

1. Introduction

Education Organisation of Wageningen University

Wageningen University comprises just one faculty: the faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. This implicates that the Rector Magnificus of Wageningen University is also the Dean of the Faculty. The Faculty consists of circa 80 Chair Groups. The Chair Groups are grouped in five Departments. Wageningen University offers 19 BSc study programmes and 28 MSc study programmes for about 5000 students. The BSc and MSc education is organised in the Education Institute (OWI). The Education Institute is responsible for the content and quality of the study programmes. The education of the BSc and MSc study programmes, as either a compulsory or restricted choice course, is provided by the staff of the Chair Groups of Wageningen University. In addition, the Chair Groups provide education that is not classified as either compulsory or restricted choice courses: 1. selected topics (code 5) (according to the choice of the chair group), 2. education provided by professors holding endowed chairs (code 9) according to the choice of the chair; cannot be part of a prescribed programme), 3. internships and 4. theses.

2. BSc study programmes

The design of the BSc study programme

The BSc study programme exists of 180 credits: a major of 150 credits (including the BSc thesis) and free choice of 30 credits. Every BSc study programme has its own explicit intended learning outcomes. Intended learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after successful completion of the study programme (see appendix 3).

Major and BSc thesis

The core of the BSc study programme is the major of 150 credits. For every BSc study programme there is at least one major. A BSc study programme can exist of more majors. In this case the majors have to differ at least 24 credits with each other. Students complete their major by a BSc thesis. The optimal length of the BSc thesis varies across study programmes. Each BSc Programme Committee can choose for either 12, 18 or 24 credits. A successfully completed BSc thesis is seen as a proof of the fact that the student achieved the learning outcomes of the study programme.

Free choice

Each BSc study programme has 30 credits free choice, scheduled in either the first half year (periods 1, 2 and 3) or the second (periods 4, 5 and 6). Within the free choice, students can choose a combination of courses (at Wageningen University or another university) or follow a minor of 24 credits. The free choice should show cohesion and profundity and has to contribute to the intended learning outcomes of the BSc study programme. It is up to the student to prove that this is the case. Therefore, the student has to write a well-founded proposal before he starts with his free choice. This proposal has to be approved by the study advisor.

BSc minor

A minor can be described as a cluster of related courses (24 credits). Three types of minors can be distinguished: 1. described and by the Education Institute approved WU BSc minors; 2. individual minors and 3. minors offered by other universities.

3. MSc study programmes

The design of the MSc study programme

The MSc study programme exists of 120 credits. Every MSc study programme has its own explicit intended learning outcomes. Intended learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after successful completion of the study programme (see appendix 3). The MSc programme is tailor-made and student centred. The MSc study programme can include different specialisations.

MSc thesis, Internship and Academic Master Cluster

An MSc study programme includes at least one MSc thesis with a minimum size of 24 credits. In addition to this thesis, the MSc study programme consists of an Internship or a second MSc thesis. The MSc thesis and the Internship or second MSc thesis represent at least 60 credits in total. Next to the thesis and the internship (or second thesis), every MSc study programme has an Academic Master Cluster (AMC) of at least 12 credits.

4. Scheduling

Study load

The size of the study load per academic year is 60 credits.

One credit corresponds with 28 hours of study. These hours of study include all activities that are necessary to pass the interim examination or the testimonial.

Structure of academic year

The academic year is divided into six periods (see schedule).

- Periods 1, 2, 5 and 6 have a duration of 8 weeks each and a study load of 12 credits. (Duration period 6 pending final decision making in the Student Council);
- Periods 3 and 4 have a duration of 4 weeks each and a study load of 6 credits.
- Pending final decision making in the Student Council there are two general re-exam periods; one between period 3 and 4 and the other is in August. Re-exams are limited to these two general re-exam periods.

Scheduling education and interim examinations

The scheduling is based on the following principles:

- There are three possibilities per year for taking an interim examination. The education and the corresponding interim examination should both take place within a single period (whenever possible).
- In general, no compulsory or restricted optional courses are scheduled in the evenings or during the holidays. However interim examinations in both re-exam periods can also be scheduled in evening hours.
- The free choice of the BSc study programme will be scheduled either in the first half year (periods 1, 2 and 3) or the second half year (periods 4, 5 and 6) of the third year of the BSc study programme.
- BSc minors are scheduled as a block in period 1,2 and 3 or period 4, 5 and 6.
- The planning of individual education subjects such as theses and internships – and teaching that is difficult to schedule due to its nature (such as distance learning, review courses, summer courses, etc.) – takes place in mutual consultation between student and lecturer wherever possible.
- Programme subjects that, due to their nature and/or size, do not lend themselves to scheduling within a single period can be scheduled during two or more sequential periods ('ribbon scheduling'). The individual parts of such programme units must end during each period with a sub-exam about the material from that period.

5. Courses, internship and theses

Size of courses

The size of a course depends of the type of subject matter and the period in which it may be scheduled.

Courses

- The standard size of courses is 6 credits.
- The courses that are taught in periods 1, 2 and 5 have a size of 6 or 12 credits.
- The courses that are taught in period 3 and 4 have a size of 6 credits.
- The size of the courses in period 6 can be other than 6 or 12 credits.
- In periods 1 t/m 5, courses with a size other than 6 or 12 credits are only allowed if they do not cause any problems with scheduling the relevant study programme(s). For courses with a size of less than 6 credits in periods 1 t/m 5, permission must be requested from the Board of the Education Institute.

MSc Internships

- The standard MSc internships have a minimum size of 24 credits and a maximum size of 39 credits, expressed in multiples of three credits (24, 27, 30, etc.).

BSc theses

- A BSc thesis consists of 12, 18 or 24 credits; depending on the study programme.

MSc theses

- The standard MSc theses have a minimum size of 24 credits and a maximum size of 39 credits, expressed in multiples of three credits (24, 27, 30, etc.). In addition, chair groups have the option of offering theses for Erasmus students with a size of 18 and 21 credits.

Selected topics (code 5)

- Selected topics can have a size of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 credits.

Education provided by professors holding endowed chairs (code 9)

- The size of theses and internships offered by professors holding endowed chairs -to be included in the free choice portion of an individual programme- is a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 39 credits, expressed in multiples of three credits. Professors holding endowed chairs are not required to offer theses or internships (standard sequence or otherwise).
- Courses provided by professors occupying endowed chairs can have a magnitude of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 credits.

Compulsory prerequisite knowledge and assumed prerequisite knowledge

Compulsory prerequisite knowledge

- Compulsory prerequisite knowledge may be required as part of the BSc thesis, MSc thesis and the Academic Master Cluster, with a maximum of 12 credits.

Assumed prerequisite knowledge

- Is knowledge the student is assumed to possess before starting the course, regardless of how this knowledge was acquired.
- In the Study Handbook the assumed knowledge should be described.