

# **Thesis Regulations**

## **Research Master Track**

### **Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies (CMEMS)**

**2023-2024**

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# 1. Definition and learning outcomes

## a. *Definition*

The Research Master's thesis (thesis) is one of the most important instruments for determining whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes for the Research Master's programme. The students put what they have learned (knowledge, understanding and skills in their subject area) into practice by setting up and carrying out a substantial and academically sound research project. For this purpose, an unambiguous problem definition is formulated (also known as the research question or central question), which can be split into sub-questions if necessary. A well-formulated problem definition is essential to the success of a research project. It gives direction to the research and determines which material needs to be studied. The sub-questions give structure to the research and determine how the thesis is subdivided.

The most relevant secondary and primary literature, sources and/or research data are identified and analysed in order to answer the research question as well as the sub-questions. The answers are then presented in the form of an analytical argument, substantiated with sources or data that support the argument. The academic research is carried out in accordance with the conventions for the subject area. Students conduct the research independently. Their work constitutes an (original) contribution to the development of the subject and/or to the application of ideas within it.

The thesis should demonstrate knowledge of current research on the chosen subject. It should contain a critical reflection on the theoretical perspectives and methods used. The relevant sources, arguments, views and conclusions must be assessed in terms of their value and validity, and where necessary compared with other material.

The thesis thus demonstrates the student's ability, based on subject knowledge, to analyse and critically appraise his/her own research results and what others have written on the subject. The thesis describes how the research makes a new contribution to the discipline.

The thesis forms the proof that a student can actually carry out independent research on a level that demonstrates his/her capacities to participate in the international debate on his/her topic. The level of the argumentation and the mastery of the relevant literature should be such that the thesis could be re-worked into an article that could be submitted to a peer reviewed academic journal.

## b. *Learning outcomes Research Master Classical and Early Modern Studies*

The learning outcomes /qualifications of the research master thesis are:

### **Applying knowledge and understanding**

#### **Students should**

- 2.1 have the skills to apply methodologies and techniques when conducting independent research and understand how to use research results to develop advanced ideas and practical applications.
- 3.1 be able to make an original contribution to knowledge (albeit limited in scope) in at least one branch of the specialization chosen, assessed by means of the MA thesis.
- 3.2 be able to analyse and formulate an academic problem independently, and in so doing, to select, apply and where necessary adapt an adequate theoretical framework and one or more relevant research methods.

- 3.3 be able to make connections between the own specialist knowledge of the specialization chosen and related other disciplines, e.g. archaeology, art history, law, religion, philosophy.
- 3.4 be able to independently formulate a research proposal.

### **Making judgements**

#### **Students should**

- 3.5 be able to independently formulate a research proposal and critically evaluate one's own research.
- 2.2 be able to participate actively and creatively in a research group working on an academic project.
- 2.3 be able to participate in academic debate in the chosen area of specialization and to present a scientific problem convincingly in English, both orally and in writing. Students must also be able to make use of and critically evaluate research carried out by others.
- 3.1 be able to make an original contribution to knowledge (albeit limited in scope) in at least one branch of the specialization chosen, assessed by means of the MA thesis.
- 3.3 be able to make connections between the own specialist knowledge of the specialization chosen and related other disciplines, e.g. archaeology, art history, law, religion, philosophy.
- 3.4 be able to independently formulate a research proposal.

### **Communication**

#### **Students should**

- 2.4 be able to participate in academic debate in the chosen area of specialization and to present a scientific problem convincingly in English or another modern language, both orally and in writing. Students must also be able to make use of and critically evaluate research carried out by others.
- 3.1 be able to make an original contribution to knowledge (albeit limited in scope) in at least one branch of the specialization chosen, assessed by means of the MA thesis.
- 3.2 be able to analyse and formulate an academic problem independently, and in so doing, to select, apply and where necessary adapt an adequate theoretical framework and one or more relevant research methods.
- 3.3 be able to make connections between the own specialist knowledge of the specialization chosen and related other disciplines, e.g. archaeology, art history, law, religion, philosophy.

### **Learning Skills**

#### **Students should**

- 2.1 have the skills to apply methodologies and techniques when conducting independent research and understand how to use research results to develop advanced ideas and practical applications.
- 3.1 be able to make an original contribution to knowledge (albeit limited in scope) in at least one branch of the specialization chosen, assessed by means of the MA thesis.
- 3.2 be able to analyse and formulate an academic problem independently, and in so doing, to select, apply and where necessary adapt an adequate theoretical framework and one or more relevant research methods.
- 3.3 be able to make connections between the own specialist knowledge of the specialization chosen and related other disciplines, e.g. archaeology, art history, law, religion, philosophy.
- 3.4 be able to independently formulate a research proposal.

## 2. Instructions

### *a. Language of the thesis*

The thesis should be written in English. Another language may only be used with the express authorization of the Director of Studies (DoS) and the supervisors. If a thesis is written in a language other than English, the supervisor and the DoS have to make sure that there is a second assessor available, who is sufficiently fluent in that language to assess the quality of the work.

The style of writing should be of an accepted academic level.

### *b. Length of the thesis*

The thesis must be between 20,000 and 30,000 words, excluding appendices, footnotes and bibliography. Assuming there are approximately 450-500 words on a page, this is 30-60 pages. These figures are based on the following calculation: the thesis is worth 30 ECTS credit points = 840 hours that is an effort of 21 full-time weeks.

### *c. Format of the thesis*

The thesis should be handed in in a printed and in digital form. Each thesis should have a title page, stating name, study programme and degree programme and student number. Submission date, name of the supervisor(s) and of course the title. The thesis should be printed single-sided, with a line distance of 1 ½, in a standard 12 point font.

## 3. Procedure

The student is advised to start **as early as the third semester** (i.e., the first semester of the second study year) with his or her orientation on a suitable topic and the available literature. The student is also advised to approach potential supervisors in an early stage. See pp. 14 and 15 for a step-by-step schedule for summer and winter graduation.

### *a. Admission*

The thesis is the final and all-inclusive assessment of the programme. Consequently, the student is allowed to start with the theses only after the first year of the Research Master has been completed entirely, after a supervisor has been appointed, and after the thesis proposal has been approved by the supervisor and the Director of Studies.

### *b. Supervision*

Students will have the opportunity to choose a supervisor. The choice will be communicated to and discussed with the DoS, who will officially approve their choice and appoint the supervisor. A second supervisor may be appointed if this is appropriate for the subject of the thesis.

Students should be aware that the supervisor has only a limited number of hours available for thesis supervision, but have the right to at least four supervision meetings:

1. an exploratory discussion to choose a subject;
2. discussion of the research setup and planning;
3. discussion of the first version of the thesis;

#### 4. discussion of the final version of the thesis.

The student is expected to finish the thesis within the period of one semester. If the thesis has not been completed within this period, the student should confer with the DoS and the supervisor about the possibility of a suitable extension. The extension would need to be granted by the BoE.

#### c. *Thesis contract*

One month after the beginning of the semester the student hands in a thesis contract of at least two pages signed by student and the supervisor to the DoS for approval.

A thesis contract should at least contain the following information:

- Working title
- Provisional table of contents
- Research question
- Provisional list of literature and sources
- Discussion of used methods
- Detailed time schedule, including appointments with supervisor
- If applicable, explicit agreement with respect to the availability of necessary research facilities such as computer software or hardware, lab time, etc.

#### d. *Thesis support classes*

The students will take part in the compulsory module Careers in Research and Society in the second year of the programme, which aims to support their thesis progress and devise strategies for their future careers. This is followed by incidental support meetings during the process of writing.

#### 4. **Assessment and assessment criteria; appointment third examiner**

The thesis is assessed by two examiners: the main assessor is the thesis supervisor. If the thesis is supervised by two supervisors, a third examiner will be appointed. Once the two assessors have separately decided on a mark, they will consult one another. The two assessors will then reach a final assessment, which will be presented on a new form that may be more limited in character. The two separate forms filled in by the assessors will be archived in the assessment dossier.

Should the two assessors not reach consensus, then an independent third assessor will be appointed by the Board of Examiners. The third assessor will read the thesis without considering the assessments of the former two assessors, and will fill in their own assessment and mark on a new assessment form. Once the third assessor has reached an assessment and mark, the three assessors will consult one another in an attempt to reach consensus on the mark. If consensus is still not reached, the three assessment forms and marks will be presented to the Board of Examiners, who will decide on a definitive mark on the basis of the three assessments.

In case the assessor(s) is/are of the opinion that the thesis/final assignment cannot be awarded a pass mark, the student will be given one opportunity to remedy the work in order to be awarded a pass mark within a timeframe defined by the supervisor and the DoS. This revision will need to take place within the same semester as the original work on the thesis, unless the Board of Examiners grants an extension. If the revised work cannot be awarded a pass mark, the student will have to complete a new thesis/final assignment with a new topic and a different supervisor.

If the student does not agree with the assessment, it is possible to submit a complaint via the Central Portal for the Legal Protection of Student Rights (CLRS).

The mark for a thesis is based on the quality of 1. the research setup, 2. The quality of the research itself, and 3. the quality of the reporting on the research. The following criteria are used:

- Approach to the subject: justification of the subject within the discipline, delineation of the subject, sorting of material, description and analysis of the problem, formulation and quality of the research question/problem definition, the method followed when searching for a solution, theoretical justification and framework.
- Level of difficulty and academic contribution to the subject area.
- General approach: clarity and consistency of the work, critical reflection.
- Substantiation of the conclusions in the argument.
- Understanding demonstrated of sources, literature and research skills.
- Relevance of the cited documentation (quotes, other data, appendices) and/or research results.
- Presentation and composition of the research report (care, neatness, completeness, language and style).
- Degree of independence, originality and creativity shown in setting up and conducting the research.

The following relative weights has been assigned to the three mentioned criteria:

1. Content: 50%
2. Form: 35%
3. Process: 15%

All criteria need to be marked at least as sufficient (5.5).

The final mark is awarded by means of the thesis assessment form.

## **5. Archiving and free access**

Students must provide a digital version (in PDF format) of the thesis for the degree programme's archive. This should be submitted via the delivery portal of the Office for Student Affairs. The thesis is stored in the University of Groningen repository, the digital archive of University publications.

Theses in the repository can be freely accessed (from within and outside the University) if the student and supervisor give permission. Students can indicate 'freely accessible – yes/no' on the form. 'Yes' means that the student states that the supervisor has also given permission, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Boards of Examiners that apply within the Faculty of Arts. Before answering 'yes' on the form, the student must check that the lecturer also agrees to the thesis being freely accessible.

## **6. Rights and obligations of students**

Students have the right to thesis supervision as described in Section 3. In addition, the student is required to gather material in the correct way – i.e. independently – and use it to write a thesis in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the degree programme. See also the section relating to cheating and plagiarism in the relevant Teaching and Examination Regulations.

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 thesis must be the result of



independent academic research. Copying or too closely paraphrasing consulted works does not comply with this. The lecturer has the right to examine the consulted sources and literature, and students must provide the lecturer with this material if required.

The copyright on a thesis is shared: both the lecturer and student have copyright on the thesis. This means that neither the supervisor nor the student can publish on the results reported in the thesis unless they have the permission of the other.

## **7. Final provisions**

In cases not covered by these regulations, the Director of Studies shall have the final say.

Disputes concerning the provisions of these thesis regulations will first be brought before the Board of Examiners of the CMEMS degree programme, who will take a decision that can in turn be appealed against.

## 8. Appendices

### 1. Assessment form

Assessment form Master thesis Faculty of Arts

Date	
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Student:	
Student number:	

Title thesis	
code:	LQR998M30

Supervisor/first examiner	
Second examiner	

final mark: (ON A SCALE 1-10 WITH ONE DECIMAL PLACE)	
Programme	Research MA , Classical, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

1. Content (quality of research) 50% final mark						
	Insufficient > 5.5	Sufficient (5.5-6.5)	More than sufficient (7-7.5)	Good (8-8.5)	Very good (8.5-9)	Excellent (9-10)
a) Research question						
b) Presentation , motivation						
c) Argument analysis						
d) Methodology; research skills						
e) Theoretical framework and justification						
f) Research outcome, use of sources literature						
g) Research design						
h) Originality creativity						
i) Critical reflection						
j) Degree of difficulty						

k) Contribution to the field						
	General comments and mark <b>Content</b>					

<b>2. Form (quality of presentation thesis) 35% Final mark</b>						
	Insufficient	sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent
a) Structure; structure of the argument, arrangement of chapters/paragraphs						
b) Annotation; literary sources, notes, bibliography						
c) Language; use of language, clarity, precision, style						
d) Design and execution						
	General comments and mark <b>Form</b>					

<b>3. Process (quality of research and writing process) 15% Final mark</b>						
	Insufficient	sufficient	More than sufficient	Good	Very good	Excellent

a) Independence						
b) Planning						
c) Effort						
	General comments and mark <b>Process</b>					

**Overall judgment**

**Overall judgment second examiner**

Supervisor(s) /first examiner(s)

second examiner

5. 4. <b>Name First Examiner(s):</b>	Date & signature
6. 5. <b>Name Second Examiner:</b>	
7. Additional observations:	
8. Date & signature second examiner	

## 2. *Thesis contract*

### Thesis Contract Research Master .....

Name Student:

Student number:

Name first supervisor:

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A thesis contract should at least contain the following information:

- Working title
- Provisional table of contents
- Research question
- Provisional list of literature and sources
- Discussion of used methods
- **Detailed time schedule, including appointments with supervisor**
- If applicable, explicit agreement with respect to the availability of necessary research facilities such as computer software or hardware, lab time, etc.

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Student  
(name)

(signature)

(date)

Supervisor:  
(name)

(signature)

(date)

Director of Studies:  
(name)

(signature)

(date)

### 3. *Planning schedule Graduation Summer*

#### Basic model: Step-by-Step plan for the Master's thesis

Graduation in semester 2

Step-by-step plan	Deadline*
1. Exploratory discussion on thesis subject with DoS and supervisor	December-January
2. Graduation check with study-advisor	January
3. Further consultation with supervisor	1 March
4. Student submits thesis contract to supervisor and DoS for approval.	
5. As required, interim discussions of chapters, as agreed between supervisor and student.	March-May
6. Student submits thesis.	1 June
7. Assessment by and feedback from supervisor.	1 – 15 June
8. Student submits new version, if relevant.	15 June – 1 July
9. Supervisor and second supervisor assess final version, determine final mark and submit it for processing.	15 July
10. Final discussion between supervisor and student.	15 July
11. Student requests degree certificate ceremony online from the Office for Student Affairs: <a href="http://www.rug.nl/let/afstuderen">www.rug.nl/let/afstuderen</a>	No later than 2 months before date of completing Master's programme
12. After assessment, the student must upload the thesis: <a href="http://scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/UDA/">http://scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/UDA/</a> N.B. thesis must be uploaded in PDF format.	Immediately after final mark has been entered in Progress
13. When the final mark for the Master's degree has been registered in Progress, the student must inform the Office for Student Affairs that he/she is finished.	

\* in steps 1 to 6, other dates may be agreed in consultation with the student



#### 4. *Planning schedule Graduation Winter*

### Basic model: Step-by-Step plan for the Master's thesis

#### Graduation in semester 1

Step-by-step plan	Deadline*
1. Exploratory discussion on thesis subject.	July-August
2. Graduation check with study advisor 3. Further consultation with supervisor 4. Student submits thesis contract to supervisor and DoS for approval.	1 October
5. As required, interim discussions of chapters, as agreed between supervisor and student.	September-December
6. Student submits thesis.	15 December
7. Assessment by and feedback from supervisor.	15 – 31 December
8. Student submits new version, if relevant.	1 January – 15 January
9. Supervisor and second supervisor assess final version, determine final mark and submit it for processing.	31 January
10. Final discussion between supervisor and student.	31 January
11. Student requests degree certificate ceremony online from the Office for Student Affairs: <a href="http://www.rug.nl/let/afstuderen">www.rug.nl/let/afstuderen</a>	No later than 2 months before date of completing Master's programme
12. After assessment, the student must upload the thesis: <a href="http://scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/UDA/">http://scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/UDA/</a> N.B. thesis must be uploaded in PDF format.	Immediately after final mark has been entered in Progress
13. When the final mark for the Master's degree has been registered in Progress, the student must inform the Office for Student Affairs that he/she is finished.	

\* in steps 1 to 6, other dates may be agreed in consultation with the student