

Course Guide

BSc Thesis BBC, major Business Studies (YSS-81812)

BSc Thesis BBC, major Consumer Studies (YSS-82312)

BSc thesis BEB (YSS-81312)

Course language	Dutch / English
Credits	12
Period	Depending on your schedule
Course coordinator	Dr.ir. P.B.M. Berentsen
Thesis coordinator	Depends on the chosen chair group (see appendix 2)
Supervisor	Depends on the chosen chair group
Examiner/Second reader	Depends on the chosen chair group
Date	September 2020

Table of Contents

1. Learning outcomes, nature, and general aspects of the BSc-thesis	1
2. Thesis supervision	4
2.1 How to determine the chair group and the supervisor for your thesis?	4
2.2 The supervision process	4
3. Thesis assessment	6
4. Plagiarism and Referencing	7
 Appendix 1. Chair groups and thesis preparatory courses	 8
Appendix 2. Chair groups, websites and thesis coordinators	9
Appendix 3. Responsibilities of parties involved in the thesis	10
Appendix 4. BSc Thesis Contract	11
Appendix 5. BSc Thesis Assessment Form	13

1. Learning outcomes, nature, and general aspects of the BSc thesis

The BSc thesis is an individual assignment in which you can show your competency in different academic research skills, applied to your own field of study within the domain of your BSc-program. This domain is described in the Study Handbook¹. To accomplish the thesis assignment you have to conduct individual research and this research has to result in a written report. It allows you to show that you can combine theoretical knowledge with research methods and apply it to a specific problem or situation. The thesis is a compulsory part of the BSc study program.

The learning outcomes of the BSc thesis, which can also be found in the Study Handbook², are the following. After successful completion of this course you are expected to be able to:

1. Interpret own competences and motives;
2. Design and plan own study learning processes, based on reflection upon personal knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance;
3. Formulate a research problem and do (literature) research according to scientific standards;
4. Integrate knowledge from various sources and apply theoretical knowledge obtained in the study;
5. Work individually and independently in scientific research (under supervision);
6. Plan and carry out work within the available time;
7. Report in writing in a clear and understandable way;
8. Orally present and defend the results of such work.

Learning outcomes 1 and 2 relate to the Bachelor Assessment which is made part of the BSc-thesis. The remaining learning outcomes relate to the thesis itself

The BSc thesis can be a literature study but can also involve (limited) empirical or explorative research. As each type of thesis contains at least a small overview of relevant literature you need to know how to conduct a literature search. The WUR library has developed an online tutorial which can help you to structure your literature search: http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/module_2/

In the case of empirical or explorative research it should be taken into account by both the student and the supervisor that the available time to do this is very limited. It is important that the type and the scope of the research matches the number of credits (only 11 ECTS as one credit is reserved for the Bachelor Assessment).

¹ See <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Programme/BBC/Description> for BBC, or <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Programme/BEB/Description> for BEB

² See <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-81812> for BBC, major Business Studies
See <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-82312> for BBC, major Consumer Studies
See <http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-81312> for BEB

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.

Language

The thesis may be written in Dutch or in English. The choice of language does not affect the assessment of the thesis.

Length

There is no formal requirement regarding the length of the thesis. However, a fair indication of the length is that the main text should be between about 10,000-15,000 words, excluding preface, table of contents, references and possible appendices. This corresponds to about 20-30 pages, but this depends on the letter type and size, and on the number of tables and figures, and the like. Consult your supervisor about his/her opinion regarding the desired length.

Colloquium

A colloquium (oral presentation) 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. If you are uncertain about how to present your research, visit other colloquia to get inspired. Moreover, have another look at the presentation module that was included in the first year of your program.

You are stimulated to invite other students to attend your oral presentation (naturally your supervisor and examiner should be present). Next to fellow students you can invite friends or parents to attend the colloquium.

The course code for the BSc thesis is YSS-8..12 (the exact code depends on program and major). The 12 ECTS are divided into 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.

Contrary to regular courses, registration for the thesis at the administration office via internet is not necessary. Once the thesis is finished and graded, the chair group will take care of passing on the grade to the administration office.

Requirements for starting

The requirements to start the BSc-thesis are:

1. You have passed all first-year courses;
2. You have 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);

3. You have passed the Bachelor Assessment;
4. You have chosen your free choice courses.

To get permission to start a thesis the student should CC the study adviser in the first email to the thesis coordinator of the chosen chair group. The study adviser will then react with approval or disapproval. See section 2.1 for the format of this first email to the thesis coordinator.

Information on how to write a thesis

If you want to improve your writing and/or information literacy skills, before or during your BSc thesis, you can get coaching by Wageningen Writing Lab (for free). You can make an appointment at any stage in your assignment, but don't wait too long, because you'll need time to assimilate and apply a new approach. You can find more information and make an appointment via Wageningen Writing Lab³.

Moreover, 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. (2010). *Hoe schrijf ik een scriptie?* Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 15^{de} druk.

Feijen, E. & P. Trietsch (2010). *Snel afstuderen. Stap voor stap naar een geslaagde scriptie*. Bussum: Coutinho, 1st Edition, 2nd printing.

Heuvel, J.H.J. van den (2009). *Hoe schrijf ik een scriptie of these?* Den Haag: Boom Lemma uitgevers.

Mirande, M.J.A. & E. Wardenaar (2011). *Scriptieproblemen*. Groningen: Noordhoff, 5^{de} druk.

Oosterbaan, W. (2014). *Een leesbare scriptie – Gids voor het schrijven van scripties, essays en papers*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.

Scheepers, P., Tobi, H., Boeijs, H. (2016). *Onderzoeksmethoden*. 9^{de} druk, Amsterdam: Boom Lemma uitgevers.

Verschuren, P. & H. Doorewaard (2015). *Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek*. Utrecht: Boom Lemma uitgevers.

There are also number of useful websites, for example:

<http://educatie-en-school.infonu.nl/diversen/3239-hoe-schrijf-je-een-scriptie.html> _

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

<http://www.studietips.leidenuniv.nl/scriptie.html>

³ See <https://www.wur.nl/en/article/Wageningen-Writing-Lab-2.htm>

2. Thesis supervision

The process of doing 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 are explained in this and the following chapter.

2.1. How to determine the chair group and the supervisor for your thesis?

Your thesis needs to be supervised by a chair group directly involved in your BSc-program. Appendix 1 shows the chair groups you can choose from, depending on your program and major. Supervision by one of these chair groups guarantees the disciplinary depth and quality of the thesis. The selected chair group is responsible for supervising and assessing your thesis. Therefore, the topic of your thesis not only needs to relate to your field of study, but also to the chair group of your choice.

It is recommended to explore thesis possibilities as early as possible. Appendix 2 lists the websites and thesis coordinators of the chair groups you can do your thesis with. To ensure that you can start your thesis in 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. The chair group's thesis coordinator will refer you to a lecturer who can act as supervisor.

Contacting the thesis coordinator is done by means of sending an email stating that you would like to do a thesis at the particular chair group. Furthermore, the email should list:

1. Your name, your registration number, and the name of the BSc-program you are in
2. The name of your study adviser
3. The planning of the thesis in your program (Which period(s)? Do you want to combine the thesis with following a course?)
4. The courses you plan to include in your free choice part?
5. What are your personal interests regarding thesis topics

This email to the thesis coordinator has to be CC-d to your study-adviser. The study advisor will then check if you have met all requirements to start the thesis and will respond (CC-ing the thesis coordinator) with approval or disapproval. If the latter is the case the student first has to make an appointment with the study advisor.

2.2. The supervision process

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 final choice of the thesis topic is made by the student taking into account information

collected about the topic, interests, and the advice of the supervisor.

Agreements in the BSc Thesis Contract

Once the thesis supervisor and the student agree on the thesis topic, the BSc Thesis Contract is filled in. The BSc Thesis Contract formalizes agreements between the student and the thesis supervisor. This secures rights and obligations of the student and the thesis supervisor. An obligation for the student is, for example, submitting drafts of (parts of) the thesis on agreed dates in order for the supervisor to have enough time to read. An obligation of the supervisor towards a student is, for example, to provide feedback regarding writing and content of the draft in the successive agreed meeting. The Thesis Contract is especially helpful if there is not enough progress within the agreed timeframe. After the Thesis Contract is filled in completely and signed by both the supervisor and the student, the student should send a digital copy to the study advisor.

The student is expected to write a proposal for the design of the thesis before starting the actual research. This proposal should contain background and delineation of the research topic, the research objective, specific research questions, information on data and the method(s) that will be used, a preliminary list of the thesis chapters and a time planning. For the student it is very helpful if the supervisor provides a solid proposal of any previous thesis as an example.

Progress meetings

The student and thesis supervisor will have regular meetings about the progress of the thesis. This starts with the development of the proposal. For the thesis process it is important that the student and the supervisor agree on the delineation of the topic, the research objective and the research questions, and the data and methods. Moreover, the thesis supervisor should check that the student's planning is realistic. Especially in the starting phase a few short weekly meetings are often necessary to arrive in time at the final version of the proposal. After that biweekly meetings mostly will do. It is up to the student to prepare for the meeting, meaning sending in time (a part) of the draft of the thesis and possible questions to discuss at the agreed meeting. It is up to the supervisor to comment on the drafts and to discuss possible questions at the meeting.

Some chair groups apply thesis rings, which means that students comment on work of their fellow students under supervision. Agreements about the number of thesis ring meetings should be included in the Thesis Contract.

3. Thesis assessment

After your thesis has been approved, you are normally expected to submit a PDF-file of your thesis to your supervisor. Depending on the chair group you might be required to hand in one or more hard copies and/or a WORD-file of your thesis to your supervisor. The expenses for printing these copies of your final thesis will be reimbursed by the chair group. Discuss this with your supervisor first and remember to also submit the receipt of the printing costs.

Assessment of the thesis is done by the supervisor and the examiner (also known as: second reader). The second reader is a fellow staff member, capable of judging a BSc-thesis in the relevant field of expertise. As a student you do not need to arrange the examiner (or second reader). The supervisor is responsible for this and for organizing the final examination.

The final examination is a meeting of the student with the supervisor and the examiner/second reader, typically taking one hour. As a relative outsider the examiner/second reader typically has the lead in raising questions regarding the thesis report. The supervisor can raise additional questions, but can also steer the conversation, for example if he/she thinks important aspects of the thesis are given too little attention. After the final question, the student is asked to shortly leave the room in order for the supervisor and the examiner/second reader to deliberate the grading. After that the student is informed about the grade, including the main considerations that led to the particular grade.

The thesis is assessed according to BSc Thesis Assessment Form (see appendix 5). The assessment form consists of four clusters of assessment criteria which all have a weight in the final grade. The four clusters are:

- A. 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;
- B. The thesis report. The examiner and the supervisor together evaluate this part;
- C. The colloquium (oral presentation of your thesis). This is assessed by the supervisor and the examiner.
- D. Final examination. This is assessed by the supervisor and the examiner.

The relative weight of the four clusters of assessment criteria are 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 cluster. To conclude the thesis process successfully a student must obtain at least 5.5 for each of the four clusters.

The assessment form also has space for comments by the supervisor and by the second reader /examiner. The chair group will archive the completed BSc thesis assessment form and the final version of the thesis. The student will receive a copy of the completed thesis assessment form.

4. Plagiarism and Referencing

All research is directly or indirectly based on and related with 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 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). How you should quote exactly depends on the reference style. Discuss the reference style with your supervisor.

The WUR library has developed an online tutorial on citing and referencing:

http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/module_3/

Appendix 1. Chair groups and thesis preparatory courses

BBC

BBC Major Management Studies		BBC Major Consumer Studies	
Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses:	Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses:
BEC	BEC-22806 and BEC-20806 or BEC-22306 (choose one)	CPT	CPT-23306
INF	INF-20806	UEC	UEC 22306 and UEC-31306
MCB	BMO-21306	MCB	MCB-30306
BMO	BMO-21306 and BMO-24806 or BMO-32306 (dependent on your thesis topic)	FQD	FQD-23306
ORL	ORL-20306 and ORL-30306	CHL	CHL-20806
FQD	FQD-23306		

BEB

BEB Economics profile		BEB Governance profile	
General requirement for all chair groups in this profile	2 courses from: AEP-21806, UEC-22806, DEC-32306, and ENR-21806	General requirement for all chair groups in this profile	1 course from: AEP-21806, UEC-22806, DEC-32306, and ENR-21806
Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses:	Chair group	Thesis preparatory courses:
AEP	AEP-21806	ENP	ENP-30306
DEC	DEC-32306	PAP	PAP-30306
UEC	UEC-22806		
ENR	ENR-21806		
RHI	AEP-21806 or DEC-32306		

Appendix 2. Chair groups, websites and thesis coordinators

BBC

BBC Major Management Studies			
Chair Group	Website	Thesis coordinator	Email
BEC	Thesis site BEC	Monique Mourits	monique.mourits@wur.nl
INF	Thesis site INF	Natasha Ariesen	thesis-internship.inf@wur.nl
MCB	Thesis site MCB	Frans Verhees	frans.verhees@wur.nl
BMO	Thesis site BMO	Jos Bijman	office.bmo@wur.nl
ORL	Thesis site ORL	Harmke Schellekens	education.orl@wur.nl
FQD	Thesis site FQD	Bea Steenbekkers	bea.steenbekkers@wur.nl

BBC Major Consumer Studies			
Chair Group	Website	Thesis coordinator	Email
CPT	Thesis site CPT	Joanne Leerlooijer	Joanne.leerlooijs@wur.nl
UEC	Thesis Site UEC	Jannette van Beek	jannette.vanbeek@wur.nl
MCB	Thesis site MCB	Frans Verhees	frans.verhees@wur.nl
FQD	Thesis site FQD	Bea Steenbekkers	bea.steenbekkers@wur.nl
CHL	Thesis site CHL	Merije van Rookhuijzen	education.chl@wur.nl

BEB

BEB economics profile			
Chair Group	Website	Thesis coordinator	Email
AEP	Thesis Site AEP	Dusan Drabik	Dusan.drabik@wur.nl
DEC	Thesis Site DEC	Rein Haagsma	Rein.haagsma@wur.nl
UEC	Thesis Site UEC	Jannette van Beek	Jannette.vanbeek@wur.nl
ENR	Thesis Site ENR	Rolf Groeneveld	Rolf.Groeneveld@wur.nl
RHI	Thesis Site RHI	Danielle Teeuwen	Danielle.Teeuwen@wur.nl

BEB Governance profile			
Chair Group	Website	Thesis coordinator	Email
ENP	Thesis Site ENP	Eira Carballo Cardenas	Erna.vanludevelde@wur.nl (secretary ENP)
PAP	Thesis Site PAP	Jeroen Candel	Jeroen.Candel@wur.nl

Appendix 3. Responsibilities of parties involved in the thesis

Student

The student must have passed all the first-year courses and a minimum of 42 ECTS of second year courses (including thesis preparatory courses, see Appendix 1) before a thesis can be started. The student is responsible for filling in the BSc thesis contract, including the correct names, the topic, and the time planning. The final version of the contract should be send to the supervisor and to the study advisor.

The student is responsible for working according to planning and for sending drafts and subjects for discussion to your supervisor in time to allow the supervisor enough preparation time.

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.

Thesis coordinator

The thesis coordinator of your chosen chair group will refer you to a suitable staff member to act as supervisor.

Thesis supervisor

The BSc thesis supervisor is first of all responsible for checking the thesis contract. A supervisor can only start supervision after the study advisor has admitted a student to the thesis.

The thesis supervisor is responsible for adequate and timely feedback to the student according to the planning agreed upon in the thesis contract

The supervisor is responsible for finding an appropriate examiner/second reader to participate in the final assessment of the thesis and for organizing the final examination.

Together with the examiner/second reader the supervisor is responsible for grading the thesis, using the BSc Thesis Assessment Form (Appendix 5).

Examiner / second reader

The examiner/second reader of the BSc thesis is responsible for the assessment and grading of the thesis together with the supervisor. This requires reading the thesis report and preparing questions. For the assessment the BSc Thesis Assessment Form (Appendix 5) is used.

Chair group

The chair group is responsible for passing the final grade to the Student Service Center and for digitally archiving the thesis contract, the thesis report, and the assessment form.

Appendix 4. BSc Thesis Contract for BBC and BEB students⁴

Student Name: Registration number: Program and major: Tel: Signature:	Supervisor Name: Chair group: Tel: Signature:
Thesis Code: Extend thesis ⁵ : yes / no Capita Selecta code: Language: Dutch / English Starting date: Ending date:	Thesis Topic description:
Supervision Planned meetings with the supervisor in weeks ⁶ : 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / Participation in Thesis ring: yes /no Requirements for presence at colloquia: Additional agreements:	

⁴ The WORD-version of this form can be found at the Brightspace sites of BBC and BEB. Fill in this form on the computer by deleting the dotted lines.

⁵ The thesis can be extended in size by adding a Capita Selecta code.

⁶ It is common to have a few weekly meetings at the start followed by biweekly meetings. A meeting requires from the student to submit drafts and points for discussion for each meeting in time. From the supervisor it requires reading of the submitted pieces and preparing the feedback.

Status of the Thesis Contract

The BSc Thesis Contract serves to formalize agreements regarding the BSc thesis between a bachelor student and a chair group. The agreement registers rights and duties of both parties and is a further supplement and elaboration of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Education and Examining Regulations and the Student Charter.

Problems and complaints

For problems or complaints with regard to the supervision or assessment the student can contact:

- the educational/ thesis coordinator of the chair group
- the study adviser

Depending on the type of problem the contacted person will take action or refer the student to the appropriate university staff member.

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:			
Short title thesis				
Date examination			Signature	
Supervisor chair group				
Second supervisor (in case of BCW)				
BSc thesis examiner / second reviewer				
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		Grading Mark 1-10	Relative weight *	Check
A) Research competence (30-40%) *			30%	
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%) *			60%	
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				
C) Colloquium (0-5%)*		(Not applicable to BIN)	5%	
1 Presentation (use of graphics, etc.)			0.00	Fail
2 Verbal and non-verbal presentation				
D) Final Discussion (5%) *			5%	
1 Defence of the thesis			0.00	Fail
2 Knowledge of study domain				
TOTAL not rounded			0.000	
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)

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