

Aalto Thesis Program

A multidisciplinary Master's Thesis approach

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Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University



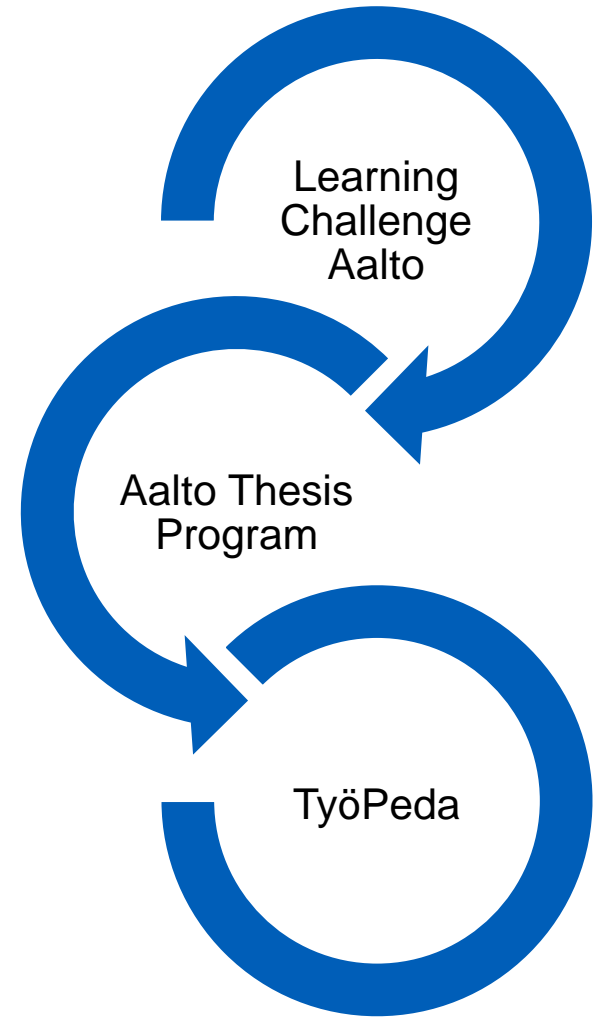
TyöPeda TP4 Webinaari

6.5.2019



Background

- **Aalto's pilot in TyöPeda initiative changed in March 2019**



Three things for today:

1. What is Aalto Thesis Program?
2. Report of Master's Thesis Practices in Aalto
3. What are our plans for TyöPeda initiative?



1. What is Aalto Thesis Program?

Pilot: Aalto Thesis Program

Aalto Thesis is a project-based and multidisciplinary program for making the master's thesis in work-life collaboration.

In one Aalto Thesis project, 2-4 students from different Aalto schools are working on their own master's theses around a topic provided by the partner organization.



Project-based



Multidisciplinary



Work-life collaboration



Aalto

- Work-life collaboration
- Accelerating & motivating the thesis works → graduating students!
- Increasing multi-disciplinary cooperation
- Work-life competences for supervisor



Student

- Work-life competences
- A motivating and accelerating project-frame
- A real-life challenge and a partner organization
- A paid grant
- Supporting team



Partner

- Multi-disciplinary student team
- Latest scientific knowledge
- Potential employees
- The support of the Thesis coordinator
- An inter-disciplinary presentation and summary

Why Aalto Thesis?

How?

1

Kick-Off Meeting

Partner's needs
Preliminary thesis
topics

2

Joint Project Plan

Created by
the student team
+
Project contract

3

2-month status meeting

4

4-month status meeting

5

Final Presentation

A joint
interdisciplinary
summary for the
partner
+ Thesis works

0 months

0,5

2

4

6
months

2. Report of Master's Thesis Practices in Aalto

6,7 years

University students'
estimated time for
graduation

(Opiskelijabarometri 2014)

47,5 %

Amount of graduated
Aalto students within 7
years in their original
program, beginning
year 2009/2010

(Education Statistics Finland)



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Why studies delay?

1. Working
2. Course timing
3. Lack of motivation
4. Family reasons
5. Lack of guidance
6. *Thesis*

(Opiskelijabarometri 2014; Liimatainen et al. 2010)

- **Challenges in time management decreases abilities to study** (Liimatainen et al. 2010)
- **Poor work-life connections in studies weakens motivation** (Liimatainen et al. 2010)
- **Support from peers enhances studies "in great amount" for 55-60 % of students** (Saari 2013)

Improving thesis process

 **Focus on group guidance and peer support**

(Stenlund 2010; Liimatainen et al. 2010)

 ***Aalto Thesis Program***

Aalto Thesis Program offers project and time management practice, work-life connections, and peer support which were lacking in studies

Master's Thesis practices in Aalto

SCHOOL	BEFORE THESIS	GUIDANCE	SEMINAR	SEMINAR TIMES
ARTS	45 cr done	Supervisor+advisor	Depends, 2–6 cr	I
BIZ	Method course done	Supervisor (+advisor)	Mandatory, 6 cr	I-V, III-II
SCI	45 cr done	Supervisor+advisor	Voluntary 1-2 cr	Flexible
CHEM	45 cr done	Supervisor+advisor	-	-
ENG	60 cr done	Supervisor+advisor	Voluntary	I-II, III-V
ELEC	45 cr done	Supervisor+advisor	Mandatory, 2 cr	I-III

Master's Thesis practices in Aalto

- **Seminars often include writing research/thesis plan, presenting the plan, reviewing other's texts, presenting finished thesis**
 - Some differences between schools and programs!
- **All theses are 30 cr and include a presentation and a maturity essay**
 - Presentation dates from 4 times a year (ARTS, ENG) to all year round
 - Common guideline (especially ELEC, CHEM, ENG & SCI) to write thesis on 2. year spring semester

→ *For Aalto Thesis Program the timing is essential: the most optimal time for writing the thesis is 2. year spring semester!*

3. What are our plans for TyöPeda?

2019

- **Report of Master's Thesis Practices in Aalto**
 - *Almost done!*
- **Contract template (Aalto-Partner-Student) and a pricing model (grants for students)**
 - *In progress*
- **Kick-starting a few pilot projects and gathering feedback**
 - The first pilot kick-started in December 2018
 - The second one in “negotiation phase” and few “hot leads”
- **Visual identity and program flyer**
 - *In progress*

2020

- **Continuing with pilot projects**
- **Developing the concept further based on the feedback and gathered experiences**
- **Creating a Student Guide (in collaboration with Oulu?)**
 - *Depending on the resources: Supervisor and Partner Guides*
- **Program brand**

→ By the end of 2020 have designed by testing and piloting a working concept of Aalto Thesis Program!

“The best thing about Aalto Thesis Program is that I don’t have to work on my thesis alone but rather as a part of the Aalto Thesis Team. Also, the program is not about working on just an academic thesis because I have a real organization as a partner. Therefore, I can also benefit the partner and make real value.”

– Tiia, marketing student

“Aalto Thesis Program provides us with relevant and realistic information about our customers without us having to make random guesses.”

– Saara Saksanen,
Communications Manager, Hoas



Questions? Comments?

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