



NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUPERVISION AND ASSESSMENT OF THESIS

Faculty of Social Sciences



MASTER THESIS ASSESSMENT MATRIX

- A new assessment matrix, approved by the faculty council on October 28, 2025, will be used starting this fall 2026 : [\(Evaluation Matrix VALTTDK\)](#).
- The purpose of the assessment matrix is to standardize the evaluation of theses by defining clear common criteria for each grade.

The assessment matrix consists of the following areas of assessment:

1. Thesis objectives and research questions
 2. Scholarly framework and use of sources
 3. Research data and methods
 4. Presentation of thesis results
 5. Discussion and conclusions
 6. The thesis as an academic text
 7. Work during thesis process
- The overall grade for theses is not necessarily the mathematical average of the assessed areas; rather, different areas may compensate for each other or be weighted differently. How each area is interpreted may also vary depending on the nature of the thesis concerned.



USING AI IN THESES

- University guidelines for the use of AI in theses: [General Guidelines from the University on the Use of AI in Studies: Using AI to Support Learning](#)
- Yliopiston ohjeistus tekoälyn käytöstä tutkielmassa: [Guidelines for reporting the use of generative AI](#)
- The Faculty of Social Sciences has further specified guidelines for the use of AI in theses: [Use of AI in theses VALTDK 2026.pdf](#) ([Available on instructions for teaching](#))
- **Familiarize yourself with the guidelines in detail.** The following slides summarize the key permitted and prohibited uses of AI, as well as the most important aspects of reporting.
- **The author of the thesis is always responsible for the final outcome.** A thesis is a scientific academic work aimed at training the student in conducting social science research. Through the thesis, the student demonstrates their competence in their field, including methods for information acquisition and justification, as well as research ethics and scientific writing practices.
- If a student uses AI in a manner that is prohibited by the guidelines, the action will be considered fraud and will be treated according to the same principles as other cases of misconduct. The same applies to situations where the student fails to report having used a language model according to the provided guidelines. See: [What is Cheating and Plagiarism](#)



PERMITTED USES

Ideation and Delimitation

- Clarifying the research problem and brainstorming sub-questions.
- Mapping relevant theories related to the topic.

Planning Search Strategies

- Keyword alternatives, synonyms.

Transcription and Translation

- Transcribing using tools recommended by HY. Note! Handling of data must always comply with data protection notices and research permissions.
- Translating foreign language materials.

Drafting Visualizations

- Ideas and drafts for diagrams and figures that the student will finalize and to which the thesis author has rights.

Support for Using Analytical Methods

- Clarifying the basic principles of the methods for oneself, creating analysis code, compiling tables. Note! The actual analysis, scientific interpretation, and conclusions are the student's own work.

Structure and Writing Support

- Suggestions for the structure of the thesis (draft of the table of contents).
- Light support for language refinement in one's own text: clarity, fluency, grammar suggestions.
- Note! The student writes, edits, and approves the final text and checks the accuracy of translations, considering copyright.

Project Management

- Coaching on scheduling the work plan and setting intermediate goals.



PROHIBITED USES

Manipulating Data

- Manipulating or altering research data in a way that jeopardizes the authenticity of the data.

Inventing References and Content

- Using non-existent sources or accepting references and sources without checking the original publication (comparable to relying on second-hand sources). Sources must always be verified.

Producing Text

- Writing the research report with AI in such a way that it replaces the student's own writing and academic contribution.

Analysis

- **Actual analysis and interpretation of the data, as well as making conclusions.**

Data Protection and Security

- Inputting personal data, identifiers, or confidential/sensitive research material into unprotected or unapproved services.
- Transcribing or analyzing using tools that do not meet HY's data protection requirements.

Maturity Test

- The use of language models for preparing the maturity test is prohibited.

Use Against Guidelines or Concealed Use

- Using AI in a manner that contradicts the supervisor's instructions or concealing its use is considered fraud and will be dealt with according to HY's regulations.



REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION IN THE THESIS

University's Common Guidelines for Reporting the Use of AI in Assignments: [Using AI to support learning](#)

- **Keep a log or journal of AI usage as part of the thesis process:**
 - Record key usage methods and notes about your learning process regarding AI use.
 - Keep the journal available for the supervisor; it can be used to support seminar presentations.
 - Report use of AI in thesis abstract. The report should at a minimum, include:
 - The tools used and their purpose.
 - How you verified the accuracy (fact-checking, verification of references).
 - How you used AI to support the use of methods.
 - How you limited AI use and what impact it had on the final outcome of the work.
 - Also, consider the ethical aspects of AI use as part of research ethics reflection.



AGREEING ON SUPERVISION AT THE START OF THE THESIS PROCESS

- Supervision is an interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee, where different perspectives on guidance, research, and learning meet.
- For the smoothness of the thesis process, it is important to discuss the duties and expectations of both the supervisor and the supervisee right at the beginning of the process.
- The supervisor's and supervisee's one-on-one discussions or group discussions in the thesis seminar can utilize the Supervision Discussion Framework:
[Framework for discussion on Supervision](#)



RIGHTS OF THE TEACHER AND THE STUDENT

TEACHER

Teacher has a right to

- a supervision process that is manageable and has a limited timeframe
- decide how the course / thesis seminar is organised and scheduled
- require active participation and work at the thesis seminar
- receive the text from the student on time in order to provide feedback, and receive information from the student on which part of the research process they especially need help with

STEUDENT

Student has a right to

- receive systematic and sufficient guidance for the thesis and research process; has the right to discuss matters related to the thesis and to receive constructive feedback
- be informed of the informed learning outcomes in advance
- be informed of the grading criteria in advance
- be informed of the schedules and seminar rules of conduct in advance



OBLIGATIONS OF THE SUPERVISOR AND THE STUDENT

TEACHER

Teacher's obligations

- responds to the student's queries without undue delay
- provides information on the thesis seminar schedule, grading criteria, intended learning outcomes and rules on time (in practice, prepares the curriculum text carefully)
- is responsible for planning and managing the learning environment
- provides guidance for both the writing and the related research process
- instructs the student in considering questions on the responsible conduct of research and research ethics
- provides expertise-based feedback on the student's work and reads and comments on the thesis manuscript
- helps the student to analyse different courses of action
- participates in the assessment of the thesis and the thesis process

STUDENT

Student's obligations

- participates actively and is committed
- follows the provided instructions and completes the specified tasks
- keeps to the agreed schedules
- is responsible for setting their own goal and managing their own work
- submits the text on time and prepares for the supervision meetings
- makes the basic decisions concerning their thesis
- receives feedback from the supervisor and utilises it
- utilises and revises previously learned knowledge when writing their thesis



PROGRAMME-/DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC ADDITIONS