

Assessment criteria for the master's thesis, Department of Psychology / University of Jyväskylä

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The master's thesis is assessed based on six areas, which are:

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Scientific Writing
- Research-Oriented Working Skills

In the Department of Psychology, master's theses are usually done and evaluated as pair work, with the authors receiving the same grade. Exceptionally, the thesis can be assessed separately for both authors when the work has not been evenly distributed (see APPENDIX: Instructions from the Department of Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä on how to make a pair thesis).

The scale is 1 = sufficient, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = good, 4 = very good, and 5 = excellent. The following describes what each grade means in each assessment area.

ASSESSMENT AREA 1: INTRODUCTION	
1	There are shortcomings in defining the study objectives and concepts and in demonstrating the significance of the study. The theoretical approach is poorly chosen or outlined in terms of the study objectives. There are weaknesses in the use of references (e.g., overextension or narrowness, use of second-hand references, emphasis on non-scientific literature).
2	The rationale for the study's significance is not linked to scientific debate, and there are some ambiguities in defining the study objectives. The theoretical review is list-like, and the description of the relationships between the concepts is incomplete. There are some shortcomings in the use of references (e.g., the scarcity of international references).
3	The study's significance is justified based on essential research literature, and the study objectives are clearly defined. The chosen concepts and theoretical approach are described in sufficient scope considering the subject. The use of references shows adequate knowledge of domestic and international research literature. The number and quality of the references make it possible to link the study well with relevant previous literature on the subject.

4	The study's significance is justified from several different points of view and is based on previous research. The study objectives are clearly defined and based on previous research. The theoretical review and use of concepts are clear, consistent, and concise. The use of references shows extensive knowledge of domestic and international literature. Good source criticism is evident in the selection and evaluation of the literature.
5	The study's significance is justified in a versatile manner, and the production of relevant information is demonstrated by highlighting the gaps of the previous research and the need for future research. The study objectives are clearly defined and insightfully justified in the light of previous research. The theoretical and conceptual review is consistent and presents new perspectives. The use of references demonstrates a very comprehensive but, at the same time, concise knowledge of domestic and international literature, insightful source criticism, and an understanding of the research field.

ASSESSMENT AREA 2: METHODS	
1	The presentation of the research data and methods is imprecise or fragmented. The analysis methods are inappropriate, and there are shortcomings in their use. The strengths and limitations of the data and methods concerning the study objectives are not described.
2	The presentation of the research data and methods is mainly clear but, in some places, inaccurate. The analyses contain methodological flaws or errors. The strengths and limitations of the data and methods concerning the study objectives have been scarcely presented in this or the discussion section.
3	The research data and methods have been presented by describing the essential issues and making some use of the method literature. The analyses have been carried out so that the most significant contribution of the data has been utilized. The strengths and limitations of the data and methods concerning the study objectives have been appropriately assessed in this or the discussion section.
4	The research data has been used appropriately, and the analyses have been carried out following the guidelines of the chosen methods. The data and methods are described comprehensively using essential methodological literature. The strengths and limitations of the data and methods concerning the study objectives have been assessed versatily in this or the discussion section.
5	The research data and methods have been presented clearly and concisely, and the selected solutions have been compared to methodological literature and study objectives insightfully. The analyses have been carried out using the data appropriately and are of high methodological quality. The assessment of the strengths and limitations of the data concerning the study objectives in this, or the discussion section is comprehensive and diverse and relates to the literature on the subject.

ASSESSMENT AREA 3: RESULTS

1	Answering the study objectives through results is incomplete, and the description of the analyses corresponds poorly to the methods used. The description of the results is fragmentary, superficial, sprawling outside the objectives, or presenting as results interpretations that the data does not support. The presentation of the results is list-like, and the illustration of the results is lacking.
2	The study objectives are answered fragmentarily or superficially through the results. The description of the analyses is partly in line with the guidelines of the chosen methods. The description of the results is partly focused and relevant but partly incomplete or not based on the data. There are shortcomings in illustrating the results, and the results are not opened up enough.
3	The analyses and results obtained answer well to the study objectives. The description of the analyses follows the guidelines of the chosen methods. The description of the results is conventional, covering the essentials of the analyses performed, and the results are based on the data. The results are presented sufficiently clearly and concisely, avoiding too much sprawling or meticulousness. Some illustrative methods (e.g., tables, figures, data excerpts) have also been used to present the results.
4	The analyses answer all the study objectives, making the results section a well-functioning whole. The description of the analyses is consistent with the guidelines of the chosen methods and conceptually accurate. The results are presented very clearly, structured, concisely (without sprawling or too much detail), and based on the data. They have been illustrated in various ways (e.g., tables, figures, data excerpts).
5	The analyses answer all the study objectives in depth and in such a way that the results section becomes a coherent and consistent whole. The description of the analyses follows the guidelines of the chosen methods, is conceptually accurate, and is carried out creatively. The results are presented not only clearly and concisely but also insightfully and consistently based on the data. They have been illustrated to a high standard and make excellent use of scientifically appropriate methods (e.g., tables, figures, data excerpts).

ASSESSMENT AREA 4: DISCUSSION

1	The discussion lacks a dialogue between the results, the study objectives, and the theoretical background and previous research presented in the introduction. Reflection on the significance of the results is sparse, and the presentation of conclusions is incomplete or inconsistent. There is little or no identification of future research needs. The assessment of the research's reliability is incomplete, fragmented, or inappropriate.
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2	The discussion includes, to some extent, a dialogue between the results, the study objectives, and the theoretical background and previous research presented in the introductions. Still, it also contains excessive speculativeness, or the theoretical background is not properly displayed. Most of the reflections on the significance of the results and the conclusions are justified. Future research needs have been presented but do not adequately relate to the study subject. The assessment of the study's reliability includes individual observations on different aspects of the research process, and some use has been made of the references.
3	The discussion includes a structured dialogue between the results, the study objectives, and the theoretical background and previous research presented in the introduction. The significance of the results and conclusions have been reflected well-foundedly, and feasible future research proposals have been presented. The assessment of the study's reliability includes some central observations on aspects of the research process, is appropriate, and is based on references.
4	The discussion includes a well-structured and diverse dialogue between the results, the study objectives, and the theoretical background and previous research presented in the introduction. The significance of the results has been considered from different perspectives, and the conclusions and proposals for future research are based on the results and previous literature. The assessment of the study's reliability is diverse but focuses on only some aspects of the research process in depth. References have been utilized, and one's own activities have been evaluated.
5	The discussion includes interpreting the results in a way that shows criticality, the ability to structure large sets of subjects, and a particularly insightful way of relating the results to the theoretical background and previous research of the subject area. The significance of the results has been considered from both practical and scientific perspectives. The conclusions and proposals for future research are concisely presented but still diverse and linked to the results and theoretical background. Reliability has been assessed in depth in all areas of the research process and includes critical evaluation of one's own activities based on references.

ASSESSMENT AREA 5: SCIENTIFIC WRITING

1	The thesis structure is inconsistent, the text is unclear in many places, and the vocabulary is in everyday language. There are numerous errors in the use of references. The language is uncompleted, there are linguistic errors in the text, and there are shortcomings in the cohesion of the text. The concepts used for the studied phenomena vary inappropriately.
2	The thesis structure is partly inconsistent. The style and vocabulary of writing are partly scientific and partly in everyday language. There are some errors in the use of references. The text has linguistic flaws, but these do not affect comprehensibility.

3	The thesis structure is consistent and clear. The style and vocabulary of writing are mainly scientific. The use of references is mainly in line with scientific practices. The text is mostly linguistically correct and fluent.
4	The thesis structure is very consistent and clear. The style and vocabulary of writing are scientific. The use of references is in line with scientific practices and without errors. The text is linguistically correct and fluent. The thesis as a whole corresponds fairly well to the reporting style of the peer-reviewed journals in the research field but on the scale of a thesis.
5	The structure of the thesis and its sub-chapters is excellent and forms a cohesive and coherent whole throughout. The author skillfully masters the style and vocabulary of scientific writing. The use of references is consistent with scientific practices, accurate, and correct. The text is of high linguistic quality. The thesis as a whole corresponds very well to the reporting style of the peer-reviewed journals in the research field but on the scale of a thesis.

ASSESSMENT AREA 6: RESEARCH-ORIENTED WORKING SKILLS

1	There have been direct shortcomings in the research-oriented working skills, independent work, and participation in the various stages of the research process and the writing of the thesis, in a way that there has been minimal personal contribution to these. Much more support than is conventional has been needed to set the study objectives, search for information, conduct analyses, and report the findings. There have been shortcomings in utilizing the received guidance, applying the guidance to the thesis work, and/or adhering to the agreed schedules.
2	Research-oriented working skills, independent work, and participation in the various stages of the research process and the writing of the thesis have been less than sought. More support than is conventional has been needed to set the study objectives, search for information, conduct analyses, and report the findings. There has been variability in utilizing the received guidance, applying the guidance to the thesis work, and/or adhering to the agreed schedules.
3	Research-oriented working skills, independent work, and participation in the various stages of the research process and the writing of the thesis have been good, and one's own contribution to these has been central. A conventional amount of support has been needed to set the study objectives, search for information, conduct analyses, and report the findings. Utilizing the received guidance, applying the guidance to the thesis work, and/or adhering to the agreed schedules have been good.
4	Research-oriented working skills and independent work have shown in-depth focus and central involvement in the various stages of the research process and the writing of the thesis. The support needed to set the study objectives, search for information, conduct analyses, and report the findings has been conventional. The guidance

	received has been applied to the thesis very smoothly, and the schedule for the progress of the thesis has been taken care of responsibly and on one's own initiative.
5	Research-oriented working skills and independent work have demonstrated an exceptionally wide-ranging and in-depth focus, as well as a very central involvement in the various stages of the research process and the writing of the thesis. The support needed to set the study objectives, search for information, conduct analyses, and report the findings has been conventional or less than that. The guidance received has been applied skillfully and effortlessly to the thesis. The schedule for the progress of the thesis has been taken care of responsibly and on one's own initiative.

APPENDIX. Instructions from the Department of Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä on how to make a pair thesis.

General Guidance

According to the Degree Regulations (45§) of the University of Jyväskylä, a master's thesis can be made as a collaboration between two students. In principle, the pair thesis is judged jointly, and no distinction is made between the two grades.

The contribution should be evenly distributed to both parties. If this is not the case, the students write a jointly signed description of what the division of labour has been like. The description must clearly show both students' work input and volume in all thesis areas. The template for writing the description is at the end of this appendix. The prepared description is attached to the thesis return as information for the supervisor and another reviewer.

If the equal contribution between the authors is not realized in practice, the situation must be immediately brought to the supervisor's attention when it is noticed. If the problem cannot be corrected by joint consultation and direction of both thesis authors, the supervisor, together with another reviewer, can consider the performance imbalance in the assessment.

Exception: Differentiation of the assessment and individual work

In exceptional cases, the assessment of a pair thesis may be differentiated if the work input has not been evenly distributed between the thesis authors and the situation has not been rectified by guiding the students. In differentiating a grade, the supervisor and another reviewer consider the performance imbalance between the students and use this as an assessment criterion.

The student and the supervisor have both the right to discontinue the pair's cooperation if necessary. If the collaboration is discontinued, the students can use the material produced before the discontinuation in their individual work. Students should agree with the supervisor

on the necessary actions and the parts to be rewritten to complete the individual thesis. In this way, the supervisor determines the steps required to complete the individual work with each student, and each student returns their individual thesis for assessment.

It is not recommended to discontinue cooperation that has already reached an advanced stage. Individual theses must pass a plagiarism check, and students may be required to rewrite parts of their thesis as the supervisor requires.

Rights in pair thesis and individual work

- The copyright of all materials in the pair thesis belongs jointly to both students.
- Students must agree on the use of new works or other immaterial rights arising from the further use of pairwork on a situation-specific basis.
- In individual work, the student is granted the copyright for one's work and the material produced after the collaboration with the pair has ended.
- Both students have the right to use material produced before the collaboration ends in their individual thesis.

A template for describing the division of work in a master's thesis done in pairs when the work input is not evenly distributed.

With this description, we, **first name last name** (in the text below, Student 1) and **first name last name** (in the text below, Student 2), make known to the reviewers our contribution in each assessment area of our master's thesis "**The title of the thesis comes here.**"

Assessment area 1: Introduction

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Assessment area 2: Methods

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Assessment area 3: Results

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Assessment area 4: Discussion

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Assessment area 5: Scientific writing

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Assessment area 6: Research-Oriented Working Skills

Student 1's share of this area has been **XX** percent, and Student 2's share has been **XX** percent. This has meant that ... **[here comes a free-form description of the distribution of labor in this].**

Place and time

Place and time

Student 1's name in block letters

Student 2's name in block letters