Universiteit Leiden

Course and Examination Regulations

valid as of 1 September 2026

Programme-specific section:

Master's Programme: Linguistics (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 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:

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Appendix A - Master's Thesis Regulations
Appendix B - General Academic Skills
Appendix C – Internship Regulations
Appendix D – Enrolment protocol

Programme-specific section:
Appendix E – 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 broaden and deepen the students' knowledge, understanding and skills, and train them in the use of scientific methods in the field of linguistics;
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 demonstrate, in their written and oral work:

1. a thorough knowledge and understanding of the discipline of linguistics, the scientific study of human language;
2. familiarity with the basic concepts, research methods and techniques, and current developments in the field; graduates have a good overview of various approaches to linguistic diversity, the way in which variation and uniformity in languages can be identified and studied;
3. an in-depth knowledge of at least one subdiscipline of linguistics, such as descriptive, formal, experimental, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse studies or comparative-historical linguistics; being acquainted with its specific research questions and methodology.

II. Application of knowledge and understanding

Graduates demonstrate, in their written and oral work, the ability to:

1. define a research topic, formulate research questions, and collect data, e.g. through fieldwork, study of existing corpora or an experimental setup;
2. perform an analysis and interpretation of the object of inquiry;

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3. relate the analysis to the relevant literature;
4. contribute to ongoing debates in the discipline, based on independent research and theoretical reflection.

III. Making judgments

Graduates demonstrate, in their written and oral work, the capacity to:

1. critically evaluate their sources;
2. build an argument that leads to its conclusion in a cogent, clear and verifiable manner;
3. be able to relate the results of their research to the existing literature;
4. take into account the philosophy and ethics of linguistic research in doing research.

IV. Communication

Graduates demonstrate, in their written and oral work, the ability to:

1. formulate clear and well-founded research questions, hypotheses and analyses in grammatically correct English, and present this in a coherent and convincing way.

V. Learning skills

Graduates demonstrate, in their written and oral work, the ability to:

1. apply learning skills that allow them to initiate and conduct a research project (for example in context of a postmaster's professional training or a PhD training) with a great degree of independence, under expert national or international supervision; this means that the student:
   a) has articulated the research question or thesis independently;
   b) has independently conducted relevant bibliographical research;
   c) has drawn up a realistic research plan;
   d) has applied other relevant linguistic research skills in an independent way.
   e) has the ability to contribute to the growth of knowledge or to its applicability, the latter most likely in a team of researchers.

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

[1] Code of Conduct on Language of Instruction
[2] Guideline on Language Policy

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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.

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 section.

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:

- 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 is in Linguistics, a language and culture programme or a comparable degree with a relevant specialisation with at least 30 EC of academic study of linguistics subjects, of which at least 20 ECs in core subjects (such as phonology, phonetics, syntax, morphology, semantics, language typology). Candidates must have knowledge, understanding and skills with respect to:

[3] https://www.staff.universiteitleiden.nl/vr/humanities/graduate-school/during-your-phd/research-schools?cf=humanities

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- the ability to understand basic linguistic analyses and read linguistic literature (in English) at the appropriate (handbook) level; and
- the ability to collect linguistic data and discover patterns in them;

as demonstrated in prior studies, previous research activities and the "Research Proposal" as referred to in 5.2.4.2.

5.2.1 c. Not applicable.
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.

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-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.

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

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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 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. A grade for the bachelor's thesis of an 8 or higher; and
C. Affinity with and suitability for linguistic research in the specific field of the programme/specialisation, and
D. Demonstrable motivation to study the research MA programme.
E. An English language requirement of at least IELTS 7.0/Toefl (internet based) 100[4]. For the 'speaking' and 'writing' components a minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or Toefl with at least 4.5 (new 1-6 scale as of 21 January 2026) or 22 (old 0-30 scale) is required. 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 and B: as evidenced by a transcript of records and diploma of the relevant obtained academic degree.

- C & D: to be demonstrated by a motivation letter in which you describe in 500-1000 words, preferably including the following information:
  - Your research interest within the field of linguistics;
  - What research questions you would like to pursue during your Research Master years;
  - Whom of the LUCL staff you would like to engage with to discuss your research interests (see LUCL website at https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/humanities/leiden-university-centre-for-linguistics);
  - How your admission to the Research Master Linguistics programme at Leiden University would help you to carry out this type of research;
  - Why you think you have the right background to start the Research Master in Linguistics programme at Leiden University;

- C and D: Provide names and contact details of 2 referents (at least one from an academic staff member). The Board of Admissions may contact them to verify that you meet the requirements.

- E: 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 and those mentioned in 5.2.4:

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

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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 Maximum Capacity

5.2.5.1 Not applicable

Article 5.4 Pre-master's Programme 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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