were met to an excellent degree. The thesis is highly useful for the client and the outcomes are significant in terms of workplace development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of topic is significant, topical and clearly justified from the point of view of workplace development. The handling of the topic demonstrates the student's professional expertise and advanced competence. The process was conducted in a self-directed, logical manner, with well-considered choices in its various stages. The student's actions during the process were systematic and target-oriented, and process was brought to a conclusion. The objectives set for the thesis were met to a good degree. The thesis is useful for the client and the outcomes are significant in terms of workplace development.
Information basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information basis for the thesis forms a very clear, logical and cohesive entity and is appropriate to the topic and objectives of the thesis. The student has used various sources of information diversely, critically and synthetically. The main concepts are defined comprehensively and analytically. The sources of information are diverse, critically chosen, reliable and up to date. The bibliography includes a significant proportion of research data and international sources. The work has made comprehensive and interactive use of personal professional expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information basis for the thesis forms a clear and cohesive entity and is appropriate to the topic and objectives of the thesis. The student has used various sources of information diversely and purposefully. The use of information sources is broad, critical and consistent. The main concepts are defined comprehensively. The sources of information are diverse, justified, reliable and up to date. The bibliography includes a good proportion of research data and international sources. The work has made interactive use of personal professional expertise.
Completion of the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has chosen highly suitable research and/or development methods, and has mastered them independently and innovatively. The student has made creative, skilful and highly appropriate use of data collection and analysis methods in the thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has chosen suitable research and/or development methods, and has mastered them independently and properly. The student has made skilful and appropriate use of data collection and analysis methods in the thesis.
Conclusions and reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very clearly and understandably justified conclusions have been drawn from the results from the point of view of workplace development. The usability of the thesis is clearly evidenced. The student has proposed well-considered further research topics and/or development ideas that are highly suitable for the results. The reliability evaluation was conducted carefully, diversely and critically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justified and logical conclusions have been drawn from the results from the point of view of workplace development. The usability of the thesis is clearly evidenced. The student has proposed further research topics and/or development ideas that are suitable for the results. The reliability evaluation was conducted carefully and diversely.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the thesis and processing of the thesis content are flawless, coherent and logical. The linguistic aspects and presentation of the expository text are flawless and highly appropriate. The sources of information have been appropriately used and referenced. The graphical elements used are highly insightful and appropriate for illustrating the results. The thesis text is fully compliant with the instructions provided by Lapland university of applied sciences. The student excels in interactive communication and fully complies with the requirements and practices imposed on presentation of information in the thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the thesis and processing of the thesis content are coherent. The linguistic aspects and presentation of the expository text are almost flawless. The sources of information have been appropriately used and referenced. The graphical elements used are appropriate for aptly illustrating the results. The thesis text complies with the instructions provided by Lapland university of applied sciences. The student is able to communicate interactively on the thesis, displaying the required research-related and professional competences.

The criteria below apply to theses conducted by individual students. They must be adapted for application to theses with several authors. Detailed criteria for evaluation of these written by teams can be found on the Lapland University of Applied Sciences website.

Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Satisfactory (1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of topic is useful and justified from the point of view of workplace development. The processing of the topic demonstrates the student's professional expertise and competence. The process was mostly conducted in a self-directed, logical manner, with appropriate choices in its various stages. The student's actions during the process were systematic and target-oriented, and process was brought to a conclusion. The objectives were met fairly well. The thesis is useful for the client and its results can be applied to workplace development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of topic is useful from the point of view of workplace development, but its justifications in this respect are limited. The handling of the topic demonstrates the student's professional expertise and some competence in the field. The process was conducted in a fairly self-directed manner, but there are some deficiencies in its logical progression and the appropriateness of choices made. During the process, the student needed assistance with sticking to the plan and bringing the process to a conclusion. The objectives were partly met. The thesis is somewhat useful for the client and its results can be applied to some extent to workplace development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The choice of topic is not closely linked to workplace development and its justifications in this respect are lacking. The handling of the topic demonstrates the student's professional expertise, but the competence shown is inadequate and unstructured. The process was not conducted independently and there were clear deficiencies in its logical progression and the appropriateness of choices made. The student needed assistance at all stages of the process and lots of help with bringing it to a conclusion. The objective were not met to any significant degree. The thesis is not particularly useful for the client and its results cannot very well be applied to workplace development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information basis for the thesis is cohesive, and it is appropriate to the topic and objectives of the thesis. The student has used various sources of information purposefully. The use of information sources consistently and critically supports the handling of the topic. The main concepts are defined comprehensively. The sources of information are justified, reliable and up to date. The bibliography includes some research data and international sources. The work has made use of personal professional expertise, with some attempts at interactivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information basis for the thesis is appropriate to the topic and objectives of the thesis. The student has used a limited but appropriate selection of sources of information. Limited use of the information sources was made in handling the topic. Not very comprehensive definitions are given of the main concepts. The bibliography is topical and up to date. It includes research, but very few international sources. Attempts were made to make interactive use of personal professional expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information basis for the thesis is too narrow in relation to the topic and objectives of the thesis. The student has used a limited selection of sources of information, whose links with the topic are inconsistent. The use of the information sources is superficial and uncritical (purely referential). The student has not properly managed the definition of concepts. The bibliography is topical and mostly up to date. The bibliography includes little research and no international sources. The work has mostly made use of personal professional expertise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has chosen suitable research and/or development methods, and has mastered them appropriately. The student has made appropriate and justified use of data collection and analysis methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has chosen suitable research and/or development methods, but has not completely mastered their use. The student has made appropriate but somewhat inconsistent use of data collection and analysis methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has chosen suitable research and/or development methods, but has demonstrated significant deficiencies in their use. The student's use of data collection and analysis methods was deficient and to some extent unjustified.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical conclusions have been drawn from the results from the point of view of workplace development. The usability of the thesis is evidenced. The student has proposed relevant further research topics and/or development ideas. The reliability evaluation was conducted carefully and properly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few conclusions have been drawn from the results from the point of view of workplace development. The usability of the thesis is evidenced. The student has proposed further research topics and/or development ideas that are not very well justified. The reliability evaluation was conducted satisfactorily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No conclusions or illogical conclusions have been drawn from the results from the point of view of workplace development The usability of the thesis is unclear. The student has not proposed further research topics and/or development ideas. The reliability evaluation has deficiencies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the thesis and processing of the content are mostly coherent. The linguistic aspects and presentation of the expository text are good. The sources of information have been appropriately used and referenced. The graphical elements used are appropriate for presenting the results. The thesis text complies to a wide extent with the instructions provided by Lapland university of applied sciences. The student is able to communicate interactively on the thesis, displaying the required professional competences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the thesis and processing of the content are only partly coherent. The linguistic aspects and presentation of the text are incoherent and inconsistent, with the main requirements of expository texts fulfilled. The use of sources of information and in-text referencing practices are inadequate. Some graphical elements are used to present some results, with deficiencies in the presentation. The thesis text complies with the main instructions provided by Lapland university of applied sciences. The student is able to communicate on the thesis, primarily based on competences acquired through experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the thesis and processing of the content are incoherent and disconnected. The text abounds in errors, is linguistically clumsy and does not meet the main requirements of expository texts. The use of sources and in-text referencing are inadequate and inconsistent. The graphical elements used are inconsistent and lacking in content. The text does not appropriately comply with the instructions provided by Lapland university of applied sciences. The student verbally communicates on the thesis, with the focus on the descriptive level.

If the thesis does not reach at least the Satisfactory (1) grade in every evaluated aspect, it is graded as Failed (0).

3.4 Maturity Test

The Master's thesis at universities of applied sciences includes a compulsory maturity test. According to Section 10 of the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003), to obtain their degrees, students must complete maturity tests based on their theses and intended to demonstrate their knowledge of the field and their skills in the Finnish or Swedish language. For students who are not required to demonstrate the language skills described in Section 8, Subsection 1 of the Decree, the university of applied sciences can decide on the format of the maturity test.⁴ The maturity test may consist of an essay on a chosen topic or a press release on the thesis.

Students may register for the maturity test once they are putting the finishing touches on the thesis. Registration is done in the same way as for an exam, and the maximum time permitted for its completion is three (3) hours. Completion of the maturity test is under supervision. Students must complete the maturity test in line with the practices of the university of applied sciences and in accordance with the topics set by the supervisor. Unless otherwise indicated on the test paper, the target group or imagined reader of the maturity test is another professional in the same field.

The subject-specific content of the maturity test is evaluated by the thesis supervisor, and the linguistic aspects by a Communications lecturer. The maturity test is graded as Pass or Fail.

⁴ Students who have been granted an exemption from the language requirements specified in Section 8:1 of the Decree (352/2003) complete the maturity test in English. The exemption is granted by the rector. In these cases, the following phrase is recorded on the student's degree certificate: "The student has completed the maturity test in English (or in another language approved by the rector) based on Sections 8 and 10 of the Polytechnics Decree."

Appendix 1 (1/2) Thesis Commission Commitment

I Thesis Commission Agreement

Company/workplace	
Name of company/workplace	
Contact person	Position
Address	Telephone
Email	
Thesis (please provide further details separately if necessary)	
Topic of the thesis	
Background materials to be provided for completion of the thesis	Completion date
Supervision of the thesis on behalf of the client. Who will supervise and how?	
The representative of the client agrees to <input type="checkbox"/> Take part in formulating the thesis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Make it possible for the student to complete the work in the workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Assist the student in professional questions related to the work <input type="checkbox"/> Attend thesis seminars where possible and provide feedback and statements on the work for evaluation purposes <input type="checkbox"/> Agree on any confidential aspects of the work (if applicable) with the student and the university of applied sciences	
Signature	

II Student's commitment to the thesis

Student	
First name and surname	Student ID
Address	Telephone
Email	
Degree programme and specialisation	
The student agrees to: <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out the work according to the plan and the instructions provided by the university of applied sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Only use the materials provided by the client for purposes related to the thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the confidentiality of background materials separately specified as confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Submit the completed thesis to the client in the agreed manner, presenting the results to the client separately if necessary	
Signature	

Appendix 1 (2/2) Thesis Commission commitment

III Supervision of the Thesis

Supervising teacher	
Name of supervisor	
Degree programme and campus	Telephone
Email	
The representatives of the university of applied sciences agree to	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that the topic and objectives of the thesis fulfil the criteria set for Master's theses in the field and that the supervision of the thesis process promotes its completion	
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate the thesis	
<input type="checkbox"/> Comply with the thesis instructions provided by the university of applied sciences at all times	
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the confidentiality of data separately specified as confidential.	
Signature	

Principal lecturer of the degree programme	
Name of principal lecturer	
Telephone	Email
Signature	

Theses are public pieces of work. Any confidential data related to the client included in the work must not be included in the published version of the thesis.
This agreement model is valid for the time being.

Appendix 2 Feedback from Commissioning Party

Client

Student

Degree programme

Topic of thesis

As a representative of the commissioning party (client) of the thesis, I make the following statement on the thesis, taking into account the following elements, among others: fulfilment of objectives, usability of results, responsibility and interactivity of the author

Date and signature of commissioning party's representative

____ / _____

Appendix 3 Student's Evaluation of Thesis Process

The feedback you provide will help us to improve the Master's thesis process at Lapland University of Applied Sciences.
Circle the option you feel is most appropriate.

1. The thesis prepared equipped me with	
- comprehensive problem-solving	poorly 1 2 3 4 5 very well
- logical and systematic work	poorly 1 2 3 4 5 very well
- diverse forms of information searching	poorly 1 2 3 4 5 very well
- improving my written, pictorial and verbal expression	poorly 1 2 3 4 5 very well
- carrying out research and development in my field	poorly 1 2 3 4 5 very well
2. The thesis instructions and guidelines provided were	insufficient 1 2 3 4 5 excellent
3. The guidance and support I received from the client was	insufficient 1 2 3 4 5 excellent
4. The guidance and support I received from my supervisor was	insufficient 1 2 3 4 5 excellent
5. The guidance and support I received from the Communications lecturer was	insufficient 1 2 3 4 5 excellent
6. The thesis seminars contributed to the completion of the work	very little 1 2 3 4 5 a lot
7. The workload involved in my thesis in relation to the time available to complete it was	light 1 2 3 4 5 heavy
8. In relation to my skill level, the thesis was	undemanding 1 2 3 4 5 very demanding
9. The thesis increased my workplace competence	a little 1 2 3 4 5 a lot
10. The feedback I received during the process was	depressing 1 2 3 4 5 encouraging
11. Please provide some comments and development suggestions related to the thesis process.	

Date and signature

_____ / _____

Please return this feedback to your supervisor.

Appendix 4 Master's Thesis Evaluation Form (template)

Name of student _____

Title of thesis

Title of thesis in English

Commissioned by _____

Evaluated by _____

Grading scale
5 Excellent
4 Good
3 Good
2 Satisfactory
1 Satisfactory

Areas of evaluation (please refer to explanation)

1. Management of topic _____

2. Information basis _____

3. Completion of work _____

4. Conclusions and reliability _____

5. Reporting _____

Grade _____

The Master's thesis evaluation form is a template for use in thesis evaluation. The form can be supplemented with an appendix explaining the overall grade.

The maturity test has been completed and approved. _____

Explanation of areas of evaluation

1. Management of topic

The topic of the thesis justifiably develops the workplace. The links with the workplace are explained. The main idea of the thesis, a specific research problem or development task and their objectives are defined, delimited and explained. The thesis process is well conducted. The objectives set for the work are met, and the outcomes of the work benefit the client.

2. Information basis

The main concepts used in solving the research problem/task and the links between them are appropriately defined based on relevant existing data or theoretical knowledge. Information sources are used diversely, critically and resourcefully. The sources used are up to date, reliable and international. The information basis is seamlessly linked to the empirical data and the structure of the thesis is clear and logical.

3. Completion of work

The student has gathered information from various sources, logically, carefully, comprehensively and critically. The data collection and analysis methods that are significant in terms of solving the research problem/task are presented. Data collection, analysis and the drawing of conclusions are systematically accomplished in compliance with the plan, and the principles according to which they progress are carefully described. The chosen research and data gathering methods are used creatively and skillfully.

4. Conclusions and reliability

The results proposed as a solution to the problem are clearly described with argument provided. The author evaluates the applicability and usability of the solution, and alternatives to apply the solution to different circumstances and situations are presented. Topics for further research are proposed. The reliability of the results is critically evaluated.

5. Reporting

The organization of the thesis content is flawless, coherent and logical. Linguistically the report is appropriate in style, explicit and clear. The text is fluent and flawless professional text. The text is a concise account of the content. The use of sources of information and referencing to the sources are appropriate. The oral presentation of the thesis is illustrative and clear in presenting the main results of the work in a compact form.

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Lapland University of Applied Sciences

www.lapinamk.fi

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