



# ***Course Guide***

## ***BSc Thesis Economics and Governance***

*Code:* YSS- 81312 *Thesis Economics and Governance*

*Credits:* 12 ECTS

*Contact Person:* Ir. E.P. (Edwin) Kroese

*Contents:*

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*Version:* 1 October 2014

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# 1. Nature and learning outcomes of the BSc thesis

## 1.1 What is a thesis?

The BSc thesis is an **individual** assessment of your **competency** in different **academic research skills**, applied to your own **field of study** within the domain of the Bachelor Economics and Governance (BEB) as mentioned in the Study Handbook<sup>1</sup>. The thesis will result in a written report and is a **compulsory** part of the BSc study programme.

## 1.2 Learning outcomes

The BSc thesis is based on independent **research**. The thesis allows you to demonstrate your knowledge in your field of study; to show that you can apply and integrate knowledge and research methods.

The learning outcomes of the BSc thesis, which can be found in the Study Handbook are:

After successful completion of this course you are expected to be able to:

- a) formulate a scientific research problem;
- b) find and access relevant literature;
- c) collect, review and structure relevant data (literature);
- d) critically analyse and interpret collected data;
- e) plan and carry out work within the available time;
- f) write a concise, clear and understandable report;
- g) orally present and defend the results of your research.

## 1.3 Nature of the thesis

The BSc thesis is usually a **literature study**. Depending on the aim of the research, theses can be divided into different types of literature studies:

- A literature review;
- An overview of recent developments;
- A critical analysis of existing theories;
- A critical analysis of inconsistencies in an author's work or discrepancies between several authors;
- A comparison between different research outcomes or theoretical findings;
- A historical-analytical reflection;
- Testing literature, theories, concepts, and ideas against the empirical world or empirical representations.

It is also possible to do (limited) **empirical or experimental research**. In this case the focus of the research will be on generating (not testing) a hypothesis. The possibility to do this within the available time/ECTS is very limited. It is important that the **scope and type** of research matches the amount of credits (11 ECTS).

The thesis must be written **individually** due to the aim of the thesis (examination of individual knowledge and skills). Therefore, it is important that you have your own (research) assignment and work independently on that assignment. However, two students each working on their **own thesis** can still collaborate. It is possible that two or more research topics can be defined within the same research theme.

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<sup>1</sup> see <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-81312>

#### **1.4 The differences between a BSc thesis and a MSc thesis**

Naturally the BSc thesis **differs** from a MSc thesis. A BSc thesis is often – but not always – a literature study, whilst a MSc thesis usually contains a substantial part of empirical data collection, an experimental or design phase. Furthermore, the analytical component in a MSc thesis is substantially larger. Moreover, during a BSc thesis a student will receive more guidance than during a MSc thesis.

The most important differences between a BSc and a MSc thesis are clearly shown in the table below:

	<b>BSc thesis</b>	<b>MSc thesis</b>
<i>Problem Statement</i>	Student is given a (somewhat) predefined assignment.	Student defines own assignment.
<i>Theoretical</i>	Student discusses and applies a number of theories.	Student independently considers, selects, and links theories.
<i>Methodological</i>	Student is assisted in choosing and applying (a) research method(s).	Student chooses the research method(s) and reflects on the use of these methods.

#### **1.5 Language**

The thesis may be written in **English** or in **Dutch**. The choice of language does not affect the assessment of the thesis. However, writing the thesis in English gives you the opportunity to further develop your English writing skills and have these skills assessed.

#### **1.6 Colloquium**

An oral presentation (colloquium) is a compulsory part of the BSc thesis. Each student is allowed 20 minutes in total: 10-15 minutes for the presentation and 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion. You must agree with your thesis supervisor when you will present your research (results).

If you feel that your presentation skills need improving, you can contact Stefan Nortier (chair group ECS). You can discuss with Stefan Nortier what the best way is to improve and train your presentation skills.

You may invite people to attend your oral presentation (naturally your supervisor and examiner should be present). In previous years students have, for example, invited parents or friends to attend their presentation.

#### **1.7 Course code BSc thesis and number of credits**

The course code for the BSc thesis is YSS-81312. The course YSS-81312 is divided in 11 ECTS for the thesis and 1 ECTS for the Bachelor Assessment. You will receive all 12 ECTS for the entire course after you have completed the thesis **and** the Bachelor Assessment.

### **1.8 Requirements before starting the thesis**

You have met all requirements for admission to the thesis if you have:

- passed all first year courses;
- obtained a minimum of 42 ECTS in the second year, including the preparatory courses needed to write the thesis at your chosen chair group (see **appendix 1** for thesis preparatory courses per chair group);
- have passed the Bachelor Assessment.

To get permission to start your thesis you must contact your study advisor. He or she will check that you have passed all necessary courses to start your thesis. If you meet the requirements your study advisor will sign the BSc Thesis Contract. Only after you have received this signature are you entitled to supervision.

### **1.9 Recommended literature about writing a thesis**

There are various books and websites that provide helpful information about writing a thesis. They can provide information about, for example, solving problems that may arise and how to avoid common pitfalls. Listed below are a few (Dutch) literature suggestions you may find useful when writing your thesis:

- Eco, U. (2000). Hoe schrijf ik een scriptie? Amsterdam: Uitgave Ooievaar, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Feijen, E. & P. Trietsch (2007). Snel afstuderen. Stap voor stap naar een geslaagde scriptie. Bussum: Coutinho, 1<sup>st</sup> edition.
- Miranda, M.J.A. & E. Wardenaar (1988). Scriptieproblemen. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Oosterbaan, W. (1995). Het schrijven van een leesbare scriptie. Rotterdam: Uitgave NRC Handelsblad.
- Verschuren, P. & H. Doorewaard (1995). Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek. Utrecht: Uitgeverij LEMMA BV.
- Internet: <http://educatie-en-school.infonu.nl/diversen/3239-hoe-schrijf-je-een-scriptie.html>
- Internet: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>
- Internet: <http://www.studietips.leidenuniv.nl/scriptie.html>

## 2. Thesis supervision

### **2.1. How to find a thesis supervisor and a research topic?**

Your thesis has to be related to the field of Economics and Governance. Therefore, your thesis needs to be supervised by a chair group **directly** involved in the programme. For a Thesis Economics the chair groups you can choose from are: AEP, DEC, ECH and ENR. For a Thesis Governance the chair groups are: ENP and PAP. Supervision by one of the constitutive chair groups<sup>2</sup> guarantees the disciplinary depth and quality of the thesis.

The selected chair group (professor and teaching staff) is responsible for supervising and assessing your thesis. Therefore, you need to choose a topic that relates to your field of study (see 'Profile' as described in the Study Handbook under BEB Economics and Governance) *but also* relates to the chair group of your choice.

It is advisable to explore thesis possibilities as early as possible. **Appendix 2** lists the websites of the chair groups you can do your thesis with. To ensure that you can start your thesis on time it is important to make an appointment with the thesis coordinator of the chair group about **two months in advance** to discuss (possible) topics and obtain supervision.

Before you make an appointment with a thesis coordinator, you should have completed the Bachelor Assessment and chosen your free choice courses. *It is compulsory to discuss the free choice motivation form with your study advisor before you contact a chair group about your thesis.*

The chair group's thesis coordinator will refer you to a lecturer who can act as supervisor. It is also possible to approach a professor or a lecturer of your chosen chair group directly.

### **2.2. Supervision**

The supervision of a BSc thesis involves different parties. **Appendix 3** provides an overview of the responsibilities of the parties involved in the thesis. The most important responsibilities of the supervisor and the student are explained below.

#### *Advice on topic choice*

The thesis supervisor gives advice about the chosen topic and can also suggest other possible research topics. You can ask your supervisor for literature to start a preliminary orientation into a topic. The eventual choice of the thesis topic is made by the student and should be based on the background information you have collected and reviewed.

You can find examples of bachelor theses per chair group on the internal BEB site: [bit.ly/bebsite](http://bit.ly/bebsite)

*(To access the list click on 'BSc Scriptie' in the menu on the left)*

#### *Drawing up the BSc thesis contract*

Once the thesis supervisor and the student agree on the thesis assignment, the standard BSc Thesis Contract is drawn up (**appendix 4**). The BSc Thesis Contract formalises agreements between the student and the thesis supervisor. Furthermore, it secures the rights and obligations of the student and the thesis supervisor. For the thesis supervisor an obligation towards a student is, for example, to provide feedback on previously agreed dates. For the student an obligation is, for example, submitting drafts on previously agreed dates. The Thesis Contract is useful if, for example, there is no satisfactory thesis within the agreed timeframe.

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<sup>2</sup> In some documents the name "department" is used instead of chair group.

You need the study advisor to sign the BSc thesis contract declaring that you have met all requirements **before** you can make arrangements with your supervisor. Your study advisor should receive a signed copy of the thesis contract.

*Advice about defining the topic and structuring the thesis*

Often it is necessary to narrow down the topic and limit the relevant literature you consult. This is first of all the student's responsibility. The student is expected to relate his or her ideas to the thesis supervisor. The thesis supervisor checks that the student's plans are realistic and can be executed within the available time.

The student is expected to write a proposal for the design of the thesis before starting. This proposal should focus on formulating specific research questions and give a general indication of the thesis chapters. The student and supervisor agree on eventual size of the thesis, such as the number of words or amount of pages (excluding references, citations, and illustrations).

*Progress meetings*

The student and thesis supervisor will have regular meetings about the progress of the thesis. The supervisor will also monitor the student's progress in achieving the learning outcomes. The supervisor can evaluate if the student is on track or if changes need to be made to the thesis process. The student and supervisor agree on the frequency of these progress meetings and put this in the BSc thesis contract.

*Feedback on draft versions*

Before the final version of the thesis is submitted for assessment, the student is given the opportunity to submit and receive feedback on drafts. The supervisor is expected to provide critical feedback on these draft versions. The student can use the feedback to improve the thesis and then submit the final version for assessment (**chapter 3**).

The BSc Thesis Contract (**appendix 4**) should stipulate the amount of times a student can submit a draft version of the thesis and what kind of supervision the student can expect. For example, feedback on the text, the content, the design, use of literature, structure etcetera.

### 3. Thesis assessment

#### **3.1. Submission requirements and procedures**

After the digital version of your thesis has been approved, you are expected to submit **three** hardcopies of your thesis to **your supervisor**. One copy is for your supervisor, the second is for the examiner (or second reviewer) and the third is a 'clean' copy for the chair group.

The expenses for printing these three copies of your final thesis can be submitted to the chair group for reimbursement. Discuss this with your supervisor first and remember to also submit the receipt. (See Student Charter: Regulation Wageningen University; payment of student's expenses, implementation, Copy and Printing Expenses). *If the student decides to spend more than is absolutely necessary, for example to improve the appearance of the report, the student must pay these additional expenses.*

After the final examination, send a copy of your thesis (PDF file) and a copy of the completed assessment form to your study advisor. A copy of your thesis will be made available to the WUR library.

#### **3.2 Assessment procedure**

The thesis supervisor and the examiner (or second reviewer) jointly assess the thesis. The entire process that led to the final thesis (proposal, data collection and writing) is assessed, not just the final report. The examiner (or second reviewer) is primarily involved in the assessment of your final report. You do not need to arrange the examiner (or second reviewer); your supervisor is responsible for this.

See **appendix 5** for an overview of the assessment criteria in the standard BSc Thesis Assessment Form. The assessment form consists of four clusters of assessment criteria which all have a relative weight in the final grade. The four criteria are:

- 1) The research competences of a student. This evaluation is based on the experience of the supervisor with the student during the process of doing research and writing the thesis report;
- 2) The thesis report. The examiner is the best person to assess this report, in consultation with your supervisor. Ideally this is a staff member that assesses all the theses within the chair group since he or she has a general impression of the standard;
- 3) The colloquium (oral presentation of your thesis), is mandatory for BEB students. This is assessed by your supervisor/examiner.
- 4) Final examination. This will be assessed by the supervisor in consultation with the examiner.

The relative weight of the four assessment criteria is determined by the chair groups. Therefore, the relative weight of these clusters may vary between chair groups. However, there are restrictions for determining the minimum and maximum relative weight of each criteria. To conclude the thesis process successfully a student must obtain at least 5.5 for each criteria; if one criteria scores lower than 5.5 the final result will be "fail" regardless of the total score (see **appendix 5**).

If desired, specific assessment criteria that are relevant to the final examination can be added to the assessment form. The chair group will keep the completed BSc thesis assessment form and the 'clean' copy of the thesis. The student will receive a copy of the completed thesis assessment form.

#### **3.3 Plagiarism**

All research is directly or indirectly based on and related for the intellectual work of others, on their theories, their models or their research findings. We live in an era in which 'cut and paste'

possibilities are overwhelming. Using someone else's work from books, articles or the internet in theses or assignments without a proper reference is considered plagiarism and considered theft of intellectual property.

You are expected to be familiar with proper referencing techniques. Wageningen University insists on documenting sources correctly. In order to avoid plagiarism, staff is expected to screen students' written work carefully and the University has made scanning software available to teaching staff for this purpose (Turnitin).

In the scientific world and in academic education it is the norm to reference an author's thoughts, ideas and findings, in both the body of the text and in the reference list. If text is literally quoted it needs to be unmistakably clear what part of the text is the citation of the author's work (for example, by using quotation marks).

It is important that you choose one referencing style and use the referencing techniques consequently, just like you learned in the first year of your bachelor programme.

The amount of quoted literature and the entire size of the thesis should be in proportion. In other words, a thesis that mainly consists of quoted literature (with the correct citations and references) is not considered acceptable.

The WUR library has developed a number of online tutorials on citing and referencing:  
[http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/module\\_3/](http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/module_3/) and [http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/7\\_citing/](http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/7_citing/)

Other sites:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

<http://monash.edu/library/skills/resources/tutorials/citing/index.html>

## Appendix 1. Chair groups and thesis preparatory courses

Thesis Economics		Thesis Governance	
Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses <sup>3</sup>	Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses <sup>4</sup>
AEP	AEP-21806 or AEP- 22806	ENP	ENP-30306
DEC	DEC-32306	PAP	PAP-30306
ECH	AEP -30806 and two other courses <sup>5</sup>		
ENR	ENR-21806		

## Appendix 2. Chair groups, websites and thesis coordinators

Thesis Economics		
Chair group	Website	Thesis Coordinator
AEP	<a href="http://www.aep.wur.nl/UK/teaching/Thesis/">http://www.aep.wur.nl/UK/teaching/Thesis/</a>	Jack Peerlings
DEC	<a href="http://www.dec.wur.nl/UK/Theses+and+Internships/">http://www.dec.wur.nl/UK/Theses+and+Internships/</a>	Marrit van den Berg
ECH	<a href="http://www.ech.wur.nl/UK/education/">http://www.ech.wur.nl/UK/education/</a>	Gerrit Antonides
ENR	<a href="http://www.enr.wur.nl/UK/education/thesis/">http://www.enr.wur.nl/UK/education/thesis/</a>	Edwin van der Werf

Thesis Governance		
Chair group	Website	Thesis Coordinator
ENP	<a href="http://www.enp.wur.nl/UK/education/">http://www.enp.wur.nl/UK/education/</a>	Bas van Vliet
PAP	<a href="http://www.pap.wur.nl/UK/education/Theses+subjects/">http://www.pap.wur.nl/UK/education/Theses+subjects/</a>	Otto Hospes

A number of chair groups post possible thesis topics on their website.

If you want to familiarise yourself with topics researched by the chair groups you can always attend bachelor or master colloquia. The following website provides information about when these colloquia will take place: <https://teamsites.wur.nl/sites/colloquia/SitePages/Home.aspx>

You can always attend a colloquium and you do not need to register before attending. You are advised to contact the secretariat of your favourite chair group(s) to get more information about upcoming colloquia.

<sup>3</sup> As well as the Economics preparatory course, you must also choose another Economic thesis preparatory course listed in this column.

<sup>4</sup> You must choose one Economics preparatory course from the table, as well as the Governance thesis preparatory course.

<sup>5</sup> AEP-30806 and choose **two** thesis preparatory courses listed in this table.

### **Appendix 3. Responsibilities of parties involved in the thesis**

#### 1. Responsibilities student

To start your thesis you must have passed all the first year courses and obtained a minimum of 42 ECTS in second year courses (including thesis preparatory courses, see **appendix 1**). If you meet these requirements, go to your study advisor who will admit you to the thesis by signing the BSc Thesis Contract.

Fill in the name of your supervisor and examiner on the BSc Thesis Contract. Also include the topic and a planning for the different stages of your thesis (proposal, draft version, final thesis, and oral presentation, etcetera).

The BSc Thesis Assessment Form (which is used by all social science bachelor programmes) is included in this course guide as **appendix 5**. Your thesis and the (research) process leading up to the final report will be evaluated and graded using this form.

#### 2. Responsibilities study advisor

The study advisor declares in the Thesis Contract (see **appendix 4**) that you have met all requirements mentioned above. The study advisor can refer you to a suitable staff member for your topic or to the thesis coordinator of the chair group.

#### 3. Responsibilities thesis coordinator

The thesis coordinator of your chosen chair group will refer you to a suitable staff member to act as supervisor. Every chair group keeps all assessment forms, thesis contracts, and theses on file.

#### 4. Responsibilities thesis supervisor

The BSc thesis supervisor is first of all responsible for checking the thesis contract. A supervisor may only start supervision after the study advisor has admitted a student to the thesis. Students are not permitted to start their thesis without the approval of their study advisor. The thesis supervisor is responsible for overseeing the content of the thesis.

Together, student and supervisor, formalise their agreements in the BSc thesis contract. The student must send a copy of the signed BSc thesis contract to the study advisor. The supervisor is responsible for finding an examiner, either within or outside the chair group, to participate in the final assessment of the thesis.

#### 5. Responsibilities examiner / second reviewer

The examiner (or second reviewer) of the BSc thesis is responsible for the assessment and grading of the final thesis in consultation with the supervisor. The examiner assesses the thesis report using the BSc Thesis Assessment Form (**appendix 5**).

#### 6. Responsibilities Examining board

The Examining board sees to it that assessments are carried out uniformly and correctly.

#### **Appendix 4. BSc Thesis Contract**

PLEASE MAKE USE OF THE BSC THESIS CONTRACT ON THE ENR WEBSITE:

<http://www.wageningenur.nl/web/file?uuid=b5ee2f5e-ff38-4945-a6ae-f747643d34e0&owner=c193d5b0-fb19-426d-b9a9-80b10019ad87>

## Appendix 5. BSc Thesis Assessment Form

Assessment Form BSc Thesis Social Sciences Wageningen University			
Involved BSc programmes: BBC, BCW, BEB, BGM and BIN			
Complete the green fields boxed with a single line. Use a point as decimal sign; the default language is English (UK)			
Name chair group (three letter code)	Chair Group	Fee percentage per chair group	
Name student		Chair Group	100,00%
Registration number		Not applicable	0,00%
BSc programme		Select if BBC/BEB Thesis:	0.00%
Major / Specialisation			
Course code BSc thesis	Select BSc Thesis Code:		2,00%
Short title thesis			3,00%
Date examination		Signature	1,00%
Supervisor chair group			1,00%
Second supervisor (in case of BCW)			1,00%
BSc thesis examiner / second reviewer			
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Grading Mark 1-10	Relative weight *	Check
<b>Research competence (30-40%) *</b>			
1 Initiative, pro-activity and creativity		0,00	Fail
2 Commitment and perseverance			
3 Time management			
4 Critical and self reflective capacity			
5 Handling supervisor's comments			
6 Analysis and processing of (literature) data			
<b>Thesis report (50-65%) *</b>			
1 Problem definition & research set-up		0,00	Fail
2 Theoretical underpinning and use of literature			
3 Description of methods and analysis (literature) data			
4 Clarity of argumentation and conclusions			
5 Critical discussion			
6 Writing skills incl. correct quoting			
<b>Colloquium (0-5%)</b>	(Not applicable to BCW and BIN)		
1 Presentation (use of graphics, etc.)		0,00	Check weight
2 Verbal and non-verbal presentation			
<b>Final Discussion (5%) *</b>			
1 Defence of the thesis		0,00	Fail
2 Knowledge of study domain			
<b>Sum of relative weights is not 100</b>			
TOTAL not rounded		0,000	
		0,0	
FINAL GRADE		0,0	Fail
* Please choose weights for your own chair group and BSc Programme such that their sum is 100			
Extensive comments by supervisor and 2nd reviewer/examiner on next page			
NOTE: this form, including the signatures, needs to be archived for 7 years for accreditation purposes			

Comments by supervisor. (Please use ALT+ENTER to open a new line)

Large empty rectangular area for supervisor comments.

Comments by 2nd reviewer/examiner. (Please use ALT+ENTER to open a new line)

Large empty rectangular area for 2nd reviewer/examiner comments.