rijksuniversiteit
groningen

faculteit der letteren

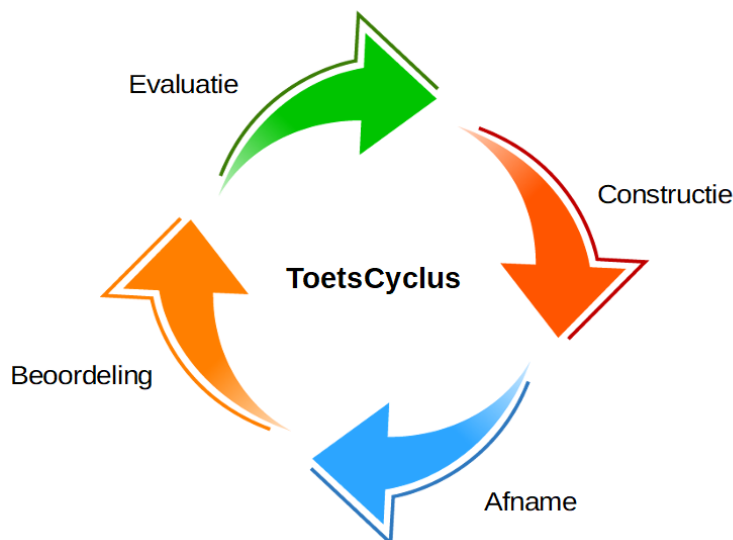# Assessment Plan

Master's Programme Middle Eastern Studies

1 / Vision of teaching and assessment

In line with the general policy of the Faculty of Arts, the programme of Middle Eastern Studies has opted for a student-oriented approach to education. As an output or student-oriented model, the programme's primary aim is to prepare students as well and efficiently as possible for a role in society that fits the programme they have received. The student-oriented approach assumes that the teaching, learning and testing methods that are used are of an activating nature. This implies that a major responsibility in the learning process is attributed to the student. To this end, a variety of teaching methods is used, aimed at the students developing themselves and being responsible for their own learning process. In line with the vision for education as formulated by the Faculty in 2018, the role of the lecturers increasingly is that of a coach who provides feedback on student learning based on formative and summative assessment. The small-scale character of the programme facilitates this approach and enables the creation of strong bonds between staff and students, research and education, and academia and society, which are all central to our vision of education.

The vision of assessment of the Middle Eastern Studies Master degree programme follows from our student oriented vision on education and is in line with the Faculty's assessment policy. Central to this vision is the development of an active, critical and independent attitude of students. We assume that assessment can function as an instrument in this respect and thus can have a positive effect on the learning behaviour of students, enabling them to achieve the programme learning outcomes and preparing them as well as possible for the job market. This vision is put to practice via a balanced assessment plan including both formative and summative assessments. The overall intention therefore is i) to provide students with feedback on their performance during the semester and ii) to check whether students meet the programme learning outcomes at the end of the module.

2 / How to follow the assessment cycle (from design to evaluation and optimization)

The programme follows the Faculty's guidelines regarding the design and evaluation of tests, as represented in the figure below.

Evaluatie

Constructie

ToetsCyclus

Afname

Beoordeling

3 / Assessment dossier

a. The assessment dossier

The requirements of the assessment dossier are set out in §4 of the 'Protocol for Quality Assurance in the Assessment of Course Units' drawn up by the Board of Examiners.

All the examiners of a degree programme must provide the Board of Examiners with an 'assessment dossier' containing the following:

a.   the syllabus

b.   the list of marks, comprising all marks that count towards the final mark

c.

- for assessments in the narrower sense of the word (i.e. tests): the test that was set, incl. model answers/key

- for written assignments: the formulation of the assignment, information about the assessment method (assessment criteria and standards) if this is not listed in the syllabus, and the completed assessment forms

- for final assignments: the completed assessment forms and the work submitted (with or without the lecturer's comments)

d.   the assessment blueprint, minutes of peer-support meetings, evaluations and self-evaluations of course units, etc., if available

e.   an evaluation form completed by the examiner with information about how the assessment proceeded.

b. Parties involved

The following parties are involved in fulfilling duties related to the assessment dossier:

- Examiners of the individual modules

- Programme Committee
- Board of Examiners

4 / Assessment timetable

Overview of learning outcomes of the degree programme + matrix	Appendix 1
Schematic overview of time periods intended for assessment, modes of assessment used and, if relevant, learning pathways	Appendix 2
Overview of the intended learning outcomes of the course units and their modes of assessment	Appendix 3
Additional regulations for the graduation dossier	Appendix 4

The objectives of the degree programme, set out in the learning outcomes of the degree programme (Appendix 1), form the guiding principles. All course units together fulfil a role in working towards these learning outcomes. This is reflected in a coherent curriculum with a transparent structure. The matrix of learning outcomes (Appendix 1) defines the course units that include summative assessments and distinguishes between a) course units with assessments that *lead up to* the attainment level set out in the programme-level learning outcomes and b) course units with assessments *at this attainment level* (in the latter case the learning outcomes of the course unit are thus identical to the programme-level learning outcomes of the degree programme). This distinction is expressed as follows:

'x', i.e. underlined, is used for summative[1] assessments at the level specified in the programme-level learning outcomes

'x' for summative assessments at lower performance levels

'fx' for formative[2] evaluations at lower performance levels

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In parallel with the curriculum, the assessment programme (Appendix 2) offers a balanced, well-structured overview of modes of assessment and exam periods. Course units taught within one learning pathway may be given matching visual markings in the overview.

In order to gain insight at the programme level into whether the chosen modes of assessment tie in with the learning outcomes of the course units and create a balanced mix in the run-up to the programme-level learning outcomes of the degree programme, the

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[1] Summative assessment aims to assess a student's knowledge and skills. Such assessments are usually awarded a mark, accompanied by a justification of the mark (adapted from *Toetsen in het hoger onderwijs* (2017)).

[2] Formative evaluation relates to the process of searching, aggregating and interpreting information, which students and lecturers can then use to determine how students are doing in their learning process, what they should work towards and how this can be most effectively done (adapted from *Toetsen in het hoger onderwijs* (2017)).

intended learning outcomes of the course units are related to their modes of assessment (Appendix 3).

Specific rules may apply to certain components of the graduation dossier (e.g. for the thesis: approval of the thesis proposal, amount of supervision, resit). These rules are set out in Appendix 4.

5 / Safeguarding of assessment quality by the Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is responsible for safeguarding the quality of assessment at both the degree programme level and the level of individual course units.

a. Safeguarding of assessment quality at degree programme level

The Board of Examiners annually issues advice on each degree programme's draft assessment plan for the coming academic year.

b. Safeguarding of assessment quality at course unit level

The Board of Examiners evaluates a reasonable number of assessments theses each year.

6 / Archiving

All the necessary documents related to assessment are uploaded on the Board of Examinors page of the separate Nestor modules.

7 / List of documents relevant to assessment

Faculty vision of teaching and assessment – see

https://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/medewerkers/let/onderwijs/vision-for-education.

Rules and Regulations – the internal regulations of the Board of Examiners.

Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER = OER; *Onderwijs- en examenregeling*) – a legally binding document that applies to the entire cohort of students who start a degree programme in a certain academic year. The TER may also contain transitional arrangements for previous cohorts.

Matrix of learning outcomes – an appendix to the Assessment Plan that specifies the course units with *summative* assessment leading up to or at the level specified in the programme-level learning outcomes and the course units with formative assessment.

Placement manual – a manual for the placement course unit.

Syllabus – a document that sets out the details of the TER and the Assessment Plan at course unit level in accordance with the information in Ocasys.

Assessment Plan – a document that is enclosed as an appendix with the TER and is therefore legally binding.

Assessment programme – a schematic overview of time periods intended for assessment, modes of assessment used and, if relevant, learning pathways (previously known as the 'assessment plan').

Assessment protocol – the implementation of the TER, Part A, Article 8.7.

Qualifications Master level (Dublin-descriptors)	Final qualifications and programme learning outcomes Master
	The graduate students in the Master programme MES demonstrate:
Knowledge and understanding Students have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;	1. Specific knowledge in the field of political and religious developments in the contemporary Middle East. 2. Insight in order to study the field from a theoretical and methodological point of view. The student is aware of current approaches. 3. Knowledge of the scientific codes of conduct / ethics with regard to referring to and making use of the work and insights of others, and with regard to the collection and processing of empirical data (data). 4. In-depth knowledge and insight into current developments within the field.
Applying knowledge and understanding Students can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;	5. The ability to formulate independently a scientific problem and to choose and use an adequate theoretical framework and one or more relevant research methods. 6. The ability to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, and to arrive at a well-founded opinion. 7. The ability to write independently and scientifically, and speak as a well-informed critic, or as an empirically oriented scientist, while making adequate use of relevant issues, debates and developments in media and culture. 8. The ability to investigate scientifically the relationship between characteristics of the western world and the Middle East. 9. The ability to investigate scientifically how concepts and activities contribute to the social functioning of utterances related to the Middle East. 10. The ability to provide a scientific analysis of a genre, a period, a movement or an oeuvre in relation to the Middle East. 11. The ability to carry out independently theoretical and empirical research within their own field. 12. The ability to use the acquired scientific knowledge, insights and skills in the performance of a social and / or academic function with due regard for ethical and societal issues.

Making judgements Students have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;	**13.** The ability to adopt a well-considered position in current developments within the discipline independently and to defend this in debate (oral and written). **14.** The ability to provide an independent well-founded (comparative) analysis and interpretation of aspects of the Middle East. **15.** The ability to assess critically theoretical and empirical research within their own field.
Communication Students can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;	**16.** The ability to use scientific research and present the results of this research both in writing and orally to an audience of specialists and non-specialists.
Lifelong learning skills Students have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.	**17.** The ability to process large amounts of complex information efficiently and effectively. **18.** To realize that the developments in the field and beyond require continuous training, as well as the necessary written and oral skills to be able to (continue to) follow the scientific literature and the debate in his / her field. **19.** The ability to keep track of developments in the scientific field, to deepen and supplement their own knowledge and insights, and to apply these in a professional practice. **20.** The skills required for successful professional practice. These include: o showing initiative and personal responsibility; o being able to make decisions in complex and unpredictable situations; o the ability to work independently; o the ability to function as a member of a team.

Matrix of learning outcomes

	Knowledge and understanding	Applying knowledge and understanding	Making judgements	Commu-nication	Learning skills

Year 1, sem. 1	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
Conflicts in the Middle East	x	**x**		x	x	x	x				x		x		fx	x	x			
International Organizations, Governance and the Middle East	x	x	x	x				**x**	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			**x**
Understanding Sectarianism and Minorities in the Middle East	X	X		X		X	X	**X**	X		X		X	X		X	X			
Contemporary Developments in the Middle East	**x**			x			**x**						x	x		x		x		
Religion and Politics: Theocracy and Nationalism in the Middle East	x	x	x						x	x	x			x		x	x			
Year 1, sem. 2																				
Tutorial		x	x	x		x	x				x	**x**		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Internship							x					**x**				x		x	x	x

Appendix 2. Learning outcomes and their assessment in course units

Thesis		x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x

Year 1	Semester 1	
Module	**Code**	**Learning outcome**
Conflicts in the Middle East	LXX029M10	Upon successful completion of this course unit, students are able to: – Identify and interpret different dimensions of conflicts in the contemporary Middle East (1, 4) – Recognise and explain relevant academic theories about, approaches to and perspectives on the contemporary Middle East (2, 13, 17) – Apply relevant theoretical and methodological insights to contemporary conflicts in the Middle East (11) – Compose, carry out and present a research demonstrating that the student is able to apply the knowledge and insights obtained to a specific case (5, 6, 7, 16) – Critically review research of fellow students with regard to content, composition and academic quality (15)
International Organizations, Governance and the Middle East		– Understand and know the role of a selection of relevant international organizations in the Middle East (1, 2) – D iscuss and critically reflect on the political-historical themes discussed in class(3, 8). – Use the attained knowledge and insight from the literature to evaluate common and contemporary visions on the Middle East (4, 9). – Conduct a reliable and valid research at a Master's level and report on it in written form as well as orally (10, 11, 17). – Examine and scrutinize primary sources related to the activities of international organizations in the Middle East. – Provide constructive feedback and commentary on the research of their peers in the field of modern Middle Eastern studies (13, 14). –
Understanding Sectarianism and Minorities in the Middle East		Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able: · to acquire insight into 'majorities' and 'minorities' in the Middle East · to have an understanding of how communal boundaries are defined · to critically analyse and use primary sources from past and present in their own research · to develop an awareness of the diversity of scholarly traditions concerned with sectarianism and minorities in the Middle East studies

Module	Code	Learning outcome
		· to foster reflexive analytical tools, based on an awareness of multiple perspectives
		· to obtain familiarity with interdisciplinary approaches to the study of diasporas and minorities
		– · to carry out a research project on a well-defined topic, based on primary source texts
Contemporary Developments in the Middle East	LXX032M05	Upon successful completion of the course unit, the student – has specialized knowledge of historical, political, social, religious and economic developments in the Middle East (1) – is well-acquainted with contemporary developments in the modern Middle East (4) – is able to independently conduct critical, academic research about contemporary developments in the Middle East (7) – can analyze contemporary developments in the Middle East and position him/herself in the wider academic debate (14) – knows how to present a contemporary subject in an academic presentation (16) – is capable of digesting large amounts of complex information (18)
Religion and Politics: Theocracy and Nationalism in the Middle East	LXX031M05	- The student will acquire insight into and understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in the Middle East on an advanced level (3.2.1). - The student is able to apply the acquired substantive, theoretical and methodological insights to situations in the Middle East (3.2.4, 3.2.5). - The student will learn how traditional texts are used in the modern Middle East in different ways by different peoples and in different contexts. - The student is able to compose, and carry out a research essay demonstrating that the student is able to apply the knowledge and insights obtained to a specific case (5, 6, 7, 16) –

Year 1	Semester 2	
Module	Code	Learning outcome
Tutorial	LXX024M10	Upon successful completion of the course unit, the student – has advanced knowledge of the field of expertise on which the tutorial is conducted (4) – is able to critically assess the knowledge-level in this field of expertise (2; 15; 18; 19) – is able to independently search for, analyze and interpret research data in this field of expertise (3; 11; 14; 17; 20) – is able to adequately report his/her findings, both verbally and in writing (7; 12; 16; 20)
Internship	LXX111M10	Upon successful completion of the course unit, the student – is able to function adequately and independently in the organization

		– has proven to be able to realise the specific output (products and/or services) as listed in the placement plan – is able to report adequately and accessibly on the internship in the final report by describing the performed tasks – is able to reflect on the internship with sufficient depth – has proven to be able to realise the personal learning outcomes as listed in the placement plan
Thesis	LXX998M20	Upon successful completion of the course unit, the student – has acquired specialist knowledge and understanding of one or more themes related to and/or regions within the Middle East as well as scholarly research thereon – has acquired advanced knowledge and understanding of theories, methods and techniques (including interdisciplinary ones) in Middle Eastern Studies – has acquired knowledge and understanding of the complexity and diversity of the Middle East and scholarly research thereon – is able to independently and academically draw up a convincingly contextualised research question, select the relevant theories and methods, and to gather and critically analyse various sources and literature – is able to apply the acquired knowledge of the Middle East and Middle Eastern Studies and its theories, methods and techniques to the assessment of research within the field – is able to apply transferable skills related to Middle Eastern Studies in professional contexts, (skills) such as: a. personal responsibility b. the ability to take well-founded decisions in complex and unpredictable situations c. problem-solving skills d. the ability to constructively address feedback by experts – is able to evaluate complex academic knowledge and research results and to discuss these critically and effectively with academics, while reflecting on their own standpoints and those of others – is able to set up and implement a research project of a predefined scope based on a complex yet transparent question and to process its results into a well-founded conclusion, bearing in mind the possible academic, social or ethical aspects of the question. – is able to to communicate in a clear, accurate, attractive and linguistically correct way in written form the results of their own research and that of others. – is able to actively participate in oral discussions on the results of their own research and to defend these – is able to to systematically identify their own learning needs with regard to current and new topics and to independently initiate a learning process

Appendix 3. Schematic overview of the assessment programme

YEAR 1 semester 1		Teaching unit 1		Teaching unit 2	
Course title	**Code**	**Weeks 1-7: classes**	**Weeks 8-10 : exams**	**Weeks 11-17: classes**	**Weeks 18-20 : exams**
Conflicts in the Middle East	LXX029M10	Weekly assignments	Exam: essay questions (30%)	Weekly assignments	Paper (70%)
International Organizations, Governance and the Middle East		Presentation 30% Source analysis 20%	Final paper/ case study		
Understanding Sectarianism and Minorities in the Middle East				Source analysis (25%), pitch (25%)	Final paper (50%)
Contemporary developments in the Middle East	LXX032M05	Weekly assignments	Paper		
Religion and Politics : Theocracy and Nationalism in the Middle East	LXX031M05			Podcast (30%)	Research paper (70%)
Total ECTS assessed		2	11	4	13
YEAR 1 semester 2		Teaching unit 3		Teaching unit 4	
Course title	**Code**	**Weeks 1-7: classes**	**Weeks 8-10 : exams**	**Weeks 11-17: classes**	**Weeks 18-20 : exams**
Tutorial	LXX024M10				Final report

Internship	LXX111M10				Final report
Master's thesis	LXX999M20				Thesis
Total ECTS assessed					30

Thesis manual

MASTER MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Table of contents

1 Introduction

2 Learning outcomes and definition

3 Composition and presentation

4 Writing process and deadlines

5 Assessment and marking

6 Supervision

7 Rights and obligations

Appendix: Master's thesis assessment report

1 Introduction

This syllabus is intended to provide students of Middle Eastern Studies with information about the Master's thesis. It offers guidelines and suggestions for writing a Master's thesis and it includes rules and regulations for both the students and the supervisors.

2 Learning outcomes and definition

The learning outcomes of the Master's thesis are the following:

Upon successful completion of the course unit, the student

1. has acquired specialist knowledge and understanding of one or more themes related to and/or regions within the Middle East as well as scholarly research thereon
2. has acquired advanced knowledge and understanding of theories, methods and techniques (including interdisciplinary ones) in Middle Eastern Studies
3. has acquired knowledge and understanding of the complexity and diversity of the Middle East and scholarly research thereon
4. is able to independently and academically draw up a convincingly contextualised research question, select the relevant theories and methods, and to gather and critically analyse various sources and literature
5. is able to apply the acquired knowledge of the Middle East and Middle Eastern Studies and its theories, methods and techniques to the assessment of research within the field
6. is able to apply transferable skills related to Middle Eastern Studies in professional contexts, (skills) such as:
   a. personal responsibility
   b. the ability to take well-founded decisions in complex and unpredictable situations
   c. problem-solving skills
   d. the ability to constructively address feedback by experts
7. is able to evaluate complex academic knowledge and research results and to discuss these critically and effectively with academics, while reflecting on their own standpoints and those of others
8. is able to set up and implement a research project of a predefined scope based on a complex yet transparent question and to process its results into a well-founded conclusion, bearing in mind the possible academic, social or ethical aspects of the question.
9. is able to to communicate in a clear, accurate, attractive and linguistically correct way in written form the results of their own research and that of others.
10. is able to actively participate in oral discussions on the results of their own research and to defend these
11. is able to to systematically identify their own learning needs with regard to current and new topics and to independently initiate a learning process

A Master's thesis is one of the most important instruments to determine whether the student meets the learning outcomes of the Master's program. The student applies the learned knowledge, insights and skills obtained in the program by setting up and conducting an academic research project. For this purpose, the student designs a well-defined research question, that is being answered by means of a number of analytic and reasoned chapters, based on academic literature and, if possible, primary sources. So, in short, a Master's thesis is a reasoned essay based on a student's analysis. It is the result of substantial study of literature and/or primary sources.

The following can be added to this definition:

- *Reasoned essay based on analysis:* An answer to an academically relevant and substantiated research question, which must in principle be drawn up by the student, is formulated based on carefully-argued answers to subquestions. The discussion must demonstrate knowledge of the current state of research and enrich existing academic knowledge. It must not be simply a reformulation of what is found in the literature.
- *Substantial study of literature and sources:* The publications studied must be thoroughly analysed from the perspective of the research question, and interrelated arguments, views and conclusions must be assessed in terms of their value and validity, and compared. This will result in a research report that is not merely reproductive but demonstrates the student's ability to analyse and critically evaluate – based on subject knowledge – what others have written about the subject. The report is thus an original contribution to the subject area. This does not necessarily mean that an independently found solution to the problem must be presented as an *alternative* to the criticized or rejected views of others. However, an attempt can be made to come up with, or make a contribution towards, an alternative. The Master's thesis may also be a report on the student's own research into a topic that has thus far not been studied (or not studied sufficiently) and for which little or no literature is available. A Master's thesis may therefore also largely comprise the publication of new material, for example a text edition with a commentary.
- *Feedback and synthesis:* The discussion must demonstrate cohesion and structure and the conclusion must follow logically from the arguments presented in the various chapters.
- *Important:* - The Master's thesis must be the credible result of 560 hours of full-time study at an academic level (20 ECTS).

3   Composition and presentation

Composition

The text of a Master's thesis always consists of three main parts: an introduction, the actual research report and a conclusion.

(i) The *introduction* comprises remarks about: topic, research question, the relevance of the research, its position in the wider context and justification of the limitation/demarcation of the research field, the research method, justification of chapter organization, possibly an overview of the conclusion(s).

(ii) The *actual research report* is divided into chapters which can be further divided into sections or subsections if desired for the sake of clarity. It is a good idea to start each chapter with a concise introduction and conclude each chapter with a summary, indicating how the findings relate to the research question and how the argument will continue.

(iii) The *final part* consists of a summary of the points argued and the conclusions. The latter should be placed in a wider context, and suggestions for further research can be made.

Presentation

The Master's thesis should be written in English, unless there are good (content and/or sources-related) reasons to write the thesis in Dutch. Writing a thesis in Dutch is only allowed after formal approval by both the thesis coordinator and the supervisor.

The writer of a Master's thesis should always have the readers in mind, and aim to ensure that they can understand the thesis. The readers may include experts or advanced fellow students in the field of Middle Eastern Studies who are not specialists in the subject area of the Master's thesis. Since a Master's thesis aims to transfer academic knowledge, it must be written in an

academic and accurate style. A Master's thesis aims to convince its readers with logical arguments, by presenting facts and conclusions, hypotheses and explanations. One characteristic of an academic text is that it must be verifiable – in other words, facts and statements must always be substantiated.

The Master's thesis should be structured as follows:

1. Title page
    a. The title should accurately reflect the thesis content without being too long
    b. Author's name
    c. Author's student number
    d. Completion date
    e. Name of the degree programme
    f. Names of supervisor and second assessor
2. Table of contents
    Chapters and possibly sections and subsections; starting page of each chapter, etc.
3. Text (incl. footnotes)
4. List of abbreviations (optional)
5. Bibliography
6. Appendices (optional)

There are no strict style requirements regarding quotes, references, notes, paragraph structure, etc. The most important thing is to use the same system consistently.

The complete version of the Master's thesis must be presented neatly in A4 format for assessment. The pages must have wide margins, with the text typed in a commonly used font with line spacing 1.5. Once the final version has been discussed with and approved by the

lecturer, a neat *complete version* must be produced and submitted to the supervisors both electronically and on paper.

References

For references (footnotes and bibliography), the use of Chicago Manual of Style is recommended. If the student prefers another referencing system (e.g. because of training in the BA programme), this is allowed after consultation with the supervisor.

Length

The thesis must be approx. 18,000 words in length (excluding footnotes, bibliography and any appendices), with a 10% margin.

Student workload

The student workload for the Master's thesis is 560 hours, i.e. 20 ECTS credit points. The subject should be chosen in good time, and should ideally relate to the individual study programme as well as the research conducted by staff members. This helps to ensure that the orientation is relevant, that the subject is adequately delineated, that complications are thereby prevented and that effective supervision is available.

4   Writing process and deadlines

The Master's thesis is officially scheduled for the second Master's semester, but Master's students can also write their thesis during the first semester if there are good reasons for doing so (e.g. an internship in the second semester). In all cases, students are advised to begin writing their thesis at any time during the academic year, preferably in good time. It is therefore advisable to use the months before the thesis semester for orientation on possible thesis *topic*, including an examination whether sufficient primary source material and secondary literature is available for the desired topic. The thesis is linked to the specializations offered by the degree

programme. It preferably builds on one of the Master's course units and/or the expertise of the staff.

Once students have worked out their thoughts on this topic to a sufficient degree, they can make an appointment for a meeting with the lecturer whose subject specialization is most closely related to the desired research project. Ultimately, the staff decides on who will act as supervisor and as second assessor, taking into account the expertise of staff members, their availability and (possible) earlier meetings between the respective student and (a) staff member(s) on the thesis topic.

After supervision has been formalised and the thesis topic has been set, students must draw up a formal research proposal consisting of one to two pages (500-1000 words). This proposal must contain:

- Short description of the thesis topic and its relevance
- Problem definition and a sharply defined research question(s)
- Short description of approach and methodology
- Preliminary outline of chapters, possibly including related subquestions
- Time schedule including an overview of the planned submission dates for each chapter and for the final version of the Master's thesis
- Brief list of sources and literature

This formal research proposal must be explicitly *approved* by the supervising lecturer.

The thesis timeframe is as follows:

Step-by-step plan	Deadline sem. 2	Deadline sem. 1
1. Reflection on possible thesis topics; meeting with intended supervisor to discuss topic	Before 1 February	Before 1 September
2. Submission of intended thesis topic, after which supervisor and second assessor will be formally appointed.	1 February	1 September
3. After the topic has been determined, the student composes and submits a first thesis proposal to supervisor for approval.	1 March	3 October
4. Lecturer provides feedback on proposal,	15 March	17 October

after which the final proposal is submitted.		
5. Student writes the thesis and submits separate chapters according to the deadlines set in the thesis proposal	March-May	October-December
6. Student formally submits the thesis for assessment to the supervisor and second assessor	**15 June**	**13 January**
7. Assessment by supervisor and second assessor.	29 June	27 January
8. Student submits revised version (if necessary).	10 July	10 February
9. Lecturer and second assessor assess final version, decide on final mark and submit it for processing.	24 July	24 February

The following rules apply:

1. The deadlines mentioned under 2, 3 and 4, as well as the deadlines formulated in the approved thesis proposal, are strict deadlines. If the student does not meet these deadlines, the thesis will no longer be supervised and cannot be formally submitted. The student can then start again in a next semester. Deviation from these deadlines is only allowed after explicit approval by the supervisor.
2. The formal deadline for thesis submission to both assessors is either 15 June or 13 January. Deviation from this deadline is only possible after approval by the Board of Examination.
3. The student has the right to submit a 'resit' version of the thesis only if a complete first version has been submitted in time and has been graded with a fail.
4. If the thesis (after resit) has been assessed with a fail, the student can start again in a next semester. They should choose a different topic and will be assigned a new supervisor.

5 Assessment and marking

The following assessment criteria will be taken into account:

1. **Content**

A. Research question/problem definition, formulation and substantiation: the approach to the subject (sorting of material, description and analysis of the problem, the method followed when searching for a solution)

B. Topic, presentation and motivation

C. Information (quality, relevance) and information density

D. Argumentation and analysis

E. Methodology; mastery of research skills; general approach (clarity and consistency of the work, critical eye)

F. Research results (substantiation of conclusions), demonstrated familiarity with sources and literature; relevance and mastery

G. Originality and creativity

H. Critical reflection

2. **Form**

A. Structure; arrangement of the discussion, chapter/section structure

B. Annotation; source referencing, notes, bibliography

C. Language; language use, clarity, completeness, accuracy, style

D. Design

E. Length and layout (title page, table of contents, etc.)

3. **Process**

A. Independence/autonomy

B. Planning

C. Commitment

The level of difficulty and originality of the thesis will also be taken into account, and it will be assessed whether the research, given the nature of the subject, has been sufficiently independent. Further information can be found in the enclosed assessment form, which is completed independently by both the supervisor and the second assessor. The feedback from

both assessors will subsequently be combined in one feedback form that will be sent to the student.

If the thesis is assessed as sufficient (5,5 or higher), it cannot be resubmitted for obtaining a higher grade. If the second version is assessed as insufficient, the student has to start again with a new topic and a new supervisor in the following semester.

6   Supervision

Once a student has gained some ideas for the thesis, he or she can make an appointment with one of the staff members from the degree programme to discuss these ideas. The student must submit the choice of topic to the team of lecturers before 1 February/1 September (see step-by-step plan), after which a thesis supervisor and second assessor will be formally assigned. The supervision process can then be divided into several phases:

1. Early February/September: Discuss thesis topic.
2. Early March/October: Discuss thesis proposal.
3. March-May/October-December: Discussing progress and thesis chapters – during the writing process, at least two meetings with the supervisor will be scheduled during which submitted chapters will be discussed.
4. May-June/December: If submitted in time, the supervisor provides feedback on the introduction, conclusion and main lines of the thesis before formal submission.
5. June/January: Supervisor and second assessor assess the thesis
6. July/February: If necessary, the supervisor and second assessor assess the second version of the thesis

The lecturers must be kept regularly up to date on the progress of the Master's thesis. In order to ensure the best possible supervision, students should submit the relevant thesis structure and draft chapters to the supervisors at least a week before each discussion session. N.B. Lecturers may be absent for shorter or longer periods in connection with conferences, research or vacations. Students are advised to find out about this in good time, preferably before the timeframe is drawn up.

Courses on 'how to write a Master's thesis' are available for students who have or expect problems with the research for and the writing of their Master's thesis. More information about these courses can be obtained from the Student Service Center or the study advisor. The study advisor can also provide information about incorporating the Master's thesis in the study programme as a whole.

7   Rights and obligations

Students have a right to Master's thesis supervision as set out above. Students also have the obligation to collect information in a correct manner, i.e. independently, and to write a Master's thesis in accordance with the rules and customs of the University of Groningen. Cheating and plagiarism carry severe penalties, because it must be clear at all times that the student is the actual author of the thesis in all respects. Partial or inaccurate source references and deliberate false references will count against the student. The Master's thesis must be the result of *independent* academic research. Copying or too closely paraphrasing consulted works does not comply with this. The lecturers have the right to examine the sources and literature consulted, and students must provide the lecturers/supervisors with this material for perusal if necessary and required.

Appendix: assessment form Master's thesis for the supervisor

(N.B. The assessment form for the second assessor omits part 3: Process)

Assessment form Master's thesis Middle Eastern Studies Supervisor

Date:

Name student:

Student number:

Title thesis:

Programme: **Middle Eastern Studies**

Code thesis module: **LXX998M20**

Name supervisor:

Assessment supervisor	
Assessment second assessor	

Final grade	

Content (quality research)

Insufficient/Sufficient/Satisfactory/Good/Excellent [underline]

	Assessment and explanation
Research question; formulation and explanation	
Topic; description, depth	
Argumentation and analysis	
Results, conclusions	
Methodology; mastering research skills	
Use of sources and literature	
Originality and creativity	
Critical reflection	

Explanation assessment content:

1. Form (quality of reporting)

Insufficient/Sufficient/Satisfactory/Good/Excellent [underline]

	Assessment and explanation
Structure; chapters and sections	
References; footnotes bibliography	
Language; correctness, clarity, style	
Design	
Formal requirements; length, lay-out, title page, table of contents etc.	

Explanation assessment form:

2. Process

Insufficient/Sufficient/Satisfactory/Good/Excellent [underline]

	Assessment and explanation
Independency, handling of feedback	
Planning	
Commitment	

Explanation assessment process:

Explanation final assessment supervisor: