

Rules and Guidelines
Research Master's Programs
Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences
2019-2020

NB Text shaded **yellow** differs from the text included in the Rules and Guidelines document for the Bachelor's, Master's and Educational Master's Programs of Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences.

Rules and Guidelines as referred to in Article 7.12, subsection 3 of the Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – WHW*), to be established by the Examination Board.

These Rules and Guidelines apply to the (final) examinations of all **Research Master's** programs offered by the Faculty of Humanities and Digital Sciences, and are linked to the Education and Examination Regulations of these educational programs, to be adopted by the Dean.

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Article 1 Definitions

In these Rules and Guidelines, the following definitions apply:

- Examination Board: the Examination Board in the sense intended by the law, for all **Research Master's** educational programs of the faculty. Members of the Examination Board are tenured members of the scientific staff involved in teaching or other educational activities. The chairperson is designated from the body of professors/senior lecturers (Hoogleraar/UHD/UD). Members and chairperson are designated by the Dean, having heard the members and chairperson of the Examination Board;
- Examinee: the person who takes an examination or a final examination;
- Examiner: the person who, on behalf of the Examination Board, is entitled to administer an examination or a final examination. Those appointed at Tilburg University as lecturer [1] are also examiner in the sense intended by article 7.12c of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW);
- Final examination: the collection of examinations of the program passed by the examinee, possibly extended with an investigation into the knowledge, the insight and the skills of the examinee, conducted by examiners appointed by the Examination Board;

[1] Tenured and non-tenured Docent/UD/UHD/Hoogleraar; PhD student under supervision of Docent/UD/UHD/Hoogleraar.

- Examination: the investigation into the knowledge, the insight and the skills of the examinee with respect to a certain course/unit of study of the program, as well as the assessment of the results of that investigation;
- Test: an interim investigation into the knowledge, the insight and the skills with respect to a certain course/unit of study of the program, as well as the assessment of the results of that investigation;
- Student: the person registered at the university to receive instruction and/or take examinations that are part of the program.

Article 2 Tasks and day-to-day management

The Dean appoints the Examination Board. This board is charged with:

- Guaranteeing the quality of the exams and final exams without prejudice to the provisions in article 7.12c of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW),
- Determining the regulations and directions within the framework of the Course and Assessment Regulations, as referred to in article 7.13 of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), to assess and determine the results of exams and final exams,
- Administering final exams,
- Organizing and coordinating exams,
- Granting requests for admission to the programs and requests for free programs,
- Granting requests for exemptions from taking one or more exams.

The secretary is responsible for the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Examination Board. Each year, the Examination Board compiles a report of its activities. The Examination Board presents this report to the dean.

Article 3 Administering examinations or parts of examinations

1. Each final examination, examination or part of an examination comprises the investigation into the knowledge, the insight and the skills of the examinee with respect to a certain course/unit of study of the program, as well as the assessment of the results of this investigation.

2. This investigation and this assessment are carried out by the Examination Board, or by examiners appointed by the Examination Board.
3. If the same part of a final examination is examined and assessed by more than one examiner, either at the same time or not, the Examination Board will see to it that the examiners use the same norms/standards of assessment. If necessary, the Examination Board will appoint a primarily responsible examiner.
4. The determination of whether the conditions for admission to the final examination or one or more of its components have been met is a matter for the Examination Board or for the examiner.

Article 4 Dates on which examinations are administered

1. Having consulted the examiners concerned, the Examination Board, prior to the beginning of the academic year, determines the dates and times on which the written examinations are to be administered.
2. In determining the dates and times as referred to in subsection 1, precautions are taken to prevent examinations from coinciding or overlapping. If possible, at least one exam-free day will be scheduled between any two examinations of the compulsory curriculum (the required courses).
3. Changes in the time referred to in subsection 1 will only take place due to circumstances beyond the control of the Board, for instance if the room needed for the exam to take place is not available, and in certain cases if students are abroad as part of their studies.
4. If students can prove to have been unable to attend at a time and place specified in subsection 1 due to circumstances beyond their control, this inability to attend must have been reported to the secretary of the Examination Board, prior to the scheduled time of the examination in question. If the inability to attend has been reported in time, or if reporting in time was impossible due to circumstances beyond the student's control, the student can file a written request with the Examination Board in which the student can ask for an alternative opportunity for the first attempt / resit within 15 working days after the scheduled date (as specified in subsection 1). In case the student submits a request for an alternative opportunity for the first attempt, the Examination Board will initially refer the student to the scheduled time of the resit. The Examination Board may ask the involved lecturer for advice.
5. Oral examinations are scheduled at a time and place determined by the examiner in question, if possible after consultation with the examinee.
6. Whenever possible, the provisions in subsection 5 are likewise applicable to examinations that are neither written nor oral exams.

Article 5 Granting of special requests with regard to examination facilities

1. Students with functional limitations can file a request for special examination facilities through the Digital Report Desk Functional Limitations. Students are obliged to supply evidence of their specific limitations.
2. Requests and documents testifying to the student's functional limitations filed at the Digital Report Desk Functional Limitations are evaluated by the Student Dean.
3. The Student Dean is authorized to decide on behalf of the Examination Board in individual requests where the functional limitations and the requested examination facilities are specified in the protocol drawn up for that purpose.
4. A decision as specified in subsection 3 is an intended decision. An intended decision automatically becomes a definitive decision after 14 days, unless the student concerned disagrees with the intended decision and files a motivated request in writing with the Student Dean within the term specified, to reconsider the intended decision.
5. Having received a request for reconsideration, the Student Dean will take an official decision in consultation with the Examination Board within 4 weeks.
6. If the student's functional limitation and/or the requested examination facility is not specified in the protocol regarding special exam facilities for students with functional limitations, the Student Dean will forward the request as soon as possible to the Examination Board, which will subsequently decide on the request.
7. Students can lodge an appeal against a final decision with the Board of Appeals for Examinations within six weeks.

Article 6 Registration for examinations

1. Registration for written examinations takes place through the Internet. This registration takes place in accordance with the regulations drawn up by the Central Student Desk.
2. Registration for oral examinations takes place by filling out the relevant form, in consultation with the examiner in question.
3. To be admitted to a final examination, the examinee has to submit the relevant form at the Central Student Desk, together with any other required papers, no later than three weeks before the desired graduation date.

Article 7 Exemptions for courses/components of the final exam

1. Any request to be exempted from the obligation to take the exam of a certain course/component of the final exam of the program must be filed with the secretary of the Examination Board.
2. The Examination Board will take a motivated decision after consulting with the lecturer in question, within a month of receiving the request, (or, if this period of time falls partly or entirely within the academic recess period, within a month after the recess has ended). The applicant will receive a written notification of the decision.

Article 8 The language in which (final) examinations are conducted

1. The (final) examinations are conducted in **English** or in another language determined by the nature of the course in question.
2. Any requests by examinees to complete the exams of one or more courses/components of the final examination in another language than the language referred to in subsection 1 must be submitted to the Examination Board at least two months before the date of the examination.

Article 9 Questions and assignments, content and duration of the examinations

1. Examinees must reasonably be able to answer the questions and assignments of the examination on the basis of the previously announced sources determining the material to be studied for the examination. These sources are for the most part announced before the start of the course that prepares students for the examination. The exact designation of the material to be studied is announced one month before the date of the exam at the latest.
2. In the case of classes being taught again in preparation for an examination, the examinee takes the examination on the material that is set for that particular examination, unless the Examination Board decides differently at the request of the examiner and/or the examinee.
3. The duration of each examination is long enough for the examinee to answer the questions, by reasonable standards. The allotted time for written examinations in principle is 2.5 hours. Interim tests administered in the course of the semester, are allotted a maximum time equivalent to two lectures (1.5 hours).
4. The examiner will give the examinees an opportunity, if possible and well in advance of the test of examination, to study sample questions or an example of a comparable test of examination and provide them with answer key.

Article 10 Oral examinations

Examinations previously specified as being other than oral exams cannot be changed into oral examinations by the examiner without consent from the examinee.

Article 11 Invigilation at examinations

1. In principle, it is the examiner primarily responsible for the course/unit of study who invigilates at an exam.
2. In the first instance, invigilators other than the examiner are asked by the examiner or the Examination Board and act on behalf of the examiner concerned or of the Examination Board. Student assistants are allowed to invigilate only in the presence of and under the supervision of a member of the scientific staff, being the lecturer responsible. If for urgent reasons the lecturer in question is detained, he or she is to see to it that one (or more) authorized invigilator(s) is/are present at the examination.
3. If there are 50 participants or more, at least two invigilators must be present. If there are 100 participants or more, the number of invigilators must be at least three.

Article 12 Order during examinations

1. Examinees are not allowed to leave the room until half an hour after the start of the examination.
2. If, due to delays beyond their control, examinees enter the room after the start of the examination, they can only be handed the questions or assignments if none of the other examinees have already handed in their papers and left the room(s). Delayed examinees have no right to hand in their work any later than the scheduled time fixed for the end of the examination.
3. Examinees are obliged to identify themselves with their university card, their passport or driver's license, if asked to do so by or on behalf of the Examination Board. Examinees that cannot or will not comply with requests to that effect will be told that there will be no assessment of their examination until on behalf of the Examination Board their identity has been satisfactorily established.
4. At written exams, examinees have to sign the attendance list. Examinees are to take the numbered seat assigned to them by the Central Student Administration, and indicated on the notification (card) they received. Examinees who are not present on the list of names supplied by the Central Student Administration of those that have registered for the exam, and who can not produce a notification (card) either, are excluded from participation in the exam in question.

5. During a written examination, examinees are not allowed to have within their reach any books, readers, notes and the like, except for writing materials and any materials (including scrap paper) handed to them on the spot, unless it has been decided otherwise on behalf of the Examination Board or the examiner.
6. During the examination, examinees are only allowed to use their own capacities and the literature and the equipment allowed by the Examination Board or the examiner. It is forbidden to engage in activities that are not in accordance with this, such as cheating, copying things from fellow-students, supplying information to fellow-students or inviting them to do so. This provision also applies to the writing of individual papers and take-home examinations (plagiarism and fraud in conducting research).
7. With due regard for the provisions in the previous subsection and provided the nature of the subject of the thesis allows it, which is to be determined by the examiner, the research for a **Research Master's** thesis can also be prepared and conducted by two students working together. The point of departure is that both students write their own thesis and that in accordance with the rules for reference to sources each of them refers to the other's thesis. The two theses are assessed separately.
For the joint parts of the research process and/or the final result in the form of thesis texts, both students are equally responsible. In consultation with the examiner, the division of tasks between the students is made explicit and a justification is given in both theses specifying which of the two students is responsible for which (part of the) research questions and which elements. The preface explicitly indicates which elements are the joint responsibility of both students and which elements they are responsible for separately. The elements prepared and carried out by the students separately must be recognizable as such as separate sections or chapters.
8. Examinees are obliged to follow the instructions of the Examination Board or of the examiner published prior to the examination, as well as any instructions given during or immediately after the examination. Invigilators are authorized to give instructions and carry out checks to ensure proper order during the exams. Invigilators are authorized to ask examinees for any form of identification mentioned in subsection 3.

Article 13 Fraud

1. Any kind of acting or failing to act on the part of examinees, resulting in making proper assessment of their knowledge, insight and skills partly or totally impossible is considered fraud.
2. In any case, the following are considered instances of fraud:
 - a. Having within reach during an examination written material, electronic equipment or any other device with similar qualities or functions the consultation or use of which is not explicitly allowed during the examination.

- b. Copying things from fellow examinees during an examination, or in any way exchanging information with them or others, inside or outside the examination room.
 - c. Posing as another person during an examination or having oneself represented by another person during an examination.
 - d. Switching the distributed question and/or answer forms, or sharing them with others.
 - e. Getting possession prior to the examination of the questions or assignments, by oneself or together with one or more fellow-examinees, of the exam in question.
 - f. Making changes in the examination after it has been handed in.
 - g. Taking from or paraphrasing data, texts, argumentations or thoughts from others in a thesis or other project without proper reference to the sources.
 - h. Making up, manipulating or misrepresenting research data, either or not with the intention of deception, while conducting (thesis) research.
 - i. Allowing or urging fellow students or fellow-examinees to engage in fraudulent behavior.
 - j. Copying or paraphrasing one's own existing work, in whole or in part, already done for another course, without the permission of the examiner.
3. With an eye to checking for possible forms of fraud, the examiner can oblige the examinee to turn in a written project or a **Research Master's** thesis or any other kind of written assignment electronically as well as hard copy.

Article 14 Procedure and sanctions in case of fraud

1. When fraud is established by the examiner or invigilator, the examinee is informed about this immediately, and the examiner or invigilator indicates this on the work to be submitted by the examinee. The examiner or invigilator is authorized to take in as evidence any of the materials or equipment used to commit fraud, insofar as and for however long as is necessary for proper verification.
2. As soon as possible after the examination is finished, the examiner reports to the Examination Board on the established or suspected fraud using the special fraud report form intended for the purpose. A copy of this form is sent to the examinee.
3. The chairperson of the Examination Board offers the examinee the opportunity to react to the fraud report. The examinee can choose to do this orally or in writing.

4. Depending on the seriousness of the fraud committed and in compliance with the principles of equality before the law and proportionality, the Examination Board will impose one or more of the following measures:
 - a. In all cases, the examination in question will be declared invalid;
 - b. If the fraud concerns the writing of a final thesis, a new thesis will have to be written ^[2];
 - c. Exclusion of the examinee from one or more (final) examinations of the university for a period of at least three months and for a maximum of one year;
 - d. Proposing to the Executive Board the definitive termination of the enrolment in the program of the person concerned.
5. In determining the measure as referred to in subsection 4, the Examination Board can take into account any fraud previously committed by the examinee.
6. The Examination Board immediately informs the examinee of its decision by written notification with reference to the possibility of appeal to the Board of Appeals for Examinations ('College van Beroep voor de Examens', CBE), within 6 weeks after the announcement of the decision.

Article 15 Assessment of examinations and components of final examinations

1. Assessment grades are expressed in whole numbers or halves (0 – 0.5 – 1 – 9 – 9.5 - 10), 10 being the highest. For some components, a testimonial can be given instead of a grade.
2. The grade 5.5 is not a possible final grade. It is rounded up to a 6. This will only be done however, if the true grade scored is at least a full 5.5 when not rounded off. If a course/component contains subcomponents, then, in accordance with Article 15, subsection 1, the final assessment grade is determined as the mathematical average of the results scored on the subcomponents, the resulting grade being rounded off as follows:
 - if the resulting grade $\geq 4,75$ and < 5.5 , then the final assessment grade is rounded down to 5.0;
 - if the resulting grade ≥ 5.5 and < 6.25 , then the final assessment grade is rounded up to 6.0;
 - in all other cases: < 0.25 is rounded down, ≥ 0.25 to < 0.75 are rounded up/down to 0.5, ≥ 0.75 is rounded up.

[2] This measure may be interpreted as having been indicated under 'a', but where these are concerned, the concept of examination not only includes the writing of a thesis, but also its defence. Thus, the writing of a thesis is not equivalent to an 'examination'. Hence the inclusion of this specific measure.

3. If passing a subcomponent is a (course) requirement, the result scored on that subcomponent is calculated as an assessment grade (see subsection 1).
If a subcomponent does not necessarily have to be passed in order to pass the course/ the component as a whole, the result scored on the subcomponent is not rounded off.
4. In assessment, the grades given have the following meaning:
 - 10 Excellent / Flawless
 - 9 Outstanding
 - 8 Good
 - 7 Satisfactory / Fair
 - 6 Sufficient / Pass
 - 5 Insufficient / Fail
 - 4 Quite insufficient
 - 3 Poor
 - 2 Very poor
 - 1 Extremely poor
5. Assessment is transparent and takes place in such a way that examinees can check how the result of their examination was established.
6. The Examination Board can decide that, on conditions to be set by the board itself, not every separate exam will have to be passed in order for the board to decide that the final examination has been passed.

Article 16 Evaluative Meeting

1. During a period of 20 working days, starting on the day of publication of the results of a examination that was not conducted orally, examinees can ask the examiner in question for an evaluative meeting (post-mortem). This meeting takes place at a place and time to be determined by the examiner.
2. If the Examination Board initiates a collective conference (or if such a conference is organized on behalf of the Board), examinees can only file a request as referred to in subsection 1 if they have been present at this collective conference, and motivate their request, or if due to circumstances beyond their control they have not been able to attend this collective conference.
3. The provisions in subsection 2 apply equally if the Examination Board or the examiner offer the examinees the opportunity to compare their answers to the model answers.
4. The Examination Board or the examiner can allow deviations from the rules defined in subsections 2 and 3.

Article 17 Determining the results of a final examination

1. Examinees will have passed the final examination of the program if all the grades scored on the components of the final examination are at least 6.0 and all the requirements have been met.
2. As of 1 September 2015 the following obtains with regard to resits: If students have taken an exam and (a) subsequent resit(s) of that exam, the highest grade scored counts. Once students have passed the exam of a course/component, whether this be their first attempt or a resit, they are allowed no more than one resit after that (to improve their grade).
3. For the **Research Master's** thesis, the final grade is the round mathematical average of the judgment of the examiner appointed by Examination Board (first reader) and that of the second examiner (second reader). The final grade is rounded off as specified in article 15, subsections 2 and 3.
4. After all the components of the final exam have been completed, the Examination Board determines the result of the final examination. The Examination Board is obliged to check whether a 'judicium' as specified in article 19 can be awarded.

Article 18 The certificate and the list of grades

1. To certify that the final examination has been completed successfully, the Examination Board awards a certificate. The certificate is signed by the thesis supervisor and by the examiner/examiners.
2. When the certificate is officially presented to the examinee, he or she will also receive a separate list of grades.

Article 19 Judicium

1. If in the course of their final examination examinees have shown outstanding competence, a 'judicium' is awarded.
2.
 - a. **Research Master's' students' performance is excellent ('cum laude' ('with honors')) when they have scored an average mark of at least 8.0 on all components of the final examination, with no grades being lower than 7.0, and a grade of at least 8.0 on their Research Master's thesis.**
 - b. **Research Master's' students' performance is 'met genoegen' ('with distinction') when they have scored an average mark of at least 7.5 on all parts of the final examination, and a grade of at least 7.5 on their Research Master's thesis.**

- c. In determining the average score, the study load of each component is taken into consideration.
 - d. In determining the judicium, any exemptions awarded by the Examination Board are not taken into consideration.
 - e. No judicium is awarded if a student has been awarded exemptions to a value of 50% or more of the total number of ECTS-credits of the Research Master's program (in principle 61 ECTS-credits or more).
3. In exceptional cases the Examination Board may grant a judicium for average marks and/or grades that differ from the average marks and/or grades referred to in the previous subsections.

Article 20 The Right to Appeal

1. Students can lodge an appeal with the Examination Board when they object to the way they were treated or assessed during an oral examination, or to the assessment of a written examination or paper or, finally, to the treatment or the assessment during a final examination. The Examination Board will answer the person who has filed the complaint within 6 weeks after the objection has been lodged. If in the eyes of the objecting student the answer does not provide a satisfactory solution, the student can appeal to the Board of Appeals for Examinations (CBE) within 6 weeks after the date of decision by the Examination Board. The appeal has to be motivated and submitted in writing.
2. Before appealing to the Board of Appeals for Examinations (CBE), as referred to in subsection 1, students have to communicate their objection to the person who administered/ assessed the examination/paper.
3. Lecturers must keep copies of examinations until two years after the date on which the result of the examination was determined. Thereafter, the examination documents should be destroyed.
Theses or other final projects that were passed by the examinee with a sufficient grade should be preserved by the university for at least seven years.
4. If a student lodges a request or an appeal with the Examination Board that involves an examiner who is a member of the Examination Board, the examiner in question does not take part in dealing with the request or appeal.

Article 21 Changes in these Rules and Guidelines

There will be no changes that apply to the current academic year, unless the rights and interests of examinees or students who have taken their exams are comprised.

Article 22 Unforeseen circumstances

1. In exceptional individual cases in which applying the Rules and Regulations would lead to situations of extreme unfairness, the Examination Board has the power to make an exception in favor of the student.
2. In cases not provided for by the Rules and Regulations, the Examination Board will decide.

Article 23 Date of entry into effect

These Rules and Guidelines shall enter into effect on September 1, 2019.

Adopted by the Examination Board on **May 30, 2019.**