

# Master's thesis info event

Geoinformatics MSc program

29 September 2023

# Master's thesis



## WHAT?

The crown jewel of your MSc studies

- your opportunity to shine!
- your opportunity to learn more & apply theory into practice
- a stepping stone to working life or doctoral studies

~6 months of work.

30 credits: includes thesis + short oral presentation (video)

Thesis submitted in electronic format (pdf). Binding thesis not needed any more.

## WHEN?

Thesis work can be started when you have completed a sufficient amount of studies in geoinformatics.

If you plan to work on your thesis in January 2024, you need to look for the topic now!

# Supervisor & advisor(s)

- **Supervisor:** a professor from the GIS MSc program
  - Henrikki, Maaria, Matti, Miina, Mirjam, Petri, Jussi (soon)
  - Discusses the choice of topic with you
  - Helps in finding the suitable theoretical sources and framework for the topic
  - Supports you in writing the thesis
  - Grades the thesis
- **Advisor:** your hands-on guide during the thesis process
  - Helps in the (daily/weekly) execution of the empirical part of the thesis
  - Must have at least a master's degree
  - 1 or 2 advisors per thesis, depending on potential inter/multidisciplinarity of topic
  - Usually there is more interaction between student and advisor than student and professor during the process

# Process

1) Discuss your thesis idea with your supervisor (and advisor).

Supervisors have a strong understanding of what is a "good" topic and what is not.

2) Apply for formal approval of topic in eAge (<https://eage.aalto.fi>)

The Degree committee meets ~7 times per year to approve topics.

3) Prepare a research proposal.

Details on materials and methods & schedule & deadline agreed with supervisor.  
Check with your supervisor how often they want to be updated about your progress.

4) Start working! Work, work!

Help from advisor during this phase. Keep track of how much time you spend working on your thesis. Template for thesis available online.

5) Get comments from your supervisor on a thesis draft (/drafts).

Submit a draft version also to Turnitin for a preliminary plagiarism check (in MyCourses under your professor's name).

6) Agree about presentation (video) with your supervisor.

7) Submit the final version for grading.

Done through eAge and Turnitin.

# Oral presentation

**A video presentation** (Youtube, Vimeo, Panopto, ...)  
5-10 min video (detailed instructions available online)

# Academic writing

- Academic writing is demanding, especially if you are not writing in your native language
- Academic writing conventions are different in different languages even though the structure ("IMRaD") of a scientific report is the same
- Some basic info here: <http://sana.aalto.fi/awe/style/reporting/sections/index.html>
- The Language Center offers help – **highly recommended!**
  - Writing Clinic (<https://www.aalto.fi/en/language-and-communication-studies/writing-clinic>)
  - LC-1320 - Thesis Writing for Engineers (MSc)
  - LC-7105 Thesis Incubator (if you are stuck in the writing process)

# Evaluation of MSc thesis

- Graded 1-5 (also 0 possible)
- Will be evaluated within a couple of weeks of its submission (i.e., not immediately)
- Evaluation criteria (details are available online)
  - Definition of research scope and goals
  - Command of the topic
  - Methods, conclusions
  - Contribution to knowledge, thesis structure
  - Presentation and language
- TIP: When writing your thesis, try self-evaluating it against the official criteria.

# Looking for a thesis topic?

- Many topics / opportunities are not published anywhere – you need to be proactive & ask!
- **GeoForum**
  - About 60 companies
- **Research institutes**
  - Finnish Geospatial Research Institute, Finnish Meteorological Institute, Natural Resources Institute Finland, Finnish Environmental Institute, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland
- Talk to our professors or lecturers
- Funding for MSc thesis:
  - The work can be done without separate funding.
  - Sometimes, the work is (partly) funded by working in a company or through a research project.



# Some legal issues

- The thesis is a public document and cannot contain any confidential parts.
- Contact your professor & Aalto's legal counsel Timo Syrjälä if you have complex issues with e.g., immaterial rights

# Some tips

- Browse through some previously completed MSc theses:  
<https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/handle/123456789/18>
- Stick to the schedule!
  - Target time = 6 months.
  - Excess time spent on thesis lowers your grade.
  - Your topic is valid for one year – you will not be reminded about it.
  - You cannot have your topic and thesis approved in the same meeting.
- Note the schedule of the Degree Committee
  - Dates: see next slide

# Thesis schedule in 2023 & 2024

## Thesis deadlines

Deadlines for thesis topic/ thesis evaluation application	Degree programme committee meeting date
Mon 31.7.2023	Mon 21.8.2023
Mon 25.9.2023	Mon 9.10.2023
Mon 20.11.2023	Mon 11.12.2023
Fri 29.12.2023*	Mon 22.1.2024
Mon 19.2.2024	Mon 11.3.2024
Mon 29.4.2024	Mon 20.5.2024
Mon 27.5.2024	Mon 10.6.2024
Wed 31.7.2024*	Mon 19.8.2024
Mon 30.9.2024	Mon 21.10.2024
Mon 18.11.2024	Mon 9.12.2024
Tue 31.12.2024	January 2025

For example, if you want to start working on your MSc thesis in January 2024, you should start searching for the topic NOW!

**The deadlines are not flexible.**

More info on MSc thesis in our program (incl. thesis guidelines, timetables, ...):

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/programmes/masters-programme-in-geoinformatics/thesis>