WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITEIT
WAGENINGEN UR

Course Guide
BSc Thesis Economics and Governance (YSS-81312)

Language	Dutch / English
Credits	12
Period	2016-2017: Periods 1-3 or Periods 4-6
Examination	See Section 3. Thesis assessment
Contact person	Ir. E.P. (Edwin) Kroese
Coordinators	Depends on profile (*Economics* or *Governance*), and chair group, see Section 2.2 and Appendices 1 and 2
Examiners/Second readers	See Course description in Study Handbook: http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-81312
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Date	10 June 2016

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1. Nature and learning outcomes of the BSc thesis

1.1 What is a bachelor or 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 the Bachelor Economics and Governance (BEB). This domain is described in the Study Handbook[1]. In brief, the programme BEB focusses on fields of economic activities that show a high degree of policy intensity, such as in agriculture, natural resources and the environment, and (economic) development in low and middle income countries. To accomplish the thesis assignment you have to do individual research and this research has to result in a written report. The thesis 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 and understanding in your field of study within the domain of BEB. It also allows you to show that you can apply this knowledge and understanding to a specific problem or situation, and integrate it with research methods. This is reflected in the learning outcomes of the BSc thesis which support reaching the learning outcomes of the programme as a whole, as formulated in the Study Handbook (see Note 1). As the BSc Economics and Governance is an academic *bachelor* programme, the formulated learning outcomes of the thesis should therefore be seen in that context.

The learning outcomes of the BSc thesis, which can also be found in the Study Handbook[2], are the following. After successful completion of this course you are expected to be able to:

1. Interpret own competencies 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.

1.3 Nature of the thesis

The BSc thesis is usually a literature study, but can also involve (limited) empirical or experimental research. Depending on the aim of the research, *reviews of literature* can be divided into different types of 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.

[1] See http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Programme/BEB/Description
[2] See http://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Course/YSS-81312

In the case of *empirical* or *experimental* research, 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 (only 11 ECTS and not 12 as one credit is reserved for the Bachelor Assessment[3]).

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.

There is no formal requirement regarding the length of the thesis either in terms of the number of words or pages. Much more important is the quality of the work. 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. Please consult your supervisor about his/her opinion regarding the desired length.

But, next to the supervisor, always consider other possible readers. Try to be as 'friendly' as possible to him/her and, therefore, keep the text as short and clearly as possible. Furthermore, consider that later in a professional setting, short, but to the point reports are more appreciated than lengthy ones.

Last but not least, it is important to keep in mind that the allocated time for the thesis is eight weeks, and that your effort and result should be in line with this.

1.4 The differences between a BSc thesis and a MSc thesis

A BSc thesis is normally the first thesis about a scientific subject a student has to write. Being an academic *bachelor* programme, the requirements of a thesis as part of this programme should be seen in that context, as already indicated in Section 1.2. Furthermore, the number of credits is only 11 (see Section 1.3) and it is intended to finish the thesis within eight weeks. After graduation from the bachelor programme, most students will do a MSc or master programme. As part of a master programme a student also have to write a thesis. In these programmes, it is required that such a *master* thesis complies with higher scientific and academic standards than a *bachelor* thesis. It is also much larger in terms of credits and available time; at Wageningen University it involves 33 credits, to be completed in somewhat more than half an academic year.

[3] Students have to follow the Bachelor Assessment (BA) to aid students in making choices in their study programme. This assessment is scheduled in the first two periods of Year 2. It is a self-assessment, guided by the study adviser, aimed at exploring personal motivation and skills, and resulting in well-motivated tentative study program, in particular regarding the optional courses and profile (economics or governance), the life and natural science courses, and the free choice courses. The purpose of the BA is that students better come to know themselves, and because of that, are better able to choose restricted optional courses, thesis type and topic, and free choice courses, as well as what to do after the completion of the bachelor, thus which master study, or whether it would be better to try to find a job. The BA must be completed before starting with a thesis. For more information, consult the study advisor.

Therefore, the BSc thesis differs, naturally, 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, and 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 shown in the table below:

	BSc thesis	**MSc thesis**
Problem Statement	Student selects and defines a topic in close consultation with the supervisor.	Student defines own topic.
Theoretical	Student discusses and applies a number of theories.	Student independently considers, selects, and links theories.
Methodological	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 Suzet Zijlstra (Chair group Education and Competence Studies (ECS)). You can discuss with her the best way to improve and train your presentation skills.

You are stimulated to invite other students to attend your oral presentation (naturally your supervisor and examiner should be present). Next to students, in previous years students also 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);
- 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: Ooievaar, 2nd Edition.

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 (2004). *Hoe schrijf ik een scriptie of these?* Den Haag: Lemma.

Miranda, M.J.A. & E. Wardenaar (1988). *Scriptieproblemen*. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 2nd Edition.

Oosterbaan, W. (1995). *Het schrijven van een leesbare scriptie*. Rotterdam: Uitgave NRC Handelsblad.

Oosterbaan, W. (2011). *Een leesbare scriptie – Gids voor het schrijven van scripties, essays en papers*. Amsterdam: Prometheus.

Verschuren, P. & H. Doorewaard (1995). *Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek*. Utrecht: LEMMA.

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
http://www.ser.nl/nl/educatie/scriptieservice/tips.aspx

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. In case you opt for the Economics profile (see 'Profile' as described in the Study Handbook under Economics and Governance (BEB) / BSc), you can choose from the chair groups: AEP, DEC, ECH and ENR. In case you opt for the Governance profile, the chair groups are: ENP and PAP. Supervision by one of these chair groups guaranties 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 (profile), *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 (see also Appendix 2) 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 (see Section 1.3 and Note 3) 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*
(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. An obligation of the supervisor towards a student is, for example, to provide feedback on previously agreed dates. An obligation for the student is, for example, submitting drafts on previously agreed dates. The Thesis Contract is especially useful if, for example, there is no satisfactory thesis within the agreed timeframe.

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 the intended 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 time 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 your thesis has been approved, you are normally expected to submit a PDF-file of your thesis to your supervisor.

If you are required to hand in one or more hard copies of your thesis to your supervisor, the expenses for printing these 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.*

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 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 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;
C. The colloquium (oral presentation of your thesis), is mandatory for BEB students. This is assessed by your supervisor/examiner.
D. Final examination. This will be assessed by the supervisor in consultation with the examiner.

The relative weight of the four clusters of 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).

As mentioned above, each cluster consists of a number of criteria. On each of these criteria you will be graded. To determine these grades, the supervisor and second reader will use a rubric, which is a tool to indicate for each *criterion* the *level* for the grading together with a *descriptor* of this level. (see Appendix 6).

The assessment form also has space for comments by the supervisor and by the 2nd reviewer/examiner. The chair group will keep the completed BSc thesis assessment form and a copy of the final, approved, version of the thesis. The student will receive a copy of the completed thesis assessment form.

3.3 Referencing and 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 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, in particular, in the courses RHI-10806 *Economics and Governance in Historical Perspective* and YSS-10906 *Analysis of a Problem Situation*. In these courses the suggestion was made to use the **Author-date** system of the *Chicago-Style* referencing. However, it was also stated that you can use any other system as long as you apply it is correctly and consistently. It is a good advise to consult your supervisor on the preferred system of referencing, if any.

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. Correct quoting and referencing is considered very importing in judging the writing skills as part of the thesis report.

The WUR library has developed a number of online tutorials on citing and referencing: http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/module_3/ and http://library.wur.nl/infoboard/7_citing/

Appendix 1. Chair groups and thesis preparatory courses

A. Thesis Economics and Governance: *Economic* profile	
Chair group[4]	**Thesis preparatory courses**[5]
AEP	AEP-21806 *Agriculture, Food and Policy*, **or** AEP- 22806 *Spatial and Regional Economics*
DEC	DEC-32306 *International Trade and Development Policies*
ECH	Two courses of RO2A; and, additionally, the required 42 credits of 2nd year courses (see Section 1.8) must include the course AEP-31806 *Economic Analysis of Coordination* .
ENR	ENR-21806 *Environmental Economics in Practice*
B. Thesis Economics and Governance: *Governance* profile	
Chair group[6]	**Thesis preparatory courses**[7]
ENP	ENP-30306 *International Environments Policy*
PAP	PAP-30306 *Designing Innovative Governance Arrangements*

Appendix 2. Chair groups, websites and thesis coordinators

A. Thesis Economics			
Chair group	**Website**	**Thesis Coordinator**	**Email**
AEP	bit.ly/AEPthesis	Dr J.H.M. Peerlings	jack.peerlings@wur.nl
DEC	bit.ly/DECthesis	Dr R. Haagsma	rein.haagsma@wur.nl
ECH	bit.ly/ECHthesis	Prof. dr G. Antonides	gerrit.antonides@wur.nl
ENR	bit.ly/ENRthesis	Dr S.G.M. Gabbert	silke.gabbert@wur.nl

B. Thesis Governance			
Chair group	**Website**	**Thesis Coordinator**	**Email**
ENP	bit.ly/ENPthesis	Dr C.S.A. van Koppen	kris.vankoppen@wur.nl
PAP	bit.ly/PAPthesis	Dr O. Hospes	otto.hospes@wur.nl

A number of chair groups is posting 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 and where colloquia will take place: bit.ly/WURcolloquia. You do not need to register before attending. However, as this site is often not up-to-date, you are advised to contact the secretariat of your favourite chair group(s) to get more information about upcoming colloquia.

[4] AEP: Agricultural Economics and Rural Policy; DEC: Development Economics; ECH: Economics of Consumers and Households; ENR: Environmental Economics and Natural Resources.
[5] Apart from the Economics thesis preparatory course, you must also choose another Economic thesis preparatory course listed in this table; the economics courses mentioned in the table are the courses of the Restricted Optional RO2A.
[6] ENP: Environmental Policy; PAP: Public Administration and Policy
[7] Next to one of the Governance thesis preparatory course (which is a course of the Restricted Optional RO2B), you must also choose one Economics preparatory course from the table (thus one of the courses of RO2A).

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 and for grading the thesis, next the grading of the examiner/second reviewer (see below) using the BSc Thesis Assessment Form (Appendix 5), in conjunction with the Social Sciences BSc Thesis Assessment Rubric (Appendix 6).

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), in conjunction with the Social Sciences BSc Thesis Assessment Rubric (Appendix 6).

6. Responsibilities Examining board

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

Appendix 4. BSc Thesis Contract

Student Information:

Name: Reg. no.:……

Address: Programme and major: ……

Tel. no.:

Statement Study Advisor:

Name: , states that the student has met all requirements for starting the BSc thesis and agrees that the student may start thesis work.

Date: Signature:……

Information thesis supervisor
Name of thesis supervisor and chair group:

……

Examiner or second reviewer
Name and chair group:

……

Arrangements of the BSc-thesis:

1. Topic ……

2. ECTS and Course Code ……

3. Planning:
    1. Starting date: ……
    2. Submission date draft proposal: ……
    3. Discuss draft proposal: ……
    4. Submission date draft version thesis: ……
    5. Discuss draft version: ……
    6. Submission date final version thesis: ……
    7. Oral presentation[8] ……

Other agreements: ……

Signature:

Thesis supervisor : Student: ……

[8] This is **only** compulsory for BBC, BGM and BEB students.

Status of the Thesis Contract

The BSc Thesis Contract serves to formalise 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.

Completing and signing the agreement

- This form has to be completed for each BSc thesis by the student and a representative of the chair group before the start of the thesis activities.
- Student and chair group sign two copies of the form. Both receive a signed copy. A third copy is sent to the study advisor.
- When the agreement is modified the student will receive a copy of the adjusted form.

Problems and complaints

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

- his or her programme director;
- a dean;
- the educational/ thesis coordinator of the chair group;
- the Examining Board; or
- a confidential advisor for students

If necessary the legal department can provide advice about the best person to direct your complaint to.

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					
Country (of fieldwork) 1					
2					
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	
Research competence (30-40%) *			30%		
1 Initiative, pro-activity and creativity					
2 Commitment and perseverance					
3 Time management			0.00	Fail	
4 Critical and self reflective capacity					
5 Handling supervisor's comments					
6 Analysis and processing of (literature) data					
Thesis report (50-65%) *			60%		
1 Problem definition & research set-up					
2 Theoretical underpinning and use of literature					
3 Description of methods and analysis (literature) data			0.00	Fail	
4 Clarity of argumentation and conclusions					
5 Critical discussion					
6 Writing skills incl. correct quoting					
Colloquium (0-5%)*	*(Not applicable to BIN)*		5%		
1 Presentation (use of graphics, etc.)					
2 Verbal and non-verbal presentation			0.00	Fail	
Final Discussion (5%) *			5%		
1 Defence of the thesis					
2 Knowledge of study domain			0.00	Fail	
	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)

Appendix 6. Social Sciences BSc Thesis Assessment Rubric (Version April 2016)

Author and contributors

- Author of the rubric: Marjolijn Coppens, with valuable contributions from Arnold F. Moene, Judith Gulikers, Anja Kuipers, Sonja Isken and Lotte Woittiez, 16 November 2010.
- Adaptation to new evaluation form: S. Isken, September 2012.
- Adapted for BSc Thesis Social Sciences: Wilbert Houweling, Edwin Kroese, Gerry van Nieuwenhoven and Maria Smetsers, April 2016.

User instructions

In the BSc-thesis assessment form, a number of criteria for the assessment of the BSc-thesis are mentioned. The *rubric* can be used as a tool to determine the appropriate mark for each criterion. In the rubric, which has the form of a table, each line discusses one *criterion* for assessment, each column gives a *level* for the grading, and each cell contains the *descriptor* of the level for that criterion. The criteria in the rubric follow the order of the criteria in the assessment form for the BSc thesis of the BBC, BCW, BEB, BGM and BIN[9] bachelor programmes of Wageningen University. For more information on the analytic rubric, see e.g. Andrade (2005), Reynolds *et al.* (2009), and Mueller (2010).

The main intention of using a rubric is to enhance the homogeneity of assessments and the ability to communicate about assessments both with students and with colleagues. Furthermore, it clarifies to students the expectations of the supervisor and helps the supervisor to structure feedback during the process of thesis research. However, it should be noted that even with the use of a rubric some arbitrariness will remain.

In a few cases the criteria were split into two or more parts because the description of the criteria clearly covered different subjects. The mark for the criterion should in such a case consist of the average mark for the different subjects or if one criteria is far more important for that particular thesis, that criteria should be should be weighted more.

When determining the mark of a certain criterion, always start at the lowest level and test if the student should be awarded the next higher mark. Note that in some cases achievements of a lower level are not repeated at the higher level because the lower level achievements are implicit in the higher levels. If a level has a range of marks, choose the most appropriate one (consider the description of the level of performance as a continuum, rather than a discrete description). Since the final marks of a thesis usually range between 6 and 9, individual levels have been established for the marks of 6, 7 and 8. When performance is at the 9-10 level, it is necessary to decide whether the student is on the low edge (9) or high edge (10) of this level. Descriptions at the 9-10 level tend to describe the ultimate performance (10). Hence, if a student performs well above 8, but below the description at the 9-10 level, a 9 would be the appropriate mark. Keep in mind that each line in the rubric should be read independently: it could be that a student scores a 1-3 on one criterion and a 9-10 on another.

The final mark of the thesis is determined using the BSc-thesis assessment form (version April 2016). The main categories (groups of criteria: A) Research competence, B) Thesis report, C) Colloquium, and D) Final discussion) should have an assessment of 'sufficient' (>5.5) before the total thesis work can be considered as sufficient. So, no compensation between main categories is possible to obtain a final mark of 5.5.

Please keep in mind that the difference between a BSc and MSc thesis is that a BSc thesis is more intensively supervised, has a smaller size (12 ECTS) and is a less complex project than a MSc thesis (in most programmes 33 ECTS).

Examiners/second readers and supervisors: Please report any positive or negative experiences and suggestions to Examiningboard.socialsciences@wur.nl.

References

[9] Wageningen University BSc social sciences programmes:

BBC Management and Consumer Studies
BCW Communication Sciences
BEB Economics and Governance
BGM Health and Society
BIN International Development Studies

- Andrade, H.G (2005). Teaching With Rubrics: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. *College Teaching* 53, p. 27-31.
- Reynolds, J., R. Smith, C. Moskovitz and A. Sayle (2009). BioTAP: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Scientific Writing and Evaluating Undergraduate Theses. *Bioscience* 59, p. 896-903.
- Mueller, J. (2010). Jon Mueller, North Central College, Naperville, IL. http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/rubrics.htm (Accessed on 1 June 2016).

A) Research competence (30-40%)					
1. Initiative, pro-activity and creativity					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student shows no initiative or ideas at all.	Student picks up some initiatives and/or ideas suggested by others (e.g. supervisor), but the selection is not motivated.	Student shows some initiative and/or together with the supervisor develops one or two ideas on minor parts of the research.	Student initiates discussions on ideas with supervisor and develops one or two own ideas on minor parts of the research.	Student has his own creative ideas on hypothesis formulation, design or data processing.	Student develops innovative hypotheses, research methods and/or data-analysis methods.
2. Commitment and perseverance					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student is not motivated. Student escapes work and gives up regularly.	Student has little motivation. Tends to be distracted easily. Has given up once or twice.	Student is motivated at times, but often, sees the work as a compulsory task. Is distracted from thesis work now and then.	The student is motivated. Overcomes an occasional setback with help of the supervisor.	The student is motivated and/or overcomes an occasional setback on his own and considers the work as his "own" project.	The student is very motivated, goes at length to get the most out of the project.
3. Time management					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
No planning is made.	Planning is without any detail, not feasible and backup strategies are lacking.	Planning is somewhat concrete but not feasible and backup strategies are lacking.	Planning is quite concrete, but some aspects of the planning are not feasible and backup strategies are insufficient.	Planning is quite concrete and feasible, but backup strategies are insufficient.	Planning is concrete and feasible and backup strategies are sufficient.
The student can only perform the project properly after repeated detailed instructions and with direct help from the supervisor.	The student needs frequent instructions and well-defined tasks from the supervisor and the supervisor needs to check carefully to see if all tasks have been performed.	The supervisor is mainly responsible for setting out the tasks, but the student is able to perform them mostly independently.	Student selects and plans the tasks together with the supervisor and performs these tasks on his own.	Student plans and performs tasks mostly independently, asks for help from the supervisor when needed.	Student plans and performs tasks independently and organizes his sources of help independently.
Final version of BSc-thesis or presentation hugely overdue (without a valid reason).	Final version of BSc-thesis or oral presentation at one-two months overdue (without a valid reason).	Final version of BSc-thesis or oral presentation at most a month overdue (without valid reason).	Final version of BSc-thesis or oral presentation at most two weeks overdue (without valid reasons).	Final version of BSc-thesis or oral presentation at most one week overdue (without valid reasons).	Final version of BSc-thesis or oral presentation finished within planned period.

4. Critical and self reflective capacity					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student doesn't realize the occurrence of strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan).	Student is not able to point out strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan).	Student is able to point out some strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan).	Student is able to point out many of the strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan).	Student is able to point out most of the strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan).	Student is able to point out most of the strengths and weaknesses of the research (plan) and is able to give some constructive suggestions for improvement.
5. Handling supervisor's comments					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student does not pick up suggestions and ideas of the supervisor.	The supervisor needs to act as an instructor and constantly needs to suggest solutions for problems.	Student incorporates some of the comments of the supervisor, but ignores others without arguments.	Student incorporates most or all of the supervisor's comments.	Supervisor's comments are weighed by the student and asked for when needed.	Supervisor's comments are critically weighed by the student and asked for when needed, also from other staff members or students.
Knowledge and insight of the student (in relation to the prerequisites) is insufficient and the student is not able to take appropriate action to remedy this	There is some progress in the research skills of the student, but suggestions of the supervisor are also ignored occasionally.	The student is able to adopt some skills as they are presented during supervision	The student is able to adopt skills as they are presented during supervision and develops some skills independently as well	The student is able to adopt new skills mostly independently, and asks for assistance from the supervisor if needed.	The student has knowledge and insight on a scientific level, i.e. he/she explores solutions on his own, increases skills and knowledge where necessary.

6. Analysis and processing (literature) data: a) literature analysis, b) data analysis, c) model development Only assess those criteria that are relevant for the thesis of the student					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
a) Literature analysis					
Student is not able to organise literature and come to a synthesis.	Student is able to organise the literature, but is not able come to a synthesis that results in own insights, hypotheses or conclusions independently.	Student is able to organise literature and comes to a synthesis that results in own insights, hypotheses or conclusions; but the way the literature is used does not clearly contribute to answering of the research questions	Student is able to organise literature and comes to a synthesis that results in own insights, hypotheses or conclusions which contribute to the research question.	Student is able to organise literature and critically evaluates the quality of his literature sources. The student comes to a synthesis that results in own insights, hypotheses or conclusions which contribute to the research question.	Student is able to organise literature and critically evaluates the quality of his literature sources. The student comes to an original synthesis that results in own original insights, hypotheses or conclusions which contribute to the research question.
b) Data analysis					
Student is lost when using data. Is not able to use a spreadsheet program or any other appropriate data-processing program.	Student is able to organise the data, but is not able to perform checks and/or simple analyses.	Student is able to organise data and perform some simple checks; but the way the data are used does not clearly contribute to answering of the research questions and/or he/she is unable to analyse the data independently.	Student is able to organise the data, perform some basic checks and perform basic analyses that contribute to the research question.	Student is able to organise the data, perform commonly used checks and perform some advanced analyses on the data.	Student is able to organise the data, perform thorough checks and perform advanced and original analyses on the data.
c) Model development					
Student is not able to make any modification/addition to an existing model.	Student is able to make minor modifications to an existing model, but errors occur and persist. No validation.	Student is able to make minor modifications (e.g. a single formula) to an existing model. Superficial validation.	Student is able to make major modifications to an existing model, based on literature. Validation using some basic measures of quality.	Student is able to make major modifications to an existing model, based on literature or own analyses. Validation using appropriate statistical measures.	Student is able to develop a model from scratch, or add an important new part to an existing model. Excellent theoretical basis for modeling as well as use of advanced validation methods.

B) Report (50-65%)					
1. Problem definition & research set-up					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
There is no researchable research question and the delineation of the research is absent.	Most research questions are unclear, or not researchable and the delineation of the research is weak..	The research questions are mostly clear but could have been defined sharper at some points.	The research questions and the delineation are mostly clear but could have been defined sharper at some points.	The research questions are clear and researchable and the delineation is clear..	The research questions are clear and formulated to-the-point and limits of the research are well-defined.
No link is made to existing research on the topic. No research context is described.	The context of the topic at hand is described in broad terms but there is no link between what is known and what will be researched.	The link between the thesis research and existing research does not go beyond the information provided by the supervisor.	Context of the research is defined well, with input from the student. There is a link between the context and research questions.	Context of the research is defined sharply and to-the-point. Research questions emerge directly from the described context.	Research is positioned sharply in the relevant scientific field. Student is able to indicate the novelty and innovation of the research.
2. Theoretical underpinning and use of literature					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
No discussion of underlying theories.	There is some discussion of underlying theories, but the description shows serious errors.	Student has found the relevant theories, but the description has not been tailored to the project at hand or shows occasional errors.	Student has found the relevant theories, and has been partially successful in tailoring the description to the project at hand. Few errors occur.	Student has found the relevant theories, makes a synthesis of those, and has been successful in tailoring the description to the project at hand.	Clear, complete and coherent overview of relevant theories. Exactly tailored to the project at hand.
No peer-reviewed/primary scientific papers in reference list except for those already suggested by the supervisor	Only a couple of peer-reviewed papers in reference list.	Some peer-reviewed papers in reference list but also a significant body of gray literature.	Relevant peer-reviewed papers in reference list but also some gray literature or text books. Some included references less relevant.	Mostly peer-reviewed papers or specialized monographs in reference list. An occasional reference may be less relevant.	Almost exclusively peer-reviewed papers in reference list or specialized monographs All papers included are relevant.

3. Description methods and analysis (literature) data					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
No description of methods and analysis of the information/data.	Insufficient information on methods and insufficient analysis of the information.	Some aspects of the project regarding methods and analysis of information are described insufficiently. Used methods and analysis of data/information are not always appropriate.	Description of methods and analysis of information/data is lacking in a number of places. Used methods and analysis of data/information mostly appropriate.	Description of methods and analysis of information/data is mostly complete, but there are lacking some details. Used methods and analysis of data/information are appropriate.	Description of methods used and analysis of the information is appropriate, complete and clear.
4. Clarity of argumentation and conclusions					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
No link between research questions, results and conclusions.	Conclusions are drawn, but in many cases these are only partial answers to the research question. Conclusions merely repeat results or conclusions are not substantiated by results.	Conclusions are linked to the research questions, but not all questions are addressed. Some conclusions are not substantiated by results or merely repeat results.	Most conclusions well-linked to research questions and substantiated by results. Conclusions mostly formulated clearly but some vagueness in wording.	Clear link between research questions and conclusions. All conclusions substantiated by results. Conclusions are formulated exact.	Clear link between research questions and conclusions. Conclusions substantiated by results. Conclusions are formulated exact and concise. Conclusions are grouped/ordered in a logical way.
Use the criteria below only if applicable					
No recommendations given.	Recommendations are absent or trivial.	Some recommendations are given, but the link of those to the conclusions is not always clear.	Recommendations are well-linked to the conclusions.	Recommendations are to-the-point, well-linked to the conclusions and original.	Recommendations are to-the-point, well-linked to the conclusions, original and are extensive enough to serve as project description for a new thesis project.

5. Critical discussion					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
No discussion and/or reflection on the research. Discussion only touches trivial or very general points of criticism.	Student identifies only some possible weaknesses and/or points at weaknesses which are in reality irrelevant or non-existent.	Student indicates most weaknesses in the research, but does not weigh their impact on the main results relative to each other.	Student indicates most weaknesses in the research and is able to weigh their impact on the main results relative to each other.	Student indicates all weaknesses in the research and weighs them relative to each other. Furthermore, (better) alternatives for the methods used are indicated.	Student is able to identify all possible weaknesses in the research and to indicate which weaknesses affect the conclusions most.
No confrontation with existing literature.	Some confrontation with existing literature but incomplete and irrelevant.	Some confrontation with existing literature, some relevance.	Student identifies only most obvious conflicts and correspondences with existing literature. Student tries to describe the added value of his study but does not relate this to existing research.	Student shows minor and major conflicts and correspondences with literature and can identify the added value of his research relative to existing literature.	Student critically confronts results to existing literature and in case of conflicts is able to weigh own results relative to existing literature. Student is able to identify the contribution of his work to the development of scientific concepts

6. Writing skills including correct quoting					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Thesis badly structured. In many cases information appears in wrong locations. Level of detail is inappropriate throughout.	Main structure incorrect in some places, and placement of material in different chapters illogical in many places. Level of detail varies widely (information missing, or irrelevant information given).	Main structure is correct, but lower level hierarchy of sections is not logical in places. Some sections have overlapping functions leading to ambiguity in placement of information. Level of detail varies widely (information missing, or irrelevant information given).	Main structure correct, but placement of material in different chapters illogical in some places. Level of detail inappropriate in a few places (irrelevant information given).	Most sections have a clear and unique function. Hierarchy of sections is mostly correct. Ordering of sections is mostly logical. All information occurs at the correct place, with few exceptions. In most places level of detail is appropriate.	Well-structured: each section has a clear and unique function. Hierarchy of sections is correct. Ordering of sections is logical. All information occurs at the correct place. Level of detail is appropriate throughout.
Formulations in the text are often incorrect/inexact inhibiting a correct interpretation of the text.	Vagueness and/or inexactness in wording occurs regularly and it affects the interpretation of the text.	The text is ambiguous in some places but this does not always inhibit a correct interpretation of the text.	Formulations in text are predominantly clear and exact. BSc thesis report could have been written more concisely.	Formulations in text are clear and exact, as well as concise.	*Textual* quality of thesis is such that it could be acceptable for a peer-reviewed journal.
Dutch/English incorrect and unreadable. Spelling and grammar errors too many to count.	Dutch/English incorrect and very hard to read. Spelling and grammar errors so numerous that they make the thesis almost impossible to understand.	Dutch/English somehow correct but not pleasant to read. Spelling and grammar errors numerous.	Dutch/English basically correct and readable. Spelling and grammar errors present but at acceptable quantities.	Dutch/English correct and pleasant to read. Some spelling and grammar errors.	Dutch/English fluent and pleasant to read. Few spelling and grammar errors. English is (almost) at the level of what is written in peer-reviewed journals.
Student is often inconsequent in references in the text and/or reference list or often references are lacking.	Student is often inconsequent in references in the text and/or reference list or often references are lacking.	Student is sometimes inconsequent in references in the text and/or reference list or sometimes references are lacking.	Student is sometimes inconsequent in references in the text and/or reference list.	Student mainly uses one format for references in the text and reference list.	Student uses one format for references in the text and reference list.

C) Colloquium (0-5%)					
1. Presentation (use of graphics, etc.)					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Presentation has no structure.	Presentation has unclear structure.	Presentation is structured, though the audience gets lost in some places.	Presentation has a clear structure with only few exceptions.	Presentation has a clear structure. Mostly a good separation between the main message and side-steps.	Presentation clearly structured, concise and to-the-point. Good separation between the main message and side-steps.
Unclear lay-out. Unbalanced use of text, graphs, tables or graphics throughout. Too small font size, too many slides.	Lay-out in many places insufficient: too much text and too few graphics (or graphs, tables) or vice versa.	Quality of the layout of the slides is mixed. Inappropriate use of text, tables, graphs and graphics in some places.	Lay-out is mostly clear, with unbalanced use of text, tables, graphs and graphics in few places only.	Lay-out is clear. Appropriate use of text, tables, graphs and graphics.	Lay-out is functional and clear. Clever use of graphs and graphics.

2. Verbal and non-verbal presentation					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Spoken in such a way that majority of audience could not follow the presentation.	Presentation is uninspired and/or monotonous and/or student reads from slides: attention of audience not captured	Quality of presentation is mixed: sometimes clear, sometimes hard to follow.	Mostly clearly spoken. Sometimes monotonous or difficult to follow.	Clearly spoken in such a way that it keeps audience's attention.	Relaxed and lively though concentrated presentation. Clearly spoken in such a way that it keeps audience's attention.
Student does not make eye-contact, moves in a very restless way or is completely frozen, does not support his words with gestures.	Student hardly makes eye-contact, moves too much or is almost frozen, hardly supports his words with gestures.	Student sometimes makes eye-contact, moves in a way that is not very annoying or distracting, makes some useful supporting gestures.	Student regularly makes eye-contact, moves rather naturally, makes some supporting gestures.	Student makes eye-contact, moves naturally, makes supporting gestures.	Student constantly makes eye-contact, moves naturally, is lively and relaxed and makes supporting gestures.
Language and interest of audience not taken into consideration at all.	Language and interest of audience hardly taken into consideration.	Language and interest of presentation at a couple of points not appropriately targeted at audience.	Language and interest of presentation mostly targeted at audience.	Language and interest of presentation well-targeted at audience. Student is able to adjust to some extent to signals from audience that certain parts are not understood.	Take-home message is clear to the audience. Language and interest of presentation well-targeted at audience. Student is able to adjust to signals from audience that certain parts are not understood.

Bad timing (way too short or going on and on till stopped by supervisor or chairman).	Bad timing (way too short or at least twice as long as planned).	Timing marginally okay but rushing or killing time in the end.	Timing more or less okay, no rushing or killing time.	Presentation finished well in time.	Presentation finished perfect in time.
Student is not able to answer questions.	Student is able to answer only the simplest questions	Student answers some of the relevant questions appropriately and deals in an acceptable way with the questions he/she cannot answer.	Student is able to answer many relevant questions in an appropriate way, although not to-the-point in some cases.	Student is able to answer most of the relevant questions in an appropriate way.	Student is able to give appropriate, clear and to-the-point answers to all relevant questions.

D) Final discussion (5%)					
1. Defense of thesis					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student is not able to defend/discuss his thesis. The student does not master the contents.	The student has difficulty to explain the subject matter of the thesis.	Student is able to defend his thesis. The student mostly masters the contents of what he/she wrote, but for a limited number of items he/she is not able to explain what he/she did, or why.	Student is able to defend his thesis. The student masters the contents of what he/she wrote, but not beyond that. Is not able to place thesis in scientific or practical context.	Student is able to defend his thesis, including indications where the work could have been done better. Student is able to place thesis in either scientific or practical context.	Student is able to freely discuss the contents of the thesis and to place the thesis in the context of current scientific literature and practical contexts.
2. Knowledge of study domain					
1-3	4-5	6	7	8	9-10
Student does not master the most basic knowledge (even below the starting level for the thesis).	The student does not understand all of the subject matter discussed in the thesis.	The student understands the subject matter of the thesis on a textbook level.	The student understands the subject matter of the thesis on a textbook level and realizes the importance of literature without using it.	The student understands the subject matter of the thesis including the literature used in the thesis.	Student is well on top of subjects discussed in thesis: not only does he/she understand but he/she is also aware of current discussions in the literature related to the thesis topic.