

Master's degree: instructions for the preliminary assignment

Dear applicant,

We appreciate your interest in our master's programme. To ensure that every new group of students brings both rich and diverse perspectives and is equipped with the ability to develop new questions and a learning-to-learn mindset, we would like you to prepare a preliminary assignment.

This assignment asks you to design a thesis plan that intersects academic research with problems occurring in an organization. In short, we would like you to identify and reflect on a clearly stated real-life sustainability business/work-life problem.

To apply to this degree, you must demonstrate several years of employment. We are interested in hearing about a specific work-related challenge, or other working contexts that you have observed or experienced, and we expect you to be willing to pursue and deepen your knowledge throughout your studies. Guided by those ideas, you are expected to develop a thesis plan to help us choose the most suitable mix of candidates.

Do you have a development idea or a work-based topic for which you would like to draw up a thesis plan? Share it and convince us that you are the right candidate for this new group!

To help you with your application, we recommend following the instructions below.

Thesis plan

A master's thesis is a research or development project that aims to renew the world of work and demonstrates the student's readiness for independent work and demanding expert tasks. You may also complete a thesis for a work community, a collection of several research pieces and development projects, developing your own business operations or other work-based development targets. If you want to learn more about HAMK's thesis process, see [our final thesis web pages](#).

Your thesis plan must include (at minimum) the following sets of information:

- Name of the topic, the thesis client if applicable
- Reasoning for selecting the topic and relevant argumentation addressing items such as description of the development need/challenge, topicality of the subject and linking the topic to the degree programme you are applying for.

- Objectives of the study and its relationship with other ongoing studies/reports/development projects etc.
- Central keywords and sources used in the thesis (list of references); and
- A preliminary implementation plan:
 - o task definition and research questions
 - o work stages and research methods
 - o schedule and resourcing
 - o preliminary structure for the content of the thesis (main titles).

To help you choose the most suitable proposition, we recommend familiarising yourself with the descriptions below. You can then select the approach that better meets your proposition.

Option 1: A project that aims to develop the organization you are currently working in or your business activities/operations

The topic may arise from your organization or work community's need for development, or a challenge they may have. Moreover, your topic may focus on a renewal task at your organization. You can also select an idea related to developing your own business as the subject of your thesis.

Option 2: HAMK research projects

Familiarise yourself with HAMK's research and the top research ecosystems in HAMK, [which you can find within the research websites](#). Select a research area that suits you and write a thesis plan for it. Pay particular attention to the credibility, novelty appeal, innovativeness and topicality of the plan. Also consider the significance of your development idea in relation to current knowledge or practices, for example how your idea promotes or renews it.

Option 3: Other workplace development targets and developing your own expertise

As an alternative to options 1 and 2, you can also work on a plan for a work-based development additional topic that you want to study. The subject must be suitable for the degree programme you are applying for. The aim is to develop your own expertise in the field.

For any of the three options, your preliminary assignment with your thesis plan must not exceed a **maximum length of 5 pages** and should follow the format stated at the end of this document. The plan must contain clear answers to the evaluation criteria.

Assessment criteria and scoring of the thesis plan

We will evaluate the below items. Please pay special attention to these as they will help you succeed in your application.

- 1) Reasons for selecting the topic and its topicality and significance
- 2) Suitability to the content of the degree programme you are applying for (see the curriculum in the [Study Guide](#))
- 3) The logicality and clarity of the plan
- 4) The correct utilisation of references in the thesis plan
- 5) The plan contributes to the group's diverse perspectives

You can receive a maximum of 100 points for the thesis plan. You must score at least 20 points for your thesis plan to pass.

Even though your preliminary assignment will be confidential throughout the application process, you should note that the thesis you will write during your studies must always be public.

Microsoft Word and PDF document settings

- The preliminary assignment is written in English.
- At the beginning of the text document, type your full name and the name of the degree programme to which your preliminary assignment applies.
- The maximum length of the thesis plan is five (5) pages.
- The font used is Times New Roman, size 12 and line spacing 1.
- The marginal left and right 2 cm and top and bottom 2.5 cm (Office Word, Normal marginals)
- Name the preliminary assignment: Lastname_Firstname_preliminary assignment.
- Storing the document as PDF is recommended.

Note! In addition to these instructions, we will not issue further guidelines for the content of the preliminary assignment.

Submitting the preliminary assignment

Please note that returning just the preliminary assignment is not enough. **You must also fill out the Direct application form at <https://opintopolku.fi/konfo/en/> during the application period 1 February – 31 March 2026 at 3 p.m.**

The applicant must upload the required documents to the online application form within seven (7) days after submitting the application to be considered for admission on the basis of the preliminary assignment. Submit them by uploading them as an attachment to the Direct application form in Studyinfo. The thesis plan is attached to the section Master's degree programmes at HAMK: Preliminary assignment.

In case you have already saved your application, sign in by using the link in the confirmation email or with your Finnish online bank user identifiers.