



BA Thesis Regulations

1. Description

The BA Thesis is a key instrument for assessing whether students meet the learning outcomes of the BA degree programme. Students put the acquired knowledge, understanding, and skills in their subject area into practice by setting up, carrying out and reporting on a small-scale, academically sound research project.

A BA Thesis in the field of European Languages & Cultures should be a coherent, logical, substantiated argument based on the student's own research and analysis in the field of European language and linguistics, literature and culture, and/or modern European political history. The argument should display a high level of information literacy, demonstrate knowledge of current research on the chosen subject, and must not simply reformulate the academic literature. The relevant arguments and evidence must be critically assessed and compared. Based on a transparent use of sources, this results in a research report that demonstrates the student's ability to analyse and critically position their own research results in the field. The report is thus an original contribution to existing knowledge in the subject area.

2. Workload

The BA Thesis must be between 7,500 and 10,000 words long, excluding footnotes, bibliography, and appendices. The workload for the BA Thesis is set at 10 ECTS, which is equivalent to 280 hours. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the methodologies employed in the ETC programme, the division of workload for the BA Thesis cannot be held to a uniform standard. Therefore, the amount of primary material and the scope of the reading list are established at the discretion of the supervisor, and included in the thesis contract signed in the first phrase of the project.

Students who write a 15-ECTS BA Thesis within the framework of Honours College must consult with their primary supervisor to discuss how they can extend their thesis in accordance with the guidelines of Honours College. The extension can take the form of an increased length and complexity of the thesis, extension of the amount of primary literature and sources, an extensive theoretical-methodological justification of the research project, and/or academic or social dissemination of the research (e.g., a publication or presentation).

3. Language

The BA Thesis is written in the major language; students with Russian as their major language write their BA Thesis in Dutch or English. Students may opt to deviate from this regulation, but should consider the following:

- Writing the thesis in the major language is a requirement for obtaining the major language specialization endorsement. For students in the Culture & Literature and the Language & Society profiles, this is a requirement for entering the Educational MA. The Politics & Society profile does not provide access to the Educational MA with or without language specialization endorsement.
- Writing the thesis in a language other than the major language may make sense in light of a specific follow-up MA programme. Be advised, however, that doing so, in most cases, will make students ineligible for a language specialization endorsement.

4. Supervision

A list of primary supervisors for each profile is available on the ETC BA Thesis page on Nestor. The list specifies staff members' areas of specialisation and the languages that they can supervise. Students should choose a BA Thesis topic that falls within the available supervisors' areas of expertise. The BA Thesis will be second-marked by another member of staff, who will

also assess the language proficiency aspects of the BA Thesis in case the primary supervisor lacks the relevant expertise.

BA Thesis supervision in the writing phase will take place individually or in small groups. Students are entitled to at least three supervision meetings, not including the final interview: (a) an exploratory meeting to define the topic, (b) a meeting to discuss the research design and plan, and (c) a meeting to discuss draft text(s).

5. Time frame

The BA Thesis process takes one semester and should in principle start no later than 1 September (first semester) or 15 February (second semester). Students must bear in mind that supervisors only have a limited amount of time available to supervise and correct their thesis.

A step-by-step plan for the BA Thesis process, with suggested deadlines, is given in the table below. Further information on some of the steps is given below the table.

		Semester 1	Semester 2
1	Student chooses a thesis topic and approaches a primary supervisor.	15 September	15 February
2	Student sets out the topic and approach of the BA Thesis in the Thesis Proposal and submits it on Nestor ('BA Thesis [Major Language]'). See Form: Thesis Proposal	30 September	1 March
3	Supervisor provides feedback to the thesis proposal. Student and supervisor sign the Thesis Contract, setting out the time frame and dates for meetings. See Form: Thesis Contract	15 October	15 March
4	Student receives feedback on the chapters submitted at the agreed times.		
5	Student submits the BA Thesis in digital form.	8 December	15 May
6	Assessment by and feedback from primary and secondary assessors.	22 December	1 June
7	Student submits the definitive version to both assessors in digital form and on paper.	1 January	15 June
8	Primary and secondary supervisors assess the final version. Primary supervisor determines the final mark and submits this for further processing.	22 January	8 July (*)
9	Student requests degree certificate online from the Office for Student Affairs: www.rug.nl/let/afstuderen	No later than two months before the intended date of completing the BA degree	
10	When the final mark has been registered in Progress, the student must inform the Office for Student Affairs that they have completed the degree programme		
11	After assessment, the student must upload the BA Thesis in PDF format to scripties.let.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/UDA/	No later than 6 weeks before the degree ceremony	

(*) The 8 July deadline, especially, is a hard deadline. As students must have completed their BA before starting an MA, all results must be registered by mid-July so that students can officially pass their final assessment before the 1 August deadline for registering for an MA degree programme.

Step 1: The student independently looks for a primary thesis supervisor suitable for their topic. The supervisor must have agreed to supervise the student before the Thesis Proposal is submitted (Step 2). Students must start this process early, to allow time for finding an alternative primary supervisor if their first choice is not available.

Step 2: The Thesis Proposal must at least state the name of the primary supervisor. The second assessor will be recruited internally from available staff members, depending on the topic and the language of the BA Thesis.

Step 3: Upon approval of the Thesis Proposal, supervisor and student sign the Thesis Contract.

Steps 4–8: Students may expect to receive feedback from their supervisor within ten working days from submission of one or more chapters. Supervisor and student may agree on deadlines for submission of the BA Thesis or parts thereof and state these in the thesis contract. The right to supervision will lapse if these deadlines are missed. Students are advised that supervisors may not be immediately available during non-teaching periods, including the Christmas break and the summer vacation.

The student may always contact the study advisor if problems occur in the supervision process. The study advisor will try to mediate; in the event that mediation does not help, or if the supervisor is absent for a prolonged period (e.g. due to illness), the study advisor can help the student find alternative supervision. In extreme cases, the study advisor may present the case to the Board of Examiners.

6. Formal requirements

Style, structure, page layout and referencing should follow one of the standard academic styles (APA, Chicago, Harvard, MLA, MHRA, etc.), as appropriate to the field of study. The style sheet that is to be followed is to be agreed upon with the supervisor.

In addition, the BA Thesis must have a title page, stating:

- the title (and, if applicable, subtitle) of the thesis;
- the author's name and student number;
- the words 'BA Thesis, European Languages & Cultures';
- an indication of the profile and major language in question;
- the names of the primary and secondary supervisors;
- the date of submission.

7. Assessment criteria

The BA Thesis will be assessed according to the rubric in Appendix C.

8. Archiving and Open Access

One copy of the final version of the BA Thesis must be submitted in digital form. This digital version will be archived according to faculty regulations. The digital copy, by default, can be perused by other students, for example to gain an idea of what a thesis should look like. Students can object to the publication of their thesis when they submit the digital version.

Copyright on a thesis is shared between the student and the primary supervisor. This means that no publication can take place without both parties agreeing in writing.

9. Cheating and plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are subject to the provisions set down in the Teaching & Examination Regulations (Article 7.18 of Part A of the BA OER). The Board of Examiners is always informed in cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism.

Thesis Proposal form (PDF) – see Nestor

BA Thesis Contract (PDF) – see Nestor

Assessment criteria – see following pages

BA Thesis – Marking criteria

Criterion	Insufficient (<5.5)	Sufficient (6-7)	Good (7-8)	Excellent (8+)
Research Question and Rationale	The research question is not clear and/or unfeasible. The rationale for the study is not clearly stated.	The research question is clearly stated and is feasible. The rationale for the study is embedded in academic debate.	The rationale for the study is clearly and convincingly embedded in academic debate. The research question is clearly stated and feasible, and follows logically from the rationale.	The clearly stated rationale shows that the study is relevant and urgent in the context of current academic debate. The research question is clearly stated, interesting and challenging, and follows logically from the rationale.
Background: Comprehensiveness	The selection of sources in the background section shows a number of clear gaps: some relevant sources are missing and/or not all sources mentioned are relevant. The discussion of sources is superficial and shows only a basic understanding of the subject matter.	The selection of sources in the background section is complete with regard to the most relevant sources, showing an ability to identify diverging positions in the debate. The discussion shows an understanding of the subject matter, but with minor inaccuracies.	The background section contains a broad and original selection of relevant sources, showing a proficient ability to identify diverging positions in the debate. The discussion shows an understanding of the subject matter without inaccuracies.	The background section contains a broad and original selection of highly relevant sources, showing a professional ability to identify diverging positions in the debate. The discussion shows a thorough understanding of the topic, including more complicated details.
Background: Synthesis	Sources are mostly summarised with limited integration. Limited comparisons and contrasts.	Material from different sources is used in the argument, but may be discussed on a source-by-source basis. Limited overt comparisons and contrasts.	Material from different sources is integrated into a single argument. Comparisons and contrasts clearly show the student's own critical perspective.	Material from a wide range of different sources is integrated into a single argument. Highly nuanced comparisons and contrasts clearly show the student's own critical and original perspective.
Methods	The method of investigation is not entirely suitable for the object of investigation. The design of the study is not fully worked out.	The method of investigation is suitable for the object of study. The design of the study is clearly worked out.	The method of investigation is highly appropriate for the object of study. The design of the study is comprehensively worked out.	The method of investigation is innovative and highly appropriate for the object of study. The design of the study is comprehensively and elegantly worked out.
Presentation of Results	The presentation of results is not entirely clear or complete. Tables	The presentation of results is clear and complete. Tables and graphs are	The presentation of results is very clear and comprehensive.	The presentation of results is exceptionally clear, fully

	and graphs are not entirely clear and/or captions are missing.	included and have clear captions.	Tables and graphs are included where appropriate and have clear captions.	comprehensive and innovative. Tables and graphs are included where appropriate, have clear captions, and look professional.
Analysis of Results (Quantitative)	Data analysis is mostly correct but incomplete. Statistics are appropriate but contain errors.	Data analysis is mostly correct. Statistics are appropriate.	Data analysis is correct, transparent and complete. Statistics are appropriate and complete.	Data analysis is exceptionally good and complete. Advanced use of appropriate statistics.
Use of primary sources	Quotations are absent or do not adequately reflect the argument and/or context is missing.	Quotations adequately reflect the argument and are provided with context.	Quotations are well chosen and contextualised with critical distance.	A balanced range of quotations is used to provide a nuanced discussion of the central argument.
Analysis of Results (Qualitative)	The material used for contextualisation is inadequate, outdated, or does not represent general consensus in the field.	The material used for contextualisation is adequate and reflects general consensus in the field.	The material used for contextualisation is nuanced and reflects both consensus and debate in the field.	Extensive contextual material is used to sustain an original or individual position relative to the ongoing debate in the field.
Discussion	The discussion is not organised clearly and only partly puts the results in perspective of the background literature. Research questions are not clearly answered.	The discussion is clearly organised and results are put in perspective of the background literature. All research questions are addressed. Not much reflection on limitations of own study.	The discussion is well-organised and makes strong connections between the results and the background literature. The research questions are clearly answered. Some reflection on limitations of own study.	The discussion is very well organised and contains insightful reflections on the results in the integrated context of the background literature and the research questions. In-depth reflection on limitations of own study.
Conclusion	The conclusion merely summarises the main findings of the study.	The conclusion summarises the main findings of the study in a broader academic or social context (e.g. providing suggestions for further research or for practical application of the results).	The conclusion summarises the main findings of the study concisely in a broader context and reflects on theoretical and/or methodological issues.	The conclusion contains a concise summary of the main findings of the study as well as original reflections on theoretical and/or methodological issues.
Structure	Jumps in structure at essay level, or at paragraph level in more than one paragraph.	Generally well structured at essay and paragraph level. Minor jumps may occur.	Well-structured at essay and paragraph level.	Well-structured at essay and paragraph level. Presentation in line with professional

				publications in the field.
Style	The general style is appropriate for academic writing, but there are frequent stretches of informal language, colloquialisms and awkward expression.	The general style is appropriate for academic writing. Informal language, colloquialisms and awkward expression may occasionally occur.	Language use is academic, with little if any non-academic expression. There is appropriate variation in language.	Language use is academic throughout, appropriately varied, and precise.
Accuracy	Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Presentation follows the relevant style guide but is inaccurate in places.	No errors in spelling and simple punctuation; some errors in grammar and more complicated punctuation may occur. Presentation follows the relevant style guide but may be inaccurate only in details.	No errors in spelling and punctuation; some errors in more complicated grammar may occur. Presentation follows the relevant style guide.	No errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Presentation follows the relevant style guide.
Referencing	Regular occurrence of unsourced statements. Referencing in the relevant style, but with inaccuracies.	Complete reference of sources in the relevant style; some minor inaccuracies may occur.	Complete and accurate referencing of sources in the relevant style.	Complete and accurate referencing of sources in the relevant style. Great care in presentation of sources and bibliography.
Independence	Student depended excessively on the supervisor during all stages of the thesis process.	Student provided adequate input to the thesis process, but needed substantial guidance from the supervisor.	Student took responsibility for the thesis process, and requested feedback or input from supervisor when necessary.	Student took responsibility for the thesis process with original ideas. Supervisor input was predominantly in the role of a sounding board for ideas.
Processing feedback	Student rejected feedback or did not process feedback adequately.	Student processed feedback in a mechanical fashion.	Student processed feedback and was capable of generalising feedback to the entire project.	Student does not rely on feedback for the process, but used it to advance the quality of the final thesis beyond expectations.