



Universiteit Leiden

Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: Religious Studies

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.

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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 Religious 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

Not applicable.

Article 2.3 Learning outcomes

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

- I. Knowledge and understanding
 - knowledge and understanding of the most important current debates on method and theory in the academic study of religion – amongst others the literary, historical, cognitive, and social scientific approaches;
 - insight into the mutual impact of globalisation, modernisation, migration, and religion, including the revision and transformation of (self-) understandings of religions and their practices, and the development of (new) religions due to global contacts, colonialism, religious superdiversity, and secularisation;
 - in the specialised pathway Religion, History, and Society: a knowledge and understanding of religion in historical context and the development of religion across time, including contemporary forms of religiosity;
 - in the specialised pathway Religion, Politics, and Governance: a knowledge and understanding of religion in relation to at least one of the following fields: politics, law, political-legal systems, international relations, or education;
 - in the specialised pathway Religion and Area Studies: a knowledge and understanding of religion in an area studies perspective and the movement of ideas and peoples across places, spaces, and contexts.
- II. Applying knowledge and understanding:
 - the ability to apply a set of up-to-date analytical tools in the study of religious texts, religious beliefs, religious practices, religious traditions, and religious fields;

- the ability to independently apply these analytical tools to the study of primary material (historical and contemporary) in the context of independent research projects; and
- the ability to identify and analyse the interactions between religion, globalisation, modernisation, and migration in comparative and historical perspective in contemporary societies worldwide, the changes these processes bring about, and resistance with which these changes are often met.

III. Judgment

- the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, to draw conclusions concerning the reliability of information provided by available sources including societal debates and media, and to offer suggestions for further research and arguments for solution of problems.

IV. Communication

- the ability to communicate conclusions of their research, as well as the knowledge and rational underpinning of these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, clearly and unambiguously, both orally – using modern presentation techniques – and in writing.

V. Learning Skills

- the refinement of their research skills enabling them to formulate an independent research problem with only minimal supervision, and to operationalise abstract theory by applying analytical methods to concrete empirical material;
- the refinement of their cooperative skills, including giving and receiving good quality peer feedback, and preparing class discussions in groups;
- the refinement of their skills for writing well-argued, academic papers in English; and
- the refinement of their skills in oral discussion and debate in English.

Article 2.5 Study load

The programme has a study load of 60 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.

2.8.1. 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

Chapter 3 Curriculum

Article 3.1 Compulsory components

3.1.1 The programme includes compulsory components worth a total study load of 60 credits. These compulsory components include the set components from which a student is obliged to choose.

Chapter 4 Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education

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

² [Guideline on Language Policy](#)

Article 4.2 **Obligatory sequence**

4.2.1 Not applicable.

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. A bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in: Religious Studies
- b. To be considered as holding a degree sufficiently related to the one specified in 5.2.1.a, applicants must meet the following requirements:
 - a bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university, or a bachelor's degree from a foreign 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
 - the bachelor's degree is in the field of humanities or social sciences, and
 - the applicant can demonstrate to possess the following knowledge, understanding and skills with at least 30 EC of relevant courses:
 - knowledge of topics, theories and methods relevant to the study of religion from an academic perspective; and
 - knowledge of the academic study of one or more religious traditions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, ancient religions, new religions)

Applicants who are in possession of a bachelor's degree from a Dutch research university in humanities or social sciences, and who have successfully completed the 30 EC minor 'Religion in a Changing World', are considered to have fulfilled these requirements.

- c. a 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 may also impose further conditions.

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 5.2.1.b and 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 qualities in the field of knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in 5.2.1.b.

The admission process may include an interview with the Board of Admissions, should this be necessary to clarify whether the applicant has the qualities in the field of knowledge, understanding and skills outlined in 5.2.1.b.

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.

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

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>.

5.2.4 Qualitative admission requirements

5.2.4.1 Not applicable.

5.2.5 Maximum capacity

5.2.5.1 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 5.2.1.c.

The 30 EC 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 the field of humanities or social sciences, but who do not possess knowledge, understanding and skills listed under 5.2.1.b. They will be expected to fulfil a tailor-made premaster's programme consisting of a maximum of 30 EC.

The 60 EC 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, not in the field of humanities or social sciences or for applicants with a bachelor's degree Docent Godsdienst/Levensbeschouwing from a university of applied sciences (hbo). They will be expected to fulfil a tailor-made premaster's programme consisting of a maximum of 60 EC.

5.4.2 Information regarding the premaster's programme can be requested from the coordinator of studies of the programme.

5.4.3 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.

5.4.4. 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.

5.4.5. 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.