

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR A MASTER THESIS**

### **1 STUDY PLAN**

Master Thesis as any other research work needs a good study plan. For starting the Master Thesis the study plan should include the following parts – the length of plan depends e.g. on the topic but can be around 5 to 10 pages. Detailed study plan serves as guidelines for conducting the whole research project; just follow the plan! The introduction (and also all the other chapter) can be enlarged for the definitive version of the whole Master Thesis.

The study plan has to be approved by the advisor/s of the Master Thesis.

#### **Study plan**

- a. Introduction / Background of the study / Theoretical framework
- b. The aim of the study, specified research questions
- c. Plan how to collect the data
- d. Methods to analyse the data
- e. How to apply the results
- f. Timetable and details were to carry out the research
- g. Teachers and advisors
- h. Literature used for study plan

### **2 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING**

#### *Font*

Font should be Helvetica or comparable (Universal, Arial). Font size is normally 12. Space between lines is 1,5. The exceptions are bibliography and figure- and table legends, where space between lines is 1.

### *Margins*

The text will be printed on A4 –papers. The Margins are: on left 3 cm, on right, top and bottom 2,2 cm.

### *Topics*

The topics of chapters should be bold. Title of thesis (or other work) and all main topic headers should be written with capital letters, sub-topic headers with ordinary letters. Chapters and sub-chapters should be numbered (e.g. 1.2 or 2.3.4). Before main topics should be 2 lines space and before sub-topics 1 space.

### *Justifying text and chapters*

Text should be justified (both left and right side). Chapters should be separated with one empty space. The first line of the paragraph should *not* indented.

### *Page number*

The page number should be in the upper right corner. Font is the same as for the other text. Numbering start from the first text page with page number 1. Appendixes don't have page numbers.

### *Header and Footer*

Headers and footers can be used to make the text more readable. Header should be separated from text by using narrow, whole page wide, horizontal line.

### *Figures and tables*

Figures and tables are to complement and clarify text, not vice versa. All tables and figures should be referred on text. For example: "The difference between growth rate of pine and salix is remarkable (figure 4)."

Unnecessary "lines" and frames should be avoided when using figures and tables, and those should be removed. Vertical lines should be avoided in tables. Figure legend is placed under the figure and table heading above table. Titles of figures and tables are bold, but the text is not: **Table 1**. The difference between..... The legends should be written by using single space, font type and size is the same as in

the main text. Both figure and table legends should be so informative that the table or figure is understandable without reading the article.

### *References*

When making references to original source there are two possible alternatives:

- 1) The difference between snow cover in Spain and Finland is remarkable (Smith 1998).
- 2) Smith (1998) discovered a remarkable difference between the snow cover in Finland and Spain.

If there are more than one author: (Smith and Olsson 1998, Smith et al. 1998), Smith and Olsson (1998), Smith et al. (1998)....

If there are more than one reference the references should be in chronological order (oldest first); if more references of the same year the order should be alphabetical; if more than one reference from same authors during the same year the publications should be separated by using a,b,c,.... If the publications doesn't have any author or editor, 2-3 first words of the title is used (: Guidelines for Forestry... 1990).

It is recommendable that WEB-pages (URL addresses) are not used as source for research publications because the source might not be found after a couple of years or even months.

### *Literature*

References used should be written in alphabetical order by authors. The publications of same author/s are in chronological order (oldest first). Publications written alone by the same author are before joint-publications. If the publication doesn't have any author or editor are ordered by title. When referring a joint publication with many articles, the name of the whole publication and editors should be mentioned after information of the referred article.; for pages the pages of the article are given.

Examples:

- 1) Mannerkoski, H. and Möttönen, V. 1990. Maan vesitalous ja ilmatila metsäaurausalueilla. Summary: Soil water conditions and air-filled porosity on ploughed reforestation areas. *Silva Fennica* 24(3): 279-301.

- 2) Hänninen, H. 1990. Modelling the annual growth rhythm of trees: conceptual, experimental, and applied aspects. In: Jozefek, H. (ed.). Modelling to understand forest functions. *Silva Carelica* 15: 35-45.

### *Appendixes*

Appendixes are in the end, numbered ( appendixes 1 – 6) without page numbers.

## **3 MASTER THESIS**

### **3.1 General guidelines**

Manuscript should be written partly at the same time with research work (introduction, material and methods) and partly after calculating the results (results, discussion, conclusions). The idea of Master Thesis is to show the capability to understand and use the knowledge learned during the years of studying, to produce new ideas based on the learned knowledge, to independently identify and solve problems, that are relevant to the studied sector. In Master Thesis it is also important to show that you can use statistical methods in a right way. In addition Master Thesis shows the capability to write a proper scientific report. What is not important is the length of the thesis – content and capability to conclude important and relevant points are the crucial things.

### **3.2 Structure of thesis**

The master thesis consists of following parts and in following order:

Title page

Abstract (roughly 1 page)

Exordium / Acknowledgements (optional) – Supervisor, other contributors  
etc.

Contents

Text

References

Appendices

The title page should be printed on special paper with university stamp and name as well as faculty name, these papers are available at the faculty office.

Abstract is one page independent information of the master thesis publication. Abstract should not include any references or difficult expressions. Abstract should include aims, material, methods, main results and conclusion.

In exordium background of the research and possible links to bigger research project are explained. In addition information about advisors, organisations and sponsors are given. Some acknowledgements can also be expressed.

Content is after Abstract and Exordium so it should be noticed that these are not included in content!

Length of the master thesis is not officially specified. It depends e.g. on the topic and the type of research problem. Content is more important than the length! However it can be roughly recommended that the length should be something between 50 – 100 pages.