

# Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners of the Master's programmes of the Graduate School of Life Sciences, Utrecht University

## 2016-2017

Rules & Guidelines pursuant to section 7.12 (b)(3) of the  
Higher Education and Research Act (see appendix 3)

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## **PARAGRAPH 1 – GENERAL STIPULATIONS**

### **Art. 1 - Scope of application**

These rules and regulations apply to the tests, interim and final examinations, the procedures regarding the study components and the graduation procedure of the Master's degrees in Life Sciences of the Master's programmes in the biological sciences, biomedical sciences, chemical sciences, health science, neuroscience and cognition, and pharmaceutical sciences and to all students who are registered for the Master's programmes as listed in appendix 1.

The Master's degrees are offered by the Graduate School of Life Sciences, Utrecht University, within the Faculties of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, and Science, hereinafter referred to as 'the School'.

The terms defined in the Education and Examination Regulations of these Master's degrees also apply to these regulations.

### **Art. 2 - Board of Examiners**

1. The Board of Examiners has charged the chair and the co-chair to manage the daily course of affairs of the Board of Examiners (Daily Board of Examiners).
2. The Board of Examiners will take decisions by an ordinary majority of votes. If the votes are equal, the student or his or her request will be rejected.
3. The chair and co-chair of the Board of Examiners are authorized signatories. The Board of Examiners may authorize the official secretaries to communicate and sign off decisions of the Board of Examiners on its behalf. For this purpose the Board of Examiners will give the official secretaries written authorization, containing the frameworks and general instructions relating to exercising the delegated authority.
4. The Board of Examiners must take a decision within six weeks of receipt of a request.
5. Decisions taken by a Board of Examiners will be recorded in minutes. These minutes will be approved, at least by or on behalf of the chair.
6. The Board of Examiners will be supported in its work by two official secretaries. The official secretaries will not be members of the Board of Examiners. The official secretaries will ensure the following:
  - a. preparation, convocation and keeping of minutes at the meetings;
  - b. monitoring of the implementation of decisions taken;
  - c. communication of decisions taken to students and other interested parties;
  - d. drawing up annual reports;
  - e. archiving requests processed, objections and decisions taken.
7. The Daily Board will check whether all the study components belonging to the Master's programme have been successfully completed and whether the student has therefore passed the examination.

### **Art. 3 - Standards**

In its decisions, the Board of Examiners will be guided by the following standards:

- a. the retention of quality criteria in an examination or test;
- b. efficiency requirements, expressed inter alia in efforts to:
  - limit as far as possible loss of time for students, who can thereby make rapid progress with their studies;
  - motivate students to terminate their studies as quickly as possible, if it is unlikely that they will pass an examination or test;
- c. protecting students from themselves in the event that they wish to take on an excessive study load;
- d. leniency in relation to students who, through factors outside their control, have experienced delays in the progress of their studies.

#### **Art. 4 - Examiners**

1. Examiners are members of the academic staff of Utrecht University or the UMC Utrecht (i.e. no PhD candidates). An examiner is appointed by the chair of the Board of Examiners of the School, for three years in case of a course or for the duration of a research project, business internship or writing assignment.
2. An examiner is responsible for the quality of teaching and assessment of a course or study component.
3. The Board of Examiners may withdraw the appointment of an examiner in the event that the examiner fails to comply with the applicable legislation, regulations or guidelines of the Board of Examiners, or if the competence of the examiner in the area of examinations (creating, invigilating, assessing thereof) repeatedly proves to be of insufficient quality.
4. The Board of Examiners will register all examiners so that it is known which persons are authorized to administer examinations and to determine the results thereof.

### **PARAGRAPH 2 – ORGANISATION AND GOOD PROCEDURE**

#### **Art. 5 - Procedures during the Master's programme**

From admission to graduation, students have to use the available forms and follow the procedures described in the study guide: [www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide](http://www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide). In addition to the information provided in the study guide, the following guidelines apply:

##### **5.1 Approval of Board of Examiners for programme components**

1. Prior approval by the Board of Examiners is obligatory for each and every of the following components of the Master's programme: *the research projects, the business internship, the writing assignment, and - in specific cases, see 5.4 - the elective component*. The relevant forms have to be submitted at least *20 working days before the start* of the particular component. It is not allowed to start a study component without approval of the Board of Examiners.
2. Within 20 working days – not including academic holidays - the Board of Examiners will take a decision.
3. Study components (or parts here of) as stated in 5.1.1. taken without prior approval are invalid.

##### **5.2 Research projects and business internships**

1. The student has to conduct two research projects: a major research project (51 credits) and a minor research project (33 credits). There are four exceptions: The BISM Master's programme requires one major research project of 54 credits, EPIM requires 65 credits and EPMM requires 56 credits. The SPMM Master's programme (a.k.a. SBM) requires a major research project (51 credits) and a business internship (30 credits). Because the major research project is the central element of the Master's programme, this component has to be conducted at Utrecht University, UMC Utrecht or the Hubrecht Laboratory. Consequently, only the minor research project or business internship can be done outside Utrecht University or abroad and needs approval of the programme coordinator. The topic of the project has to be within the scope of the research focus of the Master's programme. The research project of BISM, EPIM and EPMM can partly be conducted outside Utrecht University, but only in cooperation with Utrecht University., but only in cooperation with Utrecht University. The scope of business internship of SBM has to be within the FBE-focus of the programme.

2. All research projects and business internships are to be conducted under the responsibility of an examiner (article 4). Daily supervision is done by the examiner or one or more experts in the field, which can also be a PhD candidate or post doc. In the case of an external research project or business internship, the daily supervision is the responsibility of the external supervisor at the host institute.
3. All research projects and business internships require prior approval by the Board of Examiners. The completed application form has to be signed by the student, examiner, and the programme coordinator and, in case of a project outside Utrecht University/UMCU, the supervisor at the host institute. The form also has to contain the project aim, start and end date, and agreements between supervisor and student.
4. Research projects and business internships conducted in a non-university institute or abroad require signing of an internship contract from Utrecht University by the student, the supervisor at the host institute and the examiner.
5. A research project consists of experimental research, which is completed by writing a report and giving a final oral presentation. A business internship consists of practical work within the field of business, which is completed by writing a report and giving a final oral presentation.
6. The supervisor determines the format of the written report. Research reports have to include the following sections: Abstract, Introduction, Materials & Methods, Results (containing a clear presentation of the results obtained), Conclusion & Discussion (in which the student critically evaluates the results and discusses them in the context of the relevant literature), and References. Reports of business internships have to include a Management Summary, Introduction, Company Analysis, Market Analysis, Research Conducted, Results, Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations, References and a Personal Experience Report. Both research and business internship reports have to include a summary specifically aimed at informing laymen about the content of the project.
7. If the research project is performed externally, the final presentation has to be given both at the host institute and at the department of the examiner. Alternatively, the examiner can be present during the final presentation in the host institute.
8. The final presentation has to be given and the final written report has to be handed in within 12 months after the start of the major research project and within 9 months after the start of the business internship or minor research project. This period can be extended in exceptional cases, in which case it is the student's responsibility to obtain written approval from the Research Project Coordinator for a limited, pre-determined, extension period. The student's request should contain a new time schedule and be supported by the examiner.
9. If applicable, the minor research project may be replaced by a profile (see appendix 2). The profile contains theoretical and practical components in the field of Management (M profile, a.k.a. Fundamentals of Business and Economics) or Communication and education (C&E profile). Alternatively, the profile offers an interdisciplinary approach in Applied Data Science (ADS profile), Bioinformatics (BI profile) or Complex Systems (CS profile).
10. The Board of Examiners will only accept assessments of research projects and business internship from formal examiners (article 4).
11. Upon completion of the report, a PDF file has to be sent to the administration office.

### **5.3 Writing assignment**

1. A writing assignment is conducted under the responsibility of an examiner (article 4). Daily supervision is done by the examiner or an expert in the field

- (e.g. a PhD candidate or post doc). In the case of an writing assignment performed externally, the daily supervision is the responsibility of the supervisor at the host institute.
2. The writing assignment requires prior approval by the Board of Examiners. The application has to contain the signatures of the examiner and programme coordinator and if applicable the supervisor at the host institute. The form also has to contain the title, three key references and a time schedule including deadlines and additional supervisory meetings.
  3. The writing assignment is a unique and independent learning component of the Master's programme. Hence, the topic of the writing assignment has to be clearly distinct from the topic(s) of the research project(s).
  4. The format of the writing assignment has to conform to that of a review paper in the relevant research field or to that of a grant proposal for PhD research.
  5. The writing assignment has to present a clear and adequate overview of recent literature addressing the issue of interest. It has to have an in-depth discussion, in which the student demonstrates his/her ability to critically evaluate hypotheses and results, presents his/her own views, and draws conclusions that point towards new research opportunities.
  6. The writing assignment has to include a summary specifically aimed at informing the laymen about the content of the topic.
  7. Finishing a writing assignment requires a concentrated effort. The student has a maximum of three months to write and hand in the final version of the writing assignment. This period can be prolonged in exceptional cases, in which case it is the student's responsibility to obtain written approval from the Research Project Coordinator for a limited, pre-determined, extension period. The student's request should contain a new time schedule and be supported by the examiner.
  8. The Board of Examiners will only accept assessments of writing assignments from formal examiners (article 4).
  9. Upon completion of the writing assignment a PDF file has to be sent to the administration office.
  10. The writing assignment cannot be extended for more credits.

#### **5.4 Elective component**

1. Students with a learning gap (as defined by the programme coordinator upon admission to the School) are allowed to use a maximum of 6 credits to make up the gap, e.g. by following level 3 Bachelor courses.  
If the Master's student successfully finishes a bachelor course, the student will be awarded 80% of the credits as an elective component, to a maximum of 6 credits.
2. Students without deficiencies, may fill the elective component with Life Sciences-related Master degree courses. Depending on the course this requires the following approval:
  - a. For courses offered by the Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLS) no approval is required, unless stated otherwise by the programme committee at the start of the programme.
  - b. Courses outside the GSLS (both UU and non-UU) require prior approval of the programme coordinator. The student has to provide the programme coordinator with all the information needed to evaluate the suitability of the course. This information has to include the level of the course (has to be Master's level), as well as its length and intensity (hours/day), supervision/ guidance, books to be studied, examination procedures, and any other relevant material.
3. Students may be requested to fill the electives with courses supporting specific requirements for projects such as courses in Lab animal care, VMT (safe microbiological techniques) or Radiation. This has to be planned in advance, in consultation with the programme coordinator. Although no

approval of the Board of Examiners is required, a copy of the arrangement has to be sent to the Master's Administration Office for administrative purposes.

4. Electives can be used for extension of the minor or major research project with 6,9 or 12 credits. Approval by both the programme coordinator and the Board of Examiners has to be asked in advance via the General application form. Please note that delays will not be awarded with extra credits. If the extension is requested after the start of the research project, this has to be done in writing to the Board of Examiners stating the reasons for extension and describing the content and credit load of the extra work to be done. This request has to be supported by the examiner.
5. Students without learning gaps can also fill their elective component with a technical training or mini-project. Approval by both the programme coordinator and the Board of Examiners has to be asked in advance via the General application form.
6. Electives can also be used for an extended M or C&E profile with 6, 9 or 12 credits. Approval by both the programme coordinator and the Board of Examiners has to be asked in advance via the General application form. A clear motivation has to be given using the General application form. If the extension is requested after already starting the profile, this has to be done in writing to the Board of Examiners stating the reasons for extension and describing the content and credit load of the extra work to be done. This request has to be supported by the examiner.
7. When following the extended BI and CS profile of 45 credits, a total of 12 credits of the electives will be used.

#### **Art. 6 - Language**

1. All communication to students has to be made available in English.
2. Tests have to be provided in English.
3. Students have to fill out tests in English
4. Reports of projects and internships have to be written in English, with the exception of internships in companies or government organisations which require a Dutch report. In that case an English summary has to be provided.
5. Laymen's summaries, as part of the research project report or writing assignment, have to be written in English or Dutch (the latter is only allowed if the supervisor is Dutch).

#### **Art. 7 - Times of tests**

1. In scheduling the times of the tests, the Board of Examiners must prevent as far as possible that tests overlap.
2. Changes to the schedule may be made only in cases of force majeure.
3. If possible, oral tests are to be administered by the examiner(s) in question at a time set after consulting with the student.
4. The times of written resit examinations will be determined and announced at least two weeks in advance. At least five working days will pass between the announcement of the results and the resit examination.

#### **Art. 8 - Non-participation in a test due to force majeure**

1. If the student fails to appear at the test or final examination for the course at the time for which he or she has registered, he or she will be excluded from participation in the resit examination for the course.
2. In accordance with Art. 5.8, second paragraph of the Education and Examination Regulations, the Board of Examiners may decide to allow participation in the resit examination nevertheless if the student demonstrates that he or she was prevented from participating in the test or final examination for reasons of force majeure.

3. Requests for the test dispensation as referred to in the second paragraph must be submitted as soon as possible, together with documentary evidence, to the Board of Examiners.

#### **Art. 9 - Order during an examination or test**

1. The examiner will ensure that an adequate number of invigilators are appointed for the written examinations. These invigilators will ensure that the test proceeds properly.
2. The student must identify himself/herself on request by or on behalf of the Board of Examiners by his or her student card and a valid proof of identity. Admission to the test will be denied if the student is unable to identify himself/herself.
3. The student must follow instructions of the Board of Examiners, or the examiner or invigilator, which are given before, during and immediately after the test.
4. Should the student fail to follow one or more instructions as referred to in the third paragraph, he or she may be excluded by the Board of Examiners or examiner from further participation in the test in question. As a consequence of the exclusion, no result will be determined for that test. Before the Board of Examiners takes a decision, at the student's request they must give him or her the opportunity to be heard on the matter.
5. The duration of a test must be such that students reasonably have enough time to answer the questions.
6. Latecomers will be admitted to a test 30 minutes at most after the start of the test. If a student is prevented by force majeure from being present within this time limit, the Board of Examiners, or examiner, will decide whether he or she can still be admitted to the test.
7. Students may not leave the room where the test is being administered within 30 minutes of the start of the test.
8. After the participants have left the room, no more latecomers will be admitted to the test.
9. Students must hand over their bags, coats and electronic devices to the invigilators at the start of the test.
10. Students who prove to be in possession of mobile phones or other electronic devices during the test will be excluded from further participation in that test.

#### **PARAGRAPH 3 – ASSESSMENT**

##### **Art. 10 - Marking of tests and assignments**

1. The Board of Examiners has to see to it that tests are to be marked on the basis of predetermined, written standards, possibly adjusted on the basis of a correction.
2. The weighting of the interim results in reaching the end result are specified in Osiris course catalogue.
3. If more than one lecturer or supervisor is involved in the marking of a test or (group) assignment, the examiner has to see to it that all lecturers c.q. supervisors mark it on the basis of the same standards.
4. The manner of marking has to be such that the student can check how the result of his or her test was reached.
5. If within courses a number of students contribute towards a single joint assignment, the following rules apply:
  - a) the guideline for the individual or collective marking of group work must be established beforehand by the lecturer and notified to the student;
  - b) the supervisor will verify that all students contribute proportionally to the end product;

- c) students may be marked individually on the basis of the work they have performed.
6. The last mark obtained counts as the result of a test/course.

#### **Art. 11 - Assessment of research projects, business internships and writing assignments**

1. The Board of Examiners will ensure that the assessment criteria for research projects, business internships and writing assignments are adopted and that these are included in the guides.
2. In principle, projects or internships have to be performed on an individual basis. If, due to the type of research, several students contribute to the result of a single project, the Board of Examiners will use the following guidelines:
  - i. agreements on the division of tasks among the students has to be set out in writing by the examiner(s) responsible prior to the start of the work;
  - ii. students will be assessed individually on their performance.
3. Research projects, internships and writing assignments have to be marked by an examiner and a second reviewer. The second reviewer is an expert in the field and is not directly involved in the supervision of the student or the project the student has been working on. (S)he may be from outside Utrecht University. (S)he is a senior scientist/professional in the field (not a PhD candidate).
4. The final assessment of the separate components is determined by the examiner in close consultation with the daily supervisor and taking in consideration the marks of the second reviewer. If the examiners and second reviewers marks differ by 2 or more points, the Board of Examiners will be notified by the examiner. The Board of Examiners will then take a decision on how to proceed.
5. The examiners has to provide insight, using the assessment criteria, into the way in which the final assessment has been reached. The examiner has to provide a motivation for the final grade (e.g. using the available Rubrics), which has to be signed and handed in together with the assessment form.

#### **Art. 12 - Marks**

1. Marks are awarded on a scale of 1 to 10. A mark of 5.5 (not rounded off) or higher is satisfactory, and lower is unsatisfactory. The examiner determines the final grade expressed with one decimal figure, which will be rounded off as described in EER article 5.4.1.
2. Alphanumeric results are awarded as described in EER article 5.4.3.
3. Marks obtained abroad are awarded by external supervisors via the grading system of the country of the host institute. The grades are recalculated to the Dutch system, by the UU examiner in case of a research project, business internship or writing assignment, or by the programme coordinator in case of a course. Guidelines are provided in the table below:

NL	Belgium / France	UK		Germany	Australia	US / Canada / New Zealand
8,6 - 10	16 - 20	90 - 100%	A <sup>+</sup>	1	90 - 100%	A <sup>+</sup>
8,0 - 8,5	14- 16	70 - 89%	A - A <sup>+</sup>	1-	76 - 90%	A - A <sup>+</sup>
7,7 - 7,9	13 - 14	65 - 69%	A <sup>-</sup> - A	2+	70 - 75%	A
7,4 - 7,6	13	55 - 64%	A <sup>-</sup>	2	66 - 69%	A
7,0 - 7,3	12 - 13	50 - 54%	B - B <sup>+</sup>	2-	63 - 65%	B <sup>+</sup> - A
6,7 - 6,9	11 - 12	45 - 49%	C - B	3+	60 - 62%	B - B <sup>+</sup>
6,4 - 6,6	11	40 - 44%	C	3	55 - 59%	B
6,0 - 6,3	10 - 11	35 - 39%	D - C	3-	50 - 54%	C - B
5,5 - 5,9	10	30 - 34%	E - D	4		D - C



5,0 - 5,4	8 - 9	25 - 34%	F	5+	45 - 49%	F
4,5 - 4,9	7.5		F	5		F
0,0 - 4,4	1,0 - 7,0	0 - 24%	F	6	0 - 44%	F

## Art. 13 – Assessment regulations of the specific programme components

### 13.1 Research projects and business internships

1. The final assessment of research projects is based on an evaluation of three elements: research skills, the written report, the final presentation. In principle, these elements make up 60%, 30% and 10% of the final mark, respectively. For details please refer to the assessment criteria as described in the rubrics for research projects ([www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide](http://www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide)). The research skills will be judged by the examiner, the marks for the report and the final presentation by the examiner and the second reviewer.
2. The final assessment of business internship is based on an evaluation of three elements: quality of the content, quality of the process and quality of the oral presentation. These elements make up 70%, 20% and 10% of the final mark, respectively.
3. An interim assessment (about 2-3 months after start project) on performance is mandatory. The use of the rubrics is highly recommended. The student has to provide a written summary of the interim assessment signed by the examiner to the Master's Student Administration as soon as possible after the interim assessment took place. A *Pass* will then be awarded. The written summary has to include the criteria that are already met, criteria that need more attention and new agreements on improvement.
4. Each element mentioned in clause 1 and 2 of this article (research skills, the written report and the final presentation in case of a research project and quality of the content, quality of the process and quality of the oral presentation in case of a business internship) has to be awarded at least a 5.5 in order to pass the final examination of the project.
5. If the project was supervised by a daily supervisor other than the examiner, the examiner will consult the daily supervisor closely on all marks.
6. The examiner has to complete the assessment, by filling in and signing the assessment form, within 10 working days after the student has turned in his final report and presentation. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the form to the Master's Administration Office as soon as possible.
7. If the standard project period as mentioned in article 5.2.8 is surpassed, the student is required to notify the Research Project Coordinator and hand in an explanation and a planning. Invalid explanations or a lack of it may result in an insufficient mark (NVD, incomplete or F, fail).
8. In case of an insufficient mark of 4.0 or higher, the student, according to the EER is entitled to one repair opportunity. The content and time planning of which has to be specified in writing by the examiner and student and approved by the Board of Examiners.

### 13.2 Writing assignment

1. The final version of the writing assignment will be graded by the examiner and the second reviewer. For details refer to the assessment criteria as described in the rubric for writing assignment ([www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide](http://www.uu.nl/lifesciences/studyguide)).
2. If the writing assignment was supervised by a daily supervisor other than the examiner, the examiner will consult with the daily supervisor closely on all marks.
3. The examiner has to complete the assessment, by filling in and signing the assessment form, within 10 working days after the student has handed in his/her writing assignment. It is the student's responsibility to deliver the form to the Master's Administration Office as soon as possible.

4. If the writing assignment period surpasses the 3 months, the student is required to notify the Board of Examiners and hand in an explanation and a planning. Lacking or invalid explanations will result in an insufficient mark (ONV or F).
5. In case of an insufficient mark of 4.0 or higher, the student, according to the EER is entitled to one repair opportunity. The content and time planning of which has to be specified in writing by the examiner and student.

### **13.3 Elective component**

All elements of the elective component are graded separately, when applicable. Technical trainings or mini-projects have to be assessed by filling out and signing the assessment form for research projects.

### **13.4 Theoretical courses/modules**

The student receives a mark for each course, preferable a numeric grade. The way in which the final mark for each course is computed from the various components (e.g. presentation and test) has to be described in the course manual. For courses taken outside UU a formal transcript or a signed personal letter from the institute has to be handed in at the student administration for OSIRIS registration.

### **13.5 Seminars and introduction course**

During the two years of the MSc programme, the student has to attend:

1. the Introducing Life Sciences course (0,75 ec). The student is required to attend all lectures of this introduction course.
2. at least 10 scientific seminars (0,75 ec) organised by the School, or at other institutes. The latter is only possible after approval by the programme coordinator. An *individually* written summary (maximum 1 A4) of each seminar attended is required, and has to be submitted to the programme coordinator. Each seminar report has to contain: student name and number, the date, the title, the speaker, and a concise summary of the major point(s) made in the seminar. The programme coordinator informs the Master's Administration Office when the set of summaries is complete.

### **Art. 14 - Subsequent discussion**

1. As soon as possible after the result of an oral interim examination is announced, if a student so requests or on the initiative of the examiner, a subsequent discussion will be held between the examiner and the student, in which the examiner will give reasons for the decision.
2. During a period of 30 days, starting on the day after the results of a written interim examination were announced, the student may request the examiner to hold a discussion. The discussion will be held at a place and time determined by the examiner.
3. If a collective discussion is organized, the student can submit a request as referred to in the second clause of this article only if (s)he was present at the collective discussion and (s)he gives reasons for that request, or if (s)he was prevented by force majeure from attending the collective discussion.
4. The provisions of the preceding clause will apply *mutatis mutandis* if the examiner offers the student the opportunity to compare his or her answers with model answers.

### **Art. 15 - Fraud and plagiarism**

All research and internship reports, writing assignments, essays and other written assignments must be checked for plagiarism. Preferably with the plagiarism detection programme Ephorus. In this case the document(s) have to be uploaded to Ephorus by the student and sent to the account of the examiner. In all cases, the examiner has to send proof of the plagiarism check to the administration

office. In case of plagiarism the Board of Examiners must be notified, in accordance to article 5.14 of the EER.

In addition to art. 5.14 clause 2, of the EER on fraud and plagiarism the Board of Examiners will notify the examiner about any decision in a fraud or plagiarism case.

#### **PARAGRAPH 4 – ASSURING THE QUALITY OF EXAMINATION**

##### **Art. 16 - Assuring the quality of testing**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that:

1. an examinations policy/plan is in place, and implemented;
2. examinations are created in line with the learning aims and final terms of the course in question;
3. uniform agreements are made on the way in which examinations are created.

##### **Art. 17 - Assessment of the quality of testing**

1. The Assessment Panel, a sub-committee of the Board of Examiners, is charged with the assessment of the quality of testing. To this end, it will test the quality of individual examinations on the basis of random samples – and following complaints, evaluation of results, pass rates and suchlike – in relation to the validity (do they measure knowledge, skills and competences) and reliability (are they consistent and accurate) and will inform the Board of Examiners of this.
2. The Board of Examiners may give the Assessment Panel an assignment to provide information, undertake research and make proposals concerning the organisation of the examinations.

##### **Art. 18 - Declaration of invalidity of test for all participants due to quality shortcomings**

1. If it becomes apparent that the test has such serious quality shortcomings that it cannot be ascertained whether and to what extent the students have achieved the learning objectives of the course, by virtue of its quality assurance role pursuant to Section 7.12b (1)(a) of the Higher Education and Research Act the Board of Examiners may decide immediately that the examination concerned is invalid, and that all participants must repeat the entire examination as soon as possible. The Board of Examiners will set the date on which the examination will be repeated. This date will be no later than two weeks after establishing the quality shortcomings, so that the participants will still be able to benefit from their preparations for the examination.
2. Except in the event of fraud or plagiarism as referred to in Art. 5.14 (4) of the Education and Examination Regulations, the Board of Examiners is not allowed to declare a test invalid if the final test results have already been published.

##### **Art. 19 - Assuring the quality of examinations (final level of the graduates)**

The Board of Examiners will ensure that:

1. the final qualifications for each course as described in the Education and Examinations Regulations are translated into testable learning aims for each course.
2. there is a systematic investigation of whether there is sufficient connection between the course aims and the final terms, whether the sum of the learning aims for each course corresponds to the final qualifications for that course.

##### **Art. 20 - Board of Examiners' own investigation to maintain quality of examination**

1. A student has passed the examination if all parts of the examination programme have been successfully completed. Contrary to the above, the Board of Examiners may decide that in order to pass the examination the student must have complied with the requirements relating to the Board of Examiners' own investigation as referred to in Section 7.10(2) of the Higher Education and Research Act into the knowledge, understanding and competence of the student.
2. The Board of Examiners will only conduct such an investigation if it establishes that there are certain facts or circumstances that lead to the conclusion that the Board of Examiners cannot vouch for the student having obtained the exit qualifications for the course (as referred to in Art. 3.1 of the Education and Examination Regulations).
3. If the Board of Examiners exercises its authority to conduct an investigation as referred to in the first paragraph, it will inform the student(s) concerned in writing of its decision, giving reasons and drawing the student's attention to the option to submit an appeal to the Examination Appeals Board.

#### **Art. 21- Graduation procedures**

Before awarding the Master's degree certificate, the Board of Examiners will determine whether the composition of the student's study programme complies with the programme described in the EER. In order to obtain their certificate, students must also have fulfilled all registration requirements at Utrecht University during the total period of the Master's education.

Application for graduation procedure:

1. Four weeks prior to graduation (dates can be found on the study guide), the student must hand in the graduation form as well as all remaining marks (for research projects, writing assignment, theoretical courses and elective components) to the Master's Administration Office. In case a student has already fulfilled all requirements (s)he may also be asked to send in the form.
2. The student has to invite the person who will address him/her during the graduation ceremony (*laudatio*) to attend the ceremony, and inform the Master's Administration Office of his/her name and affiliation.
3. The date of examination will be the last working day of the month in which the Board of Examiners has determined that the student has fulfilled the requirements of the examinations programme.

#### **Art. 22 - Degree certificates**

The degree certificate will state the name of the Master's degree, the name of the Master's programme and if applicable the *cum laude* distinction.

The International Diploma Supplement (IDS) will include the student's course list with marks and credits. If a formal track was followed within a Master's programme, this will also be mentioned on the IDS.

#### **Art. 23 - Marine Sciences**

In the case of the Master's programme in Environmental Biology, students that followed a specific national study programme in the field of marine sciences can have an extra distinction added to the IDS: *Marine scientist of the Netherlands*. Requirements are:

1. Registration for the Master's programme in Environmental Biology.
2. admission to the track Biomarine sciences
3. The major research project has to be within the focus of the Marine Sciences research, with approval of the programme coordinator.
4. The student has to request for the special distinction him/herself, when applying for the graduation.

## **PARAGRAPH 5 – EXEMPTIONS AND EXTENDING VALIDITY OF STUDY COMPONENTS**

### **Art. 24 - Exemption or credit transfer**

1. Students wishing to receive one or more exemptions, have to submit a request with grounds to the Board of Examiners. The request has to be signed and contain:
  - a) the student's name, address and student number;
  - b) a description of the grounds on which the exemption is being sought;
  - c) for which element(s) the exemption is being sought;
  - d) an authenticated copy of the student's diploma, examination results or proof of examinations previously taken;
  - e) and/or a description of the knowledge and experience the student has obtained outside of higher education, accompanied by the relevant documents showing this.
2. The Board of Examiners will submit the request for advice to the examiner(s) charged with the teaching of the course(s) for which the exemption is being requested or the programme coordinator.
3. The Board of Examiners will decide within 6 weeks after the date of receipt of the request on whether the exemption will be granted.
4. In case of a request for credit transfer, study components will be taken in consideration only when obtained during a period with formal Master registration at a Dutch or international University, and when the components have not been used for any another degree.

### **Art. 25 - Additional regulation credit transfer**

In addition to EER regulation 5.13.4 on credit transfer the Board of Examiners will approve for the Epidemiology Post Graduate programme the transfer of Master level courses taken before the start of the Master's programme without a Master registration under the provision that:

- a) the course was taken on contract basis (contractant);
- b) a course certificate was obtained;
- c) the course was given at UU/UMCU;
- d) the programme coordinator approves.

### **Art. 26 - Extending validity study components**

Requests to extend the period of validity of a study component have to be accompanied by a time schedule to finish the whole Master's programme, including the graduation date, co-signed by the programme coordinator.

## **PARAGRAPH 6 – COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

### **Art. 27 - Complaints about testing and marking**

1. The first point of contact for students with a complaint about testing and marking is the examiner responsible for determining the result of the test. If there is a number of lecturers involved, the course examiner is the first point of contact as the 'representative' for all lecturers involved in the test. The examiner will endeavour to reach a solution in an informal manner.
2. 'Testing and marking' is understood to mean all situations where there is a formal assessment moment that leads to a mark or an alphanumerical result relating to learning objectives and exit qualifications that are laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations.
3. If the quality of the test is at issue and the complaint has implications for the result of the test, the lecturer and/or examiner will ensure that a quality analysis is carried out to assess whether the test meets the general quality requirements as referred to in paragraph 4. For this and in the case of wide-

- ranging complaints or complex issues concerning content, the Assessment Panel has to be consulted, preferably before the test results are published.
4. If the quality analysis reveals that the test does not meet one or more quality requirements, the lecturer and/or examiner may decide to adjust the marks and the standard. If the final test result has already been published, the amended result may not be to the disadvantage of one or more students.
  5. The Board of Examiners may make use of its statutory authority pursuant to Section 7.12b (1)(b) of the Higher Education and Research Act: *'to lay down guidelines and rules from within the framework of the education and examination regulations (...), to assess and establish the result of tests and examinations'*. The lecturer and the examiner will observe the guidelines and rules laid down by the Board of Examiners.

#### **Art. 28 - Appeal against decisions concerning testing and marking**

1. Students may submit an appeal against the decisions of examiners or the Board of Examiners to the Examination Appeals Board within six weeks of publication of the mark/alphanumerical result. See the website of the Examination Appeals Board in [Dutch](#) or [English](#).
2. Art. 54 of the Administration and Management Regulations of UU stipulates that a formal complaint will not be dealt with if it concerns conduct against which the person involved may lodge an appeal. Since an appeal may be submitted to the Examination Appeals Board against decisions relating to testing and marking, complaints about testing will not be dealt with according to the formal complaints procedure of Utrecht University.

### **PARAGRAPH 7 – FINAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Art. 29 - Annual report**

1. The Board of Examiners will draw up an annual report of its activities for each academic year and will send this to the Board of Studies of the GSLS.
2. The annual report will contain the following parts:
  - a) composition of the Board of Examiners
  - b) monitoring of quality of the tests and examinations (final level of the graduates):
    - i. description of procedures and guidelines for marking and setting standards for tests; way in which it is ascertained that these are applied;
    - ii. description of guidelines for marking and setting standards for research assignments and theses; way in which it is ascertained that these are applied;
    - iii. way in which and number of times that the quality of the tests has been examined.
  - c) quantitative information, numbers: - diplomas awarded (plus number with distinction (*cum laude*));
    - i. requests for exemption or approval;
    - ii. requests for a special examination dispensation;
    - iii. cases of fraud.
  - d) recommendations

#### **Art. 30 - Amendments**

1. Amendments to these regulations will be laid down by the Board of Examiners in a separate decision.
2. An amendment to these regulations does not relate to the current academic year, unless the interests of the students are not harmed as a result in all reasonableness.

3. In exceptional cases, the Board of Examiners may deviate from these rules and regulations, if this would be to the student's advantage.

**Art. 31 - Entering into force and publication**

These regulations enter into force on 5 September 2016.

The Board of Examiners will ensure the publication of these regulations, as well as any amendment thereto, via the internet.

Adopted by the Board of Examiners for the Master's degrees of the Graduate School of Life Sciences, Utrecht University, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

## Appendix 1 - List of Master's programmes

- Biofabrication
- Bio Inspired Innovation
- Biology of Disease
- Biomedical Image Sciences
- Cancer, Stem cells and Developmental Biology
- Drug Innovation
- Environmental Biology
- Epidemiology
- Epidemiology Postgraduate
- Infection and Immunity
- Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences
- Neuroscience and Cognition
- Regenerative Medicine and Technology
- Science and Business Management
- Toxicology and Environmental Health

## Appendix 2 - Profiles

ADS	Applied Data Science
BI	Bioinformatics
CS	Complex Systems
C&E	Communication and Education ( <i>Communicatie en Educatie: in Dutch only</i> )
M	Management, also known as FBE (Fundamental Business and Economics)

## Appendix 3 – General explanation Higher Education and Research act

Section 7.12b (3) of the Higher Education and Research Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, WHW) prescribes that the Board of Examiners must lay down rules relating to:

- marking of tests
- ensuring the quality of the examinations
- exemptions

These rules of the Board of Examiners are contained in the examination regulations. The rules relating to the organization and proper procedures during the tests are also described. These regulations cannot be considered separately from that laid down and regulated in the Higher Education and Research Act, the Education and Examination Regulations (*Onderwijs- en Examenregeling, OER*) of the course(s) concerned and the Student's Charter.