



# BA Thesis Regulations

## English Language and Culture

Last updated: October 2019

Students earn 12 ECTS upon successfully completing their BA thesis.

### 1. PRE-THESIS REQUIREMENTS

120 ECTS of the Bachelor programme must be completed before students begin writing their theses. The 120 ECTS to be completed prior to beginning the thesis should include all of the required courses for the BA degree in English Language and Culture. Students following the English Language and Culture programme will receive general guidance in the thesis writing process by following a course specifically designed for that purpose, entitled “English Research Seminar”. If students fail the Research Seminar, they may not complete their BA thesis until the following academic year.

### 2. TOPIC

**Students are strongly advised to begin thinking about a possible thesis topic *before beginning their final year of study*.** Students are free to choose their own topic within the research areas that fall under English linguistics and literature, as long as it fits within the expertise of the current staff. They can discuss possible topics with staff members during their office hours or by appointment. A list of current BA thesis supervisors and their research areas will be available to students on Canvas.

### 3. THESIS PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION

Before beginning the process of thesis writing, students must submit a thesis proposal outlining their topic. The final deadline for submitting the thesis proposal for a thesis to be completed before the end of the academic year (with the deadline for the completed thesis on 5 June 2020), is **6 January 2020 at 17:00**.

The proposal must be uploaded via the Canvas page for the BA thesis. **Students handing in their proposals at a later date forfeit their opportunity to graduate by the end of the academic year (31 August 2020) and will graduate at least one semester later.**

### 4. THESIS PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

The proposal should demonstrate that the student has a roughly formulated central idea and that the project is feasible within the scope of the BA thesis. All pages should be numbered

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and the student's name must appear at the top of each page. The thesis proposal must include the following information:

- The student's name, student number and email address.
- A provisional thesis title.
- A clear indication of whether the proposed thesis topic falls under English literature or linguistics.
- A research proposal providing:
  - a. a description of the research topic, the approach to be taken, and the scope of the project (approx. 300 words);
  - b. a preliminary bibliography;
  - c. the student's work plan, including a brief timetable (i.e. what will be done when).
- The student's preferred supervisor(optional).
- The number of ECs already obtained, and a list of all courses still to be completed.

The Thesis Committee of English Linguistics or Literature will review the proposal and decide whether to accept or reject it. The English Department secretary will inform the student via email of the Thesis Committee's decision, as well as the name of his/her supervisor, by 20 January 2020. There are several options at this point:

- In case of provisional acceptance, the student will be asked to rewrite the proposal, providing further information about their topic and argument.
- In case of rejection, the student will be told to rewrite the proposal with a different topic.
- In cases where a proposal falls outside the expertise of the current staff, the student may be asked to rewrite or reframe their proposal.
- If the proposal is accepted, the student must contact his/her thesis supervisor as soon as possible to arrange supervision and further clarify the thesis topic.

## **5. SUPERVISION**

Supervision does not exceed one semester. Dependent upon the agreements between supervisor and student, supervision will include a maximum of four sessions with the supervisor (including the first meeting to discuss the topic) with feedback on what has been written at each stage (this depends on the student's timely submission of a piece of writing). Students are strongly advised to avail themselves of these four sessions with their supervisor to avoid unpleasant surprises upon submitting the thesis. The supervision process may consist of (a combination of) group supervision, individual supervision and peer review by fellow students.

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Students have the right to one read-through of their draft thesis prior to submission. Supervisors will not read multiple drafts of the entire thesis prior to final submission.

An extension of the supervisory period is possible in cases of exceptional circumstances. Any such extension is subject to approval of the supervisor in consultation with the Examinations Board representatives (Rose van der Zwaard or Kristine Johanson).

**Suggested timetable for supervision:**

Meeting	Timing	Goal
1 <sup>st</sup> appointment	Late January/ early February	First meeting with supervisor; discussion of topic, approach and sources; plan for further supervision
2 <sup>nd</sup> appointment	March/April	Discussion of progress to date plus first writing produced
3 <sup>rd</sup> appointment	April/May	Discussion of progress to date and new writing produced
4 <sup>th</sup> appointment	May	Discussion of full draft of thesis and what remains to be done before submitting

**6. THE RESEARCH SEMINAR**

In block 1 of semester 2, students follow the Research Seminar, which provides general information (as opposed to one-on-one supervision) about the completion of a research project at BA level. The seminar groups are led by an instructor from either Literature or Linguistics; students should register for a group that corresponds to their chosen thesis topic. During the Research Seminar, students will complete assignments that help them work towards completing the thesis. Please read the information on the Research Seminar in the Studiegids for further details.

**7. THESIS REQUIREMENTS**

The BA thesis is an individual piece of research on a topic within the fields of English linguistics or literature. The thesis must be 8,000 - 10,000 words long (excluding title page, table of contents, works cited, and appendices, if any). This amounts to approximately 25-30 pages, double-spaced, with ca. 330 words per page. The layout and referencing should conform to MLA guidelines for Literature, and to APA guidelines for Linguistics.

The thesis must be written in appropriate academic English. The required level of written English is C1 (CEFR). The standard for this is as follows:

- Report and Essays: Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.
- Grammatical Accuracy: Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare.

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- Vocabulary control: Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire. Good command of idiomatic expressions.
- Orthographic Control: Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips.

The submitted thesis will contain:

- a short abstract (max. 300 words),
- an acknowledgement that the student has read the UvA guidelines on Plagiarism indicating that the thesis is the student's own work,
- a table of contents,
- a title page with the following information:
  - Thesis title
  - The student's name and student number
  - The name of the supervisor
  - The type of thesis: BA thesis, i.e. English Language and Culture, University of Amsterdam
  - The date of submission
  - The word count

## 8. DEADLINE

The final deadline for submitting the finished thesis is **5 June 2020 at 18:00** for students wishing to graduate before the end of the academic year (August 31, 2019). If a student submits their thesis after 5 June, they will have to re-enrol the following semester and pay fees. That is, if you submit your thesis on 6 June, it will not be graded until after 1 September and you will have to enroll for September in order for you to receive your grade. You can de-register after you submit your thesis and your grade is awarded.

**No supervision will be provided in the summer period, i.e. between 5 June and 31 August.**

## 9. SUBMISSION

Two printed copies of the finished thesis must be handed in to the supervisor's pigeon hole (these can be found outside PCH 5.54). In addition, an electronic version should be submitted via Turnitin on the Canvas page for the BA Thesis to check the thesis for plagiarism. The supervisor will pass one of the hard copies on to the second reader.

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In order to graduate by 31 August, students must complete the online application for their degree certificate by 1 July (see <https://student.uva.nl/humanities/shared/studentensites/fgw/fgw-gedeelde-content/en/az/graduation/graduation.html>).

Before receiving their diploma, students must submit a digital copy of their thesis to the UvA thesis database using the online thesis submission form (see <https://student.uva.nl/humanities/shared/studentensites/fgw/fgw-gedeelde-content/en/az/graduation/thesis-submission/thesis-submission.html>)

### **10. FAILS AND RESIT POLICY**

If a student receives a failing grade after having submitted their BA Thesis, they will be given the opportunity to rewrite. Students may request one further meeting with their supervisor to discuss feedback and reasons for failure, but they do not have the right to an extra semester of supervision. The supervisor will determine the new thesis deadline (note again that no supervision will be provided in the summer period; see point 5).

Should the student fail again upon resubmission, there is no second opportunity to rewrite. In such cases, the student must submit a thesis proposal **on a new topic** to the secretary's office of the English Department. Depending on the topic, they will be assigned to a new supervisor.

### **11. ASSESSMENT**

After the assessment period, the student will be informed of his or her grade and receive feedback via the assessment form. The feedback and grade represent the shared assessment of the supervisor and second reader.

### **12. PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS**

If students have complaints about the supervision process or the final grade, they must first try to resolve them with their supervisor. If this is unsuccessful, they may talk to a neutral third party, such as a study adviser (see <https://student.uva.nl/humanities/shared/studentensites/uva-studentensite/en/az/complaints-objections-and-appeals/complaints-objections-and-appeals.html>).



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**13. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

The BA Thesis will be assessed using the following assessment form:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>1. Content</b> - Originality and clarity of topic - Quality, depth and scope of arguments and analysis - Engagement with field	insufficient   weak   sufficient   good   excellent
<b>2. Organization and Structure</b> - Choice of research method - Coherent structure and organization of arguments - Logical conclusion	insufficient   weak   sufficient   good   excellent
<b>3. Use of language</b> - Few grammatical and lexical errors - Appropriate academic register - Good readability and flow	insufficient   weak   sufficient   good   excellent
<b>4. Use of sources</b> - Selection of primary and secondary sources/data - Intelligent engagement with sources - Use of quotes and references	insufficient   weak   sufficient   good   excellent
<b>5. Progression</b> - Ability to learn from supervisor's comments - Ability to work independently	insufficient   weak   sufficient   good   excellent
<b>6. Formal Qualities</b> - Consistent and readable layout - Correct referencing - Use of tables, charts, etc. - Sufficient word count	insufficient   sufficient
<b>Other comments:</b>	

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#### 14. GRADING RUBRIC

Students can get an impression of what is required to achieve a certain grade using the rubric below:

Grade	Description
10	The thesis has the highest score possible on all criteria (excellent). The thesis is exceptionally ambitious, creative and original for BA-level research. The final product demonstrates a high degree of input from the student rather than the supervisor. The student responded well to feedback.
9	The thesis scores very well on all criteria (good/excellent). The work is ambitious, original, clearly written and structured, and virtually error-free. The final product demonstrates a high degree of input from the student rather than the supervisor. The student responded well to feedback.
8	The thesis meets the minimum level on all criteria (sufficient) but scores higher on most of them (good/excellent). The work is original and creative, and the final product demonstrates a high degree of input from the student rather than the supervisor. The student responded well to feedback.
7	The thesis meets the minimum level on all criteria (sufficient) and has scored higher in several cases (good). The work shows some originality, creativity and complexity. The student responded well to feedback, and the final product shows more input from the student than the supervisor.
6	The thesis meets at least the minimum level on all criteria (weak/sufficient). The work is not particularly original, creative or complex. The submitted work shows a high degree of input from the supervisor rather than the student.
Failing	The thesis does not meet the minimum level on one or more criteria (insufficient). It suffers from one or more of the following serious defects: poor structure, simplistic or flawed in terms of content, lacking a clear line of argument, badly researched, difficult to read due to serious language problems.