



**UNIES**

UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE  
FOR INTERNATIONAL AND  
EUROPEAN STUDIES

**Postgraduate**  
Student Handbook

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## **I. University Institute for International and European Studies’ Master’s Programmes**

Dear Reader,

According to international standards of Higher Education, the University Institute for International and European Studies (UNIES) Master’s programmes are academic courses on level 7 of studies leading to the Postgraduate Degree of Master. These programmes of studies can be general or specified by an addition regarding a pathway of specialisation, e.g., in Marketing, in Human Resource Management, in Hospitality Management, etc.

On Master’s level it is essential that students understand the particular challenges of academic work they are expected to demonstrate. To these count criticality, contrast and depth, but empirical research in particular. Furthermore Master’s studies require good knowledge of theory, despite that an emphasis of a number of programmes of studies’ orientation is on application in practice (applied science). Therefore students are expected making extensive use of appropriate academic literature and provide evidence that they are capable of undertaking significant elements of empirical research, which is not limited to the dissertation alone.

This Student Handbook introduces Postgraduate students to essential elements of their studies. It is recommended to read these explanations and guidelines carefully. They have been designed to guide students and offer them advice for successful outcomes facilitating their final achievement in the form of the intended Master’s Degree.

University Institute for International  
and European Studies

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## 2. UNIES Master's Studies

### 2.1. Official Status of the Programme of Studies and the Awarded Degree

Any delivery of UNIES programmes of studies in Higher Education is governed by the regulations of the Government of the corresponding country in its actual version. UNIES awards Degrees being regulated by the Ministry of Education of the corresponding country on Bachelor and Master's level. In addition, the regulations of the process of Harmonisation of Higher Education in Europe are respected.

Through the University's official Degree Awarding Powers acknowledgement and widest international recognition of the awarded Degrees takes place.

### 2.2. Masters' Level

Master's studies define a specific level, which students can expect to be delivered and which their (future) employers are considering as valuable for their organisations. To these count, despite that they are not limited to these:

- “Enabling students to focus on a particular aspect of a broader subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience through previous study or employment; and/or
- enabling students to focus on a particular subject area or field of study in greater depth than they encountered during the course of previous study or experience. This may include enabling students to develop knowledge of a new discipline or field of study in combination with a relevant subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience; and/or
- enabling students to learn how to conduct research, often linked to a particular discipline or field of study. Programmes will often include a greater emphasis on the delivery of structured learning as opposed to independent study than those which are dedicated to the actual undertaking of research; and/or
- enabling students to undertake a research project on a topic within the area of interest that makes up the majority of the overall assessment (see 'research'); and/or
- enabling students to specialise or to become more highly specialised in an area of employment or practice related to a particular profession” (QAA. 2010).

These standard guidelines of the British regulating QAA have been widely adopted in addition to those regulating in Higher Education for the further improvement of the studies' international orientation and widest global acceptance being advantageous for Graduates. It is furthermore emphasised that delivery and content of all programmes of studies is according to the standards of the process of Harmonisation of Higher Education in Europe (Bologna process).

When graduating, students will be able to fulfil these demanding tasks and offer significant contributions in their professional commitments.

### 2.3. Audiences for UNIES Programmes of Studies

The explanations under 2.1 are fully integrated into all UNIES Master's programmes. Each programme of studies and within each such course, each module specifies precise Intended Learning Outcomes enabling direct translation and application in/to challenging organisational contexts. This counts for all

types of organisations and also for scientific contexts in the academic understanding of applied sciences. Additionally these programmes are underpinned by UNIES's own research in the effort of providing a specific focus on knowledge of theory for translation into practice.

All courses and modules are developed for candidates, who either are already Bachelor graduates or, alternatively, those having sufficient work experience (on managerial level where requested) and a proven track record of achievements in organisations. This approach to Postgraduate studies is a specific focus of UNIES's objective of balancing academic education with professional orientation on superior level.

Applications from professionals without a first degree, who instead can demonstrate evidence of a credible professional progression route, are welcomed as well. For these candidates the exact entry requirements for each specific programme are explained in the programme description and the specific course outline.

UNIES programmes therefore offer Master's studies for candidates with an Undergraduate Degree (or equivalent on national level) or significant professional experience. Candidates are invited seeking advice with their local study centre or the Registry of the UNIES for further details and information.

Applications are equally welcomed from individual candidates or from individuals sponsored by their present employers. Many courses offer opportunities to be studied while candidates continue to pursue their professional responsibilities through part-time delivery. However some courses may only be available as full-time studies making a simultaneous employment unlikely.

## **2.4. Structure of Courses**

Each course will require the completion of various individual modules in different subject areas. These modules may be designed in different ways and forms. Therefore a programme of studies can consist of compulsory modules or may offer a mixture of compulsory and optional modules. The individual structure of each programme is defined by its individual Course Outline. At the end of each programme a compulsory and research-based dissertation is the summarising part of all teaching and learning on the specific course.

### **2.4.1. ECTS Credits**

All Degrees of the UNIES are part and subject to the European ECTS credit system. Within the ECTS standards, directed by the so-called Bologna process, modules typically gain 7.5 or 10 credits each, while the typical dissertation gains 30 ECTS credits. For specific cases, especially in the provision of particular Degree pathways, the dissertation may gain fewer credits. However the overall achievement always corresponds to the necessary standard amount of ECTS credits for Master's Degrees.

The typical international credit award on Master's level is 90, but specific courses may offer more than 90 credits. This counts especially for programmes of studies, which UNIES considers as elite Degrees. As these are far more challenging, they may be subject to specific admission criteria, too.

Greatest care guides the selection of all modules and their content to make them contemporary and professionally relevant. They are designed to provide the right balance between managerial roles in diverse functions and as well the organisational and wider social responsibilities, which acting managers and employees have to fulfil for sustainable and value-oriented management.

The elaboration of each programme is comprehensive, insightful and academically valid. Each course adopts highest standards constituting Higher Education meeting national regulations and expected international standards. This process guarantees that all courses and their respective Degrees represent outstanding excellence in their field and meet employers' expectations on international level. Specifically emphasised is the concept of employability impact.

#### **2.4.2. Adoption of Scientific Standards**

UNIES courses are designed and delivered by a holistic perspective. Their rationale is using and developing knowledge on actual and superior level. Scientific work is an essential part of these studies and the wide use of theories is expected by demonstration of such theory, e.g., in all forms of individual assessments. Academically best Higher Education practice is an indispensable part of the studies with UNIES. However practice-orientation and professional applicability is a further indispensable part of the studies having adopted graduates career opportunities as a strategic objective of the respective programmes of studies.

Within its orientation to meet national, but as well international requirements on highest level and to respect actual organisational needs at the same time, UNIES practices close relationships and collaboration with a variety of international partners. UNIES closely collaborates with a number of renowned other global Higher Educations Institutions and professional organisations. This may be expressed in Double Degree Awards – both Institutions (UNIES and its counterpart) award a Degree each) – or specific Summer Universities. For more information, special reference is made to the respective individual Course Outlines.

This form of extended academic and/or professional acknowledgement offers significant advantages for Graduates' future careers. Courses adopting applied sciences demonstrate employers that graduates are capable of applying their learning in practice, while purely academic courses recommend graduates for scientific careers.



### 3. Acknowledgement of External Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas

UNIES programmes of studies are unique courses, but own many interfaces offering holders of a Postgraduate Degree or Award of an external institution the opportunity to apply for Acknowledgement of Prior Learning (APL).

Based on content and extent of a previous Postgraduate achievement (Master's, Postgraduate Certificate [PGCert], Postgraduate Diploma [PGDip] or equivalent on national level) obtained before, specific modules or parts of a programme of studies may become part of individual exemption.

The diversity of potential options does not allow the formulation of a general rule. However the following prerequisites, which must be fulfilled for APL, are:

- Any previous studies must meet the level of Postgraduate Studies on acknowledged level.
- The awarding institution must be an officially recognised or approved Institution of Studies in Higher Education. For the Acknowledgement of prior Master's Degrees own Degree Awarding Powers must exist.
- The subjects studied must correspond to business and/or managerial studies, in particular meet the chosen course's learning outcomes.
- Credits awarded in these previous studies must meet the level of modules and/or courses of UNIES. Since awarded credits may differ, especially from countries outside the European Union, such foreign credits will be translated into the ECTS credit system.
- Further ways of acknowledgement or limitations may apply.

Applicants should contact their local study centre or the Registry of the UNIES for detailed information and an in-depth assessment of existing knowledge and the acknowledgement of their award for the APL application process.

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## 4. General Prerequisites

UNIES adopts highest academic standards on all levels of studies. Actuality, scientific orientation and research in actual business, economical, managerial and/or other fields of social sciences are indispensable.

Following latest developments these criteria have been extended by considerations to which count, e.g., business ethics, moral, sustainability and social and environmental responsibility of organisations and their acting managers. These and more perspectives are driving forces and guide the design of each course and its modules in the interest of not only successful, but also especially meaningful studies. This orientation is student-centred and drives good Module and Degree achievements. In this understanding and for good experience of all students, the UNIES introduces general regulations and additional recommendations for its studies.

### 4.1. Learning and Teaching

#### 4.1.1. Lecturing and Learning Strategy

Student-centred learning is strongly emphasised and developed for which a variety of contemporary methods is additionally applied: Action-based Learning, Cooperative Learning and Problem-Based Learning build an integrated part of the adopted teaching and learning strategy.

In addition to research-induced and/or interactive lectures, face-to-face, case study analysis and self directed learning resources would be available to support the delivery of each module. These may be extended, e.g., by seminars, or replaced by modules delivered as a research project. However, not regarding which teaching method is in place, the individual Intended Learning Outcomes of each module have to be met at the specific module's end.

The programmes will therefore be more than the simple delivery of subject-related knowledge and will incorporate interactivity at many points of the studies. Discourse and informed dialogue, and individual self-development complement this contemporary style of academic practice. It should be noted that the focus will be on facilitating learning and not on traditional lectures alone. In this respect, the strategy is designed to facilitate the deep learning experience attributed to a more active participation of the learning process by students for the achievement of thinking and working on informed levels.

Many programmes will deliver modules monthly (part-time studies) using intensive presence blocks over one weekend, in which the emphasis is not only on transporting knowledge, but also on the demonstration of best practice. Permanent interaction between lecturers and students are decisive elements of the delivery. Additional contemporary learning methods, including non-assessed presentations and seminar work may complete the student-centred focus regarding their individual achievements.

Individual study centres in different countries may adjust the delivery of the courses and assessments, provided that neither learning outcomes, nor contact hours will be compromised and that such alterations are officially approved by UNIES as the Degree Awarding body. The approval of all suggested changes makes sure that official regulations constituting Higher Education in the corresponding country are met and in accordance with European standards of Higher Education considering ECTS credit awards.

All methods of teaching and learning are generally subject to the necessary number of contact hours, assessments and the need for excellent student experience and results for meeting national standards and those of the ECTS credit system.

#### **4.1.2. Learning Support**

A major objective of the University is offering students 'blended learning'. This is facilitated by:

- Induction sessions including study skills and assessment criteria
- Set course text books – a minimum of one set text for each module
- Guest lecturers or visiting professors of acknowledged national and/or international reputation in their field of expertise
- Additional contemporary support by extended reading
- Collaboration with other international Higher Education Institutions and Professional Bodies for Double Degrees and/or additional professional input both leading to additional Certificates and professional acknowledgement for specific courses, where specified in the Course Outline

#### **4.2. Attendance**

The UNIES expects that students fully attend each module's sessions as necessary fulfilment on students' part. Such regular attendance is an essential element for successful studies. Consequently, the following requirements operate:

- Students are expected to attend all sessions.
- If a student cannot attend for any genuine reason (e.g. illness), he/she is expected to email the module tutor.
- Persistent non-attendance will require an explanation, in person, initially with the module tutor.

If a student fails to attend continuously or various modules he/she may be excluded from the studies.

In addition to the formal contact hours students are expected to engage in independent studies between the different modules. This is an essential part of study requirements facilitating learning outcomes and successful results.

#### **4.3. Assessments**

For each module assessments are requested in the form of an unseen exam (closed or open book), assignment (report or essay) and/or presentation (group and/or individually).

To these adds the final dissertation as an individual research project demonstrating the overall learning outcome on the course.

#### **4.4. Academic Writing**

Students will be graded on the quality of their writing as well as the content, i.e. how students write as well as what they write. On Master's level this includes a significant level of depth and criticality. The assessment will include:

- The ability to present material in an appropriate format (report, essay, exam, dissertation and presentation, where appropriate).
- The ability to present the work in grammatically correct language.
- The correct use of references based on the Harvard system.
- Academic depth according to Postgraduate Studies, which includes appropriate application of frameworks and theories, critical thinking and contrasting argumentation.
- Translation of theory, frameworks and concepts into meaningful practice-oriented outcomes.

Poor language and referencing can lose students up to 10% per assignment and/or the dissertation.

It should be noted that students must consistently identify all sources, including the internet, and that they should communicate their thoughts in their own words/diagrams/images instead of mainly reproducing the material of others. Failure to do so may lead to an allegation of academic misconduct. Direct citations in a limited and meaningful extent for supporting their own discussion and argumentation is welcomed.

The use of online collaborative encyclopædias such as Wikipedia and other public websites is not acceptable. Strict limitations apply for consultants' work not regarding which reputation consultants may have in the professional context.

## 4.5. Reassessments

In the event students are failing an assessment, they will be required to take a reassessment. They will receive formal notification in writing. Specific dates will be set for each reassessment. It is reminded that only one reassessment per module or dissertation is possible. Should the reassessment fail, too, then the student will be requested to repeat the respective module.

For dissertations specific regulations apply:

- Students, who are failing the dissertation, will also have one further approach by writing a new dissertation, but with a different topic (repetition of the module). Should this retake fail again, the student will not be awarded the intended Master's Degree.
- Repetitions have to be started latest within twelve (12) weeks after the first attempt failed.

Students failing more than two modules of a programme of studies will not be admitted to continuing their studies for the intended degree. Based on their existing credits up to the moment of the second failure, they may be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate. If achieved credits are not sufficient, then only a Transcript will be issued.

## 4.6. Submission and late submission of work

### 4.6.1. Submission

All assignments have to be submitted latest on the due day by 18:00 hours local time of the student's responsible study centre.

#### 4.6.2. Mitigating Circumstances

Should a student find that they are unable to meet an assessment deadline, they should consider applying for mitigating circumstances. This application has to be submitted to the local study centre.

Students should be aware that tangible evidence for the circumstances has to be added. Among acceptable reasons are especially illness and serious family reasons.

Work-related issues can only be brought forward in very specific cases or for unforeseeable reasons, since students are expected to plan their time for all assessments, including the dissertation accordingly.

#### 4.6.3. Extension Request Procedures

Requests for extensions must be submitted to the Course Director a minimum of 10 days prior to the submission deadline concerned. Only one extension is allowed for each module.

Evidence should be provided, if an extension request is submitted.

If the request is accepted, then it is normal that a one-week extension is granted, unless serious reasons (e.g. illness) apply.

Should acute reasons prevent a student applying for mitigating reasons before the given deadline, he/she is expected to do so at the earliest moment, when he/she will be able to. Evidence that no earlier application was possible has to be provided together with the evidence for the cause.

#### 4.6.4. Penalty for Late Submission

In the case of late submission the following regulation applies:

- 24 to 48 hours late: Maximum mark of Pass at 50%
- 48 to 96 hours late: Fail, reassessment
- More than 96 hours late: Loss of the module

#### 4.7. Academic Misconduct

Students are asked to note the regulations on academic dishonesty, in particular the inclusion in their assignments of un-attributed material taken from other sources. Every effort will be made to deal with students fairly, but they should remember that there are strict rules concerning cheating.

Students, who are presenting work in module assessments or the dissertation, which is not their own work or do not reference in full all contributions taken from third parties will be informed in writing that doubts exist about the origin of their work. These doubts can be accompanied by a report, such as turn-it-in or alike. The student will be invited to explain the situation and to provide evidence that the doubts raised are unjustified. The process of a student's justification can either be in writing or by a personal hearing.

Should the student not be able to invalidate the suspicions about the originality of his/her work, a formal Cheating Committee will take place. This committee will consist of at least three academics, which will evaluate the case presented.

The decision of the Cheating Committee is binding and may result in the loss of a particular or more modules and in severe or repeated cases in the student's exclusion from further studies.

## 5. Course and Module Documentation

### 5.1. Course Outline

Each programme of studies is documented by an individual Course Outline, which explains the Degree's achievements and details of the studies of the relevant course. Each Course Outline presents all Modules by individual Module Outlines, which deliver a detailed explanation of each module.

The Course Outline explains the course's rationale and objectives and informs students about all relevant details concerning their studies. The Course Outline is a binding document for teaching and learning.

Rigid quality assurance processes, whose focus is on highest quality standards, govern the UNIES. Therefore only approved study centres are entrusted with the delivery of UNIES Degrees, which have to comply with both approved Course and individual Module Outlines in full.

### 5.2. Individual Module Outlines

Within each Course Outline the individual Module Outlines define the nature of teaching and learning in each module. Indispensable part of all Module Outlines are Intended Learning Outcomes, assessments and set texts. Each module of a course is composed to provide superior understanding being relevant and contemporary regarding the pathway of the intended Degree.

Module Outlines consist of a

- descriptor of the subject area,
- the Intended Learning Outcomes,
- the assessment(s)
- and the set text(s).

Except set texts, which may be changed or actualised, all other components are fixed part of each module and cannot be changed during a module.

Regarding assessments it is highlighted that for students with disabilities assessments may be adapted for that these students will not be disadvantaged. However for such specific circumstances medical evidence has to be presented. Students with disabilities are advised that they should inform the module tutor in advance that they are requiring special assistance. Generally it is recommended that these students should inform their study centre best at the moment of their application.

Each successfully passed module contributes to the intended Degree and awards students the amount of ECTS credits as specified in the Course Outline.

## 6. Assessment Details

All forms of assessment are subject to the relevant module outline. As means of quality assurance and control, UNIES evaluates, moderates and approves all assignments. This guarantees that UNIES always has full information and control with regard to each individual assignment before they are disseminated to students.

### 6.1. Assignments

The modules of a programme of studies will contain one or more assignment(s) with word count limitations (+ / - 10%), which may vary depending on the module and the relevant degree. Each module document will outline the specific word count limit.

Normally the expected presentation of assignments should be structured as outlined below.

Sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Title Page (including module title, assignment title, name, word count and date)</li> <li>▪ Abstract incl. keywords (dissertation only)</li> <li>▪ Executive summary (report, essay only)</li> <li>▪ Table of Content (incl. page numbers for longer assessments and the dissertation), table of graphics, table of charts, index of abbreviations</li> <li>▪ Introduction</li> <li>▪ Analysis with Subsections</li> <li>▪ Statement or evaluation of alternatives</li> <li>▪ Recommendations (justifications and implementations)</li> <li>▪ Conclusion</li> <li>▪ References (Harvard style)</li> <li>▪ Appendices (Appendix A, Title Appendix B, Title, ...)</li> </ul>
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The purpose of the word count limitation is for students to:

- Focus on issues and structural relevance of argumentation
- Be critically concise
- Refrain from writing excessively
- Assist them in their time management throughout the programme

More specifically and to prevent confusion by students over the word count limit, the assessment specifically relates to the section in the assignment between the introduction and the completion of the conclusion.

I.e., the indicated word count does not include

- the executive summary,
- the table of content,
- diagrams,
- models,
- tables,
- in-text referencing
- the bibliography
- and appendices.

These elements are, however, expected as part of the submitted assignment structure. For consistency throughout the programme, students are requested to include the net word count on the front page of their assignment.

Written assignments and the dissertation are designed to test students' in-depth understanding of the Intended Learning Outcomes for each module and, to a wider extent in the dissertation for the programme of studies. Students are expected demonstrating their knowledge gained in a specific module or the programme of studies. This has to be done according to the individual assessment outlines or the approved topic of the dissertation regarding an issue addressing that particular subject area or degree pathway.

Cross-disciplinary approaches to solutions are especially welcomed and these may gain students even better results. However theoretical and/or practical relevance and solution-orientation have to be demonstrated effectively.

Students are either required to identify a process, issue or problem, which they must present, analyse and discuss critically, leading to conclusions and recommendations for a course of action which is underpinned by clearly reasoned arguments consistently referring to relevant theory, frameworks and scientific concepts.

All assessments provide a regular assessment process, which tests the following:

- Scientific knowledge
- Critical and analytical assessment capabilities
- Planning skills
- Organising ability
- Writing skills

Students are requested to adhere precisely to the written instructions laid out in the assessment outline to produce an academic piece of work in a selected field of knowledge being consistent and conform to expected standards of good academic writing on Postgraduate level.

For examinations specific reference is made to section 6.2, for theses to section 6.3.

## 6.2. Examinations

Examinations are an essential part of the programme of studies' assessment strategy. They seek to determine students' individual effectiveness in responding to specific questions under time-constrained invigilated conditions. Conditions, which are frequently found in workplace environments.

Examinations may be case study related and will be open or closed book examinations, in which fixed questions will be asked. Assessment will be on students' abilities to identify problems, analyse these with depth and develop solutions and communicate their reasoned recommendations and/or conclusions. For open book exams there is no limit to the amount of study materials being brought into the examination.

Examinations test knowledge and understanding and the student's ability to address questions and problems under tightened conditions and time constraints. This process simulates situations under which managers often have to identify solutions – assessing what is needed, analysing options, establishing priorities, making decisions and consider their implementation. Examinations also ensure that the student has to produce original work, which cannot benefit from external support.

The examination process is valued by employers as it assures that graduates are thoroughly assessed on their own merits and cannot achieve a pass based largely on the work of others, even if such work is academically allowed.

## 6.3. Thesis

Candidates for each Master's programmes are requested to submit a thesis in form of a superior dissertation (level 7 of studies) as the essential part of each Degree. The thesis is focused on a topic of the relevant pathway and considers a variety of applicable topics to be researched.

It is emphasised that any thesis is a scientific piece of work and hence understood as a Master's candidate's evidence to undertake own and independent empirical research on superior level. It is particularly expressed that theses without significant scientific elements including empirical research will not be accepted by the Board of Examiners.

### 6.3.1. Thesis Topics

Thesis topics have to be specific and address a field being typical for the chosen programme pathway. A few recommendations for selecting a topic include:

- Economical, societal, and/or environmental issues addressed in the learning of the specific pathway
- Cross-functional impact on economy, organisations and/or society
- Cross-disciplinary approaches
- Topics with regard to internationalisation and globalisation and global relationships
- Issues of ethics, moral and sustainability related to the course

It is repeated that within their thesis students are requested to provide evidence of their intellectual capability to undertake own and independent research, which is academically robust, consistent and

evidence-based. Arguments have to be defensible. The thesis must meet standards on postgraduate level.

### **6.3.2. Thesis requirements and specifications**

The thesis requirements and specifications are:

- Submission of a thesis, which typically consists of 15,000 words (+/- 10%); other word counts may apply as outlined in the specific Course Outline.
- Submission within 24 weeks after the start of the dissertation (thesis) module.
- The dissertation module is counted as the summarising module, providing evidence for the overall learning achievements.

### **6.3.3. Admission to the thesis:**

The dissertation module can only be started, when all taught modules of the Degree have been successfully completed.

Before starting the thesis, students will have to present a research proposal of a maximum of 1,000 words (or as indicated in the Research Methods Module Outline), in which they explain:

- The topic of their thesis
- The relevance of the topic with regard to the pathway of studies
- The methodology of research (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed method research, case study, empirical study, etc.)
- An abstract of the thesis including a maximum of six (6) key words, not longer than 600 words.

In addition to the approval by faculty of the student's study centre, each research proposal will be moderated and additionally approved by a member of the academic staff of UNIES.

## **6.4. Structure, Process and Assessment of the Thesis:**

The assessment of the thesis is based on:

- Relevance and appropriateness of the discussion and the research findings
- Academic depth
- A justifiable methodology
- Consistency of the argumentation
- Practice-orientation and scientific value for the selected field of knowledge
- Adoption of relevant literature, such as peer-reviewed accepted and published research papers, academic conference proceedings, book publications, trusted statistics and other academically acceptable publications
- Defensible data and conclusions drawn from these
- Narrative, style and structure of the dissertation

### 6.4.1. Structure of the Thesis

Each submission has to fulfil specific formal criteria. These are:

- The thesis has to be submitted either electronically or printed in a bound form (2 copies)
- Submission has to be made latest on the due day by 18:00 hours local time of the student
- The dissertation must present on the title page
  - The thesis title
  - Full name of the author
  - Student number
  - Name of Degree
  - Date of submission
  - Name of the supervisor
- On the following page the declaration of honour has to be presented, in which the student confirms that the submitted thesis is their own work and that all citations, external graphics, reports, and all other third party work used is fully referenced.
- On page 3 a table of content has to be presented (incl. appendices), followed by the index of graphics, the index of tables, the index of abbreviations.
- At the end of the dissertation the full list of references is presented; the reference style is Harvard.
- Allowed fonts are Arial, Times New Roman or Garamond at 11.0 or 12.0 size, 1.5 space.
- Graphics and tables have to be numbered and to present a headline in bold, 10.0 size.
  - Headlines for tables are above these
  - Headlines for graphics are underneath these
- Each page has to provide margins of 2.5 cm on all four sides.

### 6.4.2. Supervision

An individual supervisor will be allocated to each student based on the supervisor's expertise in the chosen subject area of the thesis.

It is the task of the student to request supervision sessions and to arrange these with the allocated supervisor. The supervisor will not unnecessarily delay the request for supervision and will provide guidance for the student as facilitator for his/her independent research. However students should note that a supervisor's task is to provide guidance only. A supervisor can and will not interfere in the independent nature of a thesis. This also means that a supervisor's support is not unlimited, which counts for supervision time, too. The supervision process must be reasonable.

Supervision sessions can be personal, by Skype, email, chat forums or other means on which supervisor and student mutually agree.

### 6.4.3. Duration of the Marking Process

The thesis will be marked within six weeks after submission. Holidays and public or bank holidays do not count to this period and may extend the period of marking. Following this a second marker will

assess the dissertation independently. Should both markers differ in their evaluation and are not able to moderate their different assessment, third marking will take place. The third marker's assessment will then be final.

Students, who are failing their thesis, will have one further attempt by writing a new thesis with a different topic. A failed thesis automatically counts as repetition of the dissertation module. The maximum mark available for retakes of the thesis is Pass at 50% (c.f. section 7.3.). Repetitions have to be started latest within twelve (12) weeks after the first attempt failed.

Should this retake fail again, the student will not be awarded with the Degree of the relevant Master's programme. As the dissertation can only be started, when all other modules of the course have been successfully completed, the student will then be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in his/her chosen pathway.

#### **6.4.4. Language of the Thesis**

Generally the language of the thesis is English. Students have the right to write either in US or British language. Alternatively, national languages of study centres may be accepted, as long as such other language can be controlled by UNIES. If possible, this will usually be assured by an external moderator, who is either a native speaking academic or one having proven excellent knowledge in the relevant language. The moderator is solely responsible to UNIES and not the respective centre of studies.

Not regarded which language is used for the thesis, the language standard must be on high level. Poor writing will affect the result of the thesis.

Students may seek help by a translator and/or native speaker, but must declare this support and specifically assure in writing that such assistance is exclusively based on language improvements and did not alter or add to the content and argumentation of the thesis.

#### **6.4.5. Complaints Procedure**

If a student feels unfairly treated, disadvantaged or not supervised according to this regulation, he/she has the right to complain to the Course Leader. (A comparable procedure applies to individual module assignments).

The Course Leader will contact the supervisor and discuss the issues raised. The intention is to achieve a moderation in which the student's concerns are intensively considered and discussed to achieve mutual understanding in the effort of a solution by consent.

Should the reasons of complaint be so serious that it will not be appropriate for the student to continue with the allocated supervisor, the Course Leader can allocate a different supervisor. The loss of time will then be compensated accordingly and the deadline for submission extended.

The decision of the Course Leader will carefully respect a student's rights and not act against these, but his/her decision is final.

#### **6.4.6. Unlawful Student Behaviour**

Other relevant regulations apply additionally as set out in the chapters before.

### **7. General Assessment Policies**

#### **7.1. Examination Board**

Based on semesters or trimesters and student progress an Examination Board takes place twice an academic year. The Examination Board moderates and approves students' progress and if necessary formulates recommendations for adjustments of marking. The Examination Board confirms also the award of the final Degree.

In particular the Board of Examiners will assess the marking of assignments with specific consideration of

- Appropriateness of marking
- Consistency of marking
- Timely marking (time for marking may vary according to national standards of teaching centres and/or general external marking by faculty of UNIES)
- Fair marking

Further task of the Examination Board is to deal with student complaints and other relevant issues occurring in the lecturing of modules. Questions on and about adaptation of module and/or courses and their outline may be discussed, too. The Board of Examiners will also deal with suspicious cases in which allegations of unallocated and/or not referenced work or plagiarism are made. This assessment follows the regulations as set out before.

The Examination Board consists of a minimum of three members of academic staff, who have taught in the relevant course(s), either of UNIES itself, or, if applicable, of the accredited local teaching centre. In the latter case UNIES is represented at least by one academic as the moderating Chair.

All proceedings of the Examination Board are noted in written form accordingly and disseminated among all faculty related to the course(s) and the UNIES Board.

Students are herewith explicitly informed that all module and course results they are communicated before are provisional until the Examination Board's formal and official confirmation.

#### **7.2. Student Appeals**

Students may appeal against any decision of the Board of Examiners by production of new evidence or other submission for the consideration of the Board of Examiners.

Appeals shall be considered initially by the Chair. The Board of Examiners shall be reconvened, when there is substantial evidence justifying or suggesting the reconsideration of the decision made. All decisions of the Board of Examiners are subject to the appeals procedure.

A student has the right to appeal against a decision of the Board of Examiners, when:

- There has been a mistake or irregularity in the conduct of examinations or assessments, which may have affected the result;
- A student's achievement was adversely affected by illness or other factors, which they were unable to communicate or for valid reasons unwilling to divulge before the Board of Examiners made its decisions;
- A substantial administrative error occurred, or when any assessment was not conducted according to the binding regulations of a module or the course or when some other affecting irregularity has occurred;
- The Board of Examiners has recommended that he or she should be penalised for cheating or plagiarism. Here the student may appeal against the Board of Examiners conclusion, provided that the appeal is accompanied by sufficient new evidence.

Simple disagreement with the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners cannot constitute reasons for an appeal, unless wrong assessment of results for an individual piece of work or in making a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of award, based on marks, grades and other information relating to the candidate's performance, is subject to serious mistakes regarding applicable regulations and/or procedures.

If a student has evidence that there are reasons for an appeal, it is their responsibility to write to the Chair of the Board of Examiners not later than fourteen days after receiving confirmation of the Board's decision. The written request must:

- Specify the reasons on which the student is exercising his or her right of appeal;
- Include all information such as medical certificates or other documentary evidence which the student wishes to be considered in support of his or her appeal;
- Identify any person(s) considered by the student as having information pertinent to the appeal.

In receipt of the student's written request that the Board of Examiners reconsiders the decisions of the Board of Examiners, the Chair shall:

- Determine whether or not the reasons for appeal are permissible under the rights above. Where it is determined that there are no reasons for appeal, the Chair shall write to the student informing him or her that the appeal has been rejected;
- Convene a hearing of the Board of Examiners' Review Group, if an appeal is permissible and provide it with
  - The student's written request together with any supporting information;
  - A copy of the minutes of the relevant Board of Examiners;
  - A written statement from the Chair of the Board of Examiners;
  - Any written statement submitted by a person or persons identified by the student as having information pertinent to the appeal.

The appointed Review Group shall determine, whether or not it can proceed considering the case solely on the basis of the written submissions or whether or not it wishes to interview any or all of the parties involved.

The appointed Review Group will consider all of the evidence pertinent to the case and may recommend to the Board of Examiners that:

- The appeal should be rejected;
- The Board of Examiners shall be reconvened to reconsider its recommendation;
- The case is so serious that the Academic Board should annul the decision of the Board of Examiners by taking necessary action to come to a new decision;
- If there is evidence, which raises doubts about the competence of or the standards being applied by the Board of Examiners and that the Academic Board should authorise a full and proper investigation as a matter of urgency.

## 8. Grading Scheme

### 8.1. Marking Scheme

Grading can be based on theoretical discussion only, but in the case of applied sciences it can also respect pragmatism. I.e., depending on the assessment brief, practice-orientation of an assessment then is of equal acceptance and value, but does not mean that submitted work can be without significant theoretical components. I.e., all assessments must include sufficient theory and (except examinations) adopt sufficient literature of academic acceptability.

The literature has to be academically acknowledged meaning that public sources are not approved, unless specific research strategies (e.g. Grounded Theory) justify such use.

### 8.2. Grading Policies

Within the taught modules and the thesis a consistent policy of assessment takes place. Grading policies are for all forms of assessment consistent.

The possible range of grades consists of:

- |             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ >91%      | High Distinction            |
| ▪ 81 to 90% | Distinction                 |
| ▪ 71 to 80% | Merit                       |
| ▪ 61 to 70% | Pass with Satisfaction      |
| ▪ 50 to 60% | Pass                        |
| ▪ <50%      | Fail = Retake of assessment |

Students, who have failed an assessment and/or module, are admitted to one retake. The maximum mark awarded to retakes is a Pass at 50%.

To achieve consistent marking and as an implemented and proven control of quality all examination papers are subject to the moderating approval of the Examination Board as outlined here before. This process guarantees that students will find an impartial, equal and fair marking process.

### **8.2.1. High Distinction**

This class is exclusively reserved for submitted work excelling in all marking criteria. All elements making the assessment must be fully met and the student has to demonstrate scientific certainty and knowledge exceeding that of others.

Theoretical concepts, frameworks and theory must be consistently applied and thoroughly support an own argumentation and conclusions being logic, critically and presented with superior depth using profound constructs, which are based on empirically valid and reliable data. Methodology and the analysis of the existing body of knowledge have to be of highest relevance, actuality and appropriateness. Own theoretical developments and suggestions will significantly contribute to this achievement.

In addition, language structure and consistency of the work are expected to be at highest level and meet standards being equal to publication. The further criteria of the distinction class apply as well.

### **8.2.2. Distinction**

Work of best quality, which incorporates and integrates both original or primary and secondary sources at a superior standard of presentation. The work meets the outline/research question as set to full extent.

A dense argumentation demonstrates an in-depth understanding, analysis and judgment of the central problematic involved. There is a high level of critical discussion balanced with reflected selection and structure of academic evidence, which is accompanied by a plausible and logic justification of the arguments adopted.

Excellent application of the relevant theoretical body is evident and leads to stringent conclusions. There is substantial evidence and depth of wider reading, which is accurately referenced following the Harvard Referencing Style. The intellectual argumentation is outstanding, significant and applies rigorous and contrasting discussion, which is critically evaluated, applied and, where relevant, adapted and considered in the wider context of relevant organisational or theoretical environments.

Detailed, realistic conclusions and recommendations are thoroughly thought through in line with the analysis.

### **8.2.3. Merit**

A very good response to the assignment outline/research question, which is well structured and presents incorporated relevant information.

The work discusses the brief/research question as set in full detail and at a level of high quality. In-depth understanding of influencing issues and evidence of wide reading, which is accurately referenced following the Harvard Referencing Style, has to be consistent and relevant.

Extensive critical coverage with confident and well-balanced selection and organisation of material exists. A contrasting and critical discussion takes place to a good extent and relevant theory and appropriate frameworks are addressed and outcome-oriented structured.

#### **8.2.4. Pass with Satisfaction**

Argumentation and discussion are logical and academically solid to a satisfactory extent. The submitted work correctly addresses a majority of key issues. However, these may not be sufficiently explored and/or linked with each other to provide a full demonstration of the issue to be analysed and critically discussed.

The assessment outline/research question has been applied, despite that some sections might not be fully considered for the constitution of a comprehensive answer in academic understanding. The application of academic underpinning and the application of theoretical and/or – when applicable - practice-oriented material may nevertheless be limited or provides only partial consideration of the essential analysis.

The evaluation and assessment of the issue is satisfying, but may be mainly descriptive, instead of being of interpretative or explanatory nature. The work demonstrates limited evidence of wide reading and/or literature, which is academically not solid or outdated. Concepts and argumentation are referenced in an adequate referencing style, although some of the detail might not be fully correct.

The work may also need in some parts of the argumentation further argumentation and evaluation of essential factors, which are not fully explored or the work is missing a necessary broader perspective and consideration of constituting elements.

#### **8.2.5. Pass**

The answer is acceptable and correctly addresses those issues being part of the assessment, but may not consider all of these. In addition/or, these may not be sufficiently elaborated and/or explored to provide a wider demonstration of knowledge on the issue to be discussed.

The brief/research question has been applied, despite that a number of factors might not be fully considered to constitute a comprehensive answer. The application of academic underpinning and the application of theoretical and or practice-oriented material may be limited or provides only limited consideration of the issues.

The analysis is generally acceptable, but may be overly descriptive, lacks critical analysis and demonstrates limited evidence of wider reading. Consistency of argumentation, criticality and depth will need further improvement. The bibliographic elements and use of underpinning literature may not be fully correct.

The submitted work identifies and applies theoretical frameworks but utilisation and critique remains restricted. Conclusions and recommendations generally follow the brief, but lack depth and/or detail.

The use of theory and/or empirical data is limited and/or conclusive argumentation may not be fully explored.

#### **8.2.6. Fail**

The work contains errors, omissions or has poorly developed argumentation and/or the discussion remains fundamental. The assessment brief is not met to a sufficient extent, either as a whole or in significant parts.

The submission lacks an adequate theoretical and/or conceptual base thereby failing to identify essential key issues and may demonstrate a misunderstanding of the brief. The structure is not consistent or lacks significant elements.

The student's own lack of understanding may be evident. Arguments are not consistently developed and/or chapters or paragraphs may not be adequately connected and explained. Assumptions may prevail instead of evidence-based argumentation. There is no sufficient evidence of wider reading. Sources used are inappropriate or are poorly referenced.

The paper contains a number of unsupported observations and fails to reach informed conclusions and recommendations. The quality of the form of expression is such that meaning is impaired in places.

### **8.3. Final Remark**

To achieve consistent marking and as an implemented and proven control of quality all assessments are subject to the moderating approval of an Examination Board. This procedure assures that students will find an impartial, equal and fair marking process according to regulations and academic standards.

### **8.4. Degree Awards**

#### **8.4.1. Master's Degree**

The final grade of each Master's Degree is based on the numeric average of all modules and the dissertation.

Degree levels are:

- Master's Degree with High Distinction – for an average mark out of all modules >90
- Master's Degree with Distinction – for an average mark out of all modules >80
- Master's Degree with Merits – for an average mark out of all modules >70
- Master's Degree with Satisfaction – for an average mark out of all modules >60
- Master's Degree – for an average mark out of all modules between 50 and 59

### 8.4.2. Testimony of Postgraduate Studies

Those students, who may wish to terminate their studies before completion of their full studies can obtain Postgraduate testimonies for their achievements:

- Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert): After successful completion of 1/3 of all taught modules, 30 ECTS credits
- Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip): After successful completion of 2/3 of all taught modules, 60 ECTS credits

These documents are valid certifications, which may be used for completion of a Master's Degree at a later date. Time limitations of validity officially formulated for ECTS credits apply.

Students having failed a module twice and are therefore excluded from further studies can obtain the same Certificates, provided that their previously awarded amount of credits is sufficient.

### 8.5. Grades and Transcripts

Official Transcripts and Degree Certificates will be issued directly and only by the UNIES as the Degree Awarding Institutions.

For UNIES programmes of Studies no external teaching centre has the right to award Degrees and/or Transcripts on its own or on behalf of UNIES.

Any requests for transcripts have to be made through the local teaching centre.

## 9. Final Remark

This Student Handbook replaces all previous versions and is the only valid regulation of and for Postgraduate studies with the UNIES.

Alterations and adaptations may be made without prior notice. Information about these will be published on the international website of UNIES.

Students actually studying a programme will not be disadvantaged by implemented changes.



UNIES | Campus Netherlands  
Heyendallaan 64  
6464 EP Kerkrade  
The Netherlands

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