

THE RENOVATION OF THE B.ENG THESIS PROCESS IN THE SCHOOL OF SMART SOLUTIONS OF METROPOLIA UAS

Heikki Valmu, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

In the engineering programmes of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, the nominal study time is eight semesters, comprising a total of 240 ECTS credits. The final compulsory part of the studies is the final-year project (15 ECTS), usually carried out individually in collaboration with the engineering industry and reported in the form of a written thesis. The project's 15 credits correspond to a nominal workload of half a semester (approximately eight calendar weeks). Unfortunately, this limited time is often insufficient to plan, implement, and report the project. In practice, the duration from project definition to final documentation and presentation in the thesis seminar typically exceeds one semester. This delay frequently results in the prolongation of studies.

The funding of universities by the Ministry of Education is largely based on the number of graduates, with higher funding awarded for graduates completing their studies within the nominal four-year period. Prolonged studies therefore have a direct negative impact on funding. The Ministry also sets annual targets for the number of graduates, and failure to meet these targets leads to further funding reductions. Until now, the number of graduating engineers in the School of Smart Solutions at Metropolia UAS has been between 300 and 350 per year. The set targets are 400 graduates for 2025 and 450 for 2026.

Consequently, changes to the thesis project process are essential, as it is clearly a major factor in study delays and, in some cases, in students not graduating at all. A development project to improve the process was launched in autumn 2024, with the first pilot implementations in spring 2025. From the beginning of 2026, all projects will follow the revised principles. This paper describes the improved process, the reasons for the reform, and preliminary results.