



Universiteit Leiden

Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: History (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 scientific methods in the field of history;
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

For students who have started before September 1st 2026, the Research Master offers the following specialisations:

- Ancient History (research)
- Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence (research)
- Colonial and Global History (research)
- Europe 1000-1800 (research)
- Politics, Culture and National Identities, 1789 to the Present (research)

The new programme of the Research Master History is not organized along the lines of specialisations.

Article 2.3 Learning outcomes

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

I. Knowledge and insight

Graduates of this programme have:

1. A thorough knowledge and comprehension of the most important research approaches within a clearly defined historical field of expertise as well as of the historiography of that particular field.
2. A thorough knowledge and comprehension of the diverse theoretical, conceptual and methodological aspects of that particular field of historical research
3. A thorough knowledge and understanding of conducting historical research and of research strategies that can be used successfully for this purpose.
4. A thorough knowledge of and insight into the complexity and diversity of the past, the historiography thereof and critical reflection on historiography.

5. At thorough knowledge and comprehension of the theoretical foundations of the historical discipline and of its position in relation to other disciplines.
6. An understanding of the relevance of the historical discipline for society.

II. Applying knowledge and insight

Graduates of this programme will have reached the following academic skills at a level that builds on and exceeds the level reached in their previous education:

7. The ability to independently formulate a clear and well-argued research question, taking into account the theory and method of the field and to reduce this question to accessible and manageable sub-questions;
8. The ability to independently set up and carry out an original research project that contributes to existing scholarly debates, and which raises new questions, pioneers new approaches and/or points to new directions for future research.
9. The ability to independently identify and select secondary literature, using traditional and digital techniques.
10. The ability to independently identify and select primary sources, using traditional and digital techniques.
11. The ability to analyse and evaluate a potentially complex corpus of sources with a view to addressing a particular historical problem.
12. The ability to analyse and evaluate literature with a view to addressing a particular historical problem.

III. Making judgements

Graduates of this programme are able:

13. To evaluate complex scientific historical knowledge and research results and to exchange ideas about this with historians and other academics in a critical and effective manner, reflecting on one's own position, professional integrity and moral conduct and those of others;
14. To arrive at convincing interpretations of historical issues based on incomplete data files and valid arguments and to reflect on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of knowledge and judgments;
15. To arrive at a substantiated judgement using results, taking into account possible academic, socio-cultural or ethical aspects of the issue.
16. To provide constructive feedback and formulate criticism of the work of others and the ability to evaluate the value of such criticism and feedback on one's own work and incorporate it;
17. To participate in a discussion on the theoretical foundations and current challenges of the discipline.

IV Communication skills

Graduates of this programme are able:

18. To give a clear and well-founded oral and written report on research results in correct English, when required, or Dutch, meeting the criteria of the discipline;
19. To participate in current debates in the specialisation;
20. To apply knowledge and understanding, and develop problem solving skills in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.

V Learning skills

Graduates of this programme are able:

21. To systematically identify one's own (future) learning needs regarding current and new topics.
22. To autonomously initiate a learning process, making use of relevant research and the latest and most recent developments in the field of historical sciences.

For students who have started before September 1st, 2026, the learning outcomes are as follows:

I. Knowledge

1. Thorough knowledge and comprehension of one of the specialisations as well as of the historiography of the specialisation, focusing particularly on the following:
 - in the specialisation Ancient History: unification processes in the Graeco-Roman World, 400 BC-400 AD; insight into the recent large-scale debates in the field with respect to both the history of mentality and socio-economic history;
 - in the specialisation Colonial and Global History: comprehension of how global (political, socio-economic, and cultural) connections interact with regional processes of identity and state formation;

- hence insight in cross-cultural processes (including the infrastructure of shipping and other modes of communication) that affect regions across the world such as imperialism, colonisation, islamisation, modernisation and globalization (in particular during the period 1200-1940);
- in the specialisation Europe 1000-1800: broader processes of political, social and cultural identity formation between about 1000-1800; awareness of problems of periodization and impact of ‘national’ historiographical traditions on the field;
 - in the specialisation Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence: the manner in which migrations (of people, goods and ideas) between and within states have led to shifts (in cohesion, ethnic composition, policies, imaging, culture, and power relations) in the period 1600-2000, with a focus on (urban) networks (within and across borders);
 - in the specialisation Politics, Culture and National Identities: political practices, symbols and perceptions, nationalism, and national identities in a cultural and societal context from 1800;
2. Thorough knowledge and comprehension of the theoretical, conceptual and methodological aspects of the specialisation, with a particular focus on the following:
 - in the specialisation Ancient History: the comparative method; application of socio-scientific methods; specialised source knowledge, in particular of documentary sources;
 - in the specialisation Colonial and Global History: empirical research from a comparative and connective perspective;
 - in the specialisation Europe 1000-1800: the ability to analyse and evaluate primary sources from the period in their original languages; ability to make use of relevant and state-of-the-art methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis to interpret sources in their textual and historical context;
 - in the specialisation Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence: the interdisciplinary approach (application of theories and methods from social sciences), the comparative perspective (diachronic and synchronic) and working with a large variety of primary sources;
 - in the specialisation Politics, Culture and National Identities: international comparison and transfer; the analysis of the specific perspectives of secondary studies; a cultural-historical approach of politics and a political-historical approach of culture;
 3. Thorough knowledge and comprehension of the theoretical foundation of the discipline and of its position vis-à-vis other disciplines;
 4. Knowledge and awareness of the relevance of disciplines related to the specialisation and the ability to evaluate their significance for the students’ own topics of study. Thorough knowledge and understanding of the interdisciplinary aspects of the specialisation, both with regard to other historical specialisations and to related fields.

II. Skills

1. The ability to independently identify and select secondary literature, using traditional and modern techniques;
2. The ability to independently identify and select primary sources, using traditional and modern techniques;
3. The ability to analyse and evaluate a potentially complex corpus of sources with a view to addressing a particular historical problem;
4. The ability to analyse and evaluate literature with a view to addressing a particular historical problem;
5. The ability to independently formulate a clear and well-argued research question, taking into account the theory and method of the field and to reduce this question to accessible and manageable sub-questions;
6. The ability to independently set up and carry out an original research project which raises new questions, pioneers new approaches and/or points to new directions for future research;

7. The ability to give a clear and well-founded oral and written report on research results in correct English meeting the criteria of the discipline;
8. The ability to participate in current debates in the specialisation;
9. The ability to apply knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study;
10. The ability to participate in a discussion of the theoretical foundations of the discipline.

III. Academic attitude

Graduates of this programme are in possession of the following:

1. The ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, including the ability to reflect on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of knowledge and judgments;
2. The ability to reflect on one's own professional integrity and moral conduct;
3. The ability to provide constructive feedback to and formulate criticism of the work of others and the ability to evaluate the value of such criticism and feedback on one's own work and incorporate it;
4. Understanding of the relevance for society of the historical discipline in general and the specialisation in particular.

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 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

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 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 schools³, 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.

Chapter 4 Examinations, Final Examination and Further Education

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 or February 2028

Article 5.1 Confirmation of admission

See the faculty session.

Article 5.2 Admission to the programme

5.2.1 a. Not applicable.

5.2.1 b. 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.

³ <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/science/graduate-school-of-science/being-a-phd-candidate/research-schools>

- 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
- The Bachelor's degree must be in History or a comparable degree; and
- Candidates must have knowledge, understanding and skills with respect to:
 - o conducting independent empirical research;
 - o the ability to read academic literature and reflect critically on it;
 - o general history and the ability to present their findings (based on a critical reading of the literature or based on empirical research) in a systematic and analytical manner;
 - o the ability to write a thesis with proper references to the literature;
- Have sufficient knowledge of languages (other than English) relevant for study and research.

5.2.1 c. Not applicable.

5.2.2. 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.

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 169⁴.

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

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 see: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/education/admission-and-application/masters>.

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. Suitability for the programme at a Dutch research master's level as demonstrated by:
 - a. Good grades comparable with an average grade of at least 7.50 (Dutch grading system) for their entire bachelor's programme, and a grade for the bachelor's thesis of an 8 or higher; or
 - b. A weighted average grade of 8.00 for 30 EC worth of courses of a master's programme in History at the level of a Dutch research university;
- 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/Toefl (internet based) 100. A minimum score of IELTS 7.0 or Toefl with at least 5.0 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 25 (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 185⁵.

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

- A.a and A.b: as evidenced by a transcript of records and diploma of the relevant obtained academic degree.
- B: to be demonstrated by
 - i. a "Research Proposal". All applicants are required to submit a Research Proposal of approximately 1000 words, accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least five (5) items, outlining the topic or field of research that the applicant wishes to pursue at Leiden University, and indicating the names of one or two faculty members who might guide that research.
 - ii. two letters of recommendation, at least one of which by an academic member of staff.
- C: To be demonstrated by
 - i. a well-argued and structured motivation letter in which the applicant indicates why he/she wants to follow the History programme and convincingly discusses what makes the applicant a good candidate for the research MA programme. The statement should be between 700 and 1,500 words.
 - ii. two letters of recommendation, at least one of which by an academic member of staff.
- D: as evidenced by sufficient scores for a language test taken no more than two calendar years previously.

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);

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

- 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:

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.

Start in February

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

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 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

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.

Appendix F: transitional provisions

Students who have started before September 1st, 2026 under the previous program, will be able to graduate within one of the specialisations until September 1st, 2028. Students who've started on February 1st 2026, will be able to graduate until February 1st, 2029. Exceptions can only be made by the Board of Examiners.

After that date, students will graduate within new programme.

Old		New - equivalent		
Course	EC	Course	EC	Comments
Literature seminar	10	Literature seminar within similar ** new specialisation	10	
Research seminar	10	Research seminar within similar** new specialisation	10	

** Similar specialisations:

- Cities, Migration and Global Interdependence = History of Inequality and Power;
- Politics Culture and National Identities = Beyond Borders, History of Inequality and Power or (if eligible, see 5.2.3.3 in the Course and Examination Regulations of the MA History) Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Wereld;
- Europe 1000-1800: Beyond Borders, History of Inequality and Power or (if eligible, see 5.2.3.3 in the Course and Examination Regulations of the MA History) Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Wereld;
- Colonial and Global History = Beyond Borders, History of Inequality and Power or (if eligible, see 5.2.3.3 in the Course and Examination Regulations of the MA History) Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Wereld.