

Accreditation History, International Relations, and European Studies

Bachelor's programme European Studies (56051)

Master's programme European Studies (69303)

Master's programme European Public Affairs (60003)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

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IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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Introduction

In answer to the QANU committee's recommendations for improvement as formulated in its assessment report on the Bachelor's programme European Studies (BA ES; 56051), Master's programme European Studies (MA ES; 69303), and Master's programme European Public Affairs (MA EPA; 60003) issued on 30 January 2014, the programmes herewith propose a plan for improvement.

The programmes have consulted staff, Programme Committees, Board of Examiners, Faculty management and heads of department. Part I presents an overview of the committee's recommendations whereas part II (BA ES and MA ES) and III (MA EPA) elaborate on the programmes' proposed actions for improvement.

The proposed actions are predominantly focused on improving the quality of 1) the organisation of the final work trajectory; 2) the final work itself; 3) quality assurance of the final work.

Several of the proposed actions have already been implemented awaiting the formal NVAO decision. Needless to say, the programmes are open to suggestions from the NVAO panel.

I Recommendations of the committee

BA ES

#	Recommendation	Panel report	Standard
1	The committee (...) concludes that the programme currently focusses primarily on Western Europe despite the programme's commendable efforts to approach Europe in its broadest sense. The committee suggests that the programme could express its main focus to potential students.	p. 13	1
3	The committee suggests that the programme could benefit from incorporating a more explicit comparison of Europe as a whole to power blocks outside of Europe.	p. 14	2
4	The committee concludes (...) that a continued reflection on the value of the PBL system remains necessary.	p. 14	2
6	The committee strongly recommends that the programme reflects on the assessment procedure of the Bachelor Papers.	p. 15	3
Ad 6	· [The unsatisfactory assessed] theses (...) reveal a lack of analytical skills	p. 30	3

MA ES

#	Recommendation	Panel report	Standard
1	The committee finds it important that the introduction of PBL to new students receives more attention because of the prominent role it plays in acquiring the intended learning outcomes.	p. 16	1
2	[The committee] would suggest to consider using an international comparative perspective (<i>sic</i>) to compare the European and a global perspective (<i>sic</i>) [in the third specialisation].	p. 26	2
3	The committee strongly recommends [the programme] to reflect on the assessment procedure.	p. 30	3
Ad 3	· [The unsatisfactory assessed] theses (...) revealed a lack of analytical skills.	p. 17	3

MA EPA

#	Recommendation	Panel report	Standard
2	[The committee] advises the programme to communicate to students more clearly what is expected of them in module four.	p. 36	2
3	The committee (...) strongly advises the programme to develop the evaluation paper of module four further into a significant research project that can serve as a master's thesis.	p. 37	3

II Proposed actions for improvement BA ES and MA ES

2.1 Standard 3

The committee assessed BA ES's and MA ES's standard 3 'unsatisfactory' and indicated that this standard should be improved concerning both programmes: 'The committee strongly recommends that the programmes reflect on the assessment procedure'.

The committee founded its recommendations on observations concerning the quality of final work.¹ The committee expressed that the unsatisfactory assessed 6 BA ES papers and 7 MA ES theses revealed a lack of analytical skills. However, the assessors' comments and critique on the assessment form met with the committee's approval. Thus, the committee advised both programmes to reflect on the assessment procedure.

The programmes feel a sense of urgency to tackle these issues. Following the committee's recommendations regarding standard 3, the programmes have focused on improving the quality of 1) the quality assurance of the final work; 2) the organisation of the final work trajectory; 3) the final work itself.

Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Year
<i>Quality assurance of the final work</i>			
BA ES/ MA ES	Revised Faculty assessment procedure	BoE	13/14
	Organisation of assessment information and collegial review sessions	DoS	13/14
		Vice-dean edu. BoE	13/14
<i>Organisation of the final work</i>			
BA ES	Restructure final work: 1 BA paper instead of 2 New skills training course year 2: <i>Research Design: Developing Your Own Research Project</i>	DoS	13/14
<i>Quality of the final work</i>			
BA ES	1 Final BA paper instead of 2 New skills training course <i>Research Design: Developing Your Own Research Project</i>	DoS	13/14

2.1.1 Quality assurance of the final work

The programmes do not recognise the committee's comment on the 'personal and informal atmosphere' characterising the assessment of final work at FASoS. Assessment procedures of all FASoS programmes have been and are of a formal nature (see e.g. the Board of Examiners' (BoE) position paper in annex I). The Board of Examiners met with three QANU accreditation panels in Spring 2013 and concluded - based on those sessions as well as the comments of these three panels on the FASoS programmes' assessment procedures and practices - that some assessment issues could be addressed (seems more appropriate formulation here):

¹ BA ES: 6 final works unsatisfactory, 19 satisfactory; MA ES: 7 final works unsatisfactory, 23 satisfactory.

1. The procedure for appointment of the second grader and assuring the second grader's independence.
2. The practice that in few programmes apparently familiar 'grading couples' (1st and 2nd grader) are being formed when assessing final work.
3. The connection between final work and taught courses appeared to be not always explicitly required; final work, however, is the materialisation of the programme's final qualifications thus it should be required that final work explicitly shows an academic reflection on taught knowledge and methods.²
4. The practice (though not on a structural basis) that some graders take into account the process of students' producing the final work instead of solely focusing on the final work 'product' itself.
5. Assessment forms indicating a mismatch between the grade issued and the comments presented on the assessment form; this issue closely relates to the former item.

Evaluation of the abovementioned assessment practices has led to several revisions of the FASoS assessment procedure; see overview below.

Item	Proposed improvement actions ³
1. Independence 2 nd grader	Appointment of 2 nd grader by final work coordinator Approval of 2 nd graders by Vice-Dean of Education 2nd grader initiates collegial review process and first fills out assessment form
2. Minimization 'grading couples' practice	Appointment of 2 nd grader by final work coordinator Approval of 2 nd graders by Vice-Dean of Education
3. Final work connected to taught curriculum ³	Requirement final work explicitly reflects on taught curriculum Final work coordinator provides overview possible final work topics Topic final work needs to be approved before writing process starts
4. Final work grade reflects assessment of product only	2 nd grader initiates collegial review process and first fills out assessment form Instructions to staff members to not take other circumstances into account but only grade the final product
5. Mismatch between the assessment comments (qualitative) and the final grade (quantitative)	Indicative grading table Instructions to staff members to not take other circumstances into account but only grade the final product

The issues mentioned are elaborated on and formally introduced in the Board of Examiners' position paper (November 2013; see annex I); this has been officially approved by the Faculty Board.⁴ These measures are a further formalisation of the assessment procedure, geared towards enhancing the quality assurance of the assessment procedure. With the second reader as *responsible examiner*, ruling

² This issue has not been commented on by the committee assessing BA ES, MA ES and MA EPA.

³ Though the overview lists 'proposed improvement actions' please note that the programme has already implemented these actions as of 13/14.

⁴ The Faculty Board decided to accept the BoE's final work guidelines as mandatory for all programmes. Deviations will not be permitted without the Faculty Board's approval.

out 'grading couples', and even more focus on the assessment of product over process, the Faculty expects this to result in minimising a mismatch between grade and assessment comments on feedback forms.

To further strengthen the procedure for assessing final work, the programmes have implemented the following:

- As of 13/14 all BA ES final work will be assessed by two examiners.
- The Board of Examiners issued a position paper on the assessment of final work in November 2013 (see annex I) including suggested guidelines for final work requirements, specifically targeted to theses and academic internships. At FASoS 'final work' always includes a thesis (research paper). A thesis presents the findings of a methodical scholarly enquiry. It should demonstrate that the student is able to:
 - devise and conduct research of a limited size with the use of methods and techniques relevant to the 'discipline' (i.c. European Studies)/domain of the research in question;
 - articulate a clear and feasible research question;
 - collect the sources and literature that are required to answer the research question as outlined above;
 - use the results of the research (i.e. selection and analysis of the sources) to articulate a well-rounded conclusion;
 - include the results of the research in a clear, concise and well-written academic argument.

Evidently, one needs to distinguish between BA and MA theses. The *division line between BA and MA final theses* can be drawn with regard to three main aspects:

- the scope and depth of the analysis
- the greater sophistication in the performed data collection/analysis
- the originality and rigor of the performed analysis

The programmes will follow these guidelines. The main criteria to grade research papers are related to the clarity and focus of the main research question, the research design (i.e. the choice of the applied analytical methods and the studied sources), the argumentation, and the critical discussion of the research findings. On these elements assessors will explicitly reflect when providing feedback.

The Faculty Board requires programmes to organise tutor/grader collegial review sessions focused on assessing and discussing a sample of exams/theses as well as evaluating the original grading of this sample. BA ES had already implemented such sessions, the MA ES has implemented such sessions as of 13/14. Training assessors to grade students' work in line with the assessment in wording is another issue that will be focused on in these sessions.

Another, Faculty-wide, action is the implementation of a yearly BKO workshop on assessment. Every year several BKO workshops are organised during which staff focus on a variety of didactic issues (supervision, PBL, assessment, etc.). As of 13/14 the FB decided to dedicate one workshop on assessment on a yearly basis.

FASoS issued its (electronic) *Quality Assurance Handbook FASoS* January 2013 describing the Faculty's quality cycle pertaining to the Faculty's (organisation of) education. Because assessment is an important element in this circle cycle, the handbook prescribes that programmes evaluate their assessment in the yearly evaluation sessions of the programmes' Directors of Studies with the Associate Dean Education and the Faculty's Managing Director.

As of 14/15 the Board of Examiners presents an annual report, reflecting on FASoS-broad assessment issues and practices. The Directors of Studies annually write a programme report in which specific attention is paid to assessment; this report will be reflected on during the yearly evaluation sessions of the Director of Studies with the Associate Dean Education and the Faculty's Managing Director. Furthermore, in the Programme Committee's annual report an explicit evaluation of the programme's assessment is included – this report will also be reflected on during the yearly sessions of the Director of Studies with the Associate Dean Education and the Faculty's Managing Director. All involved expect that the strict implementation of these quality care cycle will be beneficial for not only the quality assurance of the programmes' assessment but also their take on assessment in general. It will raise awareness of how to efficiently and effectively realise the final qualifications through adequate testing.

2.1.2 Organisation of the final work

The programme welcomes the committee's support for the envisioned changes regarding the Bachelor Papers as well as the links between the skills training courses and final work. These changes have been implemented as of 13/14:

- *Bachelor Paper I* has been abolished, with transition rules for students having started their second year before September 2013 who still need to pass *Bachelor Paper I*.
- Bachelor Paper I will be replaced by a new skills training course in the second year, called *Research Design: Developing Your Own Research Project* (currently under construction). This 8-week course culminates in an individual research design assignment, to be handed in at the end of period 5. This research design may form the basis for their final Bachelor Paper.
- *Bachelor Paper II* will become the BA ES's final work (thus the term will change as well). A second reader will be implemented for all Bachelor Papers.

2.1.3 Quality of the final work

The committee made some comments on the academic (research) character of the programmes.

In the BA ES, the Bachelor Paper I will be replaced by a new skills training course in the second year, called *Research Design: Developing Your Own Research Project* (currently under construction). This 8-week course culminates in an individual research design assignment, to be handed in at the end of period 5. Students should reflect on and implement several skills they have learned during the programme so far. This research design may form the basis for their final Bachelor Paper.

The MA ES is currently constructing a *Thesis course* geared to enhancing the research character of the final work. This new course will be implemented in 14/15; please find the proposal in annex VIII.

The programmes trust that the improved quality of final work and final work assessment can be observed in final work produced in 2014. The programmes, Board of Examiners and Faculty Board will cooperatively evaluate this in Fall 2014.

2.2 Standards 1 and 2

The committee provided suggestions concerning standards 1 and 2 as well. These will be briefly dealt with here but more thoroughly focused on in the course of this (13/14) and next (14/15) academic year.

BA ES

According to the committee, the programme should more explicitly focus on non-European developments that have an impact on the European situation. The programme already offers various courses in which a more global perspective is presented, but will check existing courses on whether this perspective could be made more explicit. Furthermore, the programme will check its curriculum to see if more (explicit) focus on non-Western European issues is implemented in the courses. It will also evaluate the programme's promotion material: is the 'Europe in a global context'-focus made sufficiently clear to potential students?

The committee was not convinced that the programme takes proper action when students do not adhere to the principles of PBL. According to the committee this in turn may lead to students not being taught well the (academic) skills that are the foundation of the PBL-method. The committee suggested that the programme continues to reflect on the value of the PBL-system.

The BA ES will indeed continue reflecting on the PBL-method and its implementation in the programme. It is strongly in favour of the (as of 13/14 more strict) 0.5-rule concerning participation in the PBL-group; see annex VII for the enhanced 0.5-rule. As also observed by the committee, in the PBL-system the development of academic skills is being focused on: PBL-groups 'mimic' the academic research process by starting with framing a 'research field' and then prompting a valid research question, to be investigated further through stating related learning objectives which will be dealt with in self-study.

MA ES

Regarding the focus of the MA ES the committee observed that the programme's third specialisation (Europe from a Global Perspective) 'has a less clear profile' which it fears may lead to inconsistencies in this specialisation. Regarding the overall curriculum, the committee mentioned it would appreciate '[m]ore focus on Eastern Europe'.

In November 2013 the DoS organised a curriculum review with all course coordinators. Two main issues were discussed: 1) the consistency of the curriculum, in particular of the third specialisation, including the overall distinctiveness of this specialisation; and 2) the focus on Eastern Europe in all courses of the programme.

Regarding the committee's observation on the third specialisation, the programme proposes to rename the third specialisation (*Europe in a globalising world*) and to refocus its curriculum to gain insights concerning the EU's global role and how the EU can affect global governance. Please see annex IX: the MA ES third specialisation will be implemented as of 14/15.

As for the committee's recommendation regarding the (lack of) focus on Eastern Europe, the programme will include lectures, readings and assignments on Eastern Europe (understood as the new EU member states from Central and Eastern Europe) in several courses where the curriculum allows

for an easy accommodation of the subject.⁵ These adjustments will be implemented as of 14/15; the changes will be presented in the course books.

Though the committee showed its appreciation for the PBL-system it also expressed some concerns. Firstly, the committee 'finds it important that the introduction of PBL to new students receives more attention because of the prominent role it plays in acquiring the intended learning outcomes'. The programme agrees and will introduce a special PBL training session in the first two weeks as of 14/15. Secondly, 'the committee was not convinced that the programme structurally acts upon students who do not prepare for a class, or students who do not get involved in discussions.' This latter comment has surprised the programme as it adheres to the '0.5-rule' for participation in class.⁶ In cases where individuals are not sufficiently participating in PBL-group sessions and are not as cooperative as expected, the 0.5-rule is an instrument that helps (formally) to steer the group and therefore the education process.

⁵ In periods 1, 3 and 4. The programme notes that the 3rd period course 'EU as an International Player' covers the European Neighbourhood Policy and therefore already offers a lecture and readings on the Eastern Partnership and the countries from the former Soviet republics (also referred to as 'Eastern Europe').

⁶ The 0.5-rule has formally been implemented for FASoS's BA programmes only. However, as the MA ES attracts ca. 90 students every academic year and quite a number of FASoS BA alumni participate in the MA ES, the MA ES programme adheres to the 0.5-rule as well.

III Proposed actions for improvement MA EPA

During the site-visit, it became clear that the committee had some doubts about the appropriateness of the final work (internship) in the MA EPA. According to the committee, final work at MA level should be a thesis.

The programme's final work went through some changes in the past years. It first followed up on the NVAO's recommendation (2007) to increase the internship period (from 2 to 3 months) so it would be more substantial as final work. And more recently, the programme developed a path to reorganise the final work, also encompassing a substantive paper next to the internship.

In its self-evaluation report the MA EPA announced that the evaluation paper (module 4) would be considered part of the final work as of 13/14; students would be required to pass the evaluation paper in order to graduate. This suggestion has been discussed with the committee during the site-visit; at the time, it wasn't clear whether the committee would approve or not.

Following the site-visit, however, the programme opted for a different route. It concluded that the evaluation paper could not fully meet the requirements of an academic research paper; the nature of evaluation research as an academic activity as such is rather practice-oriented. Furthermore, for MA EPA students having to write an evaluation paper makes much sense as this will be an activity most of them will encounter in their careers. The programme also still strongly believes that an internship has added value for MA EPA students; the programme's academic foundation plus a focus on the professional practice ensure that, as was commented on by the committee, it fills a niche in the domain of European Studies. The programme has therefore decided to implement a thesis next to the internship; when the committee's draft report arrived October 2013, it became clear that the committee also thought a thesis needed to be implemented.

Thus the programme has implemented a new 'graduation package' as of 13/14:

- 1) Internship (12 weeks, 8 ECTS): the actual work at an institute/in a company
- 2) Internship thesis (8 ECTS): an academic research paper, related to the internship
- 3) Internship report (2 ECTS): non-academic report of internship activities

Students need to have a passing grade for all components in order to graduate. See also figure 1 in annex II. Please see annex III for the assessment form used for the internship thesis; in annex IV the assessment form used for the internship work; in annex V the assessment form used for the internship report. The Board of Examiners' criteria and guidelines for final work (annex I) will be adhered to.

Another element in the organisation of the final work concerns the committee's observed necessary enhancement of training in the required academic skills. Per 13/14 the programme has implemented academic research and writing skills as the core components of the Integrated Skills Track (IST): 9 two-hour sessions from module 3 onwards; the professional skills are now clustered in the first two modules of the programme. Furthermore, a new IST Coordinator with a strong profile in research methods has been appointed. The focus of the IST sessions is on helping students prepare writing their internship thesis. The IST is now assessed via a 'research proposal' to be submitted in module 4. This 3-4 pages research proposal contains an outline of the research objective and methodology applied in the internship thesis; see the IST Manual in annex VI.

Conclusion

The programmes expect that abovementioned actions for improvement provide an adequate and sufficient response to the QANU committee's recommendations and advice. All programmes have made an effort to propose measures to enhance the quality of their programmes, in particular concerning issues in standard 3. The current accreditation will expire 31 December 2014; the programmes expect to have implemented most mentioned actions by then.

BoE position on the assessment of final work at FASoS

PRINCIPLES AND MEASURES IN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF FINAL WORK ASSESSMENT AT FASoS

(BoE policy document amending BoE position EX 12.063 from February 2013)

Pre-amble: Motivation for the current amended version
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In the spring months of 2013, FASoS received visits from QANU designated committees that assessed the quality and organization of the 2 bachelor and 6 of the master programmes of FASoS. The visitation committee reports point at several quality assurance procedures that need to be amended and improved:

- The procedure for appointment of the second grader and the assurance of his/her independence from the first reader
- The fact that too often the same 'grading couples' are working together on the assessment of final work
- The assurance that the final work is linked to the curriculum and that it is, as expected, the materialization of the stated final qualifications of the educational programme
- The assurance that the final work is graded as a 'final product' reflecting the final educational qualifications, and that the process of drafting the final work is not taken into account (and respectively graded) in the assessment of the final work
- The assurance of a consistent match between the qualitative comments stated in the assessment form and the final numeric grade

The FASoS BoE deliberated on the possible measures that are able to address the above-mentioned criticized aspects of the current FASoS practices. For this reason, the BoE proposes amendments to the existing main policy document on the assessment of final work, and concretely suggests:

Criticized aspect	Proposed measure/amendment
1. Independent 2 nd grader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment of the 2nd grader by the final work coordinator → Approval of the list of 2nd graders by the Associate Dean for Education → The 2nd grader is the initiator of the intervision process and is the first to fill-in the assessment form
2. Minimization of frequent use of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Appointment of the 2nd grader

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the same 'grading couples'	by the final work coordinator → Approval of the list of 2 nd graders by the Associate Dean for Education
3. Link of final work to curriculum	→ The link is a required step in the process now, and approval/amendment of the graduation theme is explicitly required
4. Final product and not process is graded	→ The 2 nd grader is the initiator of the intervision process and is the first to fill-in the assessment form → Instructions to staff members that only the merits of the submitted final work, and not other circumstances need to be taken into account during the grading process
5. Consistent match between the assessment comments (qualitative) and the final grade (quantitative)	→ Overview of grade calibration criteria to facilitate the final numerical formation of the grade

For the proposed measures to be implemented and to work in direction of improved quality of the final works it is essential that the normhours granted to the 2nd grader are reconsidered. Given the enlarged responsibilities vested in the 2nd grader in the current text, the BoE expects that the adoption of this proposal will be coupled to an increased hourly compensation for the work of the 2nd grader. If this is not possible, the quality of the performed assessment work might be jeopardized and instead of a quality improvement the whole proposal might have a reverse effect.

1. Quality assurance of final work assessment procedures

According to article 7.12(2) WHW the BoE should act as a warrant of the final qualifications acquired in the educational programme. Consequently, the BoE considers as its primary responsibility to safeguard the quality of assessment of the final work at FASoS. The final work (afstudeerwerk), because of the importance attached to it as the final test of the programme, requires particularly careful quality assurance measures. This document, therefore, defines the procedural requirements and minimum standards that need to be followed in grading final work in the FASoS educational programmes. The principles and quality assurance measures stated in this document **apply to all FASoS educational programmes** both at BA and MA level without exceptions.

2. Definition of final work

What constitutes final work varies per programme and depends on the educational vision and didactic approach. It is indisputable, however, that the final work is an extended piece of independent academic work, that the final work is the ultimate test for the acquired final qualifications, and that as such the final work should be tightly linked to the followed educational curriculum. In order to ensure this link between the final work and the acquired final qualifications, every FASoS degree programme should define clearly (in a separate TER article) what constitutes the programme's final work (afstudeerwerk). The definition of the final work should reflect the final qualifications envisaged by the educational programme, and should be an educational unit that requires a substantive workload (at least 12 ECTS).

At FASoS the final work takes always the form of an **academic thesis**, sometimes in conjunction with other educational units (e.g. internship work, project work, fieldwork report) as in the MA programmes MA EPA, MA GDS or MA MC. The BoE will refer to the situation when the final work is composed of several deliverables (next to the academic thesis) with the term '**graduation package**'. In case of graduation packages each element of such final work package is subject to the quality assurance criteria mentioned in this document.

3. Procedural standards to be followed in the assessment of final work

Regardless of the concrete educational and respective assessment format, the BoE formulates the following minimum standards and procedural guidelines that need to be observed by the assessment of final work at FASoS for all programmes at BA and MA level and for each element of the final work (in case the final work is composed of several elements):

1. Educational organization and appointment of a final work coordinator

The final work should administratively be organized as a course i.e. should have:

- a SAP number,
- a course coordinator,
- ELEUM pages and SafeAssignment submission points,
- first examination date and a re-sit date, etc.

In case of graduation packages (i.e. several educational units that together form the final work), each element of the final work package has to be organized administratively as a separate course. On this basis the BoE will be able to oversee the process, and check whether the defined procedures have been followed (e.g. in a case of appeal against the grade). Moreover, this measure will increase the transparency about the submission deadlines

BoE position on the assessment of final work at FASoS

and grading process, etc. Scheduling final works as 'ordinary courses' also implies: safeguarding delivery deadlines and registration of grades as 'first sit' and 'resit' (i.e. a final work handed in at the resit-deadline is registered as a resit, even if the student did not submit anything at the first sit deadline).

For the sake of clarity in the vested responsibility, the Faculty Board explicitly appoints the coordinators of final work courses at FASoS. In turn, the coordinator of the final work is the one to appoint the 1st grader(supervisor), and the 2nd grader (responsible examiner), and to observe hereby that the requirements listed under point 3 below are met. It is explicitly not allowed that the 1st grader (supervisor) selects the 2nd grader in order to assure the independence of the second grader. Both should be appointed explicitly by the final work coordinator, who observes that the competences and expertise are adequate for the concrete final work. Moreover, the Director of Education approves the list of selected 2nd graders that is suggested by the final work coordinator. This measure is necessary in order to ensure that the 2nd graders are independently appointed, and furthermore, that it is not the same cluster of 'grading couples' that frequently assess final works together.

2. Topic selection

The final work should relate to the curriculum (i.e. the modules followed by the students during the programme), and should be a materialization and an adequate test of the final qualifications envisioned by the programme. It is therefore expected that the approval of the final work's topic is a formal step in the supervision trajectory, and that this topic is altered only upon explicit new approval.

3. Two graders

The appointment of two graders for the assessment of final work is widely¹ seen as the main mark of quality assurance, because two graders are expected to increase the fairness and transparency of the grading process². Not only does the BoE adhere to this general principle but also recommends additional criteria, namely that the 2nd grader (the responsible examiner) is a FASoS examiner. Moreover, the responsible examiner should hold a PhD title, if the final work concerns an MA programme. The term 'responsible examiner' refers to the duty of the second grader, who has the responsibility to organize the intervision process with the 1st grader (usually the supervisor), to fill-in the assessment form and to send the grade to the Exam Administration. The responsible examiner is not the course coordinator of the final work (see below).

¹ See p. 17 of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" approved and published by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2005, Helsinki, Finland (accessed at: [http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf) on 13 February 2013).

² Hereby not only is the "four-eye" principle followed, but it is expected that the 2nd grader is going to counter-balance a possible drift of the 1st grader (the supervisor), who has a tendency to take the process of writing (and student progress) into account, instead of assessing only the final work at hand as a 'product'.

BoE position on the assessment of final work at FASoS

The two graders can exchange views and discuss their assessment of the final work, and the envisioned grade (i.e. intervision is possible). The BoE recognizes that there is an established tradition at FASoS to follow such an intervision process, and recommends that it is upheld. A full-fledged "double-blind" procedure of grading of final work would be more transparent, but at this moment it is seen as not feasible at FASoS. Hence, after a discussion about the assessed work the 2 graders have to **both** agree on the comments and on the final grade. This is reflected in the assessment form where the commonly agreed comments are listed.

In case of disagreement between the two graders, the final work coordinator has to appoint a 3rd grader who is an experienced senior staff member (for example an associate professor or a professor). Having read/heard the opinion of the two graders, the third grader takes a majority decision, agreeing with or convincing at least one of the previous graders, to come to a final grade. In such cases, the 3rd grader completes the assessment form, and sends it to the Exam Administration (i.e. assumes the role of responsible examiner). Following this procedure means that the final grade will always be a grade two examiners have agreed upon.

In order to safeguard the quality of the assessment process, the BoE recommends the maximum of BA final works that a grader can supervise and second-grade per academic year to be 20 (i.e. maximum 10 supervised and maximum 10 second-graded), and the maximum MA final works that a grader can supervise and second-grade per academic year to be 10 (i.e. maximum 5 supervised and 5 maximum second-graded).

Furthermore, the BoE would like to stress the importance of the team meetings, bringing together experienced and young examiners and allowing them to share their personal assessment of an (anonymous) sample thesis and make explicit all considerations in the grading process. This kind of meetings-workshops (organized by the DoSs on a yearly basis and for each programme) are very necessary, especially as most programmes have an international teaching staff with different disciplinary backgrounds, and different conceptions of grading scales. Because of their calibration effect, final-work-grading-workshops are certainly indispensable for new staff, in order to ensure the fairness and consistency of grading, and for this reason the BoE strongly recommends them to all new to FASoS staff members.

4. Assessment form for final work

In the grading process a designated assessment form is used that explicitly specifies the grading criteria. Given its legal obligations to act as a warrant of the final educational qualifications, the BoE approves **all** the assessment forms applied in the FASoS educational programmes **before** they are actually used by the graders. Moreover, the BoE acts as a 'keeper' of these assessment forms i.e. is a repository of the most up-to-date versions by publishing them on the BoE pages of the FASoS Intranet. Concretely, in April of every academic year the final work coordinator of each programme provides the BoE with the form(s) envisioned for use in that year. The BoE will approve and publish it on the BoE pages of the FASoS Intranet. In this way all graders will have a clear reference point where the relevant forms are

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stored, and the BoE will also be able to oversee (and recommend improvements to) the assessment process of final work and thereby ensure the quality of grading of final work.

It is the responsibility of the 2nd grader (responsible examiner) to fill-in the assessment form before the intervision session(s) with the 1st grader. After the intervision contact (e.g. meeting, telephone call, Skype session, etc.) the responsible examiner incorporates the comments, feedback and additions suggested by the first grader into the assessment form. In this way the assessment form, which is also the feedback form the student receives, is a common document that carries the signature of both graders. The 2nd grader is responsible for informing the Exam Administration on time (within 13 working days) about the grade and for submitting the assessment form.

In the (rare) cases when a 3rd grader is appointed, it is for this 3rd grader to complete the assessment form (including the comments that (s)he deems appropriate and relevant for justification of the final grade (s)he determined), and to submit it to the Exam Administration. In such cases, a (reasonably short) deviation from the standard term for the reporting of the grades (13 working days) is acceptable.

5. Electronic submission via Safe Assignment

In accordance with the "Procedure for assessment and archiving of FASoS final work" and the general FASoS exam regulations, the final work should be submitted via a SafeAssignment submission point on ELEUM. It is the responsibility of the final work coordinator to create and activate such a point. The submission of hard copies of the final work is not allowed in order to assure that the work is checked for plagiarism and that it is identical to the archived work.

6. Archiving of the final work

All final works are archived at FASoS. Concretely, for every final work the FASoS archive includes:

- A digital copy of the final work submitted by the student;
- the SafeAssignment report, and
- the assessment form as submitted by the responsible examiner.

The archiving is, in principle, arranged administratively by the FASoS support staff - the Office of Student Affairs - according to the "Procedure for assessment and archiving of FASoS final work" (lastly revised in 2013). The main role of the academic staff in the process of archiving is to submit the filled-in assessment form to the Exam Administration.

It is the primary responsibility of the FASoS Management team (Education Institute, Directors of Study, and final work coordinators) to make sure that the described in this document principles and measures for the quality assurance of final work are implemented and observed in practice. In addition, the BoE will verify that the norms and guidelines are observed by drawing annually a random sample from the graded final works of each FASoS programme. In the autumn of 2014 the BoE intends to execute the first round of quality checks.

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The appendices to this policy document aim to provide indicative non-binding suggestions regarding the implementation of the described quality assurance standards in the cases of the final thesis (annex 1), in the organization of the academic internship (annex 2), provides examples of assessment forms (annex 3), and considerations for the calibration and consistency of grades (annex 4). Unlike the mandatory standards stipulated in the main text, the suggestions in the annexes are a recommended roadmap that can be followed by the Management team in the implementation phase, but have a non-binding character.

Maastricht, 1 November 2013

FASoS Board of Examiners:

Elissaveta Radulova (Chair)
Manuel Stoffers (Vice-Chair)
Giselle Bosse (Board Member)
Charles van Leeuwen (Board Member)

ANNEX 1. THE FINAL THESIS

1. Background and assumptions

Universities are distinguished from other educational institutions by the conduct of advanced academic research. It is expected that the scholarly findings inform the teaching programmes, and 'feed into' the educational curricula. University students are exposed to this culture of scholarly enquiry, and are taught directly (via specialized courses) or indirectly (via socialization into the academic climate) to accomplish academic research themselves. It is therefore quite realistic to expect that university graduates are able to design and execute a research project under the supervision of a senior academic.

The final thesis is the decisive test at the end of an educational programme, and the most common 'avenue' to a university degree. It is the ultimate proof that the graduate has reached the defined level of final qualifications. It is hence only logical, given the strong link between teaching and research at universities, that the final thesis at universities is in general a well-argued **research** paper.¹

A research paper presents the findings of an independent methodical scholarly enquiry. It should demonstrate that the student is able to:

- devise and conduct research of a limited size with the use of methods and techniques relevant to the 'discipline' (i.e. Arts and Culture, European Studies, etc.) /domain of the research in question;
- articulate a clear and feasible research question;
- collect the sources and literature that are required to answer the research question as outlined above;
- use the results of the research (i.e. selection and analysis of the sources) as to articulate a well-rounded conclusion;
- include the results of the research in a clear, concise and well-written academic argument of about *** words."

Consequently, the **main criteria to grade final theses** are related to the clarity and focus of the research question, the research design (i.e. the choice of the applied analytical methods and the studied sources), the argumentation and use of academic language, the critical discussion of the research findings and more in general the observance of formal academic requirements. These grading criteria are mentioned separately on the final work assessment form.

The **division line between BA and MA final theses** can be drawn with regard to three main aspects:

- the scope and depth of the analysis

¹ It has to be acknowledged that a 'research paper' might have a different meaning for the different disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences.

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- the greater sophistication in the performed data collection/analysis
- the originality and rigor of the performed analysis

2. The organization of the supervision trajectory

The drafting of the final thesis is a lengthy process that is usually administratively structured as a 1-semester long module². In this period the drafting of the thesis is supported by a supervisor by means of consultation meetings. It is good practice to plan at least 4 such meetings between the student and the supervisor, whereby at least 2 of them are obligatory. Typically, the supervision trajectory is structured as follows:

1. Topic selection

The topic of the final work should be directly related to the curriculum (i.e. the modules) followed by the students during the programme. It is therefore recommended that the final thesis coordinator prepares a list of the possible domains that may be selected by the students for the drafting of the final work. Furthermore, it is recommended that the formal approval of the thesis topic is a step in the supervision trajectory, and that this topic is altered only upon explicit (new) approval.³

2. Appointment of supervisor (1st grader)

The thesis supervisor is appointed by the thesis coordinator depending on the selected thesis topic and/or the envisioned research approach as specified in the research proposal submitted by the student. Hereby the students themselves may come with proposals, which will be taken into account by the thesis coordinator. He/she takes the decision whom to appoint depending on the expertise of the available supervisors.

²The BoE requires that the drafting of the final work is administratively organized as a course (with a Sap code, course coordinator, ELEUM pages, first examination date and a re-sit date, etc).

³Most of the FASoS MA programmes provide separate modules on research skills and research design whereby the goal of these modules/skills trainings is the research proposal/plan of the thesis. In such cases, the BoE recommends that the thesis topic is altered only upon the explicit approval of the thesis coordinator and the supervisor.

3. Consultation meetings

The student meets the supervisor at least 4 times (two consultation meetings could be made mandatory). The rationale behind this proposal is that usually if students do not make use of the consultation meetings with the supervisor various deficiencies are displayed in the submitted thesis (which could have easily been tackled during the supervision trajectory). The consequence is that the student has to re-draft, and the graders re-grade (usually without additional normhours allocated). This presents a needless expense of resources and time, and can easily be prevented by a strict (and possibly mandatory) timeline of supervision meetings.

Among other topics, the supervision sessions can deal with the following topics :

- Thesis rationale: topic, research question, relevance, literature review, theoretical approach, student motivation
- Research design: refined RQ, basic model of the study, methods for data collection, sources and academic literature, methods for data analysis
- Research process: collection of data, preliminary findings, viability of the initial research design, time management
- Analysis and argumentation: findings, general layout of the argument, main conclusions, overall structure of the thesis
- Reflection on draft texts: language use, efficiency, academic conventions, priorities
- Thesis process: organization, time management, confidence building, links to course curriculum, events to follow, meetings with other specialists, etc.

3. The organization of the assessment process

In order to implement the policy of final work assessment at FASoS the BoE recommends the following procedural routine:

1. Appointment of second grader

The thesis coordinator appoints the 2nd grader independently of the 1st grader. The 2nd grader assesses the thesis, fills-in the assessment form⁴, and mails it to the 1st grader (the supervisor). Then the two graders plan a meeting (could also be via Skype or e-mail) to discuss the thesis and the grade.

⁴ Annex 3 provides an example of an assessment form.

2. Intervision

The two graders share their findings about the thesis and agree on the comments to be included in the assessment form. Hereby the thesis is graded strictly in terms of an academic 'product', while progress/ personal difficulties during the drafting are not taken into account. Any additional comments by the 1st grader (the supervisor) are included on the form. The two graders agree on a final grade (scale 1-10). Guidelines on how to convert the qualitative comments from the assessment form into a numeric grade (1-10) are provided in Annex 4. The assessment form is signed.

In case of disagreement between the two examiners, the final thesis coordinator has to appoint a 3rd grader to act as the responsible examiner who is an experienced senior staff member (for example an associate professor or a professor). Having read the thesis and heard the opinion of the two previous graders, the third grader takes a majority decision, agreeing with or convincing at least one of the previous graders, to come to a final grade. In such cases, the 3rd grader completes the assessment form, and sends it to the Exam Administration. Following this procedure means that the final grade will always be a grade two examiners have agreed upon.

ANNEX 2. THE ACADEMIC INTERNSHIP

1. Background and assumptions

According to the current teaching and exam regulations at FASoS several MA programmes recognize the academic internship as a route to graduation. In such cases the final work consists of several deliverables - a *graduation package*. This annex provides implementation suggestions and a summary of good practices with regard to the graduation package called 'academic internship'.

The academic internship is a common pathway to graduation in educational programmes of the higher education not the least because they provide a smooth transition of the students to their realization on the labour market. This pragmatic goal notwithstanding, the main objective of the academic internship is to apply the knowledge and understanding of the various subjects followed during the educational programme into 'real-life' practical conditions. The internship thus is a crucial opportunity to gain hands-on experience, to learn directly, to acquire a much-needed practical orientation as to the possible jobs after graduation and their content. Moreover, the students usually expand their social network during the internship, and receive invaluable coaching, which facilitates the smooth transition to the job market.

Following from the main objective – to allow the direct application of the academic knowledge in a practical context – the internship needs to be hosted by a relevant and well-chosen organization. In principle, the students look themselves for the most suitable organization to host their internship period according to the students' interests and aspirations. Nevertheless, the internship should be relevant, and the final work coordinator has the important role to observe that the academic standards are not neglected in favour of practical considerations. For this reason, the final work coordinator has to approve the host organization and the internship plan. As facilitation in this process, it might be useful for the DoSs to prepare a list of possible host organizations (e.g. where students from previous cohorts have been an intern).

In sum, a good academic internship should:

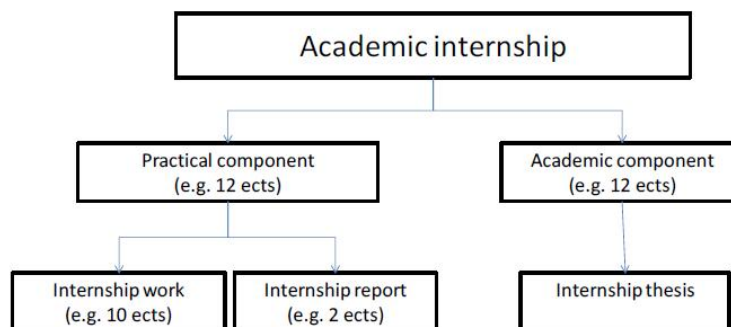
- provide insight into the professional activity linked to the field of study;
- have clearly defined learning objectives;
- ideally allow the student to get involved in everyday working life, including staff meetings, seminars etc.;
- provide an insight into the general structure and social function of the organization;
- enable the student to take on responsibility and to make a (substantial) contribution.

2. Typical organization of academic internships

First of all, a distinction has to be made between the internship as one **educational unit** (element) of the curriculum (e.g. BA CW and BA ES internships, CAST and RMES research internships), and the internship as **the final student work before graduation**. While in the first case the grading regime can be 'lighter' i.e. one grader, in the second case the same high standards of assuring quality of final work assessment should be applied.

The BoE proposes that every internship which is a pathway to graduation (i.e. counts as final work) is a graduation package and requires 3 deliverables see Fig. 1:

- **Internship thesis** - academic (research) paper which is on a topic related to the internship, and importantly is linked to the main modules of the programme (followed in the 1st semester)
- **Internship work** - work delivered at the host organization (this is the bulk of the invested hours during the internship trajectory - usually 10 weeks or more)
- **Internship report** - a paper that reflects in an academic way on the internship work and the gained experience, moreover analyses the social function of the host-organization and the learning curve accomplished during the internship. In the internship report is assessed the ability to situate one's competences and learning curve in the context of a professional workfield.



The 3 elements together form the 'graduation package', which implies that each of these 3 deliverables is subject to the FASoS standards for the assurance of quality of grading of final work (see the 6 standards in the main text). Each of these deliverables is considered a separate educational unit for the purposes of the exam administration and archiving (i.e. has a separate SAP code, a regular sit and a resit, a responsible examiner). The number of ECTS is up to the general set-up of the programme.

For each of the three elements applies the usual rule of 2 graders, whereby they do not have to coincide for the practical and the academic

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components i.e. the final thesis may be graded by a different grading couple than the internship report and work.

In the case of internship work, one of the 2 graders is coming from the host organization, the other examiner is always a FASoS examiner. This FASoS examiner should be one of the graders of the internship report together with an additionally appointed 2nd grader.

The BoE recommends *fail/pass/excellent grading scale* for assessment of the internship work because the FASoS examiner does not have sufficient insight into the work to give a numeric grade (due to mediated impressions from the organizational supervisor). For the thesis and the report the usual *10-point grading scale* is applied. Examples of assessment forms of the 2 practical components of the internship (work and report) are enclosed in Annex 3. It is assumed that the final thesis assessment form serves in the assessment of the internship thesis (see annex 3).

3. The organization of the internship supervision trajectory (practical component of the internship)

This part of the document concerns only the supervision and assessment of the 2 practical components of the academic internship. For the internship thesis - the supervision and assessment guidelines for the final thesis in annex 1 apply. The practical components of the internship usually take at least 2-3 months, and are followed by a FASoS internship supervisor by means of consultation meetings (these do not have to be held in person, but can be arranged via e-mail, telephone or Skype). The BoE recommends at least 3 such meetings between the student and the supervisor. Typically, the supervision trajectory is structured as follows:

1. Selection of host organization

It is expected that the internship work is directly related to the programme curriculum followed by the students (i.e. the modules and the internship thesis). It is therefore recommended that the final work coordinator prepares a list of the possible themes that may be selected by the students for the drafting of the final work. Related to that a list of relevant host organizations should be presented to the students. Once the students form their preferences, and initial talks are held, the final work coordinator signs internship agreements for all the students. The agreement should include the names of the host and FASoS supervisor, the length, the number of ECTS, the location of the internship, the internship topic and all other relevant information⁵.

⁵ Many host organizations have a predefined format for the internship agreements, so FASoS should be flexible in accommodating the requirements. For these reasons, the presented in Annex 2 format of internship agreement is of very tentative nature. Yet, this agreement should be assuring high levels of safety and dignified working conditions for our students. It is the

2. Elaboration of an internship plan

In accordance with the formal internship agreement, the student drafts an internship plan, whereby (s)he outlines the planned activities, their timeline, the competences that will be trained/gained, the expected learning progress, type of deliverables (if any), the academic themes that will be touched upon during the internship (and that might serve as a stepping stone toward the completion of the internship thesis), etc. The internship plan needs to be approved by the internship supervisor and will be an element of the final internship report.

3. Appointment of FASoS internship supervisor (responsible examiner)

The internship supervisor is appointed by the final work coordinator in the internship agreement. Hereby the students may come with proposals, which will be taken into account by the final work coordinator. He/she takes the decision who to appoint depending on the expertise of the available supervisors. The internship supervisor approves the internship plan of the student, provides guidance to the student during the internship work, and instructs the student regarding the expected internship report. The internship supervisor is always a FASoS examiner, and the first grader of the internship report.

4. Consultation meetings

The student meets the internship supervisor (might also be organized via phone or Skype) at least 3 times during the internship period, whereby 1-2 of them might be mandatory to pass the internship. Supervision sessions can for example deal with the following topics:

- Internship rationale: prior to the internship period the student meets the supervisor to discuss the internship plan. Discussed is the internship: topic, relevance, main ambitions/goals, what does the student expect to learn, what aspects of his/her competence profile does (s)he aim to improve (possibly: internship research question). Explanation of the grading process, and of the typical format of the internship report (the student should know what to work toward, and respectively what type of data to gather). Links to the internship thesis.
- Internship experiences: somewhere mid-way through the internship, the supervisor and the student hold a talk regarding the internship experiences, work relations, personal and professional competences, the (mis-)match between initial

primary responsibility of the final work coordinator to assure that an adequate internship contract is signed.

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- expectations and actual circumstances, the accomplished learning curve, the progress toward drafting the final internship report
- Conclusion of the internship: again about the internship experiences, the (mis-)match between initial expectations and actual circumstances, the accomplished learning curve, etc. This session should reiterate the rules of the grading process, and the typical format of the internship report (the student should know what needs to be submitted).

4. Guidelines for the organization of the assessment process

The internship assessment observes the general guidelines for the assessment of final work at FASoS. In the context of the academic internship the BoE recommends the following procedural routine:

1. Grading of the internship work

In order to grade the internship work, the academic internship supervisor holds a talk (can be arranged also per e-mail, telephone or via Skype) with the organizational supervisor. The main objective of the talk is to assess the competences and skills demonstrated by the student during the internship, as well as their relevance and applicability in the internship organization. It is essential in this talk to discuss the student's ability to adapt, receive and accommodate feedback, and general capacity to function in the working environment. The host supervisor should receive the opportunity to express his/her views on the intern's work. Still, it is recommended that the host supervisor provides assessment of concrete qualities (as listed in Annex 3 – example-form for internship work). The FASoS supervisor should 'translate' the mediated impressions (as shared by the organizational supervisor) to a grade. Given that what is graded (work ethics and performance as perceived by a potential employer) is essentially beyond the assessment competences of the FASoS examiners, and the involved difficulty in assessing based on someone else's impressions, the BoE proposes a qualitative regime of grading on an ordinal scale, whereby:

- 'fail' stands for: an overall impression as expressed by the host supervisor that the intern did not perform at the expected level. Expressions as the following are indicative of a failing grade: "Despite continuous feedback and requests to adjust his/her working behavior did not change. The intern was often late, and constantly underperforming. I will definitely not hire this intern for my organization."
- 'pass' stands for: an overall impression as expressed by the host supervisor that the intern performed at the required level. Common verbalization of this assessment: "His/her working performance was average and comparable to other interns we

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have had. His/her behavior conformed to the required standards. I am satisfied with this intern's work. I might consider hiring this intern (but this will largely depend on the competition)."

- 'excellent' stands for: an overall impression as expressed by the host supervisor that the intern performed excellently. Expressions that are indicative for this grade: "He/she continuously overperformed. This intern worked better than the typical interns at our organization. I will definitely hire this intern."

2. Appointment of an independent second grader for the internship report

The final work coordinator appoints the 2nd grader independently of the 1st grader. The 2nd grader could be one of the graders of the internship thesis, but might also be entirely independent to the case. The 2nd grader as the responsible examiner should be a FASoS examiner. Moreover, the responsible examiner should hold a PhD title, if the final work concerns an MA programme. The 2nd grader assesses the internship report, fills-in the assessment form (see Annex 3), and mails it to the 1st grader (the supervisor). Then the two graders plan a meeting to discuss the report and the grade.

3. Intervention about the internship report

The two graders share their findings about the internship report and agree on the comments in the assessment form. Hereby the internship report is graded strictly in terms of an academic 'product' (i.e. depth of the analysis, ability to reflect, critical thinking, level of writing, etc.), while progress/personal difficulties during the internship (and/or drafting of the report) are not taken into account. Any additional comments by the 1st grader (the supervisor) are included on the form. The two graders agree on a final grade (scale 1-10).

In case of disagreement between the two graders, the final work coordinator has to appoint a 3rd examiner or act him-/herself as a 3rd grader/arbitrator. Having seen/heard the opinion of the two graders, the third grader takes a majority decision, agreeing with or convincing at least one of the previous graders, to come to a final grade. In such cases, the 3rd grader completes the assessment form, and sends it to the Exam Administration. Following this procedure means that the final grade will always be a grade two examiners have agreed upon.

Annex 3 – Examples of Assessment Forms for Final Work

Example 1: Internship Work

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
[name of the programme e.g. MA Globalization & Development Studies] 2012-2013
Assessment of work delivered during internship – [number of ects credits e.g. 10 ects]

This document consists of a three-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner should:

1. Fill in this form electronically, incorporating any relevant points raised by the internship supervisor.
2. Print and sign the assessment form.
3. Submit one hard copy of the form to the Exam Administration, room D-0.06, Grote Gracht 90-92.
4. Send the electronic version of the form to fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl with a copy to the student.

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM!

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for (double click on box below): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit
Name responsible examiner (FASoS supervisor):	Signature:	Grade: <i>(fail/pass/excellent)</i>
Organization hosting the internship (to be copied into the SLcM database):		
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):		

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Evaluation form for the delivered work during the internship

(to be filled-in by the organizational supervisor)

Organizational supervisor: _____

Position/Title: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Superior</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below Average</i>	<i>Unsatis- factory</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Professional attitude						
Punctuality						
Appearance						
Ability to grasp instructions						
Creativity/Ingenuity						
Insight into the work						
Motivation						
Initiative						
Flexibility						
Self discipline						
Analytic ability						
Writing competence						
Communication skills						
Problem-solving skills						
Ability to work independently (without frequent instructions)						
Contact with colleagues and supervisor (team- player)						
Overall quality of work						
Other competencies:						

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What did you observe as the intern's strengths during the internship?

.....
.....
.....

What did you observe as areas that need improvement?

.....
.....
.....

What was the overall progress of the student during the internship?

.....
.....
.....

Other comments?

.....
.....

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Example 2 of Assessment Form for Final Work: Internship Report

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences [official name of the programme e.g. MA Globalization & Development Studies] 2012-2013 Internship Report – [number of ects credits e.g. 2 ects]

This document consists of a three-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner should:

1. Fill in this form electronically, incorporating any relevant points raised by the internship supervisor.
2. Print and sign the assessment form.
3. Submit one hard copy of the form to the Exam Administration, room D-0.06, Grote Gracht 90-92.
4. Send the electronic version of the form to fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl, with a copy to the student.

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM!

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for (double click on box below): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit
Name responsible examiner (FASoS supervisor):	Date of upload (on EleUM):	Safe Assignment score (in %):
Signature:	Grade:	Provide explanation for the Safe Assignment score (if needed):
Organization hosting the internship (to be copied into the SLcM database):		
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):		

Criteria	Evaluation/ remarks	Description / questions to be addressed
1. Formal Requirements		Confirms the internship report to the required format and length (expected number of words)? Does the text have a clear structure and coherent parts? Does the report have an appropriate (i.e. academic) style and tone of voice? What is the quality of English spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure?
2. The host organization and the larger context		Does the report provide a contextualizing background, give a characterisation of the internship institution and its sphere of activity? Is it clear what are the goals and the societal relevance of the organization? <i>Simple copy-paste from the organizational website is not acceptable here.</i>

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		<p>Does the report provide a clear description of the organizational unit where the intern was located?</p> <p>Is there an adequate assessment of the position and significance of the organizational unit in the overall organizational structure and in the larger domain of social activity of the organization?</p>
3. The internship in practice (content)		<p>Does the report provide a clear outline of the type of work entrusted to the intern (e.g. description of the daily routine, or projects in which the intern participated, or list of tasks, or diary of the internship per week)?</p> <p>Does the report discuss what the student accomplished during the internship?</p> <p>(If applicable) Does the report provide examples of the work delivered during the internship (e.g. excerpts of a paper/ deliverable)?</p> <p>Is the information in the report sound, factual, and accurate?</p> <p>Does the report clarify how the student addressed feedback, critique, instructions and comments of the (internal and external) supervisors?</p>
4. Applied and acquired competences		<p>Does the report show the student's ability to use and bring in knowledge acquired during the study? Which concrete competences/skills?</p> <p>Does the report address newly acquired skills? Which ones?</p> <p>(If applicable) Did the student present evidence that (s)he could function as part of a multidisciplinary team and was the student able to communicate with different professionals within the organisation?</p> <p>(If applicable) Did the student present evidence that (s)he was a good team-player?</p> <p>(If applicable) Did the student present evidence that (s)he could function within a multicultural team? How did (s)he deal with arising challenges in this regard?</p> <p>Does the report discuss whether the expectations of the internship were fulfilled?</p> <p>What did the student learn about his/her professional preparation?</p>
5. Insight and critical reflection		<p>Does the student reflect upon his/her personal strengths and weaknesses (gaps in the academic and/or practical preparation for the internship)?</p> <p>Does the student discuss areas for personal improvement?</p> <p>What is the personal assessment of the student for the accomplished learning curve?</p> <p>Does the student reflect on suggestions/motivations (s)he got for his/her study and future profession?</p> <p>Does the student reflect upon the linkages between the internship and the curriculum of the MA study (identifying strengths and weaknesses of the program)?</p>

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<p>6. Overall evaluation of the internship trajectory</p>		<p>Does the student discuss how the internship experience/trajectory could be improved?</p> <p>Does the report clarify well the motivation and the added value of the internship? How do you evaluate the originality of the internship's subject and approach?</p> <p>Is the student able to evaluate the internship experiences and to analyse and reflect on the gathered observations about the host organization/ professional sector?</p> <p>Is the student able to situate its own (positive and negative) experiences and learn from them? Was the self-assessment of the student's learning curve adequate in your view?</p> <p>Does the student provide an insightful evaluation of the internship organization, sphere of activity and internal structure?</p> <p>Does the report reflect the student's progress in the MA curriculum?</p> <p>Are the goals of the internship accomplished?</p>
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Implementation suggestions and good practices in the assessment of final work at FASoS

Example 3 of Assessment Form for Final Work: Bachelor thesis

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
BA European Studies (ES) (2012-2013)

Assessment Form – Bachelor Paper I (6 ects) and Bachelor Paper II (12 ects)

This document consists of a two-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner (first reader/supervisor) should:

1. Fill in this form electronically (when applicable, by double clicking the relevant check box);
2. Send an email with the final assessment form to the Exam Administration (fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl), with a copy to the student and (if applicable) to the second reader;
3. Print *one* completed form, sign it and hand it in at the Exam Administration (D-0.14) – collect the signature from the second reader (if applicable).

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM.

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit	Date of upload on EleUM:
Main title of the thesis (to be copied into the SLcM database):			BA Paper I <input type="checkbox"/> BA Paper II <input type="checkbox"/>
SafeAssign percentage:	Explanation percentage:		
Name responsible examiner (second reader):		Name first reader (i.e. supervisor):	
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):			
Grade:			
Signature responsible examiner (second grader):		Signature first grader/supervisor):	

Did the student meet the <i>intermediate</i> deadlines:			
25 January 2013: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	18 February 2013: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	18 March 2013: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	1 May 2013: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Implementation suggestions and good practices in the assessment of final work at FASoS

Notes for supervisors:

- In case you have agreed upon slightly different dates with your students you can still tick the boxes of the official intermediate deadlines;
- Students who did not meet at least 2 out of 4 deadlines (including at least 1 draft deadline) can no longer participate in the course and cannot receive a grade.

Criteria	Evaluation/ remarks	Description / reminders
1. Formal Requirements		Does the paper have an appropriate length? Are title page and type page (margins, indentation, lettering, line spacing, etc.) cf. ES Style Sheet? Is the bibliography formatted according to the APA guidelines? Documentation: are quotations, footnotes, and in-text references cf. ES Style Sheet?
2. Research Problem		Is the topic of this paper sufficiently focused? Is there a clear research question that helps to direct the research & writing process? Is the wider significance (or rationale) of the research question made clear? Is the problem well positioned <i>vis-à-vis</i> societal problems and existing academic studies?
3. Structure		Does the introduction provide a contextualizing background, state the research problem, and outline a response to this problem? Does conclusion return to research problem (present main findings & their significance)? Does the text consist of coherent parts, which are well connected to each other, and presented in a logical sequence?
4. Data Collection & Analysis		Does the selection of empirical data/primary sources help to answer the research question? Are the potentials and limitations of available data/primary sources acknowledged? Does the author (provide insight in) use (of) qualitative and/or quantitative method(s) for data collection and/or analysis? Does the author make use of theory and/or analytical concepts in data analysis?
5. Argumentation		Does the paper defend a central claim/provide main answer to the research question? Is the main claim or thesis supported by good reasons and reliable evidence? Does the author anticipate (acknowledge & respond to) alternative accounts?
6. Language & Rhetorical Skills		How do you assess the author's sense of audience? Does the paper have an appropriate (i.e. academic) tone of voice? Quality of English spelling, grammar, punctuation. Quality of sentence structure, transition between sentences, paragraph development. Quality of titling, subheadings, opening and final words.

Implementation suggestions and good practices in the assessment of final work at FASoS

7. Contents		How do you evaluate the originality of this paper's subject and approach? How thorough is the analysis in this paper, how convincing is the author's argument? Does the paper reflect the student's progress in the European Studies curriculum? Does the student show an ability to make use of feedback on previous draft(s)? What are the principal strengths and weaknesses? Does the thesis have potential for further development – which aspects?
<u>Additional Remarks:</u> Important! Please stipulate in the case of a 6 or 6.5 grade, what quality(ies) of the thesis ultimately meant it was worthy of receiving a passing grade, rather than a fail.		

ANNEX 4. The use of the Dutch grading scale for final work: some considerations for the calibration and consistency of grades

FASoS applies the Dutch grading scale, ranging from 0 to 10. Even if there may exist some differences in its use among the various FASoS programmes, the general criteria in applying the grading scale are supposed to be the same. The considerations listed in this annex aim to support the formation of the final numeric grade.

From grading criteria to grading scale

A thesis is a complex text. This is one of the reasons why it is difficult to grade. The different assessment criteria are indicated in an assessment form, but these criteria cannot be translated directly into a specific grade. The final grade normally takes into account the overall-quality of the thesis but also weighs its stronger and weaker aspects. It would be an overt simplification to give a description of the typical 5, the typical 6, etc. as if students perform equally on all criteria mentioned in the assessment form. This being said, a few general indications about the application of the Dutch grading scale on final work theses can be provided.

The use of insufficient grades:

The most frequent reasons for giving an insufficient grade to a final thesis, are:

- the thesis does not meet formal requirements (length, bibliography, use of references)
- it has no clear research question, objectives are not clearly specified
- it has no theoretical perspective or relevant conceptual framework
- it lacks a clear methodology
- it is not enough embedded in academic literature
- it has inadequate acknowledgement of sources
- it is badly organized, no clear argumentation, disjointed parts
- it has unclear or weak language, there is a lack of final editing
- the thesis shows too little independence of mind in choice and analysis of its sources. If a student performs badly for one of these criteria, he/she fails. Often an insufficient thesis shows weaknesses in more than one domain, as they influence each other. The Dutch grading system has a relatively long scale to express insufficiency, ranging from 1 to 5,5. In our Faculty 5,5 indicates that a thesis can be sufficient with a few corrections (but important enough to fail it in a first round), 5 indicates that a thesis needs a number of corrections, 4 indicates the need of major improvements, lower grades indicate something fundamentally wrong.

A thesis suspected of containing plagiarism should NOT be (down-) graded but instead be sent directly to the Board of Examiners. The BoE decides on plagiarism cases and will invalidate theses which are found to contain plagiarism.

The use of intermediate grades:

Intermediate grades are given to theses meeting the standards, but with some problems or not convincing (not well-done) with regard to many aspects. The

Implementation suggestions and good practices in the assessment of final work at FASoS

Dutch grading scale uses the term 'satisfactory' to indicate a pass but also reserve. In general, intermediate grades are given to theses:

- meeting the formal requirements but with some weaknesses (minor shortcomings)
- with evidence of critical thought but with some weaker parts
- with a limited theoretical perspective
- with a limited range of sources used
- showing sufficient language competences, but a number of shortcomings might be present
- showing a number of gaps, inaccuracies or occasional sloppiness in the overall presentation

The Dutch grading system has a relatively short scale to express a pass/satisfactory performance, ranging from 6 till 7. Note of attention: 7,5 already indicates that a thesis is quite good.

The use of good and excellent grades:

Good or excellent grades are given to final work showing that a student masters all academic competences specified in the grading criteria. The thesis is a convincing piece of work and has no important weaknesses. This means in practice also:

- it is clearly written and well-organized with reference to the objectives of the thesis
- it is well-presented in terms of references, bibliography, chapter headings, etc.
- it shows strong evidence of critical thought in the relevant subject area
- it offers a good perspective of the programme's disciplinary domain
- it may contain some minor gaps or inaccuracies

The Dutch grading system has a relatively short scale to express good and excellent grades, ranging from 7,5 till 9 (in FASoS 9,5 and 10 are rarely used, only for extra-ordinary performances). 7,5 indicates that the thesis is quite good, but still with a number of minor gaps and inaccuracies, one or two aspects could be more convincing (better developed). 8 is a standard for good work. The reasons to go beyond and grade a thesis with 8,5 or 9 may be:

- it is an original and creative piece of work
- it shows independent and intelligent research and analysis
- it is potentially publishable
- it has only very few shortcomings or inaccuracies

The importance of team meetings among graders

It is good practice at FASoS to organize team meetings, bringing together experienced and young examiners and allowing them to share their personal assessment of an (anonymous) sample thesis and make explicit all considerations in the grading process. These meetings (organized on a yearly basis and for each programme) are very necessary, especially as most programmes have an international teaching staff with different disciplinary backgrounds, and different conceptions of grading scales. They are certainly indispensable for new staff. If examiners discuss a pass/fail decision (5 or 6?), an intermediate / above/below average score (why is it 7, why less or more?) and/or a 'good/excellent' decision (7,5, 8 or 9?), the effect will be a certain calibration and consistency in grading. Next to these collective sessions, the intervision meetings between first and second graders also have effects on the

Implementation suggestions and good practices in the assessment of final work at FASoS

calibration and consistency of grades, in the short term and also in the long term. Staff interested in more information and in the history of the Dutch grading scale are referred to the BoE document on the subject, which can be found on the BoE pages of the Educational institute (FASoS intranet).

Annex II MA EPA curriculum overview

September, October	<p>Module 1 – Perspectives on Europe</p> <p>ECTS: 11</p> <p>Core question: Which domestic backgrounds and theoretical concepts matter for European integration?</p> <p>Core disciplines: political science, comparative politics, economics, law, cultural studies, history</p>	<p>Integrated Skills Track</p> <p>ECTS: 4</p> <p><i>Stronger focus on academic writing skills, ending in submission of a research design for the internship thesis at the end of module 4</i></p>
November, December	<p>Module 2 – Governance in the EU</p> <p>ECTS: 11</p> <p>Core question: How does 'Brussels' work?</p> <p>Core disciplines: public administration, political science, economics, international relations</p>	
January	<p>Module 3 – Lobbying in the EU</p> <p>ECTS: 5</p> <p>Core question: How can one influence the EU policy process?</p> <p>Core disciplines: political science, public administration, cultural studies</p>	
February, March	<p>Module 4 – Implementation and Evaluation of EU Policy</p> <p>ECTS: 11</p> <p>Core question: How do EU policies fare in action at the Member State level?</p> <p>Core disciplines: Public administration, policy analysis, law</p>	
April, May, June	<p>Module 5 – Internship</p> <p>ECTS: 8 for internship thesis</p> <p>ECTS: 8 for internship work</p> <p>ECTS: 2 for internship report</p>	

The highlighted components together form the final work of the MA EPA

Annex III MA EPA Assessment form internship thesis

Internship Thesis

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
 MA European Public Administration (EPA) (2013-2014)
 Assessment Form – Internship Thesis (8 erts)

This document consists of a two-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner (second reader) should:

1. Fill in this form electronically (when applicable, by double clicking the relevant check box);
2. Send an email with the final assessment form to the Exam Administration (fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl), with a copy to the student and (if applicable) to the second reader;
3. Print *one* completed form, sign it and hand it in at the Exam Administration (D-0.14) – collect the signature from the second reader (if applicable).

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM.

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for: <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit	Date of upload on EleUM:
Main title of the thesis (to be copied into the SLcM database):			
SafeAssign percentage:	Explanation percentage:		
Name responsible examiner (second reader):		Name first reader (i.e. supervisor):	
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):			
Grade:			
Signature responsible examiner (second reader):		Signature first reader (supervisor):	

Criteria	Evaluation/ remarks	Description / reminders – please note that the questions below are indicative only and do not need to be answered individually or in their entirety.
1. Formal requirements		Does the paper have an appropriate length? Are title page and type page (margins, indentation, lettering, line spacing, etc.) cf. ES style sheet? Is the bibliography formatted according to the APA guidelines?

		Documentation: are quotations, footnotes, and in-text references cf. ES style-sheet?
2. Structure		Does the introduction provide a contextualizing background, state the research problem, and outline a response to this problem? Does conclusion return to research problem (present main findings & their significance)? Does the text consist of coherent parts, which are well connected to each other, and presented in a logical sequence?
3. Research problem		Is the topic of this paper sufficiently focused? Is there a clear research question that helps to direct the research & writing process? Is the wider significance (or rationale) of the research question made clear? Is the problem well positioned <i>vis-à-vis</i> societal problems and existing academic studies? How thorough was the literature review?
4. Data collection & Analysis		Does the selection of empirical data/primary sources help to answer the research question? Are the potentials and limitations of available data/primary sources acknowledged? Does the author (provide insight in) use (of) qualitative and/or quantitative method(s) for data collection and/or analysis? Does he/she explain the methodology? Does the author make use of theory and/or analytical concepts in data analysis? Did the author bring the theory back in? How useful was the case study?
5. Argumentation		Does the paper defend a central claim/provide main answer to the research question? Is the main claim or thesis supported by good reasons and reliable evidence? Does the author anticipate (acknowledge & respond to) alternative accounts? How thorough is the analysis in this paper? How convincing is the author's argument?
6. Language & Rhetorical skills		Does the paper have an appropriate (i.e. academic) tone of voice? Quality of English spelling, grammar, punctuation. Quality of sentence structure, transition between sentences, paragraph development. Quality of titling, subheadings, opening and final words.
7. Originality (and creativity)		Did the student choose an original topic that is relevant and of use for his/her own professional development? Was the research question, data collection and/or analysis done in a creative way? Does the thesis have potential for further development – which aspects?
8. Supervision process		Is the student capable of independently handling the academic research and writing process with the help of general directions and some light individual supervision? Does the student show an ability to make use of feedback on previous draft(s)?
Additional comments:		

Assessment Form Internship Work

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
MA European Public Affairs 2013-2014
Assessment of work delivered during internship – 8 ECTS

This document consists of a three-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner should:

1. Fill in this form electronically, incorporating any relevant points raised by the internship supervisor.
2. Print and sign the assessment form.
3. Submit one hard copy of the form to the Exam Administration, room D-0.06, Grote Gracht 90-92.
4. Send the electronic version of the form to fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl, with a copy to the student.

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM!

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for (double click on box below): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit
Name responsible examiner (FASoS supervisor):	Signature:	Grade: (<i>fail/pass/excellent</i>)
Organization hosting the internship (to be copied into the SLcM database):		
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):		

Evaluation form for the delivered work during the internship

(to be filled-in by the organizational supervisor)

Organizational supervisor: _____

Position/Title: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Superior</i>	<i>Above Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below Average</i>	<i>Unsatis- factory</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Professional attitude						
Punctuality						
Appearance						
Ability to grasp instructions						
Creativity/Ingenuity						
Insight into the work						
Motivation						
Initiative						
Flexibility						
Self discipline						
Analytic ability						
Writing competence						
Communication skills						
Problem-solving skills						
Ability work independently (without frequent instructions)						
Contact with colleagues and supervisor (team-player)						
Overall quality of work						
Other competencies:						

What did you observe as the intern's strengths during the internship?

.....
.....
.....

What did you observe as areas that need improvement?

.....
.....
.....

What was the overall progress of the student during the internship?

.....
.....
.....

Other comments?

.....
.....
.....

Annex V MA EPA Assessment form internship report

Assessment Form Internship Report

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
 MA European Public Affairs 2013-2014
Internship Report – 2 ECTS

This document consists of a three-page template, which can be expanded to accommodate comments. The responsible examiner should:

1. Fill in this form electronically, incorporating any relevant points raised by the internship supervisor.
2. Print and sign the assessment form.
3. Submit one hard copy of the form to the Exam Administration, room D-0.06, Grote Gracht 90-92.
4. Send the electronic version of the form to fasos-finalwork@maastrichtuniversity.nl, with a copy to the student.

Important: The grade mentioned in the current form still has to be processed by the FASoS exam administration. Once they do so, the grade will be visible in MyUM. Please, note, that the exam result is only official once the grade is published in SLcM!

Student name:	Student ID:	Submission for (double click on box below): <input type="checkbox"/> 1 st sit <input type="checkbox"/> resit
Name responsible examiner (FASoS supervisor):	Date of upload (on EleUM):	Safe Assignment score (in %):
Signature:	Grade:	Provide explanation for the Safe Assignment score (if needed):
Organization hosting the internship (to be copied into the SLcM database):		
Additional notes & remarks about the grading procedure (if any):		

Criteria	Evaluation/ remarks	Description / questions to be addressed
1. Formal Requirements		Conforms the internship report to the required format and length (expected number of words)? Does the text have a clear structure and coherent parts? Does the report have an appropriate (i.e. academic) style and tone of voice? What is the quality of English spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure?
2. The host organization and the larger context		Does the report provide a contextualizing background, give a characterisation of the internship institution and its sphere of activity? Is it clear what are the goals and the societal relevance of the organization? <i>Simple copy-paste from the organizational website is not acceptable here.</i>

		<p>Does the report provide a clear description of the organizational unit where the intern was located?</p> <p>Is there an adequate assessment of the position and significance of the organizational unit in the overall organizational structure and in the larger domain of social activity of the organization?</p>
3. The internship in practice (content)		<p>Does the report provide a clear outline of the type of work entrusted to the intern (e.g. description of the daily routine, or projects in which the intern participated, or list of tasks, or diary of the internship per week)?</p> <p>Does the report discuss what the student accomplished during the internship?</p> <p>(If applicable) Does the report provide examples of the work delivered during the internship (e.g. excerpts of a paper/ deliverable)?</p> <p>Is the information in the report sound, factual, and accurate?</p> <p>Does the report clarify how the student addressed feedback, critique, instructions and comments of the (internal and external) supervisors?</p>
4. Applied and acquired competences		<p>Was the student able to use and bring in knowledge acquired during the study? Which concrete competences/skills?</p> <p>Was the student able to learn new skills? Which ones?</p> <p>(If applicable) Could the student function as part of a multidisciplinary team and was the student able to communicate with different professionals within the organisation?</p> <p>(If applicable) Was the student a good team-player?</p> <p>(If applicable) Did the student function within a multicultural team? How did (s)he deal with arising challenges in this regard?</p> <p>Does the report discuss whether the expectations of the internship were fulfilled?</p> <p>What did the student learn about his/her professional preparation?</p>
5. Insight and critical reflection		<p>Does the student reflect upon his/her personal strengths and weaknesses (gaps in the academic and/or practical preparation for the internship)?</p> <p>Does the student discuss areas for personal improvement?</p> <p>What is the personal assessment of the student for the accomplished learning curve?</p> <p>Does the student reflect on suggestions/motivations (s)he got for his/her study and future profession?</p> <p>Does the student reflect upon the linkages between the internship and the curriculum of the MA study (identifying strengths and weaknesses of the program)?</p> <p>Does the student discuss how the internship experience/trajectory could be improved?</p>
6. Overall evaluation of the internship trajectory		<p>Does the report clarify well the motivation and the added value of the internship? How do you evaluate the originality of the internship's subject and approach?</p> <p>Is the student able to evaluate the internship experiences and to analyse and reflect on the gathered observations about the host organization/ professional sector?</p> <p>Is the student able to situate its own (positive and negative) experiences and learn from them? Was the self-assessment of the student's learning curve adequate in your view?</p> <p>Does the student provide an insightful evaluation of the internship organization, sphere of activity</p>

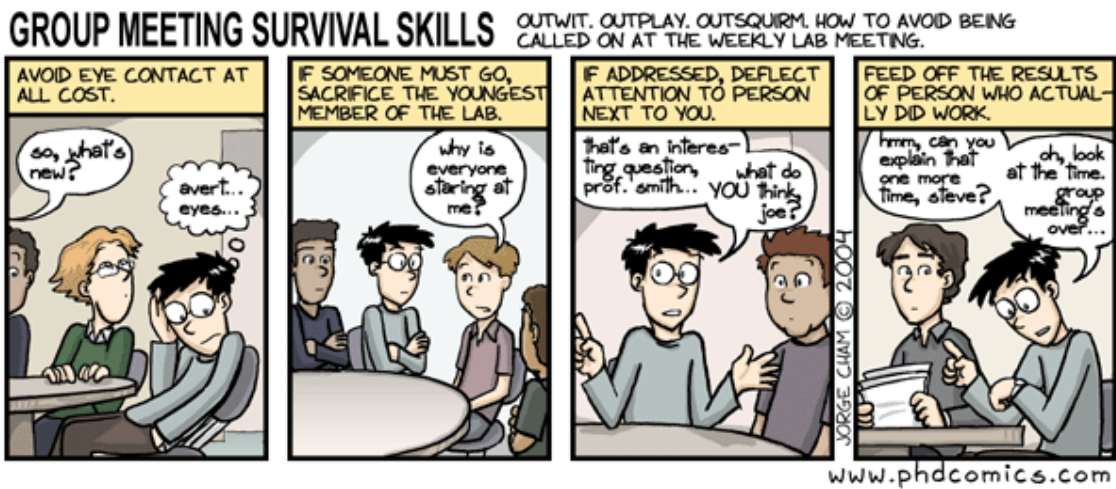
	<p>and internal structure? Did the student perform well? <i>See also the filled-in by the host organization assessment form for the internship work.</i> Does the report reflect the student's progress in the MA curriculum? Are the goals of the internship accomplished?</p>
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Additional Remarks:

Annex VI MA EPA Integrated Skills Track Manual

Skills Track

Master European Public Affairs



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims and learning objectives	3
3. Structure skills track	3
4. Important dates	4
5. Contact details lecturers and supervisors	5
6. Examination	6
7. Coordination	9

1 Introduction

The master's program in European Public Affairs (EPA) is designed to meet the growing need for professionals who have solid understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of policy-making in Europe. The program is research based and practice-oriented which clearly comes to the fore in the final work: an internship and a master thesis. In order to prepare students for the internship and the thesis the EPA program offers a skills track which consists of professional and research skills. At the end of the skills track students should be able to perform optimally in a complex environment such as policy making in the European Union.

2. Aims and learning objectives

The skills track prepares students for their internship by offering them professional skills. Students also acquire research skills which prepare them for writing the thesis. At the end of the skills track students should:

- be effective in communicating, debating and negotiating;
- be able to work as a team member in a group;
- be able to effectively manage a (research)project;
- have conducted a small scale research project;
- have acquired practical experience in policy-making.

3. Structure skills track

The skills track offers students professional and research skills. The professional skills are taught in modules 1 and 2 of the EPA master. During these two modules students have also the opportunity to apply and develop their professional skills by working on assignments (e.g. presentations and group work) which form part of modules 1 and 2. In addition, the professional skills should help students to secure an internship at the end of period 2 or at the start of period 3.

Research skills are mainly offered in period 3 and 4. The students will learn what is expected from them with regard to the master thesis. Furthermore, students will be offered a research 'toolkit' which enables them to write an academic master thesis.

In period 5 students apply their professional skills during the internship and they will use their research skills while writing their master thesis. The table below provides an overview of the structure of the skills track. Please consult the course books and schedules of the modules for detailed information on the skills modules.

Overview of the skills track

The professional skills are integrated in the various course modules and will be assessed with the examination of that course. The research skills will be assessed by a research proposal and the requirements are detailed below in section 6 (p. 6).

Professional skills			
Period	Module	Skill	Lecturer
1	Perspectives on Europe	Debating	Esther Versluis
		Letter/CV writing	Clive Lawrence
		Presentation skills	Clive Lawrence
		Speed reading	Jaap Hoogenboezem
			Arjan Schakel
		Working with EU documents	Cosimo Monda
		Introduction to statistics	Christine Arnold
2	Governance in the EU	Group dynamics	Jessica Slijkhuis
		Debating	Esther Versluis
		Project management	Jaap Hoogenboezem
		Time management	Jaap Hoogenboezem
3	Lobbying in the EU	Negotiating	Martin Unfried
		Debating	Esther Versluis
4	Implementation and evaluation of EU policy	Pitching	Andreea Nastase
		Debating	Esther Versluis
		Policy evaluation	Klaartje Peters
Research skills			
Period	Module	Skill	Lecturer
3	Lobbying in the EU	Introduction Research skills	Arjan H. Schakel
		Academic writing I	Elisavetta Radulova
		Academic writing II, III	Arjan H. Schakel
		Sources	Elisavetta Radulova
4	Implementation and evaluation of EU policy	Research design I, II, III	Arjan H. Schakel
		Data collection and analysis	Elisavetta Radulova
		Working with statistics	Jaap Hoogenboezem
5	Internship	Internship report and thesis	Your supervisor

4. Important dates

The following dates are important to note in your diary for your internship and master thesis.

1 January 2014	Students have secured an internship
31 January 2014	E-mail with a research topic for your master thesis sent to Dr. A. Schakel, a.schakel@maastrichtuniversity.nl
10 March 2014	Allocation of (envisaged) supervisors to students
10-21 March	Students meet with their supervisors to discuss research ideas
21 March 2014	Submission of research proposal
7 April 2014	Start internship
25 June 2014	Submission of master thesis and internship report

5. Contact details lecturers and supervisors

The tables below provide an overview of the lecturers of the skills track and the supervisors of the internships and master thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to contact their envisaged supervisors after 10 March 2014 while they develop their research proposal for their master thesis.

Lecturers

Name	Institution	E-mail
Christine Arnold	Dept. of Politics	c.arnold@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Jaap Hoogenboezem	Dept. of Politics	j.hoogenboezem@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Frank Lavadoux	EIPA	f.lavadoux@eipa.eu
Clive Lawrence	Language Center	c.lawrence@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Cosimo Monda	EIPA	c.mondaeipa.eu
Andreea Nastase	Dept. of Politics	a.nastase@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Klaartje Peters	Dept. of Politics	klaartje.peters@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Elisavetta Radulova	Dept. of Politics	e.radulova@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Martin Unfried	EIPA	m.unfried@eipa.eu
Arjan H. Schakel	Dept. of Politics	a.schakel@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Jessica Slijkhuis	Koraal Consulting	jessica@koraalconsulting.nl
Esther Versluis	Dept. of Politics	e.versluis@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Supervisors

Please consult EleUM for a description on the expertise of the supervisors.

Name	email
Christine Arnold	c.arnold@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Jaap Hoogenboezem	j.hoogenboezem@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Christine Neuhold	c.neuhold@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Andreea Nastase	a.nastase@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Arjan H. Schakel	a.schakel@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Esther Versluis	e.versluis@maastrichtuniversity.nl

6. Examination

The professional skills are integrated in the various course modules and assessment will take place within the examination of that module. The research skills will be assessed by a research proposal and the requirements are detailed below. The research proposal should give students a 'jump start' with writing their master thesis. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their research ideas with their envisaged supervisor. In addition, students are also strongly encouraged to write their master thesis on a topic which lies close to their internship work.

Deadlines research proposal

Electronic **21 March 2014** via EleUM Safe Assign.

Grading: Fail, pass, excellent pass according to the criteria listed in the table below

Requirements

The assignment is to write a 3-4 page research proposal (single spaced, times roman 12 point, plus a bibliography) for your master-thesis research. Please provide a title page with your details (name, ID) and the name of your supervisor of your master thesis. The research proposal should contain the following elements (which are explained in further detail during the sessions taught by Dr. Schakel):

Objective I (relevance): What do I want to know and why?

- Element 1 Research problem
- Element 2 Studies that have addressed the problem
- Element 3 Deficiencies in the studies
- Element 4 The significance of the study
- Element 5 The purpose statement

Objective II (methodology): How do I get to know what I want to know?

- Element 6 Basic design
- Element 7 Sampling and case selection
- Element 8 Data collection method
- Element 9 Data analyzing method
- Element 10 Limitations: validity and reliability

Each element can be illustrated with a number of questions.

Element 1 Research problem

What is the topic of the proposed research and is the research topic problematized?

Element 2 Studies that have addressed the research problem

What is the state of the art in the field? What are the main ‘bodies’ of literature that one will be drawing upon and what are the key debates to which the work is intended to contribute to? [The research proposal should cover at least 10 academic citations.]

Element 3 Deficiencies in those studies

What are the problems/strengths of the research done so far? Why is it important to pay particular attention the specific research problem of the proposed research?

Element 4 The significance of this study

What is the academic significance or relevance of the research topic? Why is it important to research exactly this research problem and how does the proposed research going to provide an answer to the research problem?

Element 5 The purpose statement

What is the aim/objective/intent of the proposed research?

Element 6 Basic design

Are the basic concepts well defined and operationalized? Are the main variables identified? Are the interactions between the variables specified? What is the basic set-up of the study: is it an in-depth case study, a comparative study, what is the time frame, etc.? Does the basic set-up of the study lead to important limitations?

Element 7 Sampling and case selection

Are the units of analysis/sample identified with respect to time and space? Are the criteria for selecting particular cases specified? How are issues of selection bias and measurement error handled?

Element 8 Data collection method

How will the data be collected and which problems are expected and how are these problems circumvented, prevented or solved?

Element 9 Data analyzing method

How will the data be analyzed and which problems are expected and how are these problems circumvented, prevented or solved?

Element 10 Limitations: validity and reliability

Are the research findings anticipated and the limitations of the research acknowledged? Does the proposed methodology accommodate the limitations of the proposed methodology?

The research proposal will be assessed according to the criteria laid down in the table below. Each student will get feedback on the structure and the lecturer will grade the introductions with a *fail*, *pass*, or *excellent pass*.

Fail	The student <i>does not address</i> all elements 1 through 10 of a research proposal mentioned above
Pass	The student <i>sufficiently addresses</i> elements 1 through 10 of a research proposal mentioned above and the student shows an ability to write a coherent research proposal whereby the elements 1 through 10 built neatly upon each other
Excellent pass	In addition to the above: the student shows an ability to write a research proposal in which findings are anticipated and limitations are recognized and the student proposes a methodology which accommodates the envisaged limitations.

7. Coordination

The coordinator for this skills track is Dr. Arjan Schakel. In case of problems or questions, please feel free to contact the coordinator (preferably through email).

Dr. Arjan H. Schakel
Assistant Professor in Research Methods
Grote Gracht 90-92,
Room D2.08
Tel: +31 (0)43 388 2516
E-mail: a.schakel@maastrichtuniversity.nl

8. Research skills

The research skills sessions are designed to prepare students for their internship thesis. The focus will be on academic writing (how to report on academic research?) and on research design (how to develop an appropriate methodology to the research question?). Both academic writing and research design consists of four sessions each which are described below. In addition, there will be one-to-one sessions.

One-to-one sessions: In week 6 to 9 (3 February – 28 February) there will be an opportunity for students to discuss their research ideas and their research proposals with Dr. A.H. Schakel during one-to-one sessions of 15 minutes. Students can sign up via Doodle-links which will be posted on EleUM.

Important dates

Friday 31 January 2014 E-mail with a **research topic** for your internship thesis sent to Dr. A. Schakel, a.schakel@maastrichtuniversity.nl

10 March 2014 Allocation of (envisaged) supervisors to students.

10-21 March Students meet with their supervisors to discuss research ideas, their research proposals and the supervision process.

21 March 2014 **Submission of research proposal.**

Sessions: please consult the schedule of the course module for the precise data, time and location of a particular session.

Week 2 6-10 January Introduction Dr. A.H. Schakel

Material: lecture slides.

The objectives, set-up and the structure of the academic skills track will be explained. The internship thesis will be placed in the context of the political system model by Easton (input, throughput, output, outcome) and in the EPA program as a whole.

Week 2 6-10 January Academic writing I Dr. E. Radulova

Material: various textual documents [available on EleUM]

In this session students will several types of writing –position paper, policy analysis by NGO, academic journal article, etc.– to get a good idea of the why and what (what is academic writing and why do EPA students need that?) of academic writing.

Week 3 13-17 January Academic writing II Dr. A.H. Schakel

Material: lecture slides.

Introduction and explanation of the ten-step approach to research design with a particular focus on the introduction to a text reporting on academic research (objective I).

Week 4 20-24 January Sources Dr. E. Radulova

Material: lecture slides.

This is a practice oriented lecture designed to help students getting started with their research by addressing the questions how to find academic journal articles and how to find appropriate sources for the various stages in the EU policy process?

Week 6, 3-7 February Academic writing III Dr. A.H. Schakel

Material: a set of 4-5 academic journal articles [available on EleUM]

This is a tutor group meeting during which we will discuss a set of four or five articles on policy analysis in order to see when, where and how each of the ten steps of research design are discussed in the articles.

Week 7 10-14 February Data collection and analysis Dr. E. Radulova

Material: lecture slides and various documents [available on EleUM]

This is a practice oriented lecture on qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis with a particular focus on interviewing and text (policy document) analysis.

Week 7 10-14 February Research Design I Dr. A.H. Schakel

Week 8 17-21 February Research Design II Dr. A.H. Schakel

Week 9 24-28 February Research Design III Dr. A.H. Schakel

Material: syllabus research design [available on EleUM]

During these three lectures we will discuss the steps a researcher needs to go through while developing a methodology (objective II) suitable to address the knowledge question (objective I). The various steps are displayed in the table below.

Elements	Steps	Syllabus
Lecture week 1: From objective I to objective II		Part II
Elements 1 through 5	Develop a research puzzle, questions and hypotheses	Sections II.4 and II.5 on research puzzles and questions
	Identify and define your crucial concepts	Section II.6 on definitions
Lecture week 2: Basic design		Part III
Element 6 basic design	Choose a format for a basic design	Section III.1 on types of research design
	Determine what, how, whom are you going to compare	Section III.2 on comparison
	Identify the relationships between the variables	Section III.3 on causality
Lecture week 3: Executing research		Part IV and V
Element 7 case selection sampling and measurement	Define your cases	Section IV.1 on cases
	Choose a case selection or sampling technique	Sections IV.2 and IV.3 on case selection and sampling techniques
	Choose a measurement for your variables	Sections IV.4 and IV.5 on measurement (error)
Element 8 data collection	Choose a data collection method	Section IV.6 on data collection and analysis
Element 9 data analysis	Choose a data analysis method	Section IV.6 on data collection and analysis
Element 10 Limitations: validity and reliability	Check research design on validity and reliability	Sections V.1 through V.4 on validity and reliability

Annex VII Participation: the plus/minus 0.5

Participation: the plus/minus 0.5

In 2012-2013 the +/- 0.5 system of the bachelor programmes has been evaluated and discussed during several occasions. Assessment of participation is regarded as an important aspect of our way of teaching and, thus, deserves careful deliberation.

One of the outcomes of the evaluation is that we re-introduce the +/- 0.5 as of 2013-2014.

The aim is to have a better +/- 0.5 system in place as quality, consistency, transparency and quantity are concerned. To guarantee that the +/- 0.5 rule is implemented consistently and in a transparent way, a number of conditions should be realized:

- a transparent use requires a description of generic skills and professional attitude and criteria to assess them.
- in each PBL course this +/- 0.5 rule should be used, consistently. The course coordinator and Director of Studies supervise this.
- each course manual gives a description of the generic PBL skills involved, and the criteria for assessing them, by including an assessment form.
- in each 8-weeks course there should be two intermediate, reflective moments/meetings scheduled to discuss the generic skills, professional attitude and group performance.
- in each 4-weeks course there should be one intermediate reflective moment/meeting scheduled to discuss the generic skills, professional attitude and group performance.
- while reflecting upon the group process, the students are expected to give feedback on the tutor's performance.
- students should not only be assessed but also reflect themselves on their skills. Self-awareness of your strong/weak points is an important skill as well. A round during the reflective meeting, in which students start reflecting upon their participation and PBL skills, is one way to organize this.
- during the first year students should include reflections in their portfolio, and discuss their learning curve with their mentor.
- in case of an assessment of - 0.5, the student should have been warned once by the tutor. As evidence for this warning the student receives an email from the tutor, within two days of the reflection meeting
- students who get a +/- 0.5 get a written assessment by the tutor, explaining and motivating this assessment. This assessment +0.5 form / -0.5 form should be sent to the course coordinator.

Reflective meetings

The re-introduction of the +/- 0.5 will be accompanied with the encouragement of reflective moments or feedback sessions in tutorial groups.

This academic year, tutors are requested to organize:

- 1 reflexive moment/meeting in a 4-weeks course
- 2 reflexive moments/meetings in a 8-weeks course

There is no success recipe for the format of these reflexive moments and tutors are free to choose an approach which suits their style. For inspiration, a few suggestions and examples:

3 key questions

Structure the feedback moments by distinguishing the following three levels:

1. How do you evaluate the course?
2. How do you evaluate the group?
3. How do you evaluate yourself?

Peer review

The questions mentioned above should be posed as motivators to a group discussion. They are not meant as one way directed questions from the tutor to the group. Peer review among the students usually is as valuable as the opinion of the tutor and can improve the atmosphere, group dynamics and individual student performance.

Invite guests

To avoid that these standard questions result in predictable and boring feedback sessions – a concern that many students raised – it is also suggested to invite external guests to explain a bit about the PBL skills. Especially in the 2nd year it might be interesting to offer the feedback in a more creative way.

For instance, an alumnus could be invited to tell the tutor group about the importance of team work skills and how she/he benefited from the PBL teaching method in his/her jobs.

Another suggestion is to invite professionals whose jobs are related to the specific skills and not to the content of the study. For instance, to discuss the role of a chair and the importance of a chair, one could invite a chair of an organization or political party to tell about his/her view and experiences. Obviously one should then organize the feedback session on a bigger scale, i.e. in the Turnzaal, for all students of a particular course.

Annex VIII Proposal MA ES Thesis course

MA Programme European Studies

Proposal for Establishing a Thesis Course

1. State of Play

A Thesis course formally exists in the MAES programme. Its code is EUS4800. It is assigned 12 ECTS. No formal educational activities take place in the framework of this course. The Director of Studies (DoS) acts as thesis coordinator. He/she keeps students and supervisors informed of important deadlines in the thesis process; matches students and supervisors and is there to help resolve any issues that may arise. As of the current academic year the DoS will also assign second readers and form the grading couples (first and second reader) per thesis. The thesis supervisor organises the supervision meetings and monitors the individual thesis progress of each student as of February onwards.

2. Link to skills training

There are two skills training in the MAES programme which are directly linked to the thesis process but are 'hosted' by other courses:

- Academic Research and Writing – 4 weeks (October) linked to EUS4012 Post-War Europe: Political and Societal Transformations (all three specialisations);
- Research Design and Methods – 4 weeks (January) linked to EEUS4003 EU as and International Player (specialisations 1 and 3) and EUS4013 EU Budget and Economic Governance (specialisation 2)

3. Proposed curriculum for EUS4800 Thesis

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6
Skills training "Academic Research and Writing"	<i>Matching of supervisors and students;</i>	Skills training "Research Design and Methods" (students develop an extended thesis	Individual thesis supervision	Individual thesis supervision	Individual thesis supervision

<i>Extend the current training from 4 to 8 weeks;</i>	<i>First meeting between students and supervisors</i>	proposal)			<i>Presentations by students of work in progress per research clusters – peer review and input from thesis coordinator</i>
<i>Discontinue skills training on intercultural communication</i>					

*The new elements are highlighted in italics.

4. Main changes proposed

The thesis course runs throughout the academic year. It begins in September and finishes in June with the submission of the MA theses by students (resit in August). In the framework of the course, students improve their research skills and are given guidance at every step of the thesis process. Owing to the milestones built into the course, students are consistently reminded to work on their thesis throughout the academic year and in parallel to the courses. The ultimate objective is to improve the quality of the final works submitted by MAES graduates.

The skills training “Academic Research and Writing” is extended to 8 weeks and takes place throughout the 1st period (September-October). The curriculum is enriched to include more readings and exercises on research design and methods. In the second part of the training senior colleagues present examples of possible research topics based on research conducted at FASoS. The main research clusters of the research programme “Politics and Culture in Europe” (PCA) of FASoS are presented, further strengthening the links between research and teaching. The PCE research clusters - The Public Bureaucracies of a Globalising World, Europe in a Globalising World and Historicizing European Union: Forms of European cooperation since the 19th century – address questions of relevance for all three specialisations in the MAES programme and ensure the links with the curriculum as well. Information on sources (where to look for information) per research cluster is also presented.

The matching of students and supervisors is conducted already in November and the first meetings between supervisors and students take place by mid-December before students are asked to develop an extended thesis proposal in January.

In May (period 6) the thesis coordinator organises collective sessions of the respective research clusters where selected students present work in progress while other students discuss the research presented and give constructive feedback to their peers. The thesis

coordinator moderates the sessions and makes suggestions for improvement/clarification. Individual thesis supervisors are also invited to participate and react.

5. Grading

The two skills training components form part of the EUS4800 Thesis course and are disconnected in terms of grading from the courses that take place in the 1st and the 3rd periods. Student performance in the two skills trainings is evaluated on a fail/pass/excellent pass basis. The final grade for the EUS4800 Thesis course consists of the numerical grade for the thesis but a pass is required on both skills trainings for a successful completion of the course.

6. Thesis coordinator

The role of the thesis coordinator is disconnected from the role of DoS. The thesis coordinator is the skills training tutor who:

- is in contact with ALL students as of September each academic year;
- is familiar with the thesis topics of ALL students (comments on thesis proposals);
- matches student interests and supervisors' expertise;
- liaises between students and supervisors in case of problems;
- is in charge of the assessment process by assigning second readers;
- reminds students and supervisors of the milestones in the thesis process and upcoming deadlines.

The thesis coordinator is given SOLVER hours for the coordination role, in addition to the SOLVER hours currently assigned for the actual skills trainings (lectures, seminars, feedback and marking per student).

7. IWIO Evaluation of the EUS4800 Thesis course

The EUS4800 Thesis course is evaluated separately by IWIO both with regard to the quality of individual supervision and the quality of thesis coordination. This evaluation is not conducted at the moment and there is no feedback from students on the supervision received.

Gergana Noutcheva
Director of Studies, MAES programme
13 December 2013
Maastricht