Guidelines for the diary-based thesis

Thesis coordinators

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

Haaga-Helia Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor's Thesis Instructions

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Abstract

Author(s) State the author(s) here, first name before surname, alphabetized according to surname
Degree Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Hospitality Management, Bachelor of Sports Studies, Bachelor of Culture and Arts (delete the unnecessary degree alternatives)
Report/Thesis Title Write the main title of your report/thesis here
Number of pages and appendix pages x + y
The abstract presents the main points of the thesis to the reader. Key information such as the background of the thesis, objectives, demarcation, theoretical framework, implementation, methods, timeline as well as results and discussion of the study are provided. The abstract follows the same order as the report proper. It is a nutshell overview of the whole report. The abstract must form an independent entity that can be understood without reading the entire thesis. The abstract is written in neutral English in a concise and understandable style. Complete clauses and sentences are used, passive voice is favoured, and the third person (author/authors) is preferred instead of the first person (I, we). The past tense is used when referring to previously published research, when discussing the progress of one's own work and its findings, or when stating conclusions others have made. The present tense is used when general results are presented, and also when the use of one's own findings and insights are presented. The abstract must not exceed one page in length. It should comprise at least three paragraphs which are separated with one blank line. Start a new paragraph for each new topic. The abstract must not include source references.
Keywords The abstract ends with a list of keywords, 3–6 words that best describe the contents of your thesis, in order of importance. Make use of glossaries available at http://finto.fi/fi/ and https://annif.org/

Contents

1 Introduction

The diary-based thesis differs from the more traditional thesis models in terms of its target group, goals and use of time. A diary thesis is a type of work-based thesis that is done in addition to one's own work. Diary reporting is done with daily descriptions and weekly analyses.

The total duration of the thesis is 40 working days, but at least 8 weeks. Therefore, the work is completed in small pieces. Diary entries and weekly analyses are returned to Wihi after each observation week (or approximately five business days).

First, prepare a thesis plan that is approved by the supervisor. The diary-based thesis plan describes the initial situation, schedule, tentative list of sources for the theoretical framework, and grade goal. Already at the planning stage, check with your workplace what things you can include in your thesis report. The texts of the plan can be utilized as such in the thesis report, for which a template file has been prepared on the haaga-helia.fi website Thesis, Bachelor's studies.

In the diary-based thesis, the primary goal is professional growth, which is tied to pre-defined themes (approximately 2–3) and work assignments. In the description of the initial situation describe and analyse your work, your skills, and the stakeholders and interaction situations in your work. At the beginning, attach themes to your professional development that you will monitor through the tasks, challenges, and the problems that arise in your daily work. The objectives of the work are tied to a source-based theoretical framework.

Read and follow Haaga-Helia's General Reporting Guidelines for Long Reports and Theses. Follow the instructions in the general guide for source citations and text citations, layout, use of images and tables, accessibility, conversion to pdf file, and privacy.

2 Requirements, guidance, evaluation and publication

The student must be in a position in the field of his or her degree program. The main goal of the diary-based thesis is to guide the student toward independent professional growth and development, and professional growth during the thesis is one of the key evaluation criteria. Therefore, the thesis cannot be done retrospectively based on notes already made: the supervisor must be present throughout the observation period.

There is usually no commissioning agreement for a diary-based thesis, because the primary goal of a diary-based thesis is the student's own professional development, that is, the goals of the thesis are not memorized. Check with your employer about what you can say about your employer, your work environment and your job responsibilities in your thesis report.

Guidance is based on weekly Wihi returns; the instructor primarily reads the diary entries and analyses for that week and provides feedback to help you improve your work on the diary entries and analysis for the following week. Thus, the work is completed week by week; there is usually no return to previous weeks, but any errors and omissions are corrected immediately in the next week's section. Note that your supervisor will not read the entire job each week, but only the entries for the most recent week.

What is relevant in the evaluation is how the description of professional growth has developed during reporting (which enables the level of reporting to improve as the work progresses). Corporate governance practices are implemented in accordance with general practice.

A diary-based thesis is published in Theseus. If your employer does not allow the publication of the thesis report in the public collection of Theseus, the work will be published in the restricted collection of Theseus, where the title and abstract of the work will be available for reading. However, the complete thesis reports of the restricted collection can be read under Haaga-Helia's domain names. Please note that a person who does not have Haaga-Helia domains can read the work by visiting the library or requesting it via the Registry in their e-mail.

3   Theoretical framework in the diary-based thesis

Despite its name, the focus of the diary-based thesis is not on making diary entries, but on a much more essential part of the weekly analyses. In the weekly analyses, it is important to retrieve new information, models and best practices from the sources of the theoretical framework and to apply the retrieved information to one's own competence. Analyses are the basic idea of the whole work; diary entries are just a starting point for reflection. By fluently using multi-level source material to develop your own skills, you will show that the only method of professional development is not a method of trial and error. Thus, you will be well acquainted with the main sources of information in the field and you will have the ability to search for information independently and systematically. In good work, different types of information sources have been used in a variety of ways.

The data base consists of:
−   basic literature in the field (including manuals)
−   expert blogs, discussion forums and other media materials
−   industry standards and models (e.g., IFRS standards and COBIT, ITIL, JHS recommendations in the IT sector)
−   laws and directives
−   articles published in scientific publications and conferences in the field.

4 Report structure

The structure of a diary-based thesis includes: a cover sheet, abstract, table of contents, introduction, description of the initial situation, diary reporting, reflection, and sources and appendices (Appendix 1).

4.1 Introduction

Start the text with an introduction to stimulate the reader's interest and provide preliminary information on the subject. A good introduction is about 2 pages long. The introduction is successful when the reader understands the aims and delimitation of the work. The introduction describes the operating environment and the themes of professional growth that you want to develop during the observation weeks.

Include in the Introduction chapter:
- the interval between the diary entries, that is, the start and end dates
- brief descriptions of the company and the work environment
- a brief description of your job
- the skills required for your job
- objectives and limits of professional development
- key professional concepts and sources
- where appropriate, abbreviations (abbreviations are explained in more detail in the Appendix).

In the introduction, you can use the overlay matrix to present the substantive cohesiveness of the work, in other words, the in-text connections (table 1).

Table 1. Overlay matrix of the in-text connections in the diary-based thesis

Own professional development objective	Theoretical framework	Observation week	Results of own professional development
Objective 1	e.g., 2.4, 2.6	e.g., weeks 2,3,8	e.g., 3.2, 3.3, 3.8 ja 4.3
Objective 2	e.g., 2.1, 2.3, 2.5	e.g., weeks 1,10	e.g., 3.1, 3.10 and 4.5
and so on	and so on	and so on	and so on

4.2 Description of the initial situation

The next chapter in the report is a description of the initial situation that analyses the current work, stakeholders, and workplace interaction situations.

4.2.1 Analysis of your current work

The analysis of your current work is about 1-2 pages long. The analysis goes on to justify:
− what are the specific tasks
− what kind of knowledge and skills are needed to cope with the job
− how the necessary know-how has been acquired so far
− the stage reached in professional development
− what you need to invest in for the future
− what else you have to learn
− the level of one's own competence in relation to the competence requirements of the job.

Assess with justification, the level at which your competencies relate to the competency requirements of your job or job:
− Novice: your performance still requires a co-worker's instructions or written instructions, lack of independent and flexible performance.
− Skilled performer: you have an in-depth understanding of the job, performance is constantly at the level of job requirements.
− Experienced expert: you are able to develop the operating models required in the job, you are able to guide/instruct the activities of others.

4.2.2 Stakeholders

In this chapter, introduce all the stakeholders involved in your work, and classify them according to the type of stakeholder into internal and external stakeholders such as partners, customers, organizations, authorities, etc. Illustrate the stakeholders in the picture. Additionally, consider which stakeholder interests are central to your work. The length of the chapter is about one page.

4.2.3 Interaction situations

In this chapter, describe the types of interaction situations related to doing your job with:
− colleagues
− customers
− other stakeholders.

In addition, describe what challenges the interaction situations bring to your skills and how your interaction skills should develop. This subchapter is about half a page long.

4.3 Diary entries

Diary entries are divided into daily entries and weekly analyses. The goals for the whole week that are aimed at developing competence can also be described at the beginning of the week, if weekly planning is more natural. However, the tasks related to competence development are described on a daily basis. If there are no tasks related to the development of selected competencies on any given day, this will be reported in the daily entries. It is not appropriate to make diary entries on topics other than those related to the student's competence development.

Daily subscriptions (2-3 pages/week):
− At the beginning of the working day: What goals do you set for this day? Describe the tasks of the day in advance. Describe how they relate to your chosen skills development themes.
− At the end of the working day: Evaluate how the goals set for the day and the planned tasks were achieved? Evaluate how your skills developed during the day?

Weekly analyses (or about five working days) (2-3 pages/week):
− At the end of the week, read the texts of the past week.
− Reflect on the problems that have arisen during the week and their solutions.
− Introduce the things you had to figure out during the week.
− Summarize the development of knowledge and insights throughout the week based on the theoretical framework.
− Highlight what good operating models can be found in the sources for these tasks.
− Consider what you could have done differently.
− Evaluate the different options and justify the model you have chosen or highlight an alternative model that you will follow in the future.
− You can highlight an unresolved challenge or problem related to your job description that you are trying to find a solution for in the coming observation weeks and their weekly analyses.
− You can also highlight a theme related to your work image that you can consider for several weeks.
− You can illustrate the content of the weekly analysis with pictures and tables.

Day and week entries may include various self-produced materials related to the student's professional development themes. In this case, describe in the entries how the materials were produced, analysed and presented.

4.4   Discussion

The report concludes with a Discussion chapter of approximately four pages. In this chapter, compare the description of the initial situation (chapter 4.2) with the weekly analyses generated in diary entries (chapter 4.3):

- How have you developed?
- What new solutions or methods have you found for your work?
- What did you learn while writing a diary-based thesis?
- What interesting new things did you notice during your thesis and what will be its benefits in the future?
- How have you been able to take advantage of job analysis?
- How can you further develop your skills in the future?

The chapter evaluates your own development as a result of the thesis and by mirroring the development in your theoretical framework. In your reflection, you should pay attention to whether your development has been relevant, minor, abundant, or surprising, etc. If the result has been surprising, for example, what could be the result? What is the significance of competence development as a whole for your career? What areas for future development did the monitoring project raise during the observation period?

Reflect on the choices and solutions you have made at the end of the chapter so that it covers the design and implementation of the thesis as well as the ethical aspects. Evaluate the topicality, success and necessity of one's own development as well as professional development during the thesis project. Critical and analytical thinking indicates development and the ability to specialize, so the work should also describe possible failed solutions or choices.

Sources

Sources are written in accordance with Haaga-Helia's general reporting guidelines and LibGuides.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Structure of the diary-based thesis report

Cover page, abstract, table of contents

1 Introduction
 	
    − timeline of the diary entries
    − brief descriptions of the company, job description and work environment
    − the skills required for your job
    − objectives and limits of professional development
    − key professional concepts and sources.

2 Description of the initial situation before the start of the observation period
 	
    − analysis of your current work
    − stakeholders
    − workplace interaction situations.

3 Diary reporting
 	
   3.1 Observation week xx
 	
    − Monday date, month, year
    − Tuesday date, month, year
    − and so on
    − week analysis xx.
 	
   3.2 Observation week xx
 	
    − Monday date, month, year
    − Tuesday date, month, year
    − and so on
    − week analysis xx.
 	
   3.3 Observation week xx
 	
    − and so on

4 Discussion
 	
    − summary and conclusions
    − assessment of one's own activities, development and learning.

Sources
Appendices