

MATURITY TEST AT LAB

The government decree on studies at universities of applied sciences (16.6.2005/423) requires the following:

By completing the maturity test, the student demonstrates mastery of the content of the thesis and the ability to write a clear and logical written presentation on it.

Evaluation criteria

In the maturity test, the student demonstrates that (s)he masters the thesis topic and is able to describe the thesis results, to assess the results relating to working life, and to analyze the used methods and processes critically.

The text has a title, and the content relates to the title. The text is written in the factual style: the writer defines concepts, and a non-specialist reader understands the relations between the source texts and the writer's own thoughts. The text has a coherent structure. Structuring is appropriate for the purpose, and the division into paragraphs reflects the structuring principle. The language is good, lucid English.

When completing the maturity test, the following need to be considered for students who have difficulties with reading and writing:

- If necessary, students with reading and writing difficulties must present an expert's statement on their situation (e.g. a specialist doctor or a special needs teacher).
- Students with reading and writing difficulties may be allowed more time to write than others.
- Students with reading and writing difficulties may complement their performance orally. If a student has complemented their performance orally, this must be recorded on the certificate.

Linguistic features of an approved maturity test

The maturity test text corresponds to the task instructions, which define the type (essay, press release, article or blog post) and length of the text. The length recommendation depends on the text type: for example, an essay is 400-600 words and an article is 3000-5000 characters.

The structure and title are typical for the chosen text type and reflect the content. For example, a maturity test essay follows the conventional essay structure: the introduction, body text and conclusion can be distinguished clearly.

The essay is written in the factual style, and it is a fully independent, complete text that is clear and consistent. The sentence and clause structures are varied and fluent. The paragraph division is appropriate for the purpose, logical, and clearly indicated.

The language is polished, and there are only occasional mistakes in the following, for instance: punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, grammar and usage (vocabulary).

Linguistic features of a failed maturity test

The text does not correspond to the task instructions.

The content does not reflect the title, or there is no title. The text structure is fragmentary, and when reading the text, it is difficult or impossible to gain an overall picture of the discussed topic. For example, an essay that lacks one structure element may be approved, but if both the introduction and conclusion are excluded, the text will be failed. The paragraph division is lacking or not logical.

The text style displays features that do not belong to the chosen text type.

The text can be understood only if the reader has more knowledge about the topic, which they have acquired when reading the thesis, for example.

Sentence and clause structures have problems: for example, a subordinate clause as an independent sentence, too long sentences, subordinate clauses in clusters, only main clauses, or clumsy sentence structures.

There are several language errors, for example 20-30 instances, in the following: punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, (basic) grammar, and usage (vocabulary). If the errors make the text difficult to understand, fewer errors may result in failing the maturity test.

Maturity test options

The maturity test can be an essay, press release, article, or blog post. The student and thesis supervisor agree on the type of text to write. Instructions about the text types and evaluation criteria are provided below:

1 Essay (Bachelor)

The essay relates to the thesis topic, but it is an independent, complete text. The writer defines the used concepts, connects the topic to a broader context, and combines processed data and own thoughts. The writer justifies the arguments and discusses the topic from various angles. The writer presents their own thoughts, which is the feature that differentiates the maturity test essay from a summary or an essay answer in an exam.

The essay structure is as follows:

The writer gives a title for the essay.

The topic is introduced by describing what the essay deals with. The introduction may explain the thesis background, viewpoint, and/or research questions, for example.

The main body comprises several paragraphs, which discuss the topic and present the solutions to the problems and answers to the questions.

The conclusion sums up the main ideas. It closes a circle as it can include a brief review of the themes presented in the introduction.

The length of a maturity test essay is 400-600 words. An essay does not include pictures, it is a text.

The time when the student writes the maturity test essay is to be agreed on in advance.

2 Article (Bachelor and Master)

One maturity test option is to write an expert article based on the thesis. The article is an independent, complete text, and it introduces something new about the thesis work. In other words, an article cannot be a simple summary of the thesis report.

The article can be offered to be published in one of the LAB publication series or in a specialist journal, but publishing the article is not required.

The article text comprises:

- a lead paragraph, which describes the main theme
- a brief theory section
- a presentation of the thesis study/case and the main results
- a brief summary.

The article may include tables and figures, which must be sent in separate image files (e.g. jpeg) and their places must be marked in the text.

Source references are added in the article text, and a list of references is included at the end of the text. Note: Also the reference details of the thesis that the article describes are to be included. The article ends with a brief introduction of the writer of the article.

The length of a maturity test article is 3000-5000 characters. Besides text, an article includes a picture or pictures.

3 Press release (Bachelor and Master)

A press release provides information, which usually is a piece of news. The student should consider carefully what news the thesis study brings. For example, the topic may be novel or of current interest, or it may have practical applications, be surprising or special, or concern a large group of people. These are common reasons for journalists to write a story.

A good press release is short and to the point. The title engages the reader. It says something new or tells why the text is worth reading. The subject matter, news or the reason for sending the release is briefly described in the beginning.

The press release tells the main news and the background facts, starting with the most important one. The release text does not necessarily cover everything that the student would like to tell about the subject matter. A concrete example or a quotation makes the text livelier. The release is written in a style that is easy to read, not using jargon or specialist terminology. Commercialism is to be avoided.

The student must carefully consider what the target audience is. A well-prepared press release is suitable for various audiences.

At the end of the release, the writer adds the contact details of the person who can and is prepared to tell more about the topic. There can also be a link or links to sources of more information.

The length of a press release is 200-300 words. A press release does not include pictures, it is a text.

4 Blog post (Bachelor and Master)

Instructions for writing a blog post are available here: <https://blogit.lab.fi/labfocus/en>

The length of a maturity test blog post is 1500-3000 characters.