

BA INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
THESIS SEMINARS GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS AND SECOND READERS
2019-2020

The following note is intended for supervisors/examiners of students in BA International Studies who are producing their bachelor's thesis. It explicates the specific nature of this degree programme, and the concomitant characteristics of its bachelor's thesis, derived from the Course and Examinations Regulation (CER). Next, it describes the procedure for establishing a grade for a thesis, including the tasks of the supervisor and the second reader, respectively.

1. AIMS OF BA INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Bachelors of Arts in International Studies provides students with the tools to investigate globalization, and its regional effects, from a humanities perspective. They study these effects through the prism of four disciplinary perspectives: culture, history, politics and economics, coupled with in-depth knowledge of one of eight world regions. The humanities perspective is ensured by placing an understanding of the historic and cultural context central in the programme, and linking this directly to the political and economic conditions. Students learn to apply the acquired knowledge of the four disciplinary approaches in the analysis of a geographical area of their choice with the aid of a language native to that area.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE BACHELOR THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Based on the knowledge and skills acquired, students will be able to:

- a) work with research techniques that are current in the discipline(s) covered;
- b) comprehend sophisticated academic debates;
- c) report on their studies and research in good written English;
- d) work and write under time-pressure, and deal with deadlines.

The general academic skills covered by these aims are the following:

- a) collect and select specialized literature using traditional and electronic methods and techniques;
- b) analyze and evaluate this in terms of quality and reliability;
- c) formulate a well-defined research question based on this;
- d) set up, under supervision, a study of limited size, taking into consideration the traditional and electronic methods and techniques relevant for the discipline;
- e) formulate a reasoned conclusion on the basis of this;
- f) explain research findings in writing, in a clear and well-argued way.

The thesis should count ca 10.000 words ($\pm 10\%$), excluding bibliography and notes.

3. SUPERVISION

Students working on their bachelor's thesis are supervised by faculty members both in a classroom context (the thesis seminar), and individually. The seminar concentrates on research skills and writing processes; for guidance in matters of substance and content, a more individual approach needs to be provided. The thesis seminar leader is therefore also responsible for the individual supervision and finally acts as the first examiner/reader. The supervisor is not responsible for the final version of the thesis – the students must themselves decide when the final version is ready to be submitted and graded (provided that they do so on or before the due date).

Attending the seminar is mandatory; no thesis can be submitted that has not been written in the context of a thesis seminar. If a student misses more than two class meetings or more than one individual meeting, the supervisor may have the student disenrolled from the seminar. Students should inform their supervisor, when possible, in advance if they are unable to attend a session.

Each seminar will be devoted to one of the geographical areas covered by International Studies. Thesis seminar leaders will have to set a theme for the seminars that lends itself to an approach from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Within the theme, thesis seminar leaders provide guidance for students to decide on their specific research topic. Although the theme should be broad enough to allow students to choose a topic of their own preference, the topic of their thesis should be clearly connected to the theme of the seminar. The same applies to the disciplinary approaches taken by the students. Overall they should be able to write a thesis covering at least two of the four disciplinary fields: politics, economics, history, and culture, but the student is expected to include at least (one of) the stated disciplinary perspective(s) of your seminar in the analysis of the chosen topic of their thesis. Instead of taking two disciplinary perspectives they can use a single perspective defined by their thesis seminar and place their analysis in a global perspective.

Upon their enrolment for the seminar, students will be asked to indicate the research topic they would like to cover, and the disciplinary perspective(s) they intend to use, as well as how these will connect to the thesis seminar theme and approach. This indication will be used to match students with a seminar/supervisor. Students should connect their topic to the theme of the seminar, in order for the supervisor to be able to supervise and assess the chosen topic. It should be realised that the thesis supervisor can, in discussion with the student, ensure that there is a match between topic and approach of the student's research plan and the theme and disciplinary approach of the thesis seminar itself, within above guidelines. In exceptional cases, when the seminar leader is unable to supervise and assess the chosen topic, a switch to another seminar within the same area can be made or an alternative supervisor may be found for the individual supervision, while the student remains part of the specific thesis seminar.

It is important to realise that students International Studies have only a limited training in each disciplinary perspective, consisting of two to four courses in their entire programme, and have, besides training in various individual aspects of conducting academic research, only practised with executing two sizeable research projects in their Thematic Seminars (formerly Elective), one of which has a focus on the application of research methods. As a result care

should be taken both in what can be expected from the student regarding their knowledge of specific disciplinary theories and methodologies, as well as what they can be allowed to use as methodology, particularly those of a more advanced nature.

The exact set-up of the seminars may vary somewhat, due to the nature of the area, the number of seminars offered in each area, and the teaching approach you as seminar leader will take. The schedule requires six classroom meetings for general instruction, discussion and students' peer feedback. Although there are some tools provided to you for this by the programme, there is a certain amount of freedom in the form you will teach the central elements of writing a thesis, including writing a research plan, formulating a research questions, writing a good literature review, etcetera. In seminars with more students it is for instance more difficult to have presentations by all students of their research set up, so forms of online peer review can be used.

On basis of past experience it may be useful to pay attention to the following elements within the seminars. Introduce the theme in the first seminar and ask each student to explain what they want to research and how it connects to the theme. It can be useful to provide a very limited amount of literature on the theme and possible methodologies to the students. Discuss what a good thesis proposal, research question, literature review, (draft) thesis contains before submission, and then discuss common problems after marking them. On the general blackboard site of the thesis seminar there are various helpful documents, PPTs, etc. uploaded, including some examples on how to use specific methodologies.

There are at least four individual meetings of approx. half an hour each with the students (for a suggested time table, see Appendix 1). A classroom is reserved for the time slot allocated to your seminar, allowing you to adjust the suggested overall schedule according to your own preferences (check the time and place of your seminar on the International Studies webpage). Booking of a meeting room on other moments can be done through the study coordinators. Supervisors can invite the students to come to their office in Leiden or The Hague, but should take into account that many of the International Studies students do not travel for free. The preferred place for meetings is therefore The Hague. The schedule for the individual meetings is a minimal indication only; it should however also be made clear from the outset that there is a limit to the amount of supervision students can obtain.

In the context of the seminar, the student is to submit three assignments before submitting the final version of the thesis:

- Thesis proposal: research question and plan (within four weeks; see Appendix 2).
- Literature review (within seven weeks; see Appendix 2).
- Draft of the thesis (in week 13 is suggested, but this is up to the thesis seminar leader's discretion).

The assignments are a prerequisite for submitting the thesis, it should be made clear to the students that they provide the only opportunity to receive actual feedback on their work. The more effort they put in the more they will benefit from it. All three assignments including the draft of the thesis should be discussed with the students individually. The deadline for all assignments is always Friday, at 23.59 h., in the appropriate week. As these deadlines are

coordinated with deadlines in other courses during the semester these should not be moved. Students in International Studies have been trained to understand that meeting a deadline is very much part of the assignment itself. Moreover, since the spring semester is in practice longer than the fall semester, it is important that in the longer spring semester, too, due dates are strictly maintained, so that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because of the semester in which they have chosen to take their thesis seminar. For late submissions, without previous permission of the final version, points can be deducted. This is to the lecturer's discretion (see under 4.4.).

Note that due dates cannot normally be extended unless there are (serious) personal circumstances that justify delay. Minor delays of up to four days, can be granted to the lecturers discretion. Students claiming circumstances that warrant longer delays must be referred to their coordinator of study. Whether such delay can be allowed by the Board of Examiners, will then be communicated to the supervisors by the coordinator of studies.

4. ASSESSMENT, GRADING AND ADMINISTRATION PROCESS (FIRST AND SECOND READERS)

Submission of the following assignments is prerequisite for submitting the thesis:

- * Thesis proposal (approx. 1,200-1,500 words)
- * Literature review (approx. 3,000-4,000 words)
- * Draft thesis (minimum format to be decided by the supervisor, but including at least a full chapter next to the literature review)

The grade for the thesis seminar is determined by the thesis grade. Assessment of participation in the thesis seminar is included in the final thesis assessment form. To successfully complete this course, the grade for the thesis needs to be a 6,0 or higher. The supervisor/first reader is responsible for feedback on all assignments, as well as for the assessment of the thesis (Appendix 3). The second reader only assesses the thesis.

4.1. Check on plagiarism

The student submits a digital copy of the final version of the thesis to the first reader, who checks the work for plagiarism, using the Turnitin module available on Blackboard, and passes the thesis on to the second reader. The supervisor may request two printed copies of the thesis; one for the supervisor and one for the second reader. Any suspicion of plagiarism is to be reported to the Board of Examiners of International Studies immediately (please include the Turnitin-report). Please discontinue grading the thesis involved, inform the second reader about the delay, and inform the student to await further notice from the Board. Never submit a grade to the administration before the Board has notified you of their conclusion.

4.2. Assessment and grading

To smoothen the process of assessment it is advised that the supervisor contacts the second reader as soon as the thesis has been submitted and provides him/her with a digital and/or a

hardcopy of the thesis, indicating the final deadline for assessment. A copy of the assessment form should then be created by the supervisor in the faculty thesis assessment system, enabling both supervisor and second reader to fill in the assessment form independently from each other. The supervisor is ultimately responsible for ensuring the assessment is completed in time. If for some reason this is not possible, make sure to inform the students in question, and contact the programme or the Educational Director of your Institute before the deadline of four weeks expires.

- Upon receipt of the thesis, the supervisor sends a copy of it to the second reader, so that both examiners can work independently and simultaneously on the grading.
- The first and second readers will have four weeks to read and grade the thesis.
- Both first and second reader independently check on the fulfilment of the following minimal standards ('knockout criteria'):
 1. Contains a clear academic research question.
 2. Is situated within a relevant academic debate.
 - 3a. Analyses the topic from at least two different disciplinary perspectives, and/or
 - 3b. places the analysis of the regionally defined topic in a global perspective.
 4. Accounts for the chosen research method(s) and materials.
 5. Is based on the evaluation of a sufficiently large body of independently collected scholarly literature and/or sources (10-20, depending on whether books and/or articles are discussed).
 6. Contains a well-structured and consistent argument.
 7. Is written in correct English.
 8. Produces a scholarly argument and analysis.

The referencing style is Chicago. It is up to the supervisor to determine whether that should be the 'notes and bibliography' or the 'author-date' version.

If the first or second reader finds that the thesis does not fulfil all the above minimum standards, they decide together whether a fail grade should be awarded. Please note that a fail grade for one criterion cannot be compensated with sufficient grades for others. If the above criteria are met, the supervisor and the second reader independently assess and grade the thesis based on the specific criteria of the thesis assessment form (Appendix 4). It includes the following categories for assessment:

- Knowledge and insight (contents, relation to the field).
- Application knowledge and insight (methodology).
- Reaching conclusions (interpretation, argumentation, conclusion).
- Communication (writing skills, structure).
- Learning skills (process).

When grading theses, please keep in mind that the multidisciplinary education of International Studies students implies that they are trained to understand their region in a wider comparative/global context. As a consequence, they are not as profoundly trained in a particular discipline (e.g. history, politics, economics, sociolinguistics or cultural studies) or

region as students who follow a more specialized programme. They should, however, be better equipped than such students in treating regional issues from a global perspective and the combination of various disciplinary approaches. For second readers it is important to note that the supervisors have to deal with a wide range of topics and disciplinary approaches. As a result the materials used and approaches taken cannot always be scrutinised at the level of an expert. This means that the theses will have to be assessed on basis of the execution of the approach taken and material used as agreed between supervisor and student, and not on what is missing.

4.3. Establishment of the final grade and administration

After both readers have filled out the assessment form independently, their conclusions need to be compared and discussed. If they agree on the grade, they then need to electronically sign and submit a joint digital assessment form to the administration. If first and second reader cannot reach consensus on the grade, the thesis must be sent, together with the opinions of both readers, to the Board of Examiners. The Board will then arrange for a third reader to decide on the final outcome (see Appendix 3). The thesis grade will be expressed as a whole number or a number with one decimal place between 1,0 and 10,0, including both limits. The grade will not be expressed as a number between 5,0 and 6,0. If the grade awarded is a 6,0, the thesis will be sent to the Board of Examiners with the request for a third reader to either confirm the assessment of the first two readers that the thesis is passable, or decide that the thesis does not fulfil the requirements and should be awarded a fail grade. In the latter case, the third reader will motivate this decision in writing.

4.4. Failing and re-writing the thesis

Students who score an insufficient grade for the thesis (6.0 or lower) are allowed to resubmit a reworked version of their thesis. The deadline for resubmission of the thesis is 10 working days after receiving the grade for the thesis and subsequent feedback.

In case of resubmission of the thesis the grade will be lowered as a consequence of the longer process of completion. However, this lowering should not result in failing an otherwise passable thesis.

The procedure is as follows:

- After submitting the final assessment form, the first reader will provide the student with final instructions as soon as possible, preferably in an individual meeting. In case of a fail grade having been awarded the deadline for resubmission is 10 working days after receiving the grade for the thesis and subsequent feedback.
- Students who fail to hand in their thesis before the original deadline, but still within 5 working days of that deadline, will receive a grade and feedback on their thesis. This will be considered a first submission of the thesis, however, the grade will be lowered as a consequence of the longer process of completion.

- Students who fail to hand in their thesis within 5 working days of the original deadline, get 10 working days, counting from the original deadline, to hand in a first version of their thesis. However, this first version will count as a resubmitted thesis with consequential lowering of the grade, and there will be no option of handing in a reworked version based on feedback from the supervisor.
- In establishing the final mark for the resubmitted thesis by both readers, the fact that the thesis had to be resubmitted will be taken into account, and an appropriate deduction of the mark will be made for process.
- Students who receive a fail grade for their resubmitted thesis have to take another seminar in the next semester. Please note that theses can only be submitted in the context of a seminar; students cannot submit or re-submit their original thesis in another seminar.

Appointment of supervisors and second readers

Supervisors (first readers), second and third readers are appointed by the Board of Examiners with agreement of the Directors of Studies of the Faculty's academic institutes on recommendation of the thesis seminar leaders. Thesis seminar leaders are responsible for providing suggestions for appropriate second readers from their institute using the list of available staff which will be provided by the institute. This should be done as soon as all topics of theses are clear to you, but no later than mid-way the semester. Under no circumstances should students themselves approach faculty members for this task.

Student Repository

Please inform the students about the obligation to upload the final graded version of their thesis (in PDF) to the Student Repository as part of the graduation procedure (see Appendix 3) as soon as they receive a sufficient thesis grade. The thesis grade can only be officially registered after the thesis has been uploaded.

APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULE

Fall semester of 2019 (students' due dates in italic/red; the due date for supervisors and second readers in bold italic/green):

Week	Date	Activities
37	9 - 13 Sept.	class meeting
38	16 - 20 Sept.	class meeting and individual meetings
39	23 - 27 Sept.	individual meetings
40	<i>deadline 4 Oct. 23.59</i>	<i>submission of research question and plan</i>
41	7- 11 Oct.	class meeting
42	14 - 18 Oct.	individual meetings
43	<i>deadline 25 Oct, 23.59</i>	<i>submission of literature review</i>
44	28 Oct.- 1 Nov.	
45	4 - 8 Nov.	class meeting/ individual meetings
46	11 - 15 Nov.	class meeting
47	18 - 22 Nov.	class meeting
48	25- 29 Nov.	
49	<i>deadline 6 Dec., 23.59</i>	<i>submission of draft</i>
50	9 - 13 Dec.	
51	16 - 20 Dec.	individual meetings
52	23 - 27 Dec.	
1	30 Dec. - 3 Jan.	
2	<i>deadline 10 Jan., 23.59</i>	<i>submission of definitive version.</i>
3	13 - 17 Jan.	
4	20 - 24 Jan.	
5	27 - 31 Jan.	
6	<i>3 - 7 Febr.</i>	<i>submission of grade to the administration</i>

Spring semester of 2020

Week	Date	Activities
6	3 - 7 Feb.	class meeting
7	10 - 13 Feb.	class meeting and individual meetings
8	17 - 21 Feb.	individual meetings
9	<i>deadline 28 February, 23.59</i>	<i>submission of research question and plan</i>
10	2 - 6 March	class meeting
11	9 - 13 March	individual meetings
12	<i>deadline 20 March, 23.59</i>	<i>submission of literature review</i>
13	23 - 27 March	
14	30 March - 3 April	class meeting/ individual meetings
15	6 - 9 April	class meeting
16	14 - 17 April	class meeting (LU closed 13 April)
17	20 - 24 April	
18	<i>deadline 1 May, 23.59</i>	<i>submission of draft</i>
19	6 - 8 May	
20	11 - 15 May	individual meetings
21	18 - 20 May	
22	25 - 29 May	
23	<i>deadline 5 June, 23.59</i>	<i>submission of definitive version</i>
24	8 - 12 June	
25	15 - 19 June	
26	22 - 26 June	
27	29 June - 3 July	<i>submission of grade to the administration</i>

APPENDIX 2. THESIS PROPOSAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Thesis proposal: research question and plan (1.200-1.500 words)

Students have to write their thesis in the context of the theme and disciplinary approach(es) of their seminar. They have to be able to explain to their fellow students in the seminar how their research contributes to the more general question that is central to the seminar. Ideally, the thesis proposal presents their research question according to the three-tiered structure with which they have become acquainted in the second-year thematic seminars, through the book of Booth *et al.*, *The Craft of Research*, esp. pp. 49-52.

The thesis proposal will consist of the following parts:

1. Tentative title.
2. Three to five keywords that quickly identify the research field and focus.
3. Research question.
4. Relevance of the research.
5. Methodology (how will the research question be answered?).
6. Preliminary outline of chapters.
7. Timeline/planning.
8. Bibliography (key sources).

All thesis proposals will if possible be presented but at least be discussed, in class.

Literature review (3.000-4.000 words)

Once students have decided on a topic which the thesis seminar leader is willing to supervise, and formulated a concrete research question and plan, they will be looking for relevant academic studies to formulate a concise state of the art. The aim is to come to a survey of the debate on the topic of the thesis or the theoretical approach taken in the relevant academic studies on the subject, i.e. well-documented and published through widely respected channels. The number of publications discussed will eventually be somewhere between ten and twenty, depending on whether books and/or articles will be discussed. Online sources may be used, depending on the quality of the website and always in combination with academic literature.

Students should realise that the substance of argument made in the thesis proposal and literature review basically leads to the framework of the introduction and the first, introductory chapter of their thesis. They are strongly recommended to anticipate the writing of these by presenting the thesis proposal and literature review as drafts that in a later stage will be condensed and integrated into the draft and final version of the thesis.

The literature review is to be submitted using the Turnitin module on Blackboard.

APPENDIX 3. INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS: WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

During the semester each student participating in a thesis seminar will have at least four individual meetings of approximately half an hour each with his or her supervisor. The aim of these meetings is not only to discuss the topic of the student's research, but also to discuss written feedback and give oral feedback on the submitted assignments: the research proposal, literature review, and draft. The supervisor will need some time to properly read and comment on the assignment, and normally schedule the meetings one or two weeks after a submission deadline. The assessment criteria depend on the nature of the assignment, but should always be linked to those formulated in the thesis guidelines.

Students should realize that the amount of in-depth feedback they receive usually depends on the supervisor's specialisms and the focus of the seminar, as well as on the quality of their work. Less developed work results automatically in more superficial feedback. The primary focus in the feedback lies on how the student deals with the collected information. The feedback may vary from one assignment to another:

Research proposal: the supervisor concentrates on the components mentioned in the proposal form: provisional title; research question (and subquestions); relevance; methodology; provisional outline of chapters; timeline/planning; and key sources. The feasibility of the intended research will also be subject of discussion.

Literature review: the supervisor will focus on the relevance of the consulted studies in connection to the research proposal, either as state of the art or as a representation of a theoretical framework.

Draft: the more complete a draft is, the more feedback supervisors can give, e.g., on the argumentation, structure, etc. It is advisable to hand in a complete first version of the thesis, which can then be improved upon based on the feedback. A draft version should however include at least one complete chapter next to the literature review, as well as a framework of the other chapters to allow the supervisor to get better insight in the student's approach and furnish adequate comments and suggestions.

Depending on the priorities and preferences of the supervisor, each assignment can also be checked on plagiarism, referencing style, and language, as well as the incorporation of earlier feedback.

Students are not only expected to submit their assignments in time, and be present at the meetings, but also to be well prepared for the individual meetings as part of their own time management. They are encouraged to reflect in advance on the matters they intend to discuss with their supervisor, the questions they have, and the difficulties they experience. Students are strongly recommended to take notes during the individual meetings to enable them to incorporate the feedback in the next assignments to be submitted.

APPENDIX 4: USEFUL INFORMATION

Contact

Board of Examiners	bais-examinationscommittee@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Administration	osz-admin-thehague@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Study coordinators	bais.stuco@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Thesis seminar coordinator	m.immerzeel@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Helpdesk Blackboard	blackboard@hum.leidenuniv.nl
Helpdesk assessment form	scriptieform@hum.leidenuniv.nl (071 5271641)
Classroom booking	ServicedeskDH@ufb.leidenuniv.nl
Assessment form	https://www.scriptiebeoordeling-hum.leidenuniv.nl/login/
Student repository	https://www.library.universiteitleiden.nl/research-and-publishing/scholarly-publishing/upload-your-ba-or-ma-thesis

Webpage International Studies:

<https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en?cf=humanities&cd=international-studies-ba>

Staff Manual International Studies:

https://ubl-wiki.leidenuniv.nl/SMIS/index.php/Main_Page

Staff Manual Thesis Guidelines:

https://ubl-wiki.leidenuniv.nl/SMIS/index.php/Thesis_Guidelines_2018-19#Appendix_1:schedule

Course descriptions:

<https://studiegids.leidenuniv.nl/en/studies/show/5635/international-studies>

Blackboard manuals:

<http://hum.leidenuniv.nl/medewerkers/ict-voorzieningen/blackboard/handleiding.html>

Blackboard page: BAIS thesis supervisors (course materials etc.)

Thesis writing:

<https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en/study--studying/study/educational-information/thesis-and-paper-writing/humanities/international-studies-ba?cf=humanities&cd=international-studies-ba#tab-1>

Useful documents

Chicago Manual of Style:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Response paper:

<https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/response-paper.original.pdf>

Literature review:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>

Booth *et al.*, *The Craft of Research*, esp. pp. 49-52:

http://www.studentofferingsupport.ca/portal/OutreachProjects/PreDepReadings/E1_The%20Craft%20of%20Research_choosing%20topic+questions.pdf