

BA Thesis Self Checklist

Formalities

Scope, Focus
& Contribution

Transparency

Honesty
& Reflection

Clarity & Style

Scope, Focus & Contribution

Is the purpose (and value) of the thesis clear?

Introduction

- The thesis topic is introduced in a way that underscores its significance.
- The theoretical framing – main literature stream(s) – in terms of where concepts and ideas comes from and where the thesis is intended to contribute is introduced.
- The scope and focus of the thesis (both in terms of *what* and *how* things are studied and produced) are clearly defined.
- The research questions for the thesis are clear. If possible, try to make a distinction between main and sub questions. Avoid using yes/no questions.
- The academic and practical relevance of the thesis topic – including what people *potentially* could do with the results - is clearly explained.
- The key concepts and ideas for the thesis are appropriately introduced and defined.

Literature review

- What literature that is reviewed, including how it was located and selected, is explained.
- The purpose of the literature review, including how the findings of it aligns with the rest of the thesis, is clear. For example, the purpose of a literature review can be defined in terms of clarifying how a topic/phenomenon earlier has been understood or conceptualized in the pursuit of clarifying what topics to address in interviews with experts and/or what potentially should be acknowledged for the production part of a thesis.
- The literature review is organized in coherent sections which are appropriately introduced. As support for the text, consider if the structure and what you hope to explain could be visualized in a figure.
- The key findings from the literature review are concisely summarized. As support for the text, consider the possibilities of summarizing the key findings in a table or figure which later can be used as a bridge to your research and/or production.

Discussion

- The results of the thesis are concisely discussed (summarized) in relation to questions of inquiry set for the thesis. Try to explain how the results potentially are similar and different to what earlier has been said in the reviewed literature.
- The practical relevance of the resulting research and production is discussed. What can/should people *actually* do differently given what is addressed (i.e. studied and produced) in the thesis?

Transparency (& repeatability)

Is the origin of conclusion and decisions clear and, in learning from your process, can a reader follow what has been done and do something similar?

Method / Research Approach

- The approach for data collection and analysis are clearly explained and justified. Why you collect and analyze data in a particular way needs to be clear. Why are interviews beneficial in doing research on your topic?
- The procedure for data collection (e.g. recruitment for interviewees, or selection of documents or website of analysis) is clearly explained and justified. How did you locate relevant people to interview and how did you persuade them to participate? Do not forget to explain how you informed the interviewees about the scope of your study and how you acquired their consent.
- The amount and quality of data are explained. Consider the possibility of using tables to add details about your data. For example, for an interview study, a table in which important characteristics of each interviewee is summarized can provide much needed overview. At a bare minimum, information about how many hours of interview data, pages of transcripts, etc. that has been collected and studied need to be stated together with basic information about interviewees.
- Material that was used for data collection is introduced in the text, and when relevant added as an appendix to the thesis. For example, interview guides are typically included in the thesis. However, in preserving overview, it often suffices that the basic structure for an interview is briefly introduced in the method section if the actual interview guide is added as an appendix.
- The procedures for data preparation and analysis are explained and, when needed, justified. Make sure that the reader can follow how you went about in drawing conclusions from your data. Outline the different steps of your process. Provide an example of how you analyzed your data and add your codebook or similar as an appendix which is referenced in the text.

Results

- How findings align with the raw data is clear. For example, findings from a series of interviews are typically exemplified through direct quotes from the interviewees. In the case of a survey, tables displaying the distribution of different responses can be useful foundation.

Production

- How the products align (follows/extends) from your research is clearly explained and justified.
- How the production part of the thesis was organized and how it informs and/or relates to the research is explained. Breakdown what you did and explain each step. Consider if a figure and/or table can provide an overview of your process.
- The thesis production is showcased in photos, in-between concepts and/or sketches from the process.

Honesty & reflection

Does the manuscript accurately capture the process, and reasoning behind it?

Results/Findings

- The findings are reported in a way that accurately reflects what and how things were studied. Totally conclusive findings are very rare. The quality of qualitative research is also assessed in terms of how reports captures the context and diversity of what has been studied. So, while there is a structure, not everything needs to fit perfectly within it.

Production

- The authorship of the production is properly explained if it involved in direct and indirect collaboration(s).

Discussion

- The main limitations of the thesis (research and production) are appropriately acknowledged. A clear reflection on a limitation (a) pinpoints and demarcates its impact on the results/outcome, (b) introduces the reasoning for why it emerged (and why it potentially was deemed appropriate at a given point in time) and (c) gives advice on how it potentially could be addressed ('avoided') in future studies/projects.

Clear and appropriate style

Is the thesis easy to read and follow?

- The structure of the thesis (including what is discussed in each section) is clear. Consider if you need to introduce the structure for the thesis in the introduction. If so, do not forget to explain *why* the content of different sections are included and *how* they fit together.
- The text adheres to the rules and conventions for academic writing. The feedback from the writing clinic has been acknowledged.
- The text is easy to read-out-loud.
- The text has been proof-read (ideally by a native English speaker).

Formalities & Expectations

As a final check, does the manuscript adhere to basic rules and conventions?

- The title page follows Aalto University guidelines (<https://wiki.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?spaceKey=ThesisTemplateForAllAaltoUniversitySchools&title=Word+Thesis+template+for+all+Aalto+University+schools>)
- The title for the thesis generates attention while also clearly indicating the scope and content of the work. People should ideally be able to do a first assessment about the relevance of a thesis by only reading the title. Consider the possibility of using a shorter main title with a more descriptive sub-title.
- The abstract is placed in the Aalto University template.
- The abstract concisely summarizes (i) the scope and purpose of the thesis, (ii) the approach taken and (iii) the key findings and what was produced.
- The people that have supported the thesis are appropriately thanked and credited in the Acknowledgment/Preface.
- The table of contents lists all chapters and sub-headings. The title of the sub-headings helps the reader in finding the relevant information from the thesis.
- Interviewees and data has been anonymized appropriately. Consent has been acquired from all participants and shared with your advisor and supervisor.
- All figures and tables are referenced in the text.
- All figures and tables are numbered and include captions which explains their content. As a basic rule of thumb, it should be possible to understand what is displayed in a figure or table by only reading the caption.
- All references and citations follow APA style.
- References appropriately used for both text and visuals. As a rule of thumb, if more than three words are the same, consider if it should be included as a quote.
- The reference list includes all relevant source material. Only source material that is referenced in the text is included in the reference list.
- The material in the appendices has been appropriately clean-up and curated.