Requirements for writing and defending Bachelor's theses and Master's theses in Department of Geography

Approved by: Head of the Department of Geography, Prof. Ülo Mander

Tartu 2018
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1. Introduction

Requirements for graduation thesis and procedure for defence in the Faculty of Science and Technology (https://reaalteadused.ut.ee/en/tuition/requirements-graduation-thesis-and-procedure-defence-faculty-science-and-technology) must be followed when writing Bachelor's theses and Master's theses in the Department of Geography. This guide provides additional instructions and specifications on the writing, formatting and defence of graduation theses in the Department of Geography.

2. Nature of graduation thesis

A Bachelor's thesis is a student's individual research paper, the compilation of which helps them to understand the chosen field of study and provides them with experience in choosing, analysing, formatting and presenting a method of scientific research. The objective of a Bachelor's thesis is also to practise using foreign-language professional scientific literature and professional databases.

A Bachelor's thesis may be either informative or exploratory; both are equivalent in assessment. Both require the author to explain the problem on the basis of theoretical treatments presented in scientific literature. An informative paper provides a theoretical overview of the problem along with generalisations by the author. The research paper provides a theoretical overview of the topic and analyses the nature of the problem on the basis of data collected personally or obtained elsewhere.

An informative Bachelor's thesis begins with an introduction in which the nature of the problem and questions discussed are briefly described. The paper is then divided into substantive chapters in accordance with the topics examined, while discussion is presented in the corresponding chapter. The paper ends with conclusions and a summary. A summary in a foreign language (preferably English) containing the title of the paper is added to a Bachelor's thesis written in Estonian. Requirements for an informative thesis differ from those for an exploratory thesis only in regard to structure.

An exploratory Bachelor's thesis may be theoretical or experimental. A theoretical research paper analyses critical questions from a theoretical perspective and proposes novel generalisations or concepts. Constructing and analysing a theoretical model is also possible. In such cases, the structure of the paper is directly dependent on the
substantive questions discussed. An experimental research paper based on empirical data follows the traditional structure of academic writing. The introduction provides an overview of the background and nature of the problem or research question. This is followed by the theory chapter, which includes a literature review. The introduction and the theory chapter may be integrated into a single introductory chapter. The following chapter describes the data and methodology used, while the chapter after that outlines the results derived from analysis of the data. In the discussion chapter the results are linked to previous knowledge, i.e. what was described in the theory chapter. The results and discussion chapters may be merged by making a clear distinction between the results of the author's analysis or experimentation and previous knowledge.

A Master's thesis is an independent research paper based on empirical data. A Master's thesis reflects the author's thorough knowledge in their chosen field of study and their ability to link its main theoretical discussions with a specific and topical problem. A Master's thesis must not be informative.

3. Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis

Title page
The title page of the graduation thesis is formatted as shown in Annex 1.

Abstract
The abstract in Estonian and English takes up no more than one A4 page. The abstract contains the background and objectives of the work, an explanation of the research question or problem, a brief description of studies/analysis/experiments undertaken and methods used, results and conclusions. The abstract begins with the title of the paper and ends with a list of keywords (up to 5), the CERCS code of the research field (which can be found in the Estonian Research Information System ETIS) and its name in the corresponding language. The abstract is bibliographical in function and does not replace the substantive summary in Estonian and English following the main body of the paper. See the example in Annex 2.

Table of contents
The table of contents of the graduation thesis is formatted as shown in Annex 3. If the paper contains a large number of abbreviations, they must be listed on a separate page
after the table of contents. Other systematic lists, such as a list of tables or figures, may also be presented in this section if it will facilitate the readability of the paper.

1. Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of what the paper will discuss, highlights the topicality and novelty of the issue, states the objective of the work and, where necessary, outlines the research questions and hypotheses. The objective or the research questions may also stem from theory, in which case they are presented at the end of the theory chapter. However, they are only presented in one of the two sections. The introduction is mainly composed of the author's writing and should only contain a modest number of references to earlier sources.

2. Theory

The theory chapter explains the objective of the thesis and its link to the field of research. If not in the introduction, the author states the research problem and research questions at the end of the theory chapter. Verifiable hypotheses are presented if the nature of the work requires this to be done. The theoretical overview may consist of substantive subchapters. Subchapters and the overall chapters may be titled in a way that reflects their content.

Theory relies on relevant research on the topic from Estonia and elsewhere in the world, including works published in recent years. A good overview of relevant publications improves the quality of the paper and the grade it receives. It is insufficient to refer solely to obsolete literary sources, to omit important international publications due to difficulties with the English language or to justify a lack of references to international sources with the localised nature of the research problem. References to studies carried out and graduation theses defended in the Department of Geography are also valued.

In the theory chapter the author uses their own writing combined, using pleasant written language, with literature-based ideas and views that are referenced and cited where necessary. Sentence construction is correct. Spoken language is avoided. The introduction and the theory may be combined in a single chapter.
3. Data and methodology

The following information is presented in this chapter.

- In the case of field studies, information about the location of the study areas and their description.

- In the case of social studies, the description of the study area and the population, if not covered in the introduction or the theory chapter.

- If a sample was formed, the principles of forming the sample and a relevant description of the sample.

- In the case of experimental work, the principles of planning the experiment and a description of the conducting of the experiment.

- The origin, structure, usability and other relevant properties of the data.

- The principles and methods of data collection, including a description of the method of obtaining data, such as specific measurements and measuring instruments, inquiries, interviews and map layers.

- The distinction between original and secondary data and the names of sources. If data have been acquired in the course of collective work, all of the participants must be named and the specific contribution of the author of the paper must be highlighted.

- If necessary, the provision of the data used in the analysis either in the methodology chapter or as an annex in systemised form. (It is recommended to present source data in an annex.) Confidentiality requirements must be followed in presenting interview data.

- Description of the principles of data processing and analysis and the reasoning behind their selection. The author describes in detail the work process and the data processing and data analysis tools used (including statistics or a data processing package). If the programme was developed by the author, it must be presented in the methodology chapter or as an annex either fully or as a reference. Standard formatting software (word processing and formulation of standard graphs) does not need to be referenced. The division of responsibility in the case of collective work (e.g. how and by whom laboratory analyses were conducted).
• Methods developed by other authors are often used, therefore specific references are necessary in the methodology chapter. If the methodology was developed by the author of the thesis, this must be clearly stated. Special subchapters may be dedicated to describing original methods, where necessary.

• The methodology chapter may end with a statistical description or generalisation of used data, but these may also be presented in the results chapter.

4. Results
This chapter presents new results and knowledge obtained in the analysis of the data. The chapter is written clearly and coherently, with the text clearly structured by points of reference (research questions or topics presented in the theoretical overview). If the results and discussion chapters are not combined, the results chapter is written in a constative manner with no elements of scientific discussion and no references to literary sources. The beginning of the results chapter may present a generalisation and synopsis of used data if these are not presented at the end of the methodology chapter.

It is permissible to combine the results and discussion chapters into one chapter, in some cases simplifying the comparison and connection of the author's results with results and views from earlier works presented in the theory chapter.

5. Discussion / Discussion and conclusions
The discussion chapter begins with a statement of the main results of the work in accordance with the objectives. This is done in a generalising manner, avoiding direct repetition of the results chapter. The results of the work are then compared with the results and views of the studies covered in the theory chapter. This chapter discusses the extent to which the results provide answers to the research questions and support or disprove hypotheses, if these were formulated. New views are presented on the basis of the results. The suitability and shortcomings of and possible improvements to the methodology are discussed. The discussion comes to specific conclusions and makes specific suggestions. The need for further research may be stated. Depending on the nature of the work it is sometimes appropriate to present the conclusions (and
suggestions) as a separate chapter after the discussion chapter and before the conclusion of the paper.

6. Summary

In the summary, the objective of the work and the main results are presented briefly, and it is shown whether and how the objectives were achieved. New information is not provided in this section compared with the results, discussion and conclusion chapters.

Kokkuvõte

A thesis written in Estonian must include a summary in a foreign language (preferably English) and a thesis written in English needs to include a summary (Kokkuvõte) in Estonian. The summary must be preceded by the translated title of the paper, the author's name and the heading Kokkuvõte. A summary in Estonia is not a translation of the summary in English, but provides a 1–1.5 page overview of the substantive parts of the thesis, including the objective, data and methodology.

Acknowledgements

Gratitude to the supervisor(s), contributors, data providers, sponsors and others may be expressed at the end of the paper as a separate chapter preceding the list of references. The text must be followed by the author's signature.

List of references

All sources referenced in the text must be listed and all listed sources must be referenced in the text. Spoken communication is not presented in the list of references: it is only indicated in the text, e.g. (M. Mallikas, personal communication, 23.01.20XX). In formatting the list of references, it is advisable to follow the example of a recognised journal in the field. An example of a list of references is given in Annex 5.
Annexes

There may be one or several annexes. These include interview plans, questionnaires, photos characterising study areas, large tables and large graphs. Annexes include material that supplements and is referenced, but is not discussed directly. Annexes must appear in the table of contents and they must be referenced in the text.

It is also advisable to add large annexes (large data tables, map layers, etc.) to digital open access databases (such as Zenodo and PANGAEA). To manage codes developed in the course of the work it is advisable to use source code management systems (e.g. Git) and to make your actions visible through a public code hosting service (e.g. Github).

Non-exclusive licence

All graduates must download and fill in the Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public (standard) from the university’s website and include it as the final page of their graduation thesis. The hard copy and digital version of the paper must be identical, therefore the page must be included in both versions. In a hard copy the licence must be bound, not provided as a loose page. A student cannot refuse to provide the non-exclusive licence at their own request. Publishing restrictions may only be imposed on the basis of trade or state secrecy and in these cases the form for the corresponding licence must be submitted.

4. Recommended structure of a thesis

Title page

The title page of the graduation thesis is formatted as shown in Annex 1.

Abstract

See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter "Abstract".

Table of contents
See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter "Table of contents".

1. Introduction

See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter 1 "Introduction".

2. Theory

See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter 2 "Theory"

3. Data and methodology

If sources in addition to literature are used or any analysis methods are applied in compiling an informative research paper, these must be introduced. The aim is for everyone to understand how the work has been compiled.

4. Content of report (title and subtitles in accordance with topic)

The main content of the report is presented in accordance with the topic and the objectives. It is advisable to divide the text into subchapters and to illustrate it with figures, where possible.

5. Discussion

The author of an informative paper may present their opinion on the topic and problems after presenting the content of the report. They may discuss potential directions for research and compare the work and results of other researchers. The need for further research may be stated.

6. Summary

See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter 6 "Summary".

Kokkuvõte

See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter "Summary".

Kokkuvõte

Acknowledgements
See Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis" subchapter "Acknowledgements".

The text must be followed by the author's signature.

See the requirements for the list of references, annexes and the non-exclusive licence for the electronic publication of the graduation thesis in the corresponding subchapters of Chapter 3 "Structure of experimental Bachelor's and Master's thesis".

5. Formatting

In formatting a graduation thesis the A4 paper format is used, the text is formatted using line spacing set at 1 to 1.5 and text alignment set at justified with half an empty line (6 points) following each paragraph. The recommended font style is Times New Roman (Times, Courier, Bookman or a visually similar serif font) with font size set at 12 points. Pages are numbered with the title page being the first page, but the page number is not printed on the title page. It is advisable to number the subchapters of a Bachelor's or Master's thesis, but this is not mandatory. In numbering it is advisable to choose the automatic numbering system provided by the word processor or to follow the example provided (Annex 3).

Both single-sided and double-sided printing are allowed. If double-sided printing is used, margins to allow for binding must be taken into account as they differ on odd and even pages. Bachelor's theses and Master's theses are submitted as one hardcover copy and a digital copy to Academic Affairs Specialist Heli Raagmaa (heli.raagmaa@ut.ee, Vanemuise 46-326). A hardcover buckramed copy of each Bachelor's thesis is retained in the Department of Geography and is available to the defence committee and all others during the week before the defence. A digital copy is transmitted to the reviewer and the committee.

Bachelor's and Master's theses may be written in the first person (I did) or the passive voice (was done). It is important that the paper is written in a uniform style throughout. The first-person form allows the student to bring out their own contribution more clearly.
6. Illustrations

The text of the research paper is illustrated by figures and tables. Each figure and table must be referenced and briefly commented on in the text. Figures have captions and tables have titles that must allow the reader to understand them even without reading the main text. Annexes are suitable for material not directly related to the results of the work, such as more extensive sample area descriptions, schematics, maps, source data tables or the results of an analysis. Their labelling and reference in the text must also correspond exactly. For example, "see Annex 7", or "in Annex 8".

Tables and figures (the latter of which include photos, maps and schematics) are numbered sequentially throughout the text in the order that they are mentioned therein, but separately, i.e. tables and figures have separate numbering. Figures and tables presented as annexes are numbered as annexes, not as figures or tables. In exceptional cases, if an annex consists of a number or figures with the same purpose (e.g. photos of a study area), these may be captioned in the format "Annex 8 Figure 2".

If figures or tables by other authors are presented in the work, the original source must be referenced in the caption of the figure or the title of the table. Maps must be correctly formatted (with a legend, scale bar and North arrow) and the base map must be referenced in the caption of the figure.

7. Literature and references

When referencing within the text and compiling the list of references, it is advisable to follow the example of an acknowledged journal in the field (such as Landscape and Urban Planning, Landscape Ecology, Climate Research, Progress in Human Geography or Environment and Planning A, B, C, D ). When compiling a list of references, it is advisable to follow the examples in Annexes 4 and 5, although other systems are permitted. It is important to follow the same style throughout. The author must be able to state the specific example they followed when compiling the list of references. Reference management software such as Endnote, Zotero and Mendeley may be used for in-text referencing and compiling the list of references in the case of large graduation theses.
The list of references is compiled in alphabetical order based on the first author's surname; in the case of works by the same author they are listed in chronological order; and in the case of works by the same lead author and different co-authors they are listed based on the co-author's surname. In the case of works by the same author or same group of authors published in the same year, the works are listed based on the first letter of the title, adding letters (a, b, etc.) to the year. All of the authors of each publication must be named in the list of references. When listing works by institutional authors, the publisher or organisation (e.g. Statistics Estonia) is listed instead of an author or the entry is begun with the title of the publication (e.g. Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Non-Latin alphabetical sources (e.g. Russian) are listed separately in accordance with the alphabet of that language or transliterated in a single list (including a note on the original language, e.g. "in Russian"). If the work is based on a large number of manuscripts or web pages, these may be presented separately in the list of references, but as a rule there is a single list of references. Research articles, reports, monographs and similar sources available online whose contents are finalised and not subject to change are always included in the main list of references, not separately.

It is advisable to add the DOI when listing research articles. When listing reports and other sources that have not been published in scientific literature databases, an Internet address must be provided in addition to bibliographic data. When listing web pages, the entry must include the page owner or institution, the year of the most recent edit made to the content, a title reflecting the content of the page, the Internet address and the date of (the most recent) viewing/reading.

Literary references within the text are listed in chronological order; in the case of works published in the same year they are listed in alphabetical order based on the first author's surname; and in the case of works by the same author the letters a, b, etc. are added to the year. Literary sources are referenced in-text as per the following example: "Although most Estonian climate researchers are in agreement on the climate change trend (Vihm 2010, Rahe 2011a, 2011b), Torm (2014) stresses the importance of opposite changes." In the case of two authors, both names are stated (Vihm, Lumi 2002); in the case of three or more authors, Estonian-language sources are referenced as (Lumi jt. 2009) and foreign language sources are referenced as (Snow et al. 2012). The page number is included only when quoting specific phrases: "To summarise, Parts
and Sepp (2016: 94) conclude: "In assessing landscape and architecture there is a tendency to contrast nature and culture, preservation and economy."

When using literary sources it is important to use logical text written mostly in the author's own words, forming complete reasoning together with integrated views from earlier works. A literature review must not consist solely of sequentially placed translated sentences or quotes. If it is considered necessary to rely on one source for an entire paragraph and reference it, the reference must be given both in the first sentence of the paragraph and at the end of the paragraph so that it is clear which source(s) the author of the work is relying on. For example, a paragraph may begin with "Tamm (2016) addressed this question as follows: ..." or "Johnson (2014) suggests the following classification: ...". In the case of sequential references the form (ibid.) may be used throughout the paper.

If the work references literary sources that the author of the research paper or Bachelor's thesis has not read (e.g. Vihm 2010) and references them by way of another publication (e.g. Lumi 2018), the reference is formatted as follows: (Vihm 2010, cit. Lumi 2018). Both sources are presented in the list of references. Where possible, indirect citations should be avoided and the original sources examined. The text and the list of references must provide an unambiguous understanding of which sources the author has used and how to find them.

The names of species of plants, animals and fungi are presented in Latin (in italics) as well as English the first time they appear in the text. In subsequent occurrences the names may be given in one language. If given in large tables and not directly discussed in the text, the names of the species may be given only in Latin. It is advisable to reference the specific source of nomenclature used. Latin names of species are not declined.

The principles of referencing and technical formatting are elaborated in other guidelines provided by the University of Tartu, such as the requirements in the Institute of Social Studies www.yti.ut.ee/et/viitamine (in Estonian). Web page https://www.ut.ee/en/current-students/academic-fraud describes academic fraud and how to avoid it. The supervisor and defence committee have the right to verify all graduation theses using plagiarism detection software.
8. Defence of Bachelor's and Master's theses

Bachelor's and Master's theses are submitted for defence with the permission of the supervisor(s) and the head of the department (respective signatures being provided on the title page of the hard copy). The student delivers their work with the supervisor's signature to the academic affairs specialist. The head of the department examines the work and decides whether to allow it to be defended. The head of department assigns a reviewer on the recommendation of the head of chair. A Bachelor's thesis is usually reviewed by a doctoral student from the department. The options for possible reviewers of a Master's thesis are broader, including teaching staff and specialists outside of the institute and university, if necessary. The reviewer's participation in the defence is both advisable and necessary: only under exceptional circumstances may their participation be limited to a written opinion. The reviewer transmits their written opinion to the academic affairs specialist and the defender no later than the day before the public defence.

The defence of a Bachelor's and Master's thesis in geography takes place as a public discussion before a committee, whose composition is approved by the director of the institute. The schedule of the defence is approved with a directive of the director of the institute. In the specialty of environmental technology the thesis defence committee is multidisciplinary.

The defender of a Bachelor's thesis is given 10 minutes to introduce their work; the defender of a Master's thesis is given 15 minutes. It is advisable not to go into detail, but to characterise the problem and the results generally, to present the objectives of the work, what was done to achieve these objectives and what the results were. It is advisable to display the results on presentation slides. The font size should be at least 24 points for text and 18 points for tables; using a sans-serif font is recommended (Arial, Helvetica or similar). When assessing the number of slides it must be taken into account that each slide will take around one minute to comment on, usually more for beginners.

The presentation of the main results is followed by a discussion between the reviewer and the defender. This is followed by questions from the members of the committee and other people present. The author then has the opportunity to deliver final remarks. The success of the defence is an important component in assessment in addition to the
content and form of the work. The committee announces the grades for works within the same curriculum and at the same level at the same time, once all of the works have been defended.

Assessment of the work is based on: (a) value of content: the complexity and capacity of the task and the achievement of the tasks set; (b) form, including the cogency and readability of the presentation; (c) defence.

In all other issues related to formatting and defence, the requirements and defence procedures for graduation theses in the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of Tartu must be followed. The supervisor, head of chair or head of department may always be consulted in this regard.

Compiled by the Department of Geography, September 2018.
Annexes

Annex 1. Example of title page of Bachelor's thesis
Specialities are not separated at the Bachelor’s level of the Geography curriculum: upon completion of studies a Bachelor's degree in Geography is obtained. Similar applies to the Master curriculum of Geoinformatics for Urbanised Society. Therefore, a specialty is not included on the title page. By contrast, Master's studies in Geography are completed in a specialty which must be indicated on the title page as "Master's thesis in Human Geography and Regional Planning (30 ECTS)", "Master's thesis in Geoinformatics and Cartography (30 ECTS)" or "Master's thesis in Physical Geography and Landscape Ecology (30 ECTS)".

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University of Tartu
Faculty of Science and Technology
Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences
Department of Geography

Master's thesis in Geoinformatics for Urbanised Society (30 ECTS)

Counter-urbanisation in Estonia
Vassili Andekas

Supervisor: Prof. Taavet Teadusmees

Approved for defence:
Supervisor: /signature, date/
Head of Department: /signature, date/

Tartu 2018
Annex 2. Example of Abstract
The example shows the Abstract for the Bachelor's thesis by Kirsti Villi defended in the Department of Geography of the University of Tartu in 2017 entitled "Media Use by Multinational Estonians".

**Annotatsioon**

**Hargmaiste eestlaste meediakasutus**


Märksõnad: hargmaisus, meedia, IKT, ränn
CERCS kood: S230 – Sotsiaalne geograafia

**Abstract**

**Consumption of Media by Transnational Estonians**

By using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) people can remain connected to their country of origin regardless of their proximity to their homeland. The term ‘transnationalism’ is applied to persons who are simultaneously embedded into more than one society. For this research interviews have been conducted with Estonians who permanently live abroad and circularly migrate in order to assess their transnationality through their consumption of media. Research has been done to analyze their continued association with Estonia, their consumption of mass media and their connectivity to close friends and family. Using standardized approach to content analysis, interviewees have been divided into three groups: ones who are less connected to Estonia, ones who are more connected to Estonia and circular migrants. Their consumption of media and connectivity with friends and family have been compared using qualitative content analysis.

Keywords: transnationalism, media, ICT, migration
CERCS code: S230 – Social geography
# Annex 3. Example of Table of contents

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Annex 4. Principles of compiling list of references

Listing different categories of sources in accordance with journals by the scientific publisher Elsevier. All data sources are presented in one list with the exception of manuscripts, foreign-alphabet materials (in Russian) and archive references.

Journals and other periodical publications

Note: the title of a journal may (but need not) be abbreviated, but the same principle must be used throughout the list of references. Journal abbreviations must be used in accordance with the system used by the journal, found in the header of the article or a corresponding international list (such as the International List of Periodical Title Word Abbreviations).

Books and other monographs

It is advisable to include the number of pages in books (monographs) (425 p), although for example Elsevier does not require this.

Compendiums and edited publications

Note: as with the names of authors, the list of references must include the names of all editors.

Manuscripts

Web references
**Legislation**


Literary sources accepted for publishing but not yet out of press cannot be listed with the volume, number or pages. In this case the entry is followed with "In press".

If unpublished data are used, the source must be referenced in the text, e.g. "personal communication from David Scienceman (Dec 8, 2017)". Such sources are not presented in the list of references.
Annex 5. Example of list of references (Elsevier journal *Geoforum*)

**Literature / References**


...
Annex 6. The form for the Non-exclusive licence

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, _______________________________________________________.

(author’s name)

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to
reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital
archives until the expiry of the term of copyright,

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________,

(title of thesis)

supervised by _________________________________________________________.

(supervisor’s name)

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available
to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the
DSpace digital archives, under the Creative Commons licence CC BY NC ND 3.0,
which allows, by giving appropriate credit to the author, to reproduce, distribute
the work and communicate it to the public, and prohibits the creation of derivative
works and any commercial use of the work until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in p. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons’
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legislation.

author’s name
dd/mm/yyyy