



# Appendix 3: BSS Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's theses<sup>1</sup> and/or final-year projects

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<sup>1</sup> If students have to write a pre-master assignment in the context of a pre-master's programme, then the Graduation Guide of the bachelor's programme that precedes the master's programme that the pre-master links up to, applies.

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## 1 Introduction

1. These regulations comprise the general rules that apply to all final-year projects for the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and Pre-Master's<sup>2</sup> programmes offered by the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences.
2. Each individual degree programme will further elaborate and complement these Regulations in degree programme-specific *Graduation Guide* and *assessment forms*. This further elaboration may include substantiated stricter requirements set out by an individual degree programme. In addition, documents listed may vary for each individual degree programme<sup>3</sup>.
3. The *Graduation Guide* contains further information about the admission requirements and procedure, the subject, structure and content of the thesis (research component of the final-year project), the learning outcomes of all components that form part of the final-year project, as well as information about supervision and assessment.
4. The assessment form is a list of aspects that will be explicitly used when determining the final mark(s).
5. Both the *Graduation Guide* and the *assessment form* are approved by the programme director and made available to staff and students at the start of the academic year.

## 2 Admission and dates

1. Degree programmes may set entry requirements for final-year projects.
2. The Bachelor's thesis usually takes the form of a specific assignment with start and end dates determined and supervisors and assessors appointed in advance by the degree programme.
3. Students can only begin writing their Master's thesis once a supervisor has been appointed and the graduation plan has been approved by the supervisor. The supervisor will also have to approve the research proposals for any research that is part of the final-year thesis (including the Lesson Study).

## 3 Registration procedure

Students must register for the final-year thesis and/or components thereof via Progress Portaal.

## 4 Topic

1. If a final-year project consists of research, or if a research project is part of the final-year project, the topic will have to tie in with the research programme of the research group (or one of the research groups) that offer(s) the degree programme.

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'final-year project' refers to the course unit(s) that form(s) the concluding component of the degree programme, including the research assignment (also referred to as thesis). Some final-year projects comprise both a research project or practical research assignment (e.g. the Lesson Study) and additional components to be determined by the degree programme, such as a placement/placement assignment or a thesis for a key course unit within the degree programme.

<sup>3</sup> All specializations that fall under the same CHROHO code are regarded as one and the same degree programme.

2. Bachelor's students must choose from a number of predefined theses. Students may in some cases indicate their preferences, upon which topics are appointed via the procedure set out in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme. In exceptional cases, degree programmes may permit outstanding students to come up with their own topic rather than choose one of the predefined theses. The relevant criteria and procedure are set out in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme.
3. The research proposals submitted by Master's students are assessed against the provisions of Point 1 of this section.
4. Bachelor's degree programmes may determine that students must register for a topic in a Bachelor's thesis workgroup. The relevant registration procedure must be transparent and set out in writing in the *Graduation Guide*.

## 5 Form and Structure

1. Research conducted within the framework of a final-year thesis may be theoretical (e.g. literature research), empirical and/or related to a specific problem within a societal or other organization or institution. Any degree programme-specific requirements with regard to the form of the assignment will be set out in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme in question. The requirements, conditions and learning outcomes of any other components of the final-year thesis, such as a placement or assignment, will also be set out in the *Graduation Guide* of each individual degree programme.
2. A final-year thesis can in principle be written in Dutch or English. Any degree programme-specific deviations to this rule will be set out in the *Graduation Guide*.
3. The final-year thesis must satisfy the ethical principles applied within the degree programme, which will be set out in detail in the *Graduation Guide*.
4. Degree programmes may set specific structural requirements relating, for example, to the title page, style, language, typography, summary, or the number of pages or words of the thesis. Any such requirements will be set out in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme.
5. A final-year thesis is regarded as copyrighted work. The copyright on the graduation work rests with the student. If someone else wishes to use the graduation work, the student must give permission for this. The copyright to the underlying information, datasets and material used do not automatically rest with the student.
6. Students who will be collecting data from individuals should comply with the principles of scientific integrity<sup>4</sup> and in compliance with the ethical code for scientific research involving subjects in the social and behavioural sciences<sup>5</sup>. The way in which students should comply and the way in which compliance is monitored, is described in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme.

## 6 Time schedule

Degree programmes may set a global time schedule for the graduation work for the Bachelor's and Master's degree. The time schedule is described in the *Graduation Guide* or is published via the digital learning environment.

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<sup>4</sup> Scientific integrity: <https://www.rug.nl/about-ug/organization/rules-and-regulations/general/gedragscodes-nederlandse-universiteiten/wetenschappelijke-integriteit>

<sup>5</sup> Code of Ethics: <https://myuniversity.rug.nl/infonet/medewerkers/gmw/onderzoek/ec/ec-gmw-richtlijnen-en-regelgeving>

## 7 Learning outcomes

1. The learning outcomes of the final-year project dovetail with the learning outcomes of the degree programme and are set out in the *Graduation Guide*.
2. The number of ECTS credits awarded for a final-year project depends on the degree programme and is set out in the relevant Teaching and Examination Regulations. If a degree programme allows variation in the number of ECTS awarded, the various options as well as the conditions under which they can be applied will be set out in advance in the *Graduation Guide*.
3. Writing a final-year project is an individual performance. Students must demonstrate that they are able to work independently and professionally in terms of managing a project and dealing with relational, methodological and content-related aspects, and in terms of keeping to agreements.
4. Final-year projects written by two or more students are only permitted in the Bachelor's phase, and only if the individual contributions to each component of the thesis can be objectively assessed.

## 8 Supervision Thesis

### 8.1 Supervisors

1. In principle, any staff member who has been appointed as examiner by the Board of Examiners may act as thesis supervisor. The supervisor of a thesis usually also acts as its primary assessor. Supervisors of research conducted in the framework of a Master's thesis must also have a PhD. The Master's degree programmes in Language Teaching in Secondary Education (CROHO code 68534) and Teaching Social Sciences and Humanities in Secondary Education (CROHO code 68535) as well as the career-preparatory parts of the degree programmes in Language and Culture Education (CROHO code 68536) and Social Sciences and Humanities Education (CROHO code 68532) are exempted from this latter stipulation.
2. Programme directors may submit substantiated requests to the Board of Examiners if they wish to deviate from the stipulations above in individual cases or if they feel that additional criteria for thesis supervisors are necessary.
3. An exception to the provisions of Article 7.1.1 can be made for employee PhD students, who may be appointed as examiners by the Board of Examiners to assess Master's theses if they can demonstrate that they have sufficient knowledge and experience to fulfil this role, for example via accepted/published articles in the research field of the Master's thesis in question, successful supervision of multiple Bachelor's thesis workgroups and/or a successfully completed course on thesis supervision.
4. In cases where an employee PhD student acts as a Master's thesis supervisor, this student's PhD supervisor may not be the second assessor. Instead, an independent third party will be appointed in the role of second assessor.
5. Individual degree programmes may stipulate further requirements with regard to the procedure for appointing a supervisor. This procedure will be set out in advance in the *Graduation Guide*.
6. The *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme also set out the procedure to be followed in the event that a primary supervisor is unable to continue the supervision and how any complaints about supervision will be handled.

## 8.2 Form of supervision

1. The supervision of the research conducted in the framework of the final-year thesis must comprise at least a discussion of the problem definition and research design, the completed research proposal and plan, a progress meeting halfway through the scheduled track, feedback at least on each draft chapter of the thesis and feedback on the completed final draft. The interim reports on which feedback will be provided will be explicitly set out in the thesis schedule.
2. When a student submits a piece of work before the agreed deadline, the supervisor must provide feedback within 10 working days. For the assessment and grading term of the bachelor's and master's theses and/or final-year projects, please refer to article 9.6.

## 9 Assessment procedure

1. The final-year thesis will in principle be assessed by the supervisor as well as a second assessor appointed to this end. Both the supervisor and the second assessor independently complete their own version of the *assessment form* for the degree programme within which the final-year thesis is written. The process will only be assessed by the supervisor. Up to half a point can be added to or deducted from the final mark based on this process assessment.
2. The appointment procedure for the second assessor is set out in the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme.
3. The second assessor will not start their assessment task until the supervisor has qualified the thesis as assessable.
4. Both the primary assessor and the second assessor will independently assess the thesis against the assessment criteria set out in the *assessment form* that applies to the degree programme in question, after which they will discuss their assessments in order to arrive at a final assessment. In the event that the two assessors are unable to reach agreement about the final mark, an independent third examiner will be approached by the Board of Examiners, degree programme coordinator or programme director to make a decision (see the *Graduation Guide* of the degree programme in question).
5. The primary and second assessors must submit their independently completed assessment forms as well as a form that they jointly complete to substantiate their final assessment. All these assessment forms will be saved in the student file. Any forms completed by a third assessor will also be saved in the student file.
6. The examiner marks the final project, if submitted in due time, within 10 working days after the day of the agreed deadline, except for the master's thesis for Sociology, Educational Sciences and Pedagogical Sciences. The in due time submitted master's thesis for these degree programmes are marked within 15 working days after the day of the agreed deadline. The assessment and grading term in case of a remedy is in all cases 10 working days.
7. If the final-year thesis is awarded a fail mark, the student in question will be granted one opportunity to remedy the work within a period of time defined by the degree programme. Students whose remedied work is still not of sufficient quality to be awarded a pass mark will have to reregister for the final-year thesis course unit.

## 10 Assessment aspects

### 10.1 Bachelor's thesis

1. All Bachelor's theses are assessed on the basis of the degree programme-specific *assessment form*.
2. All assessment aspects that form part of the assessment form referred to in Article 9.1.1 will be equally reflected in the final mark.
3. The assessment may include an oral defence and/or presentation, but this must have no more than a marginal influence on the final mark.

### 10.2 Master's thesis

1. All Master's theses are assessed on the basis of the degree programme-specific *assessment form*.
2. All assessment aspects that form part of the assessment form referred to in Article 9.1.1 will be equally reflected in the final mark. Individual tracks may refine or emphasize these aspects, and may add weightings if necessary.
3. The assessment may include an oral defence and/or presentation, but this must have no more than a marginal influence on the final mark.
4. If a placement forms part of the final-year thesis, the *Graduation Guide* will explain how the final assessment is determined (e.g. via separate marks for the paper and the placement, or a weighted average, or another method), bearing in mind that the assessment procedure must satisfy the same criteria as that for final-year projects (see Section 9). Individual degree programmes may choose to draw up separate placement assessment forms or to include some specific criteria for the placement component in the general final-year thesis assessment form. In both cases, the assessment form will be included as an Appendix to the *Graduation Guide*.

## 11 Involvement of external parties in research

1. It may be necessary or useful to involve external parties in the research. This involvement can range from making information available to formulating a research assignment. If the external party attaches conditions to the use of the information or to the results of the research, the student must make sure that these do not prevent them from fulfilling the course requirements. Agreements relating to matters such as disclosure must conform to these regulations (see Section 13). Draft contracts with external organizations must be submitted in advance to the Faculty for approval<sup>6</sup>.
2. Students who follow a placement with an external party within the framework of their final-year thesis must sign a thesis contract via the placement coordinator of the degree programme.
3. The degree programme is only responsible for supervising the student. It supervises the research as a learning process, and assesses the research process and its outcomes according to current academic standards. The student is responsible for carrying out the research and for maintaining relations with external parties.
4. The University of Groningen (UG) has taken out liability insurance<sup>7</sup> to cover its liability as a university and to cover the liability of its students during placements (except

<sup>6</sup> A contract must be drawn up with any external organizations that are involved in a final-year thesis.

<sup>7</sup> This insurance covers liability for damage caused by students during placements. Any other insurance must be arranged by the students themselves.

placements in the United States and Canada). The excess for damage to property is €2,500 per claim. The excess for damage to persons is €25,000 per claim.

## 12 Administration and archiving

Each student must submit a digital version of the thesis to the library via the delivery portal in the digital learning environment, bearing in mind the guidelines for files as set out in the *Graduation Guide*. All theses are kept in the archives for at least 7 years, for visitation and accreditation purposes.

## 13 Public nature of papers

1. Based on the vision of Open Access and the societal role of the university, the University of Groningen has included in its policy that research should be made public as much as possible. Research and assessment must be verifiable. This also applies to research reports that are written in the context of a final project (i.e. the BSc and MSc thesis). For that reason, a BSc or MSc thesis should not contain confidential data.

However, the copyright of the thesis lies with the student. In exercising this right, the student is expected to consult with the supervisor regarding the degree of disclosure that is desirable for the thesis in question. When submitting the thesis to the UB repository, the student has the responsibility to indicate what is applicable to the thesis in question.

In cases in which the research assignment is given in the context of an internship and the supervisor is also the research leader, there may be no consent for disclosure of the thesis. If this is the case, this must be established in advance in the research contract or research proposal by means of a non-disclosure agreement. For these theses only the standard metadata will be disclosed (author, title, abstract, education, supervisor and date of upload or modification thereof).

If it is necessary to shield part of the thesis, then in consultation with the supervisor it may be decided to make a public version available for publication.

The contents of theses may, for example due to expected publication of an article, be placed under embargo for a period to be specified. At the end of this embargo period, the thesis will become public.

The student always has the right to decide not to publish the thesis without giving reasons.

2. Final assignments, placement reports and Lesson Study will be considered to be confidential and only made available to the supervisor, the second assessor, the programme director, and, if necessary, the Board of Examiners and the Accreditations Committee.

## 14 Disputes

1. In the event of a dispute between a student and their supervisor in the field of supervision, the relevant programme coordinator or programme director will mediate.
2. In the event of a dispute between a student and an assessor about the assessment, the student can lodge an appeal with the Board of Appeal for Examinations via the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS): [www.rug.nl/clrs](http://www.rug.nl/clrs).

## 15 Final provision



In cases not covered by these Regulations, the programme director will be responsible for settling matters in accordance with the statutory provisions.