Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: Asian Studies (research)

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 broaden and deepen the students' knowledge, understanding and skills, and train them in the use of scholarly methods in the field of Asian Studies;
2. to enable students to develop the following academic and professional skills:
   - the ability to solve academic problems independently, critically and creatively;
   - 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 at a university for postgraduate programmes;
4. to prepare students for a non-academic career in the public or private sector for which advanced research skills and practical research experience are a prerequisite.

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

Graduates have and can show knowledge and understanding of relevant models and theoretical notions at a level typical of a master's student. They are capable of surpassing this level or deepening the knowledge and understanding and appear capable of contributing to the growth of knowledge or to its applicability, the latter most likely in a team of researchers.

1. a profound awareness of the current issues and research questions in the relevant disciplines and regional fields of the programme;
2. a thorough understanding of various theories and methodological approaches that are commonly used in research programmes in Asian Studies as well as in different related disciplines;
3. the ability to identify a theoretical framework suitable for addressing relevant problems and issues, with a particular sensitivity to the significance of 'Asia' in this regard;
4. advanced, up-to-date knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies appropriate to particular projects and locations;
5. sensitivity to the relationship between theory, method, place and language;

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6. appropriate language skills to access sources in original languages, as relevant;

II. Application of knowledge and understanding

Graduates can apply knowledge and understanding and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study; they have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity.

1. the capacity to apply a theoretical or descriptive framework in conducting independent basic research in Asian Studies;
2. the capacity to deploy the theoretical and methodological tool-sets of at least one mainstream academic discipline;
3. the capacity to think critically and creatively about the parameters and origins of disciplinary tool-sets;
4. the ability to critically select, study and analyse literature relevant to the issues and problems presented by the curriculum and the research programmes in question;
5. the ability to independently formulate, perform and assess scientific research at a level suitable to preparing scientific publications;
6. sensitivity to the relationship between theory, method, place and language;
7. ability to deploy comparison as an analytical tool.
8. the fundamentals of research project management, such as framing the research, gathering data, articulating a thesis and ordering and presenting findings in oral and written form;

III. Making judgments

Graduates can formulate judgments on the basis of incomplete or limited information, taking into account the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and understanding.

1. familiarity with the philosophy and ethics of Asian Studies research, and the limitations of individual research projects conducted in isolation;
2. sophisticated understanding of the stakes in the politics of knowledge and their relationship with the ethics of global citizenship;

IV. Communication

Graduates can clearly and unambiguously communicate conclusions and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

1. the capacity to report independently on relevant research which has been carried out according to current academic standards;
2. the ability to write scientific reports in English;
3. the ability to give persuasive oral presentations;
4. the ability to engage in the international academic debate;

V. Learning skills

Graduates have the learning skills to allow them to continue studies in a largely self-directed or autonomous manner.

the curiosity and eagerness to learn that is expected in any future research position, be it in an academic setting or in that of applied research, which are acquired through the training to develop autonomy and confidence in designing and conducting all stages of research.

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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[1] the language in which the instruction and in which the examinations and final examinations are held is English. Students are expected to have an adequate command of the language(s) 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]

Chapter 3 Curriculum

Article 3.1 **Compulsory components**

3.1.1 The programme includes compulsory components worth a total study load of 120 EC. These compulsory components include the set components from which a student is obliged to choose. This includes the electives offered by the recognised national research schools[3], from which students must choose electives totalling 10 EC.

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.

[1] Code of Conduct on Language of Instruction
[2] Guideline on Language Policy
[3] https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/vr/humanities/graduate-school/during-your-phd/research-schools?cf=humanities

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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:*
Year I	
Methodologies in the Social Sciences and Humanities	Critical Area Studies: Placing your Research
Year II	
Research Project	Critical Area Studies: Placing your Research, AND Methodologies in the Social Sciences and Humanities OR a minimum of 5 EC of National Research School courses
Pro-Seminar	Critical Area Studies: Placing your Research, AND Methodologies in the Social Sciences and Humanities OR a minimum of 5 EC of National Research School courses
Research MA Thesis	Research Project

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**

5.2.1a. Not applicable.

5.2.1b. Holders of one of the following degrees may be admitted to the programme (Article 7.30b (1) of the Act), if they can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Faculty Board that they meet the following admission requirements, without prejudice to the requirements specified in 5.2.4.

- A bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic Bachelor's degree, or demonstrate to meet the requirements for such a degree, including the General Academic Skills listed in Appendix B of the Faculty section of these regulations, and

- Candidates must be knowledgeable about Asian Studies in terms of the themes and topics they propose to study, the relevant disciplinary approaches in the humanities and/or the social sciences, and possess linguistic and cultural knowledge as appropriate to their project.

5.2.1c. Not applicable.

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Any person who fails to meet the degree requirements 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.

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 Dutch and English 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-language 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[4].

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 The language level in 5.2.3.1, with the exception of the 2nd and 3rd bullet, and 5.2.3.2 does not apply when a higher command of the language is required and included as a qualitative admission requirement (selection requirement) in Article 5.2.4. If a higher language requirement is included in Article 5.2.4, all students are required to fulfil this requirement.

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.

[4] See also the English test score equivalency table of Leiden University

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Article 5.2.4 **Qualitative admission requirements**

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 7.50 (Dutch grading system) for their entire bachelor's programme; and

B. Affinity with and suitability for scholarly research in the specific field of the programme; and

C. Demonstrable motivation to study the particular Research MA programme, and

D. An English language requirement of at least IELTS 7.0, where each separate component score must be at least 6.5/Toefl (internet based) 100, with at least 4.5 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 22 (old 0-30 scale) for each separate component. Cambridge English C2 Proficiency, or C1 Advanced with overall score 185, where each separate component score must be at least 176[5].

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

A : as evidenced by transcripts of your relevant academic records and diplomas.

B: to be demonstrated by a "research proposal," plus an "annotated bibliography" and two letters of reference.

All applicants are required to submit a research proposal that demonstrates their insight into the proposed subject matter and the relevant scholarship. The Board of Admissions considers the following components and aspects of the research proposal:

- an introductory paragraph for the non-specialist;
- clear and feasible research questions and/or objectives and the key primary source material;
- an outline of the state of the field and the contribution the candidate expects to make;
- reflection on theoretical framework and methodology;
- identification of any challenges and limitations;
- reflection on any ethical issues raised by the research;
- an annotated bibliography that lists five key scholarly books or articles and explains the relevance and significance of each item
- names of one or two faculty members at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies as potential project supervisors (depending on availability).

The proposal is about 2,000 words in length (+/– 10%, including references). It is advised to use subheadings. The proposal is accompanied by an annotated bibliography that lists five key scholarly books or articles and explains the relevance and significance of each item. Applicants should also list one or two faculty members at the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies as potential project supervisors (depending on availability).

Furthermore, all applicants are required to submit two letters of reference of which at least one by an academic member of staff.

C: to be demonstrated by a CV and a well-argued and structured motivation letter in which the applicant indicates why he/she wants to follow the research programme and convincingly discusses how the applicant's trajectory to date demonstrates that the applicant is a good candidate for the research MA programme. The CV should be max. 3 pages and the statement should be between 700 and 1,500 words.

D as evidenced by sufficient scores for a language test taken no more than two calendar years previously.

[5] See also the English test score equivalency table of Leiden University

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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).

Candidates must meet all four qualitative requirements mentioned in article 5.2.4.1. Failure to meet one or more criteria cannot be compensated by performance on other criteria. Therefore, no weighting is assigned to the individual criteria. 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:
Start in September

- In case a visa or residence permit is required, the deadline for application in the online application portal (uSis) is 1 April.
- In case a visa or residence permit is not required, the deadline for application in the online application portal (uSis) is 15 May.

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 Not applicable.

Article 5.3 Deficiencies

See the faculty section.

Article 5.4 Pre-master's Programmes and educational modules

5.4.1 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.

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