

Recommendation of the Academic Appeals Board on master's thesis supervision**Background**

The Aalto University Academic Appeals Board processes the appeals lodged against master's thesis grades at Aalto University. Each Aalto University school has its own master's thesis evaluation criteria, which have been approved by the school's academic affairs committee. In the evaluation guidelines of the Aalto schools of technology, the time spent working on the thesis is mentioned as a criterion potentially affecting the grade.

The Academic Appeals Board receives master's thesis grade appeals related to time use and its effect on the grade on a regular basis. Such appeals include cases where the student and the thesis supervisor had different views on the thesis completion timetable agreed or the principles of calculating the time spent on the thesis. Furthermore, the Academic Appeals Board has encountered cases where the thesis completion was delayed due to reasons beyond the control of the student, but the student did not communicate the reasons before lodging a grade appeal with the Academic Appeals Board.

To avoid unnecessary appeals procedures and other ambiguities in the thesis process, the thesis supervisor and student should reach an understanding of when the thesis should be complete, how the time spent on the thesis is estimated, and if there are any delays, what caused them.

Recommendation of the Academic Appeals Board

The Academic Appeals Board recommends the following:

- The thesis supervisor should discuss the evaluation criteria with the student at the very start of the master's thesis project and agree on a clear timetable for the thesis completion in a written agreement.
- The student and thesis supervisor should also agree on the methods for monitoring the student's progress. The Academic Appeals Board recommends that the student should keep track of the time spent working on thesis and report on the progress to the thesis supervisor on regular basis (what has been done and how much time used).
- Should the thesis completion be delayed for reasons beyond the student's control, the student should notify the thesis supervisor of them as early as possible so that the student and supervisor can agree on the steps to be taken. This allows the supervisor to take any acceptable causes of delay into account when proposing a grade to the degree programme committee.