

Maturity test for the students in the Master's Programme in Industrial Engineering and Management

The following guidelines are valid as of 1.11.2020. Please read them through carefully. Information for supervisors is at the bottom of this document. The document has been updated in 12/2024.

Purpose and use of the maturity essay

The maturity test is a required part of the studies. It is written as an essay in the format of an (executive) summary that is targeted at a defined audience (see below for how to write the summary and some examples of published summaries). It is written in the language of the master's thesis. Please note that this summary is not the same as the thesis abstract.

Apart from being a required part of the studies, the thesis summary is also a way to convey the results of your thesis to a broader audience. It is strongly suggested that you publish a version of the summary either on your own (e.g., as a LinkedIn post) or allow it to be published through the channels of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management and Aalto University. It is up to you to decide whether or not your thesis summary is published.

Note: If you have received your general or upper secondary education in Finland but completed your bachelor's degree abroad: If you have not demonstrated your language proficiency in national languages during your bachelor's degree you must do so when submitting your master's thesis. In this case you need to write the summary using the language that you have received your education in (koulusivistyskieli, i.e. Finnish or Swedish). Student Services will send the summary to language evaluation by the Language Center. To avoid delay in the graduation process and to get feedback from the Language Center before submitting the thesis, students belonging to this small group should contact Student Services (studentservices@aalto.fi) early in the master's thesis process. Even in this case, you are encouraged to write an English summary for publication.

Process of writing and publishing the thesis summary

You will write the thesis summary when finalizing your master's thesis, thereby following the guidelines below on how to write the summary. The supervisor provides feedback if needed. It's good to start drafting the summary as you are finalizing the thesis. The writing of the summary requires you to consider the meaning and implications of your results from a new angle, and this probably will benefit the thesis, too, especially introduction, discussion, and presentation of the key results.

The maturity test needs to be approved by your supervisor, so once your maturity test is ready, send it to your supervisor.

Publication of the summary is voluntary, but strongly recommended. The version that you end up publishing need not be the same as the one you submit as maturity test. That is, you may want to further edit and polish the version you have submitted before publishing it. It is advised to get feedback before publishing at least from your supervisor but also from, for example, company representatives or fellow students.

If you have published a version of your summary (as a blog post, article, etc.), please send a message with a link to Nina Henriksson (nina.henriksson@aalto.fi). She will then promote it on the Department's social media channels. Also let her know if you would like to publish it but don't have own channels, so it can be published, for example, through the department's channels (e.g. as a news item on the department's newsletter).

Here you can find a few examples of thesis summaries that have been published

- **How large corporations could unleash the potential of systematic startup engagement**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-large-corporations-could-unleash-potential-startup-yrttimaa>
- **Building blocks of strategic decision-making – are you aware of strategic options that shape an organization's strategy?**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/building-blocks-strategic-decision-making-you-aware-options-mäki>
- **The Unbearable Irresponsibility of Being an Investor**
 - <https://eero-vartiainen.medium.com/the-unbearable-irresponsibility-of-being-an-investor-329e2543aad0>
- **Make sure you are properly equipped to attract partners to your platform ecosystem - four key perspectives**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/make-sure-you-properly-equipped-attract-partners-your-lappalainen/>
- **Manufacturing SMEs to boost international growth through digital online strategy for B2B internationalization**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/manufacturing-smes-boost-international-growth-through-juhana-harmanen>
- **Proven results maximize online advertising platforms' revenue**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/proven-results-maximize-online-advertising-platforms-revenue-holkeri>
- **In designing market entry, managers should focus on finding matches between sources of competitive advantage and target segment characteristics**
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/designing-market-entry-managers-should-focus-finding-tatu-suontausta>
- **A unique organizational model for globally distributed network organizations and effectiveness of the organization's collaboration practices**
 - https://issuu.com/aaltodesignfactory/docs/dfgn_issuu (page 115-118)

How to write the summary

The purpose of the summary is to disseminate the results and implications of your master's thesis to a wider audience. A good summary conveys the reader the key results of the master's thesis in a manner that the reader can relate to. In the following, you find general guidelines that should help you write a good summary.

Target audience

Choose your audience. As a default, focus on an audience that is the most likely to find the results and implications useful. Aim to such a summary that is interesting to general business audience,

but also useful for smaller groups of experts. The likeliest expert groups are A) your informants: the people who work in the roles that you have been interviewing, observing, or examined in your data; and B) the peers of your instructor: those who are responsible for the business area or operations that your thesis examined. In any case, determine and decide who are the ones that would most benefit from your results and their implications: then, write to them.

Form and style

It is highly recommended to use a **business blog text** as mental template. There are multiple examples available, it is a fairly free format, and it is very convenient and effective for self-publication (see the examples above).

Important! Contrary to many business articles or blog texts, your summary is research-based. Its robustness comes from your extensive investment in the research, selection of appropriate methods, and balanced, evidence-based argumentation. The summary is therefore not an opinion piece, and this should be reflected in the text. Keep the text approachable and easy to read, still showing the research and evidence behind the argument.

Please note that this summary on your thesis is not the same as your thesis abstract. Avoid style typical of marketing and use easily understandable, clear and simple language.

Title

The summary should have an interesting title that is different from the title of the master's thesis. Reformulated research question or a claim based on the key results are good starting points. Focus on professionalism, avoid over-selling and click-baits.

Structure

Formulate your text so that it is relevant and robust but also easily understood. A good summary conveys to the reader the relevance of the topic, gives understanding of the depth and robustness of your research, and offers tangible implications that the reader can relate to.

Choose your main argument. This is the key punchline that you see that the audience of your summary should understand. The tangible structure of the summary follows from this aim, and it is affected by two drivers. First, the logical structure of your argument dictates a good part of the text. There are key concepts, evidence, and mechanisms that your text needs to convey and these need to come in an order. This order, however, is always specific to the content, and there is no fixed recipe for it.

Second, your audience reads the text from its own perspective and regardless of your argument, the text itself has to convey all the meaning to your audience. Always evaluate your text from the perspective of the audience: does the text convey the intended implications and meanings to a reader. When writing the summary, you are not mechanically reporting your results, but you are drafting a text that conveys the targeted meaning to targeted audience.

This implies some heuristic guidelines for writing:

- Instead of giving the results of the study at the end of the summary, present them at the beginning to attract the reader's attention. You can also use a short lead paragraph that shortly captures the main point of the summary. This can be thought of as a small abstract or extended title.
- If you cannot avoid using concepts or describing methods that are not commonly known to general business audience, clarify them without being overly blatant. Use judgment regarding the level of detail needed.
- Focus more on implications than technicalities of research. Explain the wider relevance of your results or their practical applications.
- To signal the extent of your research, make sure that your text conveys to reader the nature of your evidence, how conclusions were made (methods), and where the study was conducted. Part of the credibility of your results is based on the reputation of the university and the program, so mention them.

The recommended length for the summary is 600-700 words.

Publication

Publication of the summary is voluntary, but strongly recommended. Combined with the ease of publication e.g. through LinkedIn or similar platforms, there are few reasons not to publish.

If the sponsoring organization is hesitant about you publishing the summary, consider whether to target it at the organizations' managers, for example as an article for a company-internal newsletter. Keep in mind, however, that your thesis is anyway a fully public document, and that the results of your thesis tend to have generalizable aspects that are not secret and should therefore cause no problem in publishing the summary.

Information for supervisors

Requirements

Students of Master's Programme in Industrial Engineering and Management will complete the maturity test by writing a summary on their master's thesis (note that this is different from other master's programs in the School of Science, where the thesis abstract counts as maturity test).

The purpose is to write an (executive) summary targeted directly to a wider business audience. A successful summary demonstrates ability to summarize the results of the thesis and present them in a manner that is relevant to the defined audience. The format of the summary is relatively free, as long as it is appropriate from the perspective of target audience and presentation of results. Publication of the summary is voluntary.

The summary is written in the language of the master's thesis. Exception is the students who have completed their comprehensive and/or upper secondary education (peruskoulu ja /tai lukio) in Finland and their Bachelor's degree abroad. These students will write the summary using that national language of Finland, which the student has been educated in (Finnish or Swedish) and the Language Centre checks the language of these summaries.

The supervisor reviews the summary; it can be approved or rejected. Mark the maturity test completion date to Student Success Hub in Salesforce <https://aalto.my.salesforce.com> to field "thesis presentation date".

Supporting the students

Even though publication of the summary is voluntary, supervisors should strongly encourage students to publish their summary. They should advise students on potential target audience, channels for dissemination and the respective form of the summary.

One potential format for the summary is a blog-text in LinkedIn, but also other similar type of business articles, press releases, and such can be considered. Summaries in any of these forms can be approved. Please take a look at the examples listed above and encourage the students to also look at these.

It is on the student's responsibility to agree on the schedule regarding the summary with the supervisor so that the summary is approved before the student applies for approval of the thesis. Especially if the goal is to publish the summary the supervisor should provide feedback to the student. The version that is approved as maturity test need not be the version that is then published later on.