

BACHELOR THESIS GUIDE 2014/2015 *EUROPEAN STUDIES*

Three year international bachelor programme ES (ESB)/ Third year bachelor programme BSK-ES (Double Diploma)

NB !!!! From 2010 on all students have to register at the Blackboard site of the course 'Bachelor thesis ES'. There you can find all the necessary information (forms etc.)

1. Introduction

The bachelor thesis is in principle the final part of both Bachelor-programmes in European Studies: the three year international bachelor programme (ESB) and the third year of the bachelor programme BSK-ES (including the Double Diploma programme with Münster). The thesis amounts to 15 EC (i.e. 420 hours or 10,5 weeks).

Students can start on their thesis research as soon as the thesis plan has been approved by the thesis supervisors. Students that go on internships abroad (as part of the minor International Management, the minor Sustainable Development and/or their thesis research) will be able to do so as from week 9, but these students have to make sure that their thesis research plan is approved in week 7 or 8.

All ESB-students and Dutch BSK-ES-students can only start their bachelor thesis if they fulfil these requirements:

- they have completed with success the propaedeutic exam;
- they have acquired at least 135 EC.

The objectives of the bachelor thesis have been derived from the general so-called Dublin objectives for Bachelor programmes¹. Students that have finished a Bachelor programme should be able to:

1. show that they have knowledge of the most recent developments in their academic field (in this case Public Administration & European Studies);
2. use their knowledge and insights (including methodological skills) to address practical issues in their field;
3. give a well-balanced assessment of their own work, from an academic angle, from the practical side, and from the ethical perspective;
4. communicate (both orally and in writing) their ideas and insights to a mixed public;
5. work independently.

This outline describes the way this part of the programme is organised (section 2), the way of assessment, that is based on the objectives listed above (section 3), and the procedures to be followed (section 4). Section 5 is only relevant for the students of the BK-ES Double Diploma programme. It explains the procedure to receive both your Dutch and German diploma.

¹ This English outline is based on the Dutch outline in which these objectives are dealt with at considerable length.

2. Organization

2.1 Thesis subjects

Subjects for thesis research can be supplied in various ways:

- internally, by professors of UT (and WWU for the BSK-ES Double diploma);
- externally, by governments, businesses or other organisations;
- by the student him/herself;

Moreover, the thesis research can be combined with research done within the framework of the minor International Management or the minor Sustainable Development. To facilitate students a subject database (with individual assignments and thesis circles) is developed for the students of European Studies specifically. The database is accessible from the CES-site: <http://www.mb.utwente.nl/ces/ba-dd/Writing%20your%20Bachelor%20thesis/>), but can also be found on the Blackboard site 'Bachelor thesis ES'.

Students that are aiming for external subjects/internships should take proper initiatives for it themselves. CES staff can help them, provided that they:

- have already picked an organisation;
- provide the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the person to contact within that organisation (no general contact information!);
- come up with one or two alternative subjects;
- come up with a brief curriculum vitae.

In deciding whether a thesis subject is suited for thesis research the following aspects will be taken into account:

- Does the subject enable the student to show that he/she meets the overall programme objectives (listed in the introduction)?
- Can the research be finished within 420 hours?
- Is it relevant in an academic sense, i.c. relevant to European Studies?
- Is it relevant in a practical/empirical sense, i.c. relevant to practical issues of European integration and governance?

For those students that want to combine the International Management minor field study or the Sustainable Development minor field study with their bachelor thesis, it is important that they realise beforehand that in principle they have to come up with two theses:

- A minor thesis in the field of International Management Sustainable Development, which will be assessed by the staff that offers these minors;
- A Bachelor thesis (assessed by the Bachelor thesis supervisors) that has sufficient 'European' content. These students will have to explicitly link their minor thesis findings to Europe and/or the EU. In most cases it will be possible to do so by simply formulating questions that follow-up on or are related to the minor research like: What are the implications for the EU's policy? Or: What lessons can be drawn for the EU? Or: What does this mean to the relationship of the EU with other countries?²

Bachelor theses that are extended versions only of the minor thesis will not do, as we cannot give you double credits for the same piece of work. It is however possible, after consent of your supervisors, to come up with a combined thesis that covers (in a clearly recognizable manner) both the minor research questions and the bachelor thesis research questions.

² If you have problems formulating such follow-up questions, simply go through the issues covered in the core courses of European Studies, and something interesting is bound to come up.

2.2 Workplace and internships, costs

The actual place where the thesis research is conducted can also vary, and can include an internship (in the Netherlands or Germany, or in a foreign country). Neither UT nor WWU will deal with your legal status as an employee (salary, insurance et cetera). Neither will we reimburse you any of the (travel) costs you make as part of your research. There is however a collective travel insurance scheme³.

2.3 Supervision

The Bachelor's assignment is not supervised by a single responsible instructor; instead, a Bachelor's committee is assembled (two supervisors) for each assignment. The Bachelor's committee for the Double Diploma of the University of Twente and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster consists of lecturers from both universities. The Bachelor's assignment is evaluated on an individual basis. The Bachelor's assignment tests the student's competence in the integrated application of the knowledge, comprehension and skills covered in the study units. The Examination Board prescribes an evaluation checklist to help ensure the quality of the evaluation (see appendix 2).

If the minor thesis and the bachelor thesis are combined, students will be supervised by a two-person-committee, consisting of the minor supervisor and the European Studies supervisor. It is up to them to decide whether you write a combined thesis or two separate ones. In most cases the organisation that offers an internship also offers an (external) supervisor that will cooperate with the internal supervisors. If an internship is done abroad, it is compulsory to have an external supervisor. The external supervisor will act as sparring partner, will make sure that you will be properly introduced in the organisation, will provide the information you need to do your thesis research, and will advise the internal supervisors in the end regarding the assessment of the bachelor thesis. In all cases, the internal supervisors are responsible for the final assessment of the thesis.

2.4. Preparatory course

For the programme ESB in addition to the bachelor thesis the preparatory course 'Research proposal bachelor thesis' (course code 194128080) is included in the curriculum. Students for the programme BSK-ES (including the Double Diploma programme) are advised to do this preparatory course as an (extracurricular) optional course. If they do not choose to follow this preparatory course the research plan must be made within the 15 EC available for the ES-bachelor thesis under supervision of the examiners.

2.5. Written and oral report

The student gives an account of the execution and results of the bachelor assignment through a written report (bachelor thesis) and an oral presentation. The amount of the written report is a maximum of 25 pages (about 10.000 words), excluding the table of contents, appendices, list of literature etc. The form of the report is as is usual in scientific and professional journals. The oral presentation has the form of a public presentation and takes 15-20 minutes and is followed by questions from the supervisors and a discussion with the audience. Because of the

³ See the manual MB-Bachelor programs going abroad for more information on internships in a foreign country and <http://www.utwente.nl/internationaloffice/practical/travelinsurance/> for more information on insurances.

limited amount of time, the oral presentation must be concise and understandable for a broad audience. The presentation is part of the bachelor colloquium. A written report in English is obligatory both for students of the English-language track European Studies and for Double Diploma students of the European (“mixed”) track of the Public Administration programme.

2.6. Bachelor colloquium

The presentation takes place in the form a colloquium. This is a concise public presentation of 15-20 minutes. The oral presentation is followed by questioning by the supervisors and a discussion with the audience, which is led by the supervisors (examiners). If all requirements for the bachelor programme are met, the bachelor diploma is conferred at the colloquium. To be able to make sure that during the graduation all administrative requirements have been met, it is necessary to inform Mrs. Olga Boers of the Educational Office (BOZ) in time – at least 15 working days before – on the desired graduation date.

3. Assessment

The assessment of the bachelor thesis will be based on three aspects:

- a. The thesis as such. Obviously, this is the most important aspect. The assessment will include both the academic content of the thesis (‘matter’) as its merits as a means of communication (‘form’). The thesis has to be written in English;
- b. The way the thesis research has been conducted (‘process’);
- c. The final colloquium which will consist of a 15-20 minutes presentation of the research, followed by discussion. The colloquium is public, and the audience will be made up of fellow-students, family, and the thesis supervisors.

The assessment will be done by the internal supervisors, if necessary taking into account the opinion of the external supervisor, if any. The final responsibility and the decision power however rests with the internal supervisors (examiners).

The mark will be given in whole points, on a scale from 0 to 10. The bachelor programme can only be finished after receiving a mark of 6 or more for the bachelor thesis (no marks lower than 6 are allowed for the thesis). Students are admitted to their colloquium only if assessment points a. and b. (matter, form, process) are expected to merit a minimum mark of 6, based on the draft thesis. A complete list of the assessment criteria can be found in appendix 2. In case the minor thesis and bachelor thesis are combined, there is still a separate assessment of the thesis by the minor supervisor and the ES supervisor, which could lead to different marks for the same thesis because of differences in assessment criteria.

Students from the Double Diploma need supervisors from both universities: University of Twente and University of Muenster. So in practice both supervisors act as first supervisor for their respective universities, although (for administrative reasons) the supervisor from Twente must always be registered in the SMS-system as first supervisor. There must be consultation and agreement between the supervisors of Twente and Muenster on at least three occasions:

- The approval of the research proposal for the thesis;
- The ‘green light’ (at least a ‘six’ = sufficient) for the draft version of the thesis;
- The grade for the final version of the thesis after the colloquium (that can be held in Twente or in Muenster). The proper assessment form of Twente must be filled in and handed in by the supervisor from Twente at BOZ (Mrs. Olga Boers).

4. Procedure

In order to finish you have to go through the following steps:

<i>Step</i>	<i>Statement needed</i>
A. Pick a subject and (internal) supervisors	
B. Draw up a research plan, discuss it with the supervisors	
C. Conduct your actual research	Starting statement
D. Hand in the draft thesis to (internal) supervisors, get feedback and revise the thesis	
E. Final revision of the thesis	Colloquium statement
F. Colloquium	

STEP A

You can start with this step right away. Actually, it does make sense to start well in time with finding a thesis subject and supervisors. You can contact organisations or professors yourself, but you can also use the BA-ES subject database (as from the end of November 2015).

STEP B

The research plan has to include:

- Personal details (name, student#, address, telephone, e-mail et cetera)
- Brief abstract of the research proposal
- Background of the research (what problem is involved?, why is it interesting to do research on that problem?)
- Objectives of the research (academic, practical)
- Central question the research addresses, followed by sub-questions
- Overview of the literature that will be used (with a list of references at the end of the plan)
- Discussion of the main methodological choices (how will the research be conducted, and why? What data will be used?)
- Preliminary contents of the thesis (chapters, paragraphs)
- Detailed planning over the 10,5 weeks involved.

Please bear in mind that your bachelor thesis is very similar to (but larger than) the papers you have written for the core courses in European studies, so please use our European Studies guide on Writing Papers (available on the CES-site). Moreover, it is advisable to also have a look at the –also highly similar- structure for research proposals used by the minors.

The research plan has to be discussed with your supervisors. In general, make sure that you make an appointment well in time, and make sure that your supervisors have sufficient time to read your documents. Incorporate such ‘delays’ in your initial planning!

Your supervisors will decide whether the research qualifies as Bachelor-ES thesis research, taking into account the criteria listed in appendix 2. Moreover they will assess the feasibility of your plan. It is possible that you need to revise your initial research plan. When the supervisors are satisfied with your plan, together you must fill out two forms (**Assignment form and Application form**) at the link to the SMS-system at the Blackboard-site.

The Assignment form (**Starting Statement**) needs to be signed by the supervisors. This signed form must be handed in at the Educational Affairs Office (BOZ).

STEP C

It is obligatory to discuss your research with your supervisors during step A and D, but most likely you may need more input from their side. Establish a workable engagement with your supervisors, especially when you conduct your research abroad.

STEP D

Make sure that your draft thesis is complete from cover to cover, because at this stage you probably do not want to be confronted with any delays. Also make sure that you and your supervisors agree on what needs to be done in terms of revision.

This step should be concluded by the signing by the supervisors of the **Colloquium statement**. Moreover you should pick a date/time for your colloquium. It may be advisable to pick a preliminary date together with your supervisors at an earlier stage. Please bear in mind that at UT we have an academic recess that runs from the end of June 2015 to the end of August 2015. Sometime in between these dates your supervisors are likely to enjoy their holidays.

You hand in your Colloquium statement at BOZ and inform them of the planned colloquium date. If you have completed all other parts of the Bachelor programme, BOZ will arrange a venue for you to hold your colloquium and will make the necessary announcements. You must inform BOZ at least 3 WEEKS (15 working days) in advance of your colloquium date.

STEP E

In the meanwhile you can work on the final version of your thesis. Ultimately ONE WEEK (which means 5 working days) before the colloquium you have to hand in paper copies of the final report to your internal supervisors. You also have to upload a digital version of your thesis at the UT-Library: <http://essay.utwente.nl/upload.html>

STEP F

Finally you will be preparing your presentation and defence of the thesis at the colloquium.

5. Procedure to receive your Dutch and German diploma (BSK-ES Double Diploma)

German Students must hand over their study results from Münster to BOZ (Mrs. Olga Boers) before the colloquium and must send their study results and a copy of the Dutch diploma to the administration in Münster (Mrs. Christine Dietz) themselves after the colloquium **OR** hand these over in Twente to BOZ (Mrs. Olga Boers) who will send it to Muenster for you.

Mailing addresses

At the University of Twente:

Mrs. Olga Boers

University of Twente

Faculty MB

P.O. Box 217

NL-7500 AE Enschede

o.c.w.boers-ekelmans@utwente.nl

At the University of Münster:

Mrs. Christine Dietz

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Institut für Politikwissenschaft

Scharnhorststrasse 100/ Platz der Weissen Rose

D-48151 Münster

europa@uni-muenster.de

Appendix 1: criteria and assessment of the thesis plan

Criteria:

The thesis plan includes:

- a short summary of the plan
- objective: a short and clear description of the goals of the research or the design (scientific and societal interest)
- a sharply formulated research question and possible sub-questions
- approach/strategy
 - which theories are used for the answer of the research question and the sub-questions
 - which data are used for the answer
 - which research methods and techniques are used
 - justification of the choices made
- the expected end results
- time planning and time expenditure: an estimation of the time needed for the different activities, provided with dates and products/results to be delivered.
- a list of literature consulted (or eventually to be consulted)

Assessment:

The thesis plan or design plan is formally assessed at its feasibility. Especially the following points are taken into account:

1. is the objective clear
2. are the research question and the sub-questions clear (what is and what isn't included in the research and how is this motivated)
3. does the answer to the research question contribute to the objective (relevance)
4. are the starting-points and the suppositions explicit
5. are the theories useful for answering the research-question; have alternative possibilities been considered; are choices motivated
6. are the right data collected for answering the research-question; are all data to be collected necessary for the answer; has a realistic estimation been made for the time needed and the possibilities for the data-collection
7. is it clear why is chosen to use certain methods; are the right methods chosen for answering the research question
8. is the expected end result feasible
9. is the time planning feasible
10. is the relevant literature used for answering the research question

Appendix 2: criteria for the assessment of the thesis

The official bachelor thesis assessment form can be found on the CES-site and on Blackboard:

<http://www.utwente.nl/mb/ces/ba-dd/Writing%20your%20Bachelor%20thesis/>

Identifying the research problem

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of formulating a relevant research problem for a relatively simple research or design assignment under supervision, including research and/or design questions and a corresponding strategy or general line of approach. He/she has provided argumentation for the choices made, based on an identification of the objective, the core problem and the relevant solution parameters on the one hand and the theory and/or empirical considerations on the other hand.

Literature review & theoretical/conceptual framework

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of compiling a number of conventional scientific and professional sources which are relevant to the assignment and of studying them critically. The student has also demonstrated that he/she is capable of constructing a theoretical and conceptual framework through proper use of theories, models and concepts which he/she has selected and which are relevant to the field in question. This framework enables the research question to be accentuated in a clearly structured and manageable manner. In doing so, he/she has incorporated aspects of the latest developments in the field.

Research design/approach to problem

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of drawing up an action plan for carrying out the (design oriented) research under supervision. In doing so, he/she has made critical use of existing conceptual frameworks and standard operationalization methods. The student has provided adequate argumentation for the approach selected and has ensured that it follows logically from the research problem and the theoretical framework.

Data collection and data analysis and/or design and validation of the design

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of handling the instruments for data collection and analysis in a valid and reliable manner with a degree of supervision resulting in a data set and corresponding analysis results which enable him/her to answer the research questions **and/or:** The student has demonstrated that he/she can adequately handle the instruments for designing, selecting and validating solutions with a degree of supervision, resulting in a design for the solution to the problem which meets the set specifications/requirement.

Conclusions and recommendations

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of describing research and design results and of relating them to the research problem, the research or design questions and the relevant literature. The student has also demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on the strengths and weaknesses of the research carried out and, when forming an opinion of the results, to give due consideration to the scope for generalization on the one hand and the social, societal and/or ethical aspects in the immediate context on the other hand.

Written reporting

The student has demonstrated that he/she is able to present the data – in qualitative and/or quantitative form – clearly and according to accepted scientific convention. His/her argumentation is structured, logical and linguistically correct, and the literature references have been incorporated according to a scientific standard used in the field in question.

Oral reporting (colloquium)

The student has demonstrated that he/she is capable of giving a presentation which is clear, structured, satisfactorily illustrated with visual aids, and comprehensible to listeners of various levels and from different backgrounds, whereby due consideration is given to both the design and the key results of the assignment and argumentation is given to support the most important choices.

Independence and professional skills

The student has demonstrated a degree of independence in preparing and executing the assignment and is capable of planning and managing the research and/or design process (within a time limit). The student has also demonstrated the skills needed to cooperate effectively and has shown the capacity to function adequately within an organizational context. Lastly, the student has demonstrated the ability to reflect on his/her own performance, including the capacity to identify a number of lessons for the future.