

TIETS18 MSc thesis seminar in software development 2015-2016:

Guidelines for preparing for and evaluating a written report on MSc thesis progress

An MSc thesis is expected to demonstrate the author's skills and capability to conduct scientific research. The thesis should demonstrate the author's *understanding of the subject area*, and is expected to show the author's skills in using *proper research methods* and to *communicate* the results in a manner which is acceptable within the scientific community. These form the cornerstone in evaluating an MSc thesis.

There is no template for a written report on thesis progress. However, the report shall be comprised of the *thesis proposal* and a *review of literature relevant to the thesis topic*. It shall be 10-15 page long, and submitted in Moodle at least one week before the thesis progress presentation.

When preparing for the report, the following criteria shall be taken into account.

In the area of understanding the subject area, the applied criteria are

- Has the author studied the topic thoroughly and understand the subject matter?
- Is the source literature reviewed critically?
- What is new and novel in the thesis in comparison to the related research?
- Does the research properly and clearly address problems in the research field or some stakeholder groups?

In the area of research methods the applied criteria are

- What research methods are used, and how appropriate is the research design?
- how well the research has been planned?

In the area of communication

- How consistent and well-organized is the argument?
- Is the use of language correct and clear? Is the structure of the thesis logical?
- Are there mistakes and flaws in representation? is the use of different presentation styles balanced and well-thought (text, tables, figures)?

When writing a review for the written report on thesis progress, use these criteria to do evaluation and discussion. For each area assess how well the author has fared in his/her work. If possible go further and discuss how he/she could have done otherwise, what other paths he/she have pursued in each of the area. Please provide concrete and constructive suggestions for report authors to fix problems and to improve the thesis. A reviewing report shall be about 2 page long, and be submitted in Moodle immediately after the thesis progress presentation.

Evaluation Master's theses in computer science (SIS):

http://www.uta.fi/sis/en/tie/studypractices/thesis/index/pro_gradu_arviointi_2012_tietojenk%C3%A4sitteelytiede_EN.pdf