



Universiteit Leiden

# Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

## Master's Programme: Asian Studies (120 EC)

These Course and Examination Regulations (henceforth OER) have been drawn up in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act [*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*; WHW] (henceforth the Act) and the following Leiden University regulations:

- the Leiden Register of Study Programmes Framework Document;
- the Academic Calendar;
- the Regulations for Student Registration, Tuition Fees and Examination Fees;
- the Regulations for Admission to Master's Programmes;
- the Online Proctoring Protocol Leiden University.

The model OER are laid down in Dutch and then translated into English. In the event that there are differences between the two versions, the Dutch version will prevail.

Pursuant to Article 7.14 of the Act, the Faculty Board regularly evaluates the Course and Examination Regulations and considers, for the purpose of monitoring and adjusting the study load, how much time it takes students to comply. In accordance with Article 9.18 of the Act, the departmental committee is assigned the task of annually assessing the implementation of the OER.

These Course and Examination Regulations consist of two sections:

- a faculty section that is the same for all master's programmes and
- a section that contains information that is specific to a particular programme, what is known as the programme-specific section of the Course and Examination Regulations.

In the text below the relevant articles will refer to this programme-specific section. Other articles are included in the faculty section.

## Contents

1. General Provisions
2. Description of the Programme
3. Curriculum
4. Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education
5. Admission to the Programme
6. Student Counselling and Study Advice
7. Evaluation of the programme
8. Final Provisions

## Appendices

Faculty Section:

Appendix A - Master's Thesis Regulations

Appendix B - General Academic Skills

Appendix C – Enrolment protocol

Programme-specific section:

Appendix D – Prospectus (see <https://studiegids.leidenuniv.nl>)

## **Chapter 2 Description of the Programme**

### **Article 2.1 Objectives of the Programme**

The programme has the following objectives:

1. to enable students to acquire academic knowledge, understanding and skills, and train them in the use of scientific methods in the field of Asian Studies;
2. to enable students to develop the following academic and professional skills:
  - independent academic reasoning and conduct,
  - the ability to analyse complex problems,
  - the ability to clearly report academic results, both in writing and orally;
3. to prepare students for an academic career and further education;
4. to prepare students for a career outside academia.

### **Article 2.2 Specialisations**

The programme has the following specialisations:

- Chinese Studies
- Japanese Studies
- Korean Studies

### **Article 2.3 Learning outcomes**

Graduates of the programme have attained the following learning outcomes, listed according to the Dublin descriptors:

1. *Knowledge and understanding*
  - a. foundational knowledge of the history and development of Asian (Chinese/Japanese/Korean) Studies;
  - b. knowledge of research in social sciences and humanities disciplines that is grounded in Asian (Chinese/Japanese/Korean) Studies;
  - c. understanding of the concepts, terminology and approaches relevant to the regional and disciplinary specialisation of the student, and their application in original research;
  - d. understanding of aspects and/or countries in East Asia in the context of East Asia as a whole.
2. *Applying knowledge and understanding*
  - a. knowledge of the main humanities and social science research methods and techniques and their application in Asian (Chinese/Japanese/Korean) Studies;
  - b. skills in locating, retrieving, assessing and using sources and specialist secondary literature for the purposes of original research;

- c. the ability to independently design, conduct and complete original research on an aspect of Asian (Chinese/Japanese/Korean) Studies.

### 3. *Judgement*

- a. the ability to form a judgment on the basis of incomplete or limited information, whilst also taking into account the social and ethical responsibilities that come with the application of knowledge and assessments.

### 4. *Communication*

- a. the ability to interpret and comment on aspects and/or countries of East Asia for specialist and non-specialist audiences, and to act as cultural intermediary;
- b. the ability to report, debate and discuss in a professional setting, both orally and in writing.

### 5. *Modern language*

- a. excellent command of Chinese, Japanese or Korean that enables the alumnus to use the language for academic and professional purposes;

### 6. *Classical language*

In addition, the following achievement levels apply for all specialisations, if relevant for students specialising in the pre-modern period:

- a. excellent command of pre-modern Chinese, classical Japanese or classical Korean;
- b. the ability to locate, assess and use original sources in pre-modern Chinese, classical Japanese or classical Korean.

### 7. *Learning skills*

- a. the learning skills required to be able to follow post-master's professional training or a PhD training of largely self-determined or autonomous nature.

## Article 2.5 **Study Load**

The programme has a study load of 120 credits.

## Article 2.8 **Language of instruction**

2.8.1. Subject to the Code of Conduct on the Language of Instruction and Examination<sup>1</sup> the language in which the instruction is given and in which the examinations and final examinations are held is English. Students are expected to have an adequate command of the language of instruction and examination in the programme, in accordance with the requirements stated in Article 5.2.3. As appropriate, the Faculty publishes the OER in English for English-taught programmes.

2.8.2. Contrary to Article 2.8.1, in individual cases the Board of Examiners can permit the student to write the final thesis in another language, in accordance with the Guideline on Language Policy.<sup>2</sup>

## Chapter 3 **Curriculum**

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<sup>1</sup> [Code of Conduct on Language of Instruction](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Guideline on Language Policy](#)

## Article 3.1 **Compulsory components**

3.1.1 The programme includes compulsory components worth a total study load of 120 credits. These compulsory components include the set components from which a student is obliged to choose.

### Article 3.4.1 **Taking part in programme components**

3.4.1.6. Scheduled programme components in the free or bound elective space of the programme may be cancelled if too few students have registered for them. Cancellation in such cases is only possible if:

- there are sufficient alternative courses to choose from, for which students can still register; and
- the Prospectus clearly states:
  - which courses could be cancelled in case of too few registrations; and
  - at how many registrations the course will go ahead; and
  - on what date the student will be informed whether or not the course will go ahead; and
  - that, if a course that was offered in the previous year is unexpectedly cancelled because of too few registrations, two examination opportunities (resits) will still be offered, in accordance with article 4.1.1.

## Chapter 4 **Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education**

### Article 4.2 **Obligatory sequence**

4.2.1 Students may only sit examinations and, if indicated, participate in class of the following components once they have passed the examination of the preceding components specified below:

Component:	Participation in class and examination after passing:
<i>Chinese Studies:</i> Year in China A Year in China B	Advanced Mandarin 1
<i>Japanese Studies:</i> Academic Year in Japan A Academic Year in Japan B Academic Year in Japan C	Advanced Japanese 1 (120EC)
<i>Japanese Studies:</i> Advanced Japanese 2 (120EC)	Advanced Japanese 1 (120EC)
<i>Korean Studies:</i> Study in Korea A Study in Korea B	Advanced Korean

### Article 4.3 **Form of examination**

4.3.6 Not applicable.

## Chapter 5 **Admission to the Programme as of September 2027**

### Article 5.1 **Confirmation of admission**

See the faculty section.

## Article 5.2 **Admission to the programme**

5.2.1 Holders of one of the following degrees may be admitted to the programme (Article 7.30b (1) of the Act):

- a. Not applicable. No direct admission, see Article 5.2.1b.
- b. A bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic Bachelor's degree, including the General Academic Skills listed in Appendix B of the Faculty section of these regulations, and
  - Knowledge of the nature and role of as well as the ability to analyse and report on academic inquiry in the humanities or social sciences; and
  - Prior education must include completed components at the bachelor's level (which may include the thesis) equivalent to at least 30 credits on at least three out of these six disciplines: history, art, culture, politics, society or economy of one or more East Asian countries or regions.

In addition, applicant must also meet the following specific requirements per specialisation:

### ***Specialisation Chinese Studies***

- fundamental knowledge of pre-modern and modern China; and
- knowledge of sinological traditions and understanding of disciplinary-methodological issues.
- sufficient command of Chinese, at level 4 (HSK) or level 3 (TOCFL).

Please note that because an important distinguishing aspect of the programme is advanced language acquisition in Chinese, this specialisation is not suitable for native speakers or for persons with a level 6 (HSK) or equivalent level 6 (TOCFL).

### ***Specialisation Japanese Studies***

- fundamental knowledge of pre-modern and modern Japan; and
- knowledge of japanological traditions and understanding of disciplinary-methodological issues.
- sufficient command of Japanese, at JLPT 2 level, with a maximum of level JLPT 1.

Please note that because an important distinguishing aspect of the programme is advanced language acquisition in Japanese, this specialisation is not suitable for native speakers, and persons with near-native fluency and a BA or MA degree from a Japanese university.

### ***Specialisation Korean Studies***

- fundamental knowledge of pre-modern and modern Korea; and
- knowledge of Koreanist traditions and understanding of disciplinary-methodological issues.
- sufficient command of Korean, at level TOPIK 4.

Please note that because an important distinguishing aspect of the programme is advanced language acquisition in Korean, this specialisation is not suitable for native speakers, and for students with a higher TOPIK level.

- c. Not applicable.

It is not possible to apply to this programme with a degree from a Dutch University of Applied Sciences (hbo).

5.2.2 Any person who fails to meet the degree requirements or prescribed pre-master's requirement referred to in 5.2.1 may submit a request to the Board of Admissions. The Board of Admissions assesses whether the applicant may be granted admission to the programme.

To this end, the Board of Admissions assesses whether the applicant possesses sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills at the same level as a bachelor's degree or related bachelor's degree as referred to in 5.2.1, under (a) and (b) or whether they meet these conditions after additional requirements have been met. The Board of Admissions assesses, where relevant, whether the applicant meets the qualitative selection requirements referred to in 5.2.4.

### Article 5.2.3 **English and Dutch languages**

5.2.3.1 As further clarification of Article 2.8 concerning command of the language of instruction, a student who wishes to be admitted to an English-taught master's programme must have one of the following diplomas, or must meet the criteria of:

- an [International Baccalaureate](#) diploma from a programme taught in English (or an IB diploma with English A);
- a diploma of secondary or higher education completed in Australia, Canada (with the exception of French-taught programmes in Canada), Ireland, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States of America or South-Africa;
- a diploma of an English-taught university degree programme completed at a Dutch research university;
- a diploma of an English-taught higher professional education (hbo) programme of four years at a Dutch university of applied sciences; a Dutch pre-university education (vwo) diploma.

5.2.3.2 If a student who wishes to be admitted does not meet the requirements in 5.2.3.1, the language level can be demonstrated with one of the following tests:

- English IELTS 6.5; where each separate component score must be at least 6.0;
- TOEFL (Internet based) 90, with at least 4.0 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 20 (old 0-30 scale) for each separate component;
- Cambridge English C2 Proficiency, or C1 Advanced with overall score 180, where each separate component score must be at least 169<sup>3</sup>.

At the time when the student applies for the programme, the test must have been taken no more than two calendar years previously.

5.2.3.3 Not applicable.

5.2.3.4 Not applicable.

For more information on language tests and diplomas which are sufficient with regard to the required command of English please see <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/admission-and-application/masters/admission-requirements-language-requirements>.

### Article 5.2.4 **Qualitative admission requirements**

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<sup>3</sup> See also the [English test score equivalency table](#) of Leiden University

5.2.4.1 In addition to the requirements specified in 5.2.1 or 5.2.2 the following qualitative admission requirements apply for the programme pursuant to Article 7.30b (2) of the Act:

- A. Good grades comparable with an average mark of at least 7.00 (Dutch grading system) for the entire bachelor's programme, and
- B. A grade for the bachelor's thesis of a 7.00 or higher (Dutch grading system), and
- C. Demonstrable motivation to study the particular MA programme/specialisation, and
- D. Good academic writing and research skills: the ability to write a well-structured essay/paper on a topic in the specific field of the specialisation in English and demonstrable ability to conduct research.

5.2.4.2 Where article 5.2.4.1 applies, the admission requirements will be implemented as follows:

- A and B: as evidenced by a transcript of records/ grade list (including the grade of the Bachelor's thesis) and diploma of the relevant obtained academic degree;
- C: to be demonstrated by a well-argued and structured motivation letter in which the applicant indicates why they want to follow the MA programme, and shows clear understanding of the content of the study programme, specifically listing two courses of the current study programme (from the Prospectus) and explaining why these appeal to the applicant.  
The statement should be between 700 and 1,500 words.
- D: To be demonstrated by a "Writing Sample". All applicants are required to submit a writing sample (a relevant research paper or Bachelor's Thesis). In case applicants are unable to demonstrate via a writing sample that they meet the requirement sub 5.2.4.1D, they are required to submit a 1,250 word essay as part of the admission process:
  - in this essay they must demonstrate a clear affinity with and specific knowledge of Asian studies in general and specifically in the field of the specialisation for which they apply,
  - specifically, the essay must clearly answer a research question, provide a reasonable and reasonably well-organised argument that demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the topic of the essay.
- A and D: as reflected in two letters of reference, of which at least one by an academic member of staff.  
These letters should:
  - Specify the length and capacity in which the staff member knows the student,
  - Assess the quality of the student's academic performance in relation to their peers,
  - Assess the academic performance of the student with respect to their writing skills and ability to conduct research.

In addition, to assess the admission requirements stated in 5.2.1, 5.2.2, and 5.2.3, the Board of Admissions will use the following documents:

- copies of diploma(s) and transcript(s);
- proof of language proficiency (if applicable, see 5.2.3).

The admission process may include an interview with the Board of Admissions, should this be necessary to clarify whether the applicant has the same level of knowledge, understanding and skills as holders of a degree specified in 5.2.1.b. and meets the qualitative requirements specified in 5.2.4.1.

5.2.4.3 Where article 5.2.4.1 applies, the deadline for the admission requirements is as follows:

1. The admissions assessment takes place once a year in respect of the intake in September.
2. Requests for admission to the specialisation in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies or Korean Studies must be submitted before 1 April. Given the selective nature of the specialisation, this deadline applies to all applicants.

For further information on the admission procedure and required application documents please see <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/admission-and-application/masters>.

### 5.2.5 Maximum capacity

5.2.5.1 The Executive Board has determined a maximum capacity for the specialisations of this programme. The order of admission will be determined by the qualitative admission requirements as referred to in Article 5.2.4. The maximum capacity set for the specialisations of this programme for the academic year 2026-2027 is:

- Chinese Studies: 30 students;
- Japanese Studies: 17 students;
- Korean Studies: 12 students.

The maximum capacity set for the specialisations of this programme for the academic year 2027-2028 is:

- Chinese Studies: 15 students;
- Japanese Studies: 17 students;
- Korean Studies: 12 students.

5.2.5.2 Where article 5.2.5.1 applies, the method of selection on the grounds of the criteria will be as follows:

1. With regard to admission to the programme, the Admissions Board assesses the knowledge and skills of the applicants on the basis of the files they have submitted.
2. If necessary the Board can contact the applicant by mail or telephone at any time during the admission procedure in order to gain further information.
3. The Admissions Board decides on the basis of this assessment
  - a. which applicants meet the entry requirements of the specialisation – if appropriate on the condition that they have been awarded their bachelor's degree in time – and can in principle be admitted;
  - b. which applicants cannot be admitted because they do not meet the requirements.
4. The Board ranks the suitability of the applicants in category **a** to the specialisation of the MA programme on the basis of the files they have submitted, having regard to the qualitative admission requirements as specified in article 5.2.4. and, if the Board has requested this, the further information provided by the applicant.

5.2.5.3 Where article 5.2.5.1 applies, the deadlines for selection are as follows:

1. Applicants who are placed in category **b**, as referred to in article 5.2.5.2, point 4, receive a negative admissions decision by 1 May at the latest.
2. On the basis of the ranking as referred to article 5.2.5.2 point 4, the Board issues a recommendation on 15 May at the latest to the Faculty Board to admit the top ranking applicants to the respective specialisations of the programme, up to the numbers specified in article 5.2.5.1. These applicants receive a positive admissions decision on 31 May at the latest.
3. The remaining applicants in category **a** are informed that they can in principle be admitted to the programme but that they have been placed on the waiting list and will not receive an admissions decision pending places becoming free. They are informed here of their position on the waiting list.

5.2.5.4 Where article 5.2.5.1 applies, the weighting of the criteria will be as follows:

Applicants are ranked in four groups A, B, and C:

A: An excellent candidate who meets all the admissions requirements: 1) overall grades 7.5 and above (Dutch grading system); 2) a grade for the bachelor's thesis of a 7.5 or higher (Dutch grading system); 3) an exemplary, original letter of motivation which demonstrates excellent motivation, insight of and suitability for the programme; 4) an excellent writing sample in accordance with academic standards of the field of the specialisation.

B: A very good candidate who meets all the admissions requirements: 1) overall grades 7.0-7.4 (Dutch grading system); 2) a grade for the bachelor's thesis of a 7.0-7.4 (Dutch grading system); 3) a good letter of motivation which demonstrates clear motivation, insight of and suitability for the program, 4) a good writing sample which shows familiarity with the field of the specialisation.

C: A candidate who does not meet all of the qualitative admission requirements: 1) an academic record below 7.0 (Dutch grading system); 2) a grade for the bachelor's thesis of a 6.9 or lower (Dutch grading system) and 3) a below standard letter of motivation and writing sample.

### Article 5.3 **Deficiencies**

See the faculty section.

### Article 5.4 **Pre-Master programmes and educational modules**

Not applicable.

## **Chapter 7 Evaluation of the Programme**

### Article 7.1 **Evaluation of the programme**

The programme is evaluated as follows:

- course evaluations
- programme evaluation

The Programme Committee advises the Programme Board based on the outcomes of the evaluation.

## Appendix F - Transitional provisions

### 1. Overview of programme changes

- The core curriculum course *Introduction to Asian Studies* will be discontinued in 2026-2027 and will be replaced by *Asian studies: Perspectives and Debates*.
- Starting in 2026-2027, students following the MA 120 China studies and MA 120 Korea will be required to complete thesis tutorials 1 and 2 during their stay abroad.
- Starting in 2026-2027, the course *Advanced Japanese 3* is no longer required.

### 2. Duration of transitional provisions.

- The transitional provisions will apply for one additional year beyond the regular length of the program.

### 3. Content of the transitional provisions.

- Students who joined the programme before September 2026, and who have not yet successfully completed the core course *Introduction to Asian Studies* can follow *Asian studies: Perspectives and Debates* instead.
- Students who started the program in 2025-2026 or earlier are not required to follow the thesis tutorials in Chinese and Korean studies in 2026-2027, but may choose to follow them as an option.
- Students who started the program in 2025-2026 can replace *Advanced Japanese* by earning an additional 5 EC during their stay in Japan. The main purpose of the stay in Japan is the development of Japanese language proficiency.

### 4. Situation after the end of the transitional provisions.

- All students follow the core curriculum *Asian studies: Perspectives and Debates*.
- Starting in 2027-2028, all Chinese studies and Korean studies students must complete the thesis tutorials in Chinese and Korean studies or apply for an exemption by submitting a request to the Board of Examiners.
- Starting in 2027-2028, all MA 120 Japanese studies students will earn 50EC of credits while in Japan, in addition to 10 EC in thesis tutorial.