BA Design Thesis Grading Criteria

Date: September, 2022   Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture / English-medium Bachelor's Programme in Design

Criteria	Fail	1	3	5
Purpose and demarcation of thesis subject	The thesis subject has no or very limited connection to design or the work of designers. The thesis subject is undefined or hard to understand. The description of the purpose and scope for thesis are irrational and/or poorly demarcated. The thesis lacks a meaningful aim or research question.	The thesis subject connects to design or the work of designers, but the connection is weak or poorly justified. The thesis subject is poorly defined and demarcated. The rationales for the subject choice and the purpose of the thesis are only weakly formulated. The aims of the thesis are articulated in a research question(s), which is linked to prior literature or research.	The thesis subject has a clear and meaningful connection to design or the work of design. The thesis subject is demarcated, but the purpose and goals for the thesis have minor shortcomings. The aim and the research question(s) are clearly articulated and situated in relation to prior literature and research.	The connection between the research subject and design or the work of designers is very well argued and justified. The thesis subject and purpose are clear and very well demarcated and justified. The aim and the research question(s) are clearly articulated and well situated in relation to previous literature and research.
Data collection and analysis	There is insufficient and inappropriate data to address the research question(s), or the data is very poorly collected and/or analyzed.	The thesis contains a proper attempt to collect and analyze data to address the aims and research question(s). However, there are significant shortcomings in how the data has been collected or analyzed. The choice of research methods is not justified/contextualized.	The choice of research methods is clear and appropriate to address the research question(s). Enough data was collected to make an inference about the research question(s) and subject area. Research methods are applied systematically, and the research approach is contextualized to method literature.	The choice of research methods is well argued and appropriate to address the research question(s).Enough data was collected to make a meaningful inference about the research question and subject area. Research methods are applied systematically and reflectively. Data collection and analysis is very well executed and the research approach is appropriately contextualized to method literature.
Design production (if applicable)	The production does not align with the chosen thesis subject. The choice of design methods or tools for the production does not fit the task. The production is not documented or documented in a very limited way.	The production aligns poorly with the chosen thesis subject. Its execution displays major shortcomings. The choice of design methods or tools for the production fits the task, but its execution displays major shortcomings. The production is documented but the documentation is very incomplete or is significantly flawed.	The production aligns and supports the thesis subject well. The execution displays design abilities in both thinking and doing. The choice of design methods or tools for the production is explained and fits the task. The chosen methods and tools are executed appropriately. The production is documented sufficiently. Its main aspects can be understood and assessed through the documentation.	The alignment between the thesis subject and the production is excellent. The choice of the design methods and tools for the production fits the task very well and the choice for using them is very well argued. The chosen methods and tools are very well executed and handled. The production and its documentation form an insightful part in addressing the thesis subject, and the execution pf the production is of very high quality.
Subject area expertise and theoretical foundation for the thesis	The thesis does not contain any references to literature on the subject area or references to prior literature are superficial or irrelevant.	The thesis displays very limited knowledge about the thesis subject. It only repeats prior work or existing ideas. Prior literature on the subject area is referenced but in a very limited manner.	The thesis shows that the student is familiar with the subject area. It includes key definitions and combinations of knowledge and insights. Thesis addresses key literature on the subject area.	The thesis indicates that the student has more in-depth knowledge about the subject area and associated literature. The student reflects on the quality of literature in combining prior knowledge with their own insights.
Thesis structure	The thesis does not have any structure or is structured very poorly. Fundamental information to comprehend the student's work is missing.	The thesis is poorly structured. The structure significantly impacts the possibilities to comprehend the student's work.	The thesis is well structured and covers the information needed to comprehend the student's work.	The thesis is purposeful and logically structured, while striving for detail and precision in the report about the student's work.
Academic writing (use of language and referencing)	The text is not readable. There are serious shortcomings in spelling and grammar. The thesis contains plagiarism.	The text is readable but there are repeated shortcomings in spelling and grammar which significantly impacts the flow and comprehension of the text. The thesis is very poorly referenced. The references do not follow any style.	The overall language is clear, but there are small errors in spelling and grammar. The thesis is appropriately referenced but there are minor inconsistencies in the use of the reference style.	The language is clear and supports the understanding of the content. The sentence structure is versatile and varied. The thesis is well referenced. The voices of the student and others' (referenced, quoted) are presented fluidly. The reference style is used appropriately throughout the thesis.
Result and conclusion	The result and conclusions are missing or very poorly presented. No discussion about potential contribution of the thesis.	The results and conclusions of the thesis are unclear. Result and conclusion are discussed as contribution(s) to the subject area of the thesis, but there are major shortcomings in reasoning.	The results and conclusions are clearly presented, but there is not much of the student's own reflection or analysis. Result and conclusion are discussed as meaningful contribution(s) to the subject area of the thesis.	The results and conclusions are presented clearly. The student demonstrates the ability to reflect on the quality of the results. Result and conclusion are well situated as specific contribution(s) to the subject area of the thesis.
The visual layout for thesis	The application of the thesis template appears random and/or distracts the reader from the content.	The application of the thesis template makes the thesis difficult to read.	The thesis template is incorporated in a clear visual layout, but there are shortcomings in the selection of fonts, use of margins, etc.	The thesis template is incorporated in a clear and attractive manner, which makes the thesis easy to read. The visual layout strongly supports the content.
Seminar presentation	The presentation was not delivered or delivered very poorly.	The presentation was delivered but there were major shortcomings in content, visualizations and/or time used.	The presentation was prepared, but there were minor shortcomings in the delivery in terms of content, visualizations or time used.	The presentation was well-prepared and insightfully delivered. Visualizations supported the content well.
Management of thesis process	The students did not demonstrate any skills for managing research-oriented work throughout the thesis process or the organization of the thesis process was highly problematic.	There were serious shortcomings in managing the research-oriented work throughout the thesis process. The guidance offered was poorly used or neglected. The required materials were delivered late and/or incomplete. The student demonstrated very little initiative throughout the process.	The student managed the research-oriented work well throughout the thesis process. The guidance offered was appropriately acknowledged and used. The required materials were delivered on time and complete. The students stayed active throughout the thesis processes.	The students managed the research-oriented work very well throughout the thesis process. The guidance offered was professionally acknowledged and used. The required materials were delivered on time and complete. The students stayed proactive in managing the thesis process.

Comments (optional):