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# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

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## MSC BA THESIS MANUAL

(201500101 AND 201500102)

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Note: this manual is only for UT MSc BA students who started their regular one-year MSc BA programme and therefore have to do their master thesis in two parts (with course codes 201500101 and 201500102).

Double diploma students are referred to the thesis manual associated with the course codes 194100040 and 201400018.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this manual is to guide MSc Business Administration graduating students towards a successful and timely completion. Please note that this manual is only for UT MSc BA students who follow the regular one year programme and therefore do their master thesis in two parts (course code Part I: 201500101; course code Part II: 201500102). All other students (including double diploma students) are referred to the thesis manual associated with the course code 194100040. Please check your study programme which thesis type you need to take!

This manual lists the prerequisites and objectives of the MScBA master thesis. It describes the process of selecting a thesis project, the structure and organisation of the thesis, different types of theses, various steps to be followed in research methodology (i.e. formulating a problem statement, selecting a research design, etc.) and the process of supervision and examination. The thesis assessment procedure is also explained in this manual as well as the process involved with oral presentation, defence and the award of the diploma.

## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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In completing the master's thesis, the student shows that (s)he is able to:

- independently analyse a research problem in the field of Business Administration;
- demonstrate in-depth knowledge by applying advanced level of theory and integrating it with cutting-edge developments;
- use scientific sources in a systematic and critical way to develop own research framework;
- plan and manage his or her own learning process; and
- communicate with supervisors/examiners and colleagues in timely and well-prepared way.

To this end, the student independently develops and implements a research- and/or design-oriented project fitting with the expertise and research interests of the track the student follows. The tracks are related to a chair and/or research group to which supervisors/examiners belong. Roughly speaking, the MScBA thesis assignments fall within the sphere of one of the eight MScBA 'high tech, human touch' profiles: Financial Management; HRM; Purchasing and Supply Management; Marketing and Strategy; Innovation and Technology Management; Innovative Entrepreneurship; Business Information Management; and/or Change Management. The student justifies the models, theories, methodology and techniques used, as well as the research/design process; and analyses the work s/he undertook. On completion, the student is expected to hold a public colloquium in which the findings of the thesis project are presented and defended. The thesis is split up in two parts. In terms of scheduling, Part I (10EC) is developed in the student's second quartile, and Part II in the students' 4<sup>th</sup> and last quartile.

**Please note:** the time permitted to finalise the master's project is indicated in the MScBA programme specific part of the Education and Examination Regulations ([www.utwente.nl/ba/rules-and-regulations/](http://www.utwente.nl/ba/rules-and-regulations/)) as follows: the number of ECs multiplied by 28 hours, translated to working weeks. This applies mainly to Part II. Part I is ideally carried out in week 5-10 of the student's second quartile, and should be finalised always before the start of Part II. Master Thesis BA Part II is then carried out in the 4<sup>th</sup> and final quartile, and has a nominal (minimum) duration of 15 ECs = 10-11 weeks. Extra time may be allocated and agreed upon with the master thesis first examiner. If the Master Thesis project Part II is not finalised within 20 working weeks from the start date, the programme director may terminate the project. As the starting date, the date mentioned in Mobility Online is taken (see section 3.1).

## 1.2 PRE-REQUISITES

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Following the MScBA programme specific part of the Education and Examination Regulations, (see: [www.utwente.nl/ba/rules-and-regulations/](http://www.utwente.nl/ba/rules-and-regulations/)) section 3c :

- Students may begin to work on the **Master Thesis BA Part I** (201500101) when they have completed at least 10 ECs of the master's courses from their first quartile, including the profile specific course. Additionally, the student should be enrolled for two courses: Qualitative Methods in Business Research (201700035) and Quantitative and Design Methods in Business Research (201700036) or have finalised it already (or finalized Business Research 201500082).

- Students are accepted for **Master Thesis BA Part II** (201500102) when they have earned in total 35 EC, including the courses Qualitative Methods in Business Research (201700035), Quantitative and Design Methods in Business Research (201700036), and Master Thesis BA Part I (201500101). It is strongly recommended not to start Part II without having finalised all the MScBA core courses and electives.

## 2 THESIS PROJECT, SUPERVISION & EXAMINATION

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### 2.1 THESIS PROJECT

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A thesis project is appropriate for MScBA when it can be positively assessed in terms of:

- academic relevance / master level;
- relevance to the student's master programme and track courses/ supervisor's (/examiner's) research group expertise;
- practical relevance and empirical part;
- scientific level;
- research / design component;
- project's scope / potential to complete it independently and on time.

#### 2.1.1 TYPES OF PROJECTS

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Already in their first quartile students must think of the type of project s/he would like to carry out, and actively engage with his/her chosen master thesis specialisation track coordinator or envisaged master thesis first supervisor/examiner to determine this. The majority of the UT MScBA thesis projects are external projects, i.e. they are carried out in active cooperation with a company (in the Netherlands or abroad) or at least involve data gathering in practice in cooperation with a group of companies/other external organizations. It is also possible to work from within the Faculty of Business, Management and Social Sciences but also in those cases of an *internal* project, a solid empirical part is a must. The new set up of the master thesis is visualised as follows.

#### Master programme's structure design

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
<b>University Courses 1/2</b>		<b>University Courses 2/2</b>	
	<b>Boot camp &amp; Practice Thesis 1/2</b>		<b>Practice Thesis 2/2</b>

- MSc students follow courses in the first quarter, then run a 4 week intensive 'boot camp' on Business Research after which they start working on their thesis (e.g. in a firm), return to university for another quarter of classes and then finalise their thesis

#### External project

This type of project is the most common and recommended, and would be commissioned by a national / international company / organisation. It is completed off-campus. In addition to the

university examiners (and supervisors), external projects involve an external (i.e. company-based) supervisor. It is crucial to make explicit arrangements with the external supervisor and the university examiner(s) regarding the scientific quality of the thesis project and the on-company facilities to be received by the student. In the new master structure, ideally, contacts and agreements with the company are made already in the first 2 quartiles of the master year. If distance & student/company scheduling permits, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, already weeks 5-10 can even be spent at the company's site. Part II, which takes place in the student's 4<sup>th</sup> quartile, can be spent entirely at the company's site. Nominally this phase is 10-11 working weeks. During the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile, examiners are available for guidance and supervision. Following an individual agreement between the examiner and the student, the period may be extended, but not take longer than 20 working weeks counting from the start date (see 1.1).

The programme director is aware of the fact that some companies may not accept a master thesis combined internship as short as 11 weeks. However, careful planning and well thought out agreement with the company may very well facilitate finalising the thesis *during* the stay at the company, and finalising the overall internship activities (for example implement improvements resulting from your thesis project) may be planned after that. Please contact your first examiner, specialisation track coordinator or the programme director ([programmedirector-iba-ba-bms@utwente.nl](mailto:programmedirector-iba-ba-bms@utwente.nl)) for tips and inspiration on flexible internship arrangements. We will be closely monitoring and evaluating the new master thesis structure and are very keen on your constructive input.

### International project

These are also external projects, but are completed abroad. It is obvious that completing an international research project involves more complexity and takes more time to complete than working on a project in the Netherlands. Students should bear in mind that in his role as project owner, he is in charge of the project's implementation. The student must realise the importance of proper communication with his university examiners to guarantee the progress and the quality of the thesis. Students involved in the double diploma arrangements with TU Berlin and Lappeenranta will most often carry out an international project and have joint supervisors from both universities. The coordinators of these double diploma agreements are available for more information.

In addition to the usual guidelines for research projects completed in the Netherlands, the following apply especially to international projects:

- Preparations should begin well in advance prior to leaving the Netherlands, esp. when going to a non EU country and/or when VISA etc are needed.
- The student finds a project in consultation with the university examiner.
- As an international project entails additional preparations, the student must complete the relevant preparations prior to leaving the country.
- The problem statement and a plan of approach must be approved by the examiners prior to leaving the country.

For additional information about preparing for an international project and living abroad, please refer to the information about studying abroad (*Studeren in het Buitenland*) available on the faculty website ([www.utwente.nl/nl/bms/onderwijs/study-abroad/](http://www.utwente.nl/nl/bms/onderwijs/study-abroad/)).

### Internal project

These projects are typically commissioned by the staff of one of the MScBA related departments (NIKOS, F&A, HRM, TMS, IEBIS, CMOB) and are completed on-campus. The project involves performing scientific research on an academic / real-life issue relevant to the Master programme/track/ profile. It is also possible that a student suggests a research project of his

own to an academic staff. The advantage of an internal project is that the student is fully in control of its implementation and can relatively easily adhere to the scientific quality as demanded by the examiners. A solid empirical part is a must (think about case studies involving multiple companies, surveys, interviews ...)

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### 2.1.2 FINDING A PROJECT

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Thesis topics should fall within the research expertise of the MScBA academic staff (see Appendix D) and their expertise, within one of the five specialisation tracks (see 2.2).

In all circumstances, a student needs one qualified academic staff member (examiner) with whom s/he can discuss the development of the thesis project idea and who can give the written approval required at the actual start of the project. Students are encouraged to take their own initiative towards developing their own thesis project **in accordance with** the specialisation track/examiner's and/or his/her departments research interests and expertise. For example, the student can contact an (international) company of their liking and inquire for any thesis assignment. They can also look for an external project via personal / professional network. Research groups/ individual examiners also define their own projects, often in collaboration with companies for which a student may apply.

Each student should independently complete his/her own research project. If the large scope of an available research project is a reason to deviate from this norm, different arrangements may be made. However, the student should always individually write a thesis about his/her part of the work. In case of working with more than one student on a larger project, always make sure to formulate identifiable projects in accordance with the examiner(s). Consult the relevant part of the EER (Article 1a of the programme specific appendix of the Education and Examination Regulations) and contact the master programme coordinator, specialisation track coordinator or examiner for confirmation of the approach.

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## 2.2 SUPERVISION & EXAMINATION

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As indicated before, any student planning to start writing a master thesis should first of all choose a specialisation track as part of their Individual Learning Agreement (ILA). The specialisation track coordinators can help you find supervisors/examiners<sup>1</sup> for your project. Each specialisation track has its own Canvas site and at the start of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile information sessions will be held introducing staff members involved, courses taught and research interests listed.

List of specialisation track coordinators:

Specialisation track	Thesis Coördinator	Email
Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Strategy	Oukes, dr. T.	<a href="mailto:t.oukes@utwente.nl">t.oukes@utwente.nl</a>

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<sup>1</sup> A supervisor is tasked with guiding the thesis student through the process of writing the thesis. An examiner is tasked with assessing the thesis and the learning process of the thesis. Most commonly the first supervisor is the first examiner. Be aware as a student that your graduation committee includes at least two appointed examiners, and at least one of the two has earned his/her PhD degree (see Rules and Regulations of the Examination Board).

Financial Management	Kabir, prof.dr. M.R.	<a href="mailto:r.kabir@utwente.nl">r.kabir@utwente.nl</a>
Human Resource Management	Bondarouk, prof.dr. T.	<a href="mailto:t.bondarouk@utwente.nl">t.bondarouk@utwente.nl</a>
International Management	Stienstra, dr. M.R.	<a href="mailto:m.r.stienstra@utwente.nl">m.r.stienstra@utwente.nl</a>
Purchasing and Supply Management	Hoffmann, dr. ir. P.	<a href="mailto:p.hoffmann@utwente.nl">p.hoffmann@utwente.nl</a>
Strategic Marketing and Digital Business	Loohuis, dr. R.P.A.	<a href="mailto:r.p.a.loohuis@utwente.nl">r.p.a.loohuis@utwente.nl</a>
Please note, it is also possible to do your thesis assignment at the chair of 'Change Management and Organisation Behaviour'. You will need to enroll in one of the above mentioned specialization track, but one supervisor/examiner for your thesis assignment (Part I and Part II) will be from the Change Management chair.		
Change Management profile	Wilderom, prof.dr. C.P.M.	<a href="mailto:c.p.m.wilderom@utwente.nl">c.p.m.wilderom@utwente.nl</a>

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### 2.2.1 INTERNAL SUPERVISOR

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Each student receives supervision from two UT staff members whose responsibility is to give academic advice to write a good thesis. **Both supervisors need to be qualified examiners as appointed by the Examination Board of the MSc Business Administration programme (Examination Board Management Sciences)** (see Appendix D). The first examiner (also known as the first or lead supervisor) is considered as an expert in the field chosen for the master thesis which is in principle within the chosen specialization track. The student initially discusses all aspects of the thesis project with the lead supervisor. The frequency of contacts, form of meetings and method of working are matters for the student to arrange between himself and the examiner. It is expected that the student takes the lead in making agreements with regard to such issues. *A student can expect at least 24 hours of supervision from the 1<sup>st</sup> (lead) examiner and at least 6 hours of supervision from the 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor. These hours include supervisors' reading time of all drafts during the research project and the presentation & defence of the final thesis.*

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### 2.2.2 EXTERNAL SUPERVISOR

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When working on an external thesis project in a company/organization, it is essential that the student has a point of contact at the company / organization who acts as an external supervisor. This supervisor must have sufficient knowledge and experience to supervise the MSc student in the research project.

The external supervisor serves as:

- A 'sparring partner' with regard to project content;
- A source of information with regard to project implementation;
- An organisational gatekeeper in so far as relevant to project implementation;
- A process supervisor during project implementation;
- An adviser with regard to the assessment of the project results, the thesis and the student's performance.

Although the external supervisor is involved in the project's successful implementation, only the internal supervisors (as examiners) grade the Master thesis.

## 3 THESIS FORMALITIES

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### 3.1 CANVAS

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Formally, after completing at least 10 EC of the courses from their first quartile, and while being enrolled in the courses Qualitative Methods in Business Research (201700035) and Quantitative and Design Methods in Business Research (201700036), a student can start Master Thesis BA Part I (201500101). When students enroll in Osiris for that course, they will get access to the relevant Thesis Canvas pages.

Important information is available on Canvas. For example:

- The link to Mobility Online;
- Master Thesis Manual;
- Colloquium application forms;
- Evaluation forms;
- Overview of important contacts.

Information and tips according to the research process and writing your thesis is also placed on the Canvas pages.

### 3.2 MASTER THESIS BA PART I AND PART II

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#### **Master Thesis BA Part I 201500101**

Master Thesis BA Part I is administered as a 10 EC course. Students can enrol in Osiris and are admitted when they fulfil the requirements of participation in (or having finished) 201700035 and 201700036 OR 201500082 and at least 10 EC of the MScBA curriculum courses. Master Thesis BA Part I can be finalised by **pass** or **fail**. A **pass** is granted by the lead supervisor/examiner and the profile coordinator on the basis of:

- a realistic and relevant research proposal for the master thesis (including planning for Part I and Part II);
- acceptable version of the methodology chapter;
- acceptable version of the theory chapter;
- or the equivalent of the above which according to the examiner defines favourable conditions for starting and finalising Part II within 10 weeks (not exceeding 20 weeks).

#### **Master Thesis BA Part II 201500102**

Once Part I is finalised, and all courses including Qualitative Methods in Business Research (201700035) and Quantitative and Design Methods in Business Research (201700036) are finished, the student must register for the master thesis assignment by registering in 'Mobility Online'. This can be done via: [www.utwente.nl/en/education/current-students/mobility-online/](http://www.utwente.nl/en/education/current-students/mobility-online/).

Make sure you finalize this registration as soon as you and fulfil all requirements for starting your Master Thesis BA Part II.

### 3.3 ETHICAL APPROVAL

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During your studies you will be conducting research, supervised by an experienced researcher from our faculty. This research may involve human beings as participants, for example in surveys or experiments. The Faculty of BMS wants to ensure that such research is carried out in an ethically responsible way. All research involving human participants that is planned,

supervised and carried out by researchers (both staff and students) from the Faculty of BMS will be subjected to a systematic ethical assessment.

*When do I need to ask for ethical approval?*

The policy applies to all research involving human participants in a direct (e.g. experiments, surveys, interviews) or an indirect way (for example, file or social media research). Students may for example conduct such research for the Master-thesis.

You can only start the research after you have secured ethical approval. In some cases, your first supervisor/examiner may be affiliated with another Faculty than the BMS Faculty. If this is the case, your research has to comply with the ethics policy of your supervisor's faculty. Please discuss this with him/her.

*How do I ask for ethical approval?*

To ask for ethical approval, you have to submit your research proposal (in consultation with your supervisor) to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences. This can be done via a web application. The Ethics Committee will assess your proposal on a number of criteria. You may be asked to change or further justify certain aspects of your research design. The assessment may take up to 10 working days, or longer if your research is not standard. Again, you should have obtained ethical approval before you start contacting potential participants. The approval will ensure that your research meets the ethical standards of our faculty.

The faculty have developed a new website with information about the assessment process, the criteria used, and other information to facilitate an ethically responsible research practice. This website is online since October 1, 2016: [www.utwente.nl/en/bms/research/ethics/](http://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/research/ethics/). So if you start planning research with human participants, now or in the future, please consult this website and your first supervisor and submit your application in time.

*What does this mean concretely?*

Every student that will do a research that involves human participation (which for Business Administration is practically almost always the case), will have to **submit a request for ethical assessment** via a web application: <https://webapps.utwente.nl/beoordelingce/nl/bceservlet> (please check the before mentioned website of the Ethics Committee BMS before submitting).

Approval and the time needed to get approval (or not) will depend on if your research is considered standard for the department that will supervise you.

**To get to know if your research is standard**, you need to know who your lead examiner is. Find out which department s/he is in (for example by asking your examiner or checking [www.utwente.nl/telefoongids/en](http://www.utwente.nl/telefoongids/en)). Then check the website of the Ethical Committee for the standard research for that department ([www.utwente.nl/en/bms/research/ethics/members-and-standard-research-per-department/](http://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/research/ethics/members-and-standard-research-per-department/)). Now you know if your research might be considered as standard research. If your research is not standard, the procedure will take longer, given that the full Ethics Committee will conduct a more extensive assessment.

## 4 THESIS PHASES

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As a manager of his/her own master thesis project, the student is responsible for successful completion of the thesis within the stipulated time. The list of all activities associated with the thesis can be categorized under four distinct phases: preparation, implementation, completion and colloquium. These phases are described below.

### 4.1 PHASE 1: PREPARATION, RESEARCH DESIGN AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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*This preparation phase is part of the Master Thesis BA Part I (201500101).*

This phase starts when an initial meeting is held with the lead supervisor. At this meeting, the following topics are discussed:

- The student's ideas regarding the thesis project and the research/design topic;
- The student's work plan;
- The plan for supervisory meetings;
- The assessment method.

Addressing these issues satisfactorily would allow a student to gain a better understanding of all activities required towards the completion of the thesis. In this preparatory phase, the student's aim is to identify and outline a research problem. Identifying an academically challenging problem demands thorough research and careful thought. The student should also establish personal learning objectives and how these will be achieved. During this phase, the student will gather relevant information, perform a literature search and formulate – by means of an iterative process and under the guidance of the supervisor – a research plan. The student is also responsible for managing the process, including its form and content.

*If, during this phase, the student or the supervisors observe any serious quality or progress impediments, which for whatever reason could jeopardise completion of the project, the student and/or supervisors may call on the programme director to assess the progress (or lack thereof), taking into consideration the interests of those involved (i.e. the student and the project initiator). Consultation with the study advisor beforehand is then a necessity.*

The Research Proposal guides the implementation and completion of the thesis project. The student operationalises the key research/design concepts and the manner in which these will be analysed / measured. The plan specifies the methodology to be used for the research / design project, the theoretical background, the data collection procedure and how to approach the data analysis. In this phase, already some preliminary interviews and data collection may take place (e.g. for the feasibility study).

*Deliverables for finalising Master Thesis BA Part I:*

- a realistic and relevant research proposal for the master thesis;
  - o including planning for Part I and Part II;
  - o including acceptable version of the methodology chapter;
  - o including acceptable version of the theory chapter;
- or the equivalent of the above which according to the supervisor defines favourable conditions for starting and finalising Part II within a minimum of 10 weeks (not exceeding 20 weeks).

## 4.2 PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTATION

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The Research Proposal plan of approach guides the implementation and completion of the thesis project. The student operationalises the key research/design concepts and the manner in which these will be analysed / measured. The plan specifies the methodology to be used for the research / design project, the theoretical background, the data collection procedure and how to approach the data analysis. The student remains solely responsible for implementing the plan of approach. During this phase, two assessment milestones are used: (i) halfway through the implementation phase, the student and the lead supervisor evaluate project quality and progress; and (ii) towards the end of the implementation phase, both supervisors agree on near completion of the project. Students are recommended to take notes of all relevant information throughout the implementation phase.

This includes:

- Work/activities completed;
- Sources of information consulted;
- Problems/difficulties experienced;
- Decisions taken;
- Project schedule adjustments;
- Explanation/justification of decisions taken and project schedule adjustments;
- Thoughts with regard to the learning objectives.

The student can refer to the recorded information during supervisory meetings and in writing the thesis. The supervisory meetings will focus on:

- thesis progress;
- thoughts with regard to the work/activities completed;
- quality of the work/activities completed; and
- feasibility of completing the Thesis project.

*Deliverables: Green light version of thesis*

## 4.3 PHASE 3: COMPLETION

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In this third phase, the student focuses on the analysis of the information/data obtained or the validation of the design, and the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis / validation. Depending on the type of problem analyses, alternatives may be formulated, discussed and possibly implemented, or recommendations to do so may be put forward. The student finishes writing the thesis manuscript and submits it to the lead supervisor. Once the lead supervisor is satisfied with the manuscript, the student contacts both supervisors for scheduling a provisional assessment of the thesis (known as “green light” meeting). The student submits the draft thesis to both supervisors at least **five working days** prior to the assessment meeting. The internal supervisors then assess the thesis manuscript, and if applicable, take into consideration any recommendations from the external supervisor. During the assessment meeting, the supervisors can award a provisional pass/fail mark for the thesis, indicating the changes required to be awarded a pass mark (if the thesis has been awarded a fail mark) or the changes required to increase the quality of the thesis (if the thesis can get a pass mark).

Only after the manuscript is approved at the assessment meeting, the student can start preparing the definitive version of the master thesis. The student contacts the Educational Affairs Office (BOZ) for holding the colloquium (i.e. oral presentation and defence). As part of the

registration process, the student must submit a form with the thesis title/abstract for approval by the supervisors and for public announcement on the educational portal (described in next phase).

Additionally, we ask the student complete the digital evaluation form for the master thesis (see link on <http://evasys.utwente.nl/evasys/online.php?p=9QLVM>). The student's experiences with the graduation assignment provide important information for us and can be used to improve the graduation procedure and with this, the quality of the overall programme.

*Deliverables: Definitive thesis version, completed evaluation form*

#### 4.4 PHASE 4: COLLOQUIUM

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A colloquium for oral presentation and defence can only take place once the MSc student has successfully completed all courses<sup>2</sup>, registered in Mobility Online and obtained approval of the thesis from the supervisors (green light). When these requirements are met, the student can submit the form 'Colloquium Announcement' (Appendix A) to the Educational Affairs Office (BOZ).

The colloquium may take place **15 working days** after the assessment meeting ('green light' meeting). In consultation with the two internal supervisors/examiners who form the graduation committee and the Educational Affairs Office, the student schedules the date, time and location of the colloquium. Family, friends and external supervisors are welcome to attend the colloquium.

During the colloquium, the student presents the results of the Master thesis project and – by responding to questions posed by the supervisors or others in the audience – defends her work. The colloquium should last no longer than one hour. It consists of two parts: presentation of the thesis (about 20-25 minutes); questions & answers from the committee / audience (about 20-25 minutes). After the colloquium, the examiners jointly grade the thesis and announce it. The MSc diploma and a provisional list of marks are then presented to the student. The definitive list of marks and a supplement are sent to the student's home address several days after the colloquium.

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<sup>2</sup> It is the student's responsibility to complete all master's courses on time before graduation (the oral defence session/colloquium).

## 5 OTHER GUIDELINES

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The graduating student must send to each member of the graduation committee the final version of the thesis **in hard-copy and bounded** no less than **ten working days** prior to the colloquium. At the same time, the student also needs to upload the thesis on the website <http://essay.utwente.nl/>. Only when the student has uploaded the thesis he will receive the diploma supplement.

The layout of the thesis should be as follows:

- (i) Title page
- (ii) Acknowledgements (optional)
- (iii) Abstract
- (iv) Table of Contents
- (v) Main Text
- (vi) Summary and Conclusions
- (vii) Appendices (optional)
- (viii) Reference list

The title page must contain the title, the MSc in Business Administration programme name, student name, and date, as well as the thesis examiners names. Make sure these examiners are listed in Appendix D (or otherwise are appointed as examiner for the thesis of Business Administration). The main arguments and conclusions of the thesis should be presented in an abstract preferably in a single page. The table of contents should include a list of chapter numbers/titles, section numbers/titles and page numbers. The main text of the thesis should be divided into chapters and sections / sub-sections as appropriate. In the final chapter, it is useful to present the summary / implications of thesis findings, discuss the main conclusions, and mention the importance, relevance & limitations of the study. Each table and figure should have a concise descriptive title above, and notes or source, where relevant, below. The use of appendices is optional; if used, these can either be grouped together at the end of the main text or included at the end of each relevant chapter within the main text. The reference list should include all works specifically referenced within the text; should be presented alphabetically by author; and should contain the following details: name of author(s), title of publication, publisher/source, date of publication, volume number and page numbers. Whatever reference style is chosen, it should be followed consistently. The length of the thesis depends on the subject and the research approach and is determined in consultation with the supervisors. The thesis is judged by the quality of academic merit and intellectual content (Appendix B2) .

## 6 ASSESSMENT

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### **Master Thesis BA Part I:**

The graduation committee consisting of at least one examiner (Appendix D) base their assessment of the research proposal on several criteria (See Appendix B1). The assessment results in a pass or fail and feedback.

- Description of situation and complication;
- Focus of central research question;
- Theory;
- Description of theoretical contribution;
- Description of practical contribution;
- Research design;
- Outline & planning;
- Structure and writing (beyond the obvious; consistency between separate parts; clear, concise, well-written and argued; fulfilled formal requirements).

You can find the scoring sheet/ rubrics on the Canvas site. Make sure your first examiner fills in the rubrics and signs off on the document, and hand the document in at BOZ.

### **Master Thesis BA Part II:**

The graduation committee consisting of 2 examiners (Appendix D) base their assessment of the master thesis on several criteria (See Appendix B2). The assessment results in a grade (no decimals).

- Research question;
- Literature review & Theoretical framework;
- Research method / design;
- Data collection and analysis / Validation of the design;
- Conclusions & recommendations / Contribution to theory & practice;
- Writing structure and style;
- Independence and professional skills;
- Oral presentation and defence.

These criteria are not equally-weighted. The quality of the content of the thesis and the contribution of the research / design to the relevant academic field weigh more heavily than student's performance at the oral presentation and defence. The student must earn at least a 6 for the thesis. This is an individual assessment.

## 7 MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

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### 7.1 CONFIDENTIALITY

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The Master thesis is a public document. It is only by way of exception that a thesis can be declared “confidential”. A written request for confidentiality must be submitted by the student after obtaining the approval (i.e. signature) of the 1<sup>st</sup> supervisor to the BMS Examination Board Management Sciences (EB-MS) which then takes the final decision. The EB-MS can also decide whether the thesis or only a part of it contain confidential elements. A thesis that receives the label “confidential” is not freely accessible. But, in that case, an additional public version of the thesis must be submitted which would be freely accessible. A graduating student will not receive the diploma supplement until the public version of the thesis is uploaded.

### 7.2 COST REIMBURSEMENT

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The School or the University does not reimburse any thesis related costs – domestic or international – incurred by a student. It is necessary that students arrange sufficient insurance coverage for any unexpected event. The University of Twente provides collective free (international) travel insurance. For more information about this or to arrange coverage under this policy, please contact the Financial and Economic Affairs Office.

### 7.3 PLAGIARISM

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Plagiarism occurs when a person uses the work, idea or expression (printed, electronic or handwritten) of others as though it were his/her own work. It is considered as a form of cheating. A good academic practice is not to present another person’s work without giving due acknowledgment. The thesis therefore must represent the student’s own effort and his own work. If a thesis found to contain plagiarism, it will result in severe punishment. The Education and Examination Regulations provides more information on the sanctions to be applied (see EER, Appendix). If you are in any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, or how to properly acknowledge a source, you should consult your supervisor or the track coordinator. You may know more about plagiarism and ways of avoiding from the website: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>.

Students should be aware that we can use plagiarism detection software to determine if plagiarism is likely to be present in a thesis, though other means of plagiarism detection may also be used.

As the master thesis is an academic research project, also other scientific integrity issues are relevant and apply. The University of Twente subscribes to the guidelines for scientific integrity as specified in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice, the European code of conduct and the Singapore statement on research integrity are also relevant. In addition, we draw attention to the advice of the Royal Netherlands Academy of arts and sciences on providing proper citation (in Dutch: [www.knaw.nl/nl/actueel/publicaties/correct-citeren](http://www.knaw.nl/nl/actueel/publicaties/correct-citeren)) and the worldwide guidelines and codes of conduct on all aspects of publication ethics established by the committee on publication ethics (COPE) (<http://publicationethics.org/>).

## 8 TIME-LINE

This time-line provides an ideal path of major activities related to the writing of the thesis.  
It can vary across students and thesis projects.

Week	Activity	Description of the work
Q1	Searching for a thesis topic	Contact the track coordinator and/or a supervisor about available thesis projects / the topics of your interest / getting a supervisor/ examiner
Q1 or start Q2	Meeting with the 1 <sup>st</sup> supervisor ( <b>± ½ hour</b> )	Getting acquainted, discussing thesis topic, literature and the formalities
Q2	1 or 2 Meetings with the 1 <sup>st</sup> supervisor ( <b>±1 hour</b> )	Discussing progress (literature review, theoretical framework and research method / design)
Q2	Master Thesis BA Part I	Formulating the research/design problem; elaborating a plan of approach; first version of methodology and theoretical chapter; preliminary interviews/data collection
	<b>Examiner fills in and signs feedback form/ rubrics</b>	
	<b>Hand in this form at BOZ</b>	
Q4	Registration	Via Mobility Online
Q4	Master Thesis BA Part II Implementation	Execution of research (data collection, analysis / design)
	Meeting with the 1 <sup>st</sup> supervisor ( <b>± ½ hour</b> )	Discussing research progress
Completing the execution of research		
	Completion	Finalizing the analysis Submitting the manuscript
	Meeting with the supervisors ( <b>±1 hour</b> )	Discussing the manuscript
	Submitting thesis draft for the assessment ('green light') meeting	
	Assessment meeting with supervisors ( <b>±1 hour</b> )	Discussion revisions + signing colloquium form. Hand in the colloquium form at the educational office
	Hand in print copy of the thesis to supervisors and upload your thesis on <a href="http://essay.utwente.nl">essay.utwente.nl</a>	
	Colloquium	Public presentation and defence (1 hour)

## APPENDIX A. ANNOUNCEMENT MASTER COLLOQUIUM FORM

### Announcement Master Colloquium for the studies BA, PA, ES, IEM

Please fill out the form 'Announcement Colloquium' after you have set a date and time with your committee members. It is preferable to plan your colloquium during the college hours as shown below

#### College hours:

1/2 08.45 – 10.30 hrs  
3/4 10.45 – 12.30 hrs  
Lunchbreak 12.45 – 13.30 hrs  
6/7 13.45 – 15.30 hrs  
8/9 15.45 – 17.30 hrs

#### Phone numbers UT building caretakers:

Cubicus	053-4893349
Horstring	053-4892500
Ravelijn	053-4893440
Spiegel	053-4894183
Waaier	053-4892299
Carré	053-4892299
Hal B	053-4892299
Vrijhof	053-4895500

The office for educational affairs BMS (BOZ) will send the 'Announcement Colloquium' to the following parties involved:

1. Committee members within the faculty BMS
2. Mrs. S. van 't End-Bijkerk, UT-rooms
3. Reception of the building in which the colloquium will take place
4. Calendar of the department of students affairs BMS (BOZ)
5. Studentportal

#### ATTENTION, STARTING 01-01-2014 THE PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS HAS BEEN CHANGED

In order to graduate for your bachelor or master it is necessary to upload your thesis to UT Student Theses (<http://essay.utwente.nl>).

Before completing this form you have to make sure that whether or not making the thesis publicly available via the repository is supported by all parties involved. If no public access is permitted, it is also possible to restrict the publicly visible information. Moreover, in both cases you must give explicit permission to deposit the thesis in the UT Student Theses.

More instructions about how to upload your thesis you can find at: <http://essay.utwente.nl/upload.html>  
After uploading the thesis the student, the examiner(s) and the administration office of your faculty will be notified by means of a generated e-mail. The thesis will be available in UT Student Theses within 3 working days and will be attached to your student file in the UT archive.

**Please make sure this form has been delivered to the office for educational affairs BMS (BOZ) in Citadel 434-440, at least 15 working days prior to the colloquium. Forms handed in after this deadline will not be processed.**

## Announcement Master Colloquium for the studies BA, PA, ES, IEM

<b>Family name:</b>
<b>Given name(s):</b>
<b>Student registration number:</b>
<b>Current address:</b>
<b>Zip code and place of residence:</b>
<b>Telephone number:</b>
<b>Date of birth:</b>
<b>Place of birth + country:</b>

The above-mentioned student will, within the framework of the master assignment within the course

BA /  PA /  IE&M /  ES /  ES Double Degree programme

Track/Specialisation \_\_\_\_\_

give a presentation about (title): **(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)**

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This is **confidential**:  Yes  No (NB: it can only be ticked as confidential with permission of Examination Board)

**Attention!** When the thesis has not been processed in Mobility Online, the announcement will not be accepted!

<b>Date:</b>
<b>Time:</b>
<b>Total number of guests:</b>
<b>Class room (preferred):</b>

<b>First Examiner (supervisor):</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Second Examiner (supervisor):</b>	
<b>External member:</b>	
<b>ONLY for students from the ES DOUBLE DEGREE !!!!</b> Signature (Second) Supervisor from Münster:	

Future Study/Work:

- Student stops studying at the University of Twente
- Student stays studying at the University of Twente;

<b>Education</b>	<b>Track:</b>

Student hereby declares that all subjects have been completed and that the grades (including, if applicable, the Master class and Thesis Part I) are registered in Osiris. The student also declares that the date and time have been confirmed by the supervisors.

n.b. If the grades are not registered in Osiris, BOZ can decline the colloquium announcement.

**Date:**

**Signature student:**

## APPENDIX B1. MASTER THESIS BA PART I ASSESSMENT MATRIX

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Please download at: [www.utwente.nl/ba/master/thesis-and-graduation](http://www.utwente.nl/ba/master/thesis-and-graduation) or from the Canvas site of the Master Thesis BA Part 1 course.

<b>Feedback sheet for Master Thesis BA Part 1 (Research proposal) (201500101)</b>		<b>Student name:</b>				
		<b>Student number:</b>				
<b>CRITERIA</b>						
<b>ELEMENTS</b>	<b>Unclear/ limited</b>	<b>Adequate</b>		<b>Profound</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Comments/feedback (obligatory to fill in by supervisor)</b>
01: Description of situation and complication	1	2		3		
02: Focussed central research question (not necessary to split into sub questions)	1	2	3	4    5		
03: Theory (mentioned key papers, theory, concepts)	1	2	3	4    5		
04: Description of theoretical contribution	1	2		3		
05: Description of practical contribution	1	2		3		
06: Research design (for theoretical; the review method)	1	2	3	4    5		
07: Outline & planning (incl contingencies 3 pnts)	1	2		3		
08: Clear, concise, well-written and argued	1	2		3		
The student submitted a proposal to the Ethics Committee for assessment:					Yes/No	Name examiner: Exam date: Signature:
Criteria 02, 03 and 06 should be evaluated with at least score "2" to pass the proposal. Not more than 3 out of 8 criteria can be scored with "1" to pass the proposal.				<b>EVALUATION: Pass / Fail</b>		
<b>Additional comments:</b>						

## APPENDIX B2. MASTER THESIS BA PART II ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Student Name:Student number:

Assessment criteria	≤ 5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Research question</b>	Unclear	Broad	Clear and specific	Clear, specific and well-defined	Clear, specific, well-defined and original	Excellent
<b>Literature review &amp; Theoretical framework</b>	Unclear and inadequately explained; almost no link with the academic literature	Limited explanation of the academic literature	Adequate explanation of the academic literature; use of a theoretical framework	Well-explained and critical evaluation of the latest literature; use of a very clear conceptual framework	Profound and critical evaluation of the literature; use of the state-of-the-art framework; potentially worth journal publication	Excellent and original; suitable for journal publication
<b>Research method / design</b>	Unsystematic and confusing; no link to the literature	Limited explanation; justified using the academic literature	Adequate explanation and appropriately addressed using the relevant academic literature	Well-explained and well-justified using the latest academic literature	Profound and critical explanation and evaluation of all available research methods	Excellent demonstration of methodological understanding
<b>Data collection and analysis / Validation of the design</b>	Inadequately described; unclear analysis	Rather limited explanation; clear analysis	Adequate explanation; very clear analysis; linked with prior research	Well-explained; very clear analysis; decent link with prior research; results well-presented	Profound demonstration of originality; very clear presentation and analysis; potentially worth journal publication	Excellent; suitable for journal publication
<b>Conclusions &amp; recommendations / Contribution to theory &amp; practice</b>	Vague	Clear but not based on the reported findings	Conclusions based on the reported findings; appropriate recommendations	Conclusions clearly articulated and firmly based on the reported findings; valuable recommendations	Profound conclusions; original recommendations	Excellent

Assessment criteria	≤ 5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Writing structure and style</b>	Poor; illogical structure	Clear and consistent	Clear and consistent; adequately expressed	Clear and consistent; well expressed; adequately argued	Very clear structure; persuasive style with strong arguments; potentially worth journal publication	Excellent; suitable for journal publication
<b>Independence and professional skills</b>	Rather dependent; poor demonstration of skills	Not so independent; satisfactory demonstration of skills	Semi-independent; good demonstration of skills	Independent; very good demonstration of skills	High degree of independence; superior demonstration of skills	Excellent
<b>Oral presentation and defense</b>	Scrappy presentation; ambiguous answers	Satisfactory	Good	Very good demonstration of a clear engagement with the subject	Superior demonstration of a clear engagement with the subject	Excellent
<b>FINAL MARK:</b>						

Date:

Name of Examiner 1:

Signature:

Name of Examiner 2:

Signature:

## APPENDIX D. MSC BA THESIS EXAMINERS

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The grade for your thesis can only be established by (at least) two formally appointed examiners. The Examination Board appoints examiners for the thesis, and these appointed examiners can be found via the link: [www.utwente.nl/en/bms/examboard/for-examiners/](http://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/examboard/for-examiners/) (under 'Examiners').

Please make sure you have two examiners that are formally appointed as such for the Master Thesis BA (specifically Part II) before you hand in your Colloquium Form. If a supervisor is not on the list of the Examination Board and you want him or her individually appointed as examiner for you, please file a request as early as possible with the Examination Board.

## APPENDIX E. SOME USEFUL REFERENCES

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### Textbooks on research in general

Sharp, J., Peters, J. and Howard, K., *The Management of a Student Research Project*, Gower, 2002, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Bell, J., *Doing your research project*, Open University Press, 2010, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

Phillips, E and Pugh, D, *How to get a PhD*, Open University Press, 2010, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

### Textbooks on business research method

Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. and Schindler, P., *Business Research Methods*, McGraw-Hill, 2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

Ghuri, P. and Grønhaug, K., *Research Methods in Business Studies*, FT/Prentice Hall, 2010, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A., *Research Methods for Business Students*, FT/Prentice Hall, 2009, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

### Journals

The library contains a large collection of books and journals (both printed and digital). A large number of scientific journals, newspaper articles, student theses as well as some databases are freely available. Please consult the library website: [www.utwente.nl/ub/en](http://www.utwente.nl/ub/en)

The e-journals can be searched from the website: <http://sfx.utwente.nl:3210/prod/az>

### Working Papers

The Social Science Research Network (SSRN) is composed of a number of specialized research networks in most of the social science subjects. SSRN eLibrary provides access to digital research papers from scholars, journals, publishers, and institutions around the world. The website address is: [www.ssrn.com](http://www.ssrn.com)

### Databases

There are some useful databases (for example, REACH) available in the Library. One can find these databases by following these steps:

- ✓ Go to the UT library website: [www.utwente.nl/ub/en](http://www.utwente.nl/ub/en)
- ✓ Click on the link for 'SEARCH for SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION'
- ✓ Click on the link for 'A-Z list databases'