



Universiteit Leiden

Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: Philosophy (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 OER 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.

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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 the philosophy of a discipline;
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:

- Philosophy of the Arts, Philosophy of Law, Governance, and Politics

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. knowledge and understanding in the field of the history, foundations, methodology and/or ethics of the specific discipline, in particular:
 - *Philosophy of the Arts*
knowledge and understanding of the central questions in the philosophy of art with particular attention to their manifestation in works of visual, musical, literary, and performing arts, as well as in works within new fields in the arts;
 - *Philosophy of the Humanities (discontinued from September 2026, transitional arrangements in effect until February 2029)*
 - Knowledge and understanding of the methodologies, key terms, and philosophical foundations of the literary arts and humanities, as well as philosophical reflection on the social and cultural meaning of the literary arts and humanities;
 - *Philosophy of Law, Governance, and Politics*
knowledge and understanding of the methodologies, key terms, and philosophical foundations of

- legal and social sciences, as well as the philosophical reflection on the social and cultural impact of these;
 - *Philosophy in World Traditions (discontinued from September 2026, transitional arrangements in effect until February 2029)*
 - knowledge and understanding of one or more of the Asian philosophical traditions and their histories, as well as the relevant methodologies, key terms, and philosophical reflection on their linguistic, cultural, geographical, and historical underpinnings;
 - b. knowledge and understanding with regard to the social and cultural meaning of philosophy in general and the philosophy of the specific discipline in particular;
 - c. knowledge and understanding of the main philosophical elements of the discipline as well as knowledge of the problems, methods and key terms of these elements.
- 2. Applying knowledge and understanding
 - a. the ability, based on the acquired knowledge and understanding, to contribute to discussions in the philosophy of the specific discipline, and related areas;
 - b. the ability to demonstrate specific and transferable skills in an academic and/or a professional environment;
 - c. the ability to develop a personal and professional profile for employability in a future career.
- 3. Judgement
 - a. the ability, on the basis of the sound knowledge of philosophy acquired during the programme, to analyse complex philosophical problems;
 - b. the ability to judge the reliability of different kinds of sources;
 - c. the ability to form judgements based on different kinds of sources;
 - d. a realistic view of the reliability of their conclusions;
 - e. the ability to integrate different approaches to philosophical questions and compare these with each other.
- 4. Communication
 - a. the ability to give a clear presentation of philosophical problems, ideas, theories, interpretations and arguments, for specialist audiences as well as for a general audience;
 - b. the ability to write philosophical papers at an academic level.
- 5. Learning skills
 - the possession of learning skills that allow graduates to continue their study of philosophy and to formulate a research proposal for a PhD.

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 Examination¹ 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.²

¹ [Code of Conduct on Language of Instruction](#)

² [Guideline on Language Policy](#)

Chapter 3 Curriculum

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.

Chapter 4 Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education

Article 4.2 Obligatory sequence

4.2.1 Students are required to have obtained 60 EC, 30 EC of which must be in Philosophy, prior to starting their MA thesis or enrolling in the MA thesis seminar. For students with a deficiency or who enter with a pre-masters programme, Philosophical Skills must be completed prior to starting the thesis.

Article 4.3 Form of examination

4.3.6 The final part of the completion and assessment of the MA thesis is the oral MA examination, which consists of an interview with the candidate on the subject of the thesis conducted by a graduation committee, appointed by the Board of Examiners. The candidate's performance during the interview will be taken into account for the determination of the final grade of the thesis.

Article 4.6 Assessment

4.6.4 The examination results are expressed as a half number between 1.0 and 10.0, including both limits.

Chapter 5 Admission to the Programme as of September 2027 or February 2028

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
 - either the bachelor's degree is in a discipline relevant to the chosen specialisation and the applicant possesses knowledge, understanding and skills comparable to those acquired upon completion of the bridging programme in philosophy as described in article 5.4, for example by having earned a bachelor's degree in a programme in which philosophy is combined with the chosen discipline,
 - or the bachelor's degree is in a discipline relevant to the chosen specialisation and the pre-master's programme in philosophy as described in article 5.4 is completed,
 - or the bachelor's degree is in Philosophy and
 - and the ability to formulate a clear philosophical research question, to develop and formulate a critical view on that question, and to support this view by means of argument and analysis, which may be determined on the basis of a writing sample.

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

- 1.1.1 for the specialisation Philosophy of the the Arts, the relevant disciplines are in the humanities, arts, international relations, or social sciences such as cultural anthropology with a close connection to the field of study;
- 1.1.2 for the specialisation Philosophy of Law, Governance, and Politics, the relevant disciplines are in the field of law, (international) political science, political economy, international relations, public administration, or courses related to the previously mentioned disciplines;
- 1.1.3a bachelor's degree and additionally having passed the prescribed pre-master's/bridging programme pursuant to article 5.4.1. Students may overrun the allotted time for the prescribed pre-masters/bridging programme by one semester (in case of a pre-master's/bridging programme of 30 EC or less) or one study year (in case of a pre-master's/bridging programme of more than 30 EC).

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, (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.

Admission process

Applicants as referred to in Article 5.2.1.b and Article 5.2.2. are requested to provide the Board of Admissions with:

- copies of diploma(s) and transcript(s)
- proof of language proficiency (if applicable, see 5.2.3)
- a filled in 'Questionnaire Master Application' demonstrating that the candidate 1) has gained knowledge, understanding and skills in the field (of the specialisation) of the MA programme and 2) has acquired general academic skills as listed in Appendix B of the Faculty section of these regulations.
- Applicants may be asked to submit a writing sample, proving the aforementioned qualities in the field of knowledge, understanding and skills.

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.a.

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

5.2.3 **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 169³.

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**

5.2.4.1 Not applicable.

Article 5.2.5 **Capacity limitation**

5.2.5.1 Maximum capacity: not applicable.

Article 5.3 **Deficiencies**

See the faculty section.

Article 5.4 **Pre-master's programmes and educational modules**

5.4.1 The Programme has established pre-master's programmes (for the following target groups) in order to remedy deficiencies. Pre-master's programmes/bridging programmes must be completed successfully within the prescribed period as specified in sub Article 5.2.1c.

This pre-master's programme is intended for applicants with a bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic Bachelor's degree, in a subject belonging to the relevant disciplines, who do not fulfil the entry requirements regarding the knowledge, understanding and skills in the field of

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

philosophy, as specified in article 5.2.2. Students who successfully complete this pre-master programme of 40 credits will be admitted to the relevant specialisation of the Master's programme.

The premaster programme consists of:

- compulsory introductory courses of 5 credits each,
- one optional course in philosophy of 5 credits from the relevant pre-master package (if applicable),
- two advanced seminars at third-year BA level of 10 credits each,

as specified in the table below. The choice of components depends on the chosen specialisation in the Master's programme in Philosophy (120 EC).

For candidates who can demonstrate possession of relevant knowledge and skills related to one or more of the components of the pre-master's programme described below, the pre-master's programme may be tailored to their individual backgrounds (resulting in programmes smaller than 60 EC).

It is not possible for candidates with a degree from a Dutch University of Applied Sciences (hbo) to remedy deficiencies with the pre-master's programme, with the exception of students applying to the Philosophy of the Arts specialisation, who may pursue a 60 EC pre-masters in accordance with Article 5.4.2* below

5.4.2* HBO students from liberal arts, conservatories, and performing arts schools or equivalent will be admissible to the Philosophy of the Arts specialisation only following a pre-masters of 60 EC. It will include the 40 EC from Package A and one additional BA3 course relevant to Continental Philosophy, as well as two electives of 5 EC each at the 100- or 200-level.

Abbreviations:

LGP Philosophy of Law, Governance, and Politics
 ART Philosophy of the Arts

Semester	Course unit title	Level	Credits	ART (pack A)	LGP (pack B)
	Compulsory introductory courses, selected for the chosen master's specialisation):				
I	World Philosophies: Greek and Roman Antiquity	100	5	X	
I	Ethics	100	5		X
I	Political Philosophy	200	5		X
I	Science and Knowledge	200	5		X
I	Philosophy of Culture	100	5	X	
I	World Philosophies: China	100	5		
I	World Philosophies: Africa	200	5		
II	World Philosophies: Modern Europe	200	5	X	X
II	World Philosophies: India	100	5		
II	World Philosophies: Middle East	200	5		
II	Continental Philosophy from a Global Perspective	200	5	X	
I	Philosophical Skills (pre-master)	100	5	X	X
II	Core Course: The World as Problem	200	5	X	
II	Core Course: Advanced Moral and Political Philosophy	200	5		X

II	Core Course: Intercultural Philosophical Hermeneutics	200	5		
				30	30
	Select one advanced seminar from the courses that are relevant to the chosen specialisation.			ART (pack A)	LGP (pack B)
I / II	BA3 course relevant to the specialisation Continentale Filosofie	300 / 400	10	X	
I / II	BA3 course relevant to the specialisation Ethiek en politieke filosofie	300 / 400	10		X
				10	10

Students who enter in February may replace the Philosophical Skills (pre-master) course in the first semester with the BA Philosophical Skills course in the second semester.

Entering students who can take courses in Dutch may replace any of these courses with corresponding Dutch courses as follows:

- Continental Philosophy from a Global Perspective (5 EC): Continentale filosofie(5 EC) or Geschiedenis van de moderne filosofie II (5 EC)
- World Philosophies: Greek and Roman Antiquity (5 EC): Griekse en Romeinse filosofie (5 EC)
- World Philosophies: Modern Europe (5 EC): Geschiedenis van de moderne filosofie I (5 EC)
- Ethics (5 EC): Ethiek (5 EC)
- Philosophy of Science and Knowledge (5 EC): Epistemologie (5 EC) or Wetenschapsfilosofie (5 EC)
- Philosophy of Culture (5 EC): Cultuurfilosofie (5 EC)
- Philosophical Skills (5 EC): Filosofische vaardigheden (5 EC)
- Logic (5 EC): Logica (5 EC)

5.4.3 Information regarding the pre-master's programmes can be requested from the study advisor of the programme.

5.4.4 The language requirements for a pre-master's programme are identical to the language requirements for the master's programme for which admission has been requested. These requirements must be met before the start of the premaster.

5.4.5. Students who have obtained a university's bachelor's or master's degree, and who meet the requirements set for sufficiently related subjects, may be enrolled for the exclusive purpose of following and completing an educational module in order to obtain a 'limited level-two' teaching qualification⁴.

5.4.6. The educational modules are the responsibility of the ICLON Board of Examiners.

⁴ In Leiden, this concerns a teaching qualification in one of the following relevant school subjects: *Chinese Taal en Cultuur*, *Duits*, *Engels*, *Filosofie*, *Frans*, *Geschiedenis en Staatsinrichting*, *Godsdienst en Levensbeschouwing*, *Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur*, *Nederlands* or *Spaans*. During registration, students in an educational module are subject to the ICLON Course and Examination Regulations and the ICLON Board of Examiners.

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 provision

As of 1 September 2026 the specialisations of the MA Philosophy (120 EC) have been changed.

MA Philosophy (120 EC) before September 2026	MA Philosophy (120 EC) starting September 2026
Specialisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Philosophy of Humanities- Philosophy of Law, Governance, and Politics- Philosophy in World Traditions	Specialisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Philosophy of the Arts</i>- <i>Philosophy Law, Governance, and Politics</i>

The specialisation *Philosophy of Humanities* has been converted to the specialisation *Philosophy of the Arts*.

Students that started *Philosophy of Humanities* on or before 1 February, 2026 will be able to finish their programme and graduate with this specialisation by following the structure of the new *Philosophy of the Arts* specialisation. Students who started on or before February 1, 2026, will be able to do so until 31 January, 2029. Students who are not able to finish their programme on or before January 31, 2029, will be moved to the new *Philosophy of the Arts* specialisation

The specialisation *Philosophy in World Traditions* has been discontinued.

Students that started *Philosophy in World Traditions* on or before 1 February, 2026 will be able to finish their programme and graduate with this specialisation until 31 January 31, 2029). Students in this specialisation will have their courses decided by the Board of Examiners.

Exceptions to these transitional provisions can only be granted by the Board of Examiners.