

Rules and Guidelines
Research Master's Programs
Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences
2022-2023

Rules and Guidelines as referred to in Article 7.12b, 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. One member is a so-called 'external member' who is not involved in the educational activities, but who is an assessment specialist. The chairperson is designated from the body of professors/senior lecturers. 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 lecturer¹ are also examiner in the sense intended by article 7.12c of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW). The Examination Board may appoint temporary examiners who do not have a teaching appointment at Tilburg University;
- 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;
- 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;
- Component: a unit of study of the program within the meaning of the law, article 7.3;
- 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 take the education 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 7.12b of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW);

¹ Tenured and non-tenured Lecturer/Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Full Professor; PhD student under supervision of Lecturer/Assistant Professor/Associate Professor/Full Professor.

- determining the regulations and directions within the framework of the Course and Assessment Regulations, as referred to in article 7.12b of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), to assess and determine the results of exams and final exams;
- administering final exams;
- safeguarding the quality of the organization and procedures concerning examinations and the final examination;
- processing requests for admission to the programs and requests for free programs;
- processing 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 Way of submission and decision period of requests to the Examination Board

1. Students may submit a request or question to the Examination Board via the appropriate form on the website. In case no form for the request or question is available, students can submit their question or request, accompanied by the student number and the program, to the Examination Board, by e-mail.
2. The Examination Board will decide on a request submitted in accordance with paragraph 1 in principle within ten working days after receipt. This period may be extended once by a maximum of ten working days. In July and August this period may be longer.
3. If a request to the Examination Board provides insufficient data and/or documentation to evaluate the request, the Examination Board may decide not to consider the request further, provided that the requester has had the opportunity to complete the request within a period set by the Examination Board.
4. With regard to a valid request for admission to a (pre-)master's program submitted via *Studielink*, the Examination Board will come to a decision within ten working days, counting from the moment the request is complete.
5. The applicant will be notified of the Examination Board's decision by e-mail.

Article 4 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 5 Dates on which examinations are administered

1. Having consulted the examiners concerned, the Examination Board, determines the dates and times on which the written examinations are to be administered. Once the dates are set, students will be notified. Change of date or time will only take place in case of force majeure. The Planning Department will reschedule the exam in cases of force majeure, if necessary in consultation with the examiner(s).
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) of the academic year concerned.
3. In the case of two or more tests or examinations being scheduled on one day it is the responsibility of the student to notify the Planning Department of this at least 22 working days before the examination date. If possible, the department will take this into account when determining the starting times of tests or examinations. However, no rights can be derived from this.

In the case of scheduling of tests or examinations on the same date and time, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Examination Board. No alternative examination opportunity will be offered for the simultaneous scheduling of tests or examinations to be taken by a student because of the simultaneous enrolment in two programs, or two courses of different years. Similarly, no alternative examination opportunity shall be offered for simultaneous scheduling of tests or examinations to be taken by a student in courses that are part of a minor.

4. Oral examinations are scheduled at a time and place determined by the examiner in question, after consultation with the examinee.
5. Whenever possible, the provisions in subsection 4 are likewise applicable to examinations that are neither written nor oral exams.

Article 6 Granting of special requests regarding examination facilities due to a disability

1. Students with functional limitations can file a request for special examination facilities through the form on the website. Students are obliged to supply evidence of their specific limitations.
2. Requests and supporting documents submitted are evaluated by the Dean of Students.
3. The Dean of Students 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 Dean of Students within the term specified, to reconsider the intended decision.

5. Having received a request for reconsideration, the Dean of Students will take an official decision in consultation with the Examination Board within four 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 Dean of Students 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 Examination Appeals Board within six weeks.

Article 7 Registration for examinations

1. Registration for written examinations and midterms takes place through Osiris Student. This registration takes place in accordance with the regulations drawn up by the Student Desk.
2. Participation in examinations is only open to the student who has registered in time and in the prescribed manner.
3. Registration for oral examinations takes place in consultation with the examiner in question.
4. When students have passed all the mandatory courses and are nearing the completion of the thesis, they can apply for their degree certificate online. It is possible to apply for the ceremony up until 3 weeks before the date of the ceremony.

Article 8 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 submitted with the secretary's office of the Examination Board in accordance with the appropriate form.
2. The Examination Board will take a motivated decision after consulting with the lecturer in question, after ten working days of receiving the request (or, if this period falls partly or entirely within the academic recess period, after ten days after the recess has ended). The applicant will receive a written notification of the decision.

Article 9 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 10 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 topics and level of the materials to be studied is announced ten days before the date of the examination 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 11 Oral examinations

An examiner can only decide to convert a previously announced method of examination into an oral examination after approval of the Examination Board.

Article 12 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, they are 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 13 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. The invigilator will make an official report.
4. At written exams, examinees must sign the attendance list. Examinees are to take the numbered seat assigned to them by the Student Administration and indicated on the notification they received. In principle, the Examination Board will decide to invalidate the test or examination of an examinee who is not listed on the attendance list provided by the Student Administration, or when the examinee has not signed the attendance list.
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 by 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 (see Article 14).
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 a thesis, 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.
9. In case of irregularities, the Examination Board is authorized to declare a midterm or examination or part thereof invalid for a student, for a part of the students or for all the students if a correct assessment of the knowledge, insight and/or skills of the examinee on that midterm or examination or part thereof is not reasonably possible or if the quality of the midterm or examination or part thereof cannot be guaranteed. In this context, irregularities may include fraud; irregularities caused by teachers/examiners, students or

third parties; and a technical or non-technical failure or calamity. The foregoing applies both before and after publication of the grade(s) in Osiris.

Article 14 Fraud

1. Any kind of acting or failing to act on the part of examinees, resulting in making proper assessment of their or a fellow examinee's 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. For the purpose of 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.
4. If fraud or plagiarism is found in a group assignment, it will be attributed equally to each of the group members if they could have known that fraud or plagiarism was occurring.

Article 15 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 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. giving the student a warning;
 - b. declaring the examination in question invalid;
 - c. determining that a new thesis must be written if the fraud concerns the writing of a final thesis;²
 - d. precluding graduation with a *judicium* (*summa cum laude*, *cum laude*, or with honors)
 - e. excluding the examinee from the course to which the examination taken belongs;
 - f. excluding 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;
 - g. proposing to the Executive Board the definitive termination of the enrolment in the program of the person concerned.
5. All measures listed in paragraph 4 will be recorded in the student's personal file.
6. In determining the measure as referred to in subsection 4, the Examination Board can take into account any fraud previously committed by the examinee.
7. The Examination Board promptly informs the examinee of its decision by written notification with reference to the possibility of appeal to the Examination Appeals Board (College van Beroep voor de Examens, CBE), within 6 weeks after the announcement of the decision.

² This measure may be interpreted as having been indicated under 'a', but where theses 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.

Article 16 Assessment of examinations and components of final examinations

1. Assessment grades are expressed in whole numbers or halves (1 – 1,5 9 – 9.5 - 10), 1 being the lowest and 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.
3. If a course/component contains subcomponents, then, in accordance with 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.
4. 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.
5. 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
6. Assessment is transparent and takes place in such a way that examinees can check how the result of their examination was established.
7. 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 17 Inspection

1. During a period of 30 working days, starting on the day of publication of the results of an examination that was not conducted orally, examinees can ask the examiner in question for an inspection opportunity. This meeting takes place at a place and time to be determined by the examiner but should always take place before the resit.
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 18 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 September 1, 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 based on the assessment of the examiner appointed by the Examination Board (first reader) and that of the second examiner (second reader). The final grade is rounded off as specified in article 16, 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 20 can be awarded.

Article 19 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 examinees, they will also receive a separate list of grades, and the Diploma Supplement (IDS).

Article 20 Judicium

1. If examinees have shown outstanding competence, a 'judicium' is awarded.
 - a. Research Master's' students' performance is *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 judgement 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).
2. In exceptional cases the Examination Board may grant a judgement for average marks and/or grades that differ from the average marks and/or grades referred to in the previous subsections.

Article 21 Period of retaining examinations and theses

1. 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.
2. 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.

Article 22 The Right to Appeal

1. Appeals against decisions of the Examination Board may be lodged with the Examination Appeals Board, as referred to in Article 7.61 of the Law, during six weeks after they have been announced to the student in writing (by e-mail).
2. Appeals against decisions of the examiner (i.e. decisions concerning examination and test results) may be lodged with the Examination Appeals Board, as referred to in Article 7.61 of the Law, during six weeks after they have been published via Osiris Student.
3. Before appealing to the Examination Appeals Board (CBE), as referred to in subsection 1, students are advised to communicate their objection to the person who administered/assessed the examination/paper.
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 23 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 compromised.

Article 24 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 25 Date of entry into effect

These Rules and Guidelines will enter into effect on September 1, 2022.
Adopted by the Examination Board on August 31, 2022.