

MASTER'S PROJECT
Prospectus
MSc in Education and Child Studies

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AND CHILD STUDIES
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES
LEIDEN UNIVERSITY**

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FOREWORD

This Prospectus integrates all the relevant information about the capstone of the MSc in Education and Child Studies: the Master's project. We hope this document will guide you on the way to a successful conclusion of your MSc in Education and Child Studies.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Master's project is the capstone of the Master's programme, and its end product is the Master's thesis: a document reporting on the entire research process. The Master's project integrates all the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (*competences*) you have learned during the study programme. It is also the largest project within the study programme and gives you the opportunity to practise all kinds of skills that will be useful when you are working in the professional field. The Master's project is therefore not only a conclusion of your study programme, but also a preparation for your future after graduating.

The general rules for writing and grading the thesis are listed in the [Course and Examination Regulations](#) (OER) of the Master's programme. The OER are available in the [e-prospectus](#) for the Master's programme and on the website of the Board of Examiners for Education and Child Studies. This Prospectus will assist you in accomplishing your Master's project.

1.1 Objectives of the Master's project

The general learning objective of the Master's project is:

To enable students to gain experience with scientific research practice, going through every stage of the empirical cycle. During the Master's project, students conduct research on a theme related to one of the specialisations within the Master's programme. Students formulate a research question, conduct a literature study, reflect on the methodological, ethical and practical implications of their research project, collect and analyse data relating to the research question, draw conclusions and record these steps in a research report.

The Master's project gives you the opportunity to use the competences you have acquired during the study programme: critically reflecting on questions relating to education or child studies and on methodological issues; considering and applying ethical guidelines; formulating a consistent argument; identifying key issues and side issues; and clearly presenting the findings. It may sometimes also be necessary to acquire new knowledge, such as theoretical knowledge about a specific intervention. The project will certainly be a test of your resilience, ability to tolerate frustration and planning skills. You will use and further build on the scientific attitude you have developed up to now. In short: the Master's project is the integration phase of the programme.

All the learning outcomes of the MSc in Education and Child Studies (see [Course and Examination Regulations](#)) are applicable for the Master's project.

2 PHASES OF THE MASTER'S PROJECT

The Master's project covers 20 EC, which means that it involves a relatively large time investment (560 hours). Roughly half of that time will consist of practical research activities (e.g. data collection, data processing, coding), and the other half of writing your thesis. The exact division of practical and writing activities will vary across projects, depending on the nature of the project and the phase the research is in at the moment you enroll. You should expect to work on your Master's project for at least 20 hours a week. The actual time investment may vary from week to week, and you will sometimes have to be available at irregular hours. You should consider this when planning other activities, such as an internship or part-time job.

At the start of the project, you will agree on the time schedule and organisation of the entire research project with your supervisor. This will be formalized in a contract (see Appendix 4.1). You are personally responsible for executing the project on schedule, so you should make sure that your time schedule is realistic and feasible for yourself and your supervisor. The Master's project (including the thesis) must be finished within a year after the contract is signed. A sample time schedule is given in Appendix 4.2.

You are not required to buy any books for your Master's project, but you should bear in mind that you may have to incur other expenses, such as the cost of printing articles or letters, travel expenses and costs relating to recruiting participants (telephone costs).

The Master's project comprises three different phases: the preparation phase, the execution phase and the completion phase. There are several steps that must be taken within each phase (see Figure 1). This Prospectus explains the phases and steps of the Master's project in more detail.



Figure 1: The phases and steps within the Master's project

2.1 Phase 1: Preparation

2.1.1 Topic

For their Master's project, students generally participate in **research within the Institute of Education and Child Studies** in one of the following areas: Parenting and Child Development, Educational Science, Applied Neuroscience in Human Development, Digital Media in Human Development and Learning Problems and Impairments (international track). In September and February an announcement will be made via Brightspace about the research studies in which students can participate for their Master's project, including the number of places available in each research study. In reaction, you must submit (via *uSis*) a Top 3 of your preferences for projects offered for your specialisation. Students will be assigned to the projects on the basis of their stated preferences; we will try to match students' preferences as closely as possible to the projects, but we cannot guarantee that everyone will be assigned to their favourite project. From the moment you are accepted for a project, you have an obligation to your supervisor, the research study and your fellow students: your research group and supervisor will be relying on you to show commitment to conducting the research, and supervision capacity will be reserved for you.

You can also choose to conduct an **individual research project**, where you do not participate in a research study within the Institute of Education and Child Studies but rather, for example, in an institution in the professional field. If you choose this option, you should be aware that you are taking on a greater responsibility for conducting and organising the research. You will have to ensure that your chosen topic is sufficiently related to research within the Institute of Education and Child Studies. There are also two conditions that you must satisfy before starting your research project: 1) Approval by the Board of Examiners, who will determine whether the proposed research project fulfils the study programme's learning outcomes. You must submit your research project to the Board of Examiners yourself. After approval has been given, the Master's project coordinator will find a suitable supervisor for your project; 2) Ethical approval (see section 2.1.2). In the event that your research project is not accepted by a member of teaching staff, the Board of Examiners, or the Ethics Review Board, you will probably have to wait until the next round of applications (in February or September) to start another project.

2.1.2 Ethical guidelines and professional conduct

Every research study that is conducted in the Institute of Education and Child Studies – including research in the context of Master's projects – must have the *advance* approval of an ethics review board. The Method section of your thesis, just like all scientific articles, must explicitly state that the research received ethical approval, together with the name of the relevant ethics review board and file number (in most cases, you can ask your supervisor for this number).

If you participate in ongoing research within the Institute for your project, you can assume that this research has already been checked by the Ethics Review Board for Education and Child Studies (ECPW); in that case, all you have to do yourself is ask your supervisor for the file number under which the approval was given. If you wish to participate in research by an institution in the professional field, it is your own responsibility to check whether this research has been approved by an ethics review board. You must then give proof of approval to your supervisor, before starting your Master's project. If you wish to conduct research that has not yet been ethically reviewed, you and your supervisor must together submit the research proposal to the Ethics Review Board for Education and Child Studies; your supervisor is then the main applicant. You may not start to conduct your research until ethical approval has been given. You should be aware that ethical review takes time and you may have to make changes in your research proposal, or your proposal may even be rejected. Designing a research project yourself therefore demands more time and effort, and involves more risks, than joining in with an existing research study (which already has ethical approval).

While conducting your research, you will naturally need to behave professionally in accordance with the professional code of the Association of Educationalists in the Netherlands (NVO) and the ethical guidelines that were discussed during the study programme. To ensure that you are fully aware of these guidelines, when you sign the contract you must also sign the *Student declaration research ethics*, that you can find [here](#). Take time to read this statement carefully and be aware that signing this statement means that you fully comply with it. If you are found to have acted unprofessionally or to have violated the ethical guidelines during the project, the Board of Examiners will be informed, and they will decide on the consequences.

2.1.3 Supervision

Who will supervise you?	<p>Your Master's project consists partly of practical research activities and partly of writing your thesis. In many cases you will be participating in a research study within the Institute, so the supervisor of your research activities will automatically be a teaching staff member who is involved with this research. This teacher will also often be your thesis supervisor. However, because some research studies involve many students, it is sometimes not possible for the researchers to supervise all these students in writing their thesis. In that case, a thesis supervisor will be appointed outside of the research study. If you have any questions about the subject matter of your project, you will naturally always be allowed to ask the researchers themselves. It is possible for individuals from outside the University to supervise your practical research (and other) activities, but they cannot act as your thesis supervisor.</p>
What does your thesis supervisor do?	<p>The thesis supervisor provides support with writing your thesis. You can tell her/him what support you need most. The thesis supervisor will in any case offer support with formulating your research question and writing your research proposal and your thesis. The supervision will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular meetings in person or by phone (oral discussion). The number of meetings required will be different for each student, but we recommend about once a month (assume a maximum of around 10 meetings); ✓ Feedback on written documents. In principle, your supervisor will give feedback <i>twice</i> on each section of your thesis (research proposal, Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion). Each supervisor will have their own personal feedback style; some supervisors give more detailed feedback, others give more general feedback, while yet others are more inclined to ask questions. You are naturally permitted to ask for an explanation of the feedback; ✓ Support with communication (e.g., with researchers, participants, ethics review board or people working in the professional field; this depends on the design of your project); ✓ Pointing you towards useful resources; ✓ Explaining the assessment criteria. The grading form (see Appendix 4.5) is used as the basic principle for the supervision. Even while you are still working on the project, you can ask your supervisor about the best way to meet the criteria; ✓ Holding a final meeting, focusing on your strengths and points for development; ✓ Support during graduation; for example, in preparing your final presentation. <p>You should be aware that the supervision you can request is not unlimited; a thesis supervisor has a total of 28 hours available for all of the above activities.</p>

What is expected of you?

To ensure that the thesis process runs as smoothly as possible, you are expected to show active commitment. You will have to organise the thesis process yourself and you are personally responsible for your final product. The purpose of writing a thesis is not only to bring together the skills and knowledge that you learned during the study programme, but also to prepare you for work as a professional. Your supervisor will therefore expect the following input from you:

- ✓ Formulating a relevant, researchable question, in line with both the research study in which you will be participating and your own interests.
- ✓ Making clear agreements in the very first meeting. Effective agreements and communication about expectations are essential. The supervisor accepts the obligation to supervise you, and you accept the obligation to **receive** supervision. This includes the obligation to make efforts for the research study to which you will contribute. You must in any case make agreements about: which documents, data or products you will deliver, and when; the time period in which you can expect to receive a response or feedback; and the way in which contact will take place. The most important agreements between you and your supervisor are set down in a contract (see Appendix 4.1).
- ✓ Producing a time schedule that is realistic and feasible both for yourself and for your supervisor. You must therefore make clear agreements with your supervisor about your time schedule. If you start to fall behind schedule, you must take the initiative to discuss this with your supervisor. You should be aware that there will be periods in the year when your supervisor is temporarily unavailable, such as around Christmas and in the summer, and you should anticipate this. Bear in mind that you will have to fit in with your supervisor's diary, and not the other way around!
- ✓ Taking the initiative to schedule meetings. The number of meetings required will be different for each student, but we recommend about once a month (assume a maximum of around ten meetings).
- ✓ Making constructive use of feedback. This means that you take the feedback seriously, try to take account of every comment, and ask for clarification where necessary. In principle, you will receive feedback twice on each section of your thesis. If you need more feedback than usual, your supervisor will discuss this with you. The way you deal with feedback will be included in the assessment. You should be aware that your thesis must remain your own work.
- ✓ Communicating in a professional manner, not only with your supervisor but also, where relevant, with researchers, participants, people working in the professional field, etc.
- ✓ Making sensible use of resources, such as literature, research instruments, SPSS, and books that you studied previously (e.g., for research methods and statistics courses).
- ✓ Working towards the assessment criteria (see the grading form in Appendix 4.5). You can already discuss these criteria with your supervisor even while you are still writing the thesis.
- ✓ Professional conduct; that is, complying with ethical guidelines, the professional code of the Association of Educationalists in the Netherlands (NVO) and agreements you have made with your supervisor, researchers and participants. In short, to enable your supervisor to support you, it is your responsibility to give your supervisor a clear (and truthful!) picture of your efforts, to send her/him the interim products for feedback, and to ask her/him for advice on any dilemmas that arise.

2.1.4 Research proposal

Executing a Master's project is a challenging task. Good preparation forms the basis for a good Master's project and can prevent problems with time pressure, research questions and statistics. This is why all Master's students are required to write a research proposal for their thesis. The research proposal is a way to provide both yourself and your supervisor with insight into your research process and your time schedule. This is important, because the Master's project **must be completed within one year**.

In Appendix 4.3, you will find the format for the research proposal. You will write this proposal preferably within two months after the start of your Master's project. Your thesis supervisor will support you at this. They will provide you with one round of feedback, after which you can rewrite your proposal. The second version of the proposal is assessed by both your supervisor and an independent second assessor. The second assessor's opinion is important here, because she/he will also grade the thesis that you ultimately produce.

If one or both of your assessors do not approve of your proposal, you will get a *no go* advice. This means that you cannot go ahead with your proposal in its current form. You will get a second round of feedback based on which you can rewrite the proposal again. If your assessors still do not approve of the revised version, you will have to come up with a new research question within the same research project. For instance, you could choose different variables, or a simpler design. Your new proposal runs through the same phases as your original proposal. In the very unlikely situation that you still get a final *no go* advice, you will have to discontinue your Master's project. You can then contact the Director of Studies, who will support you in the next steps (e.g., finding a new project).

If both assessors agree that your proposal is relevant, attainable, and well-designed, you will get a *go* advice. This means that you can go ahead with your thesis. Often, this is also the moment when you get your dataset.

2.2 Phase 2: Research

Executing the research project is the second phase of the Master's project.

2.2.1 Collecting and processing data

Different research projects require different types of data: interviews, questionnaire scores, test scores, etc. When collecting your data, you must ensure that your actions are verifiable and comply with the ethical guidelines that you learned during your studies, such as the professional code of the Association of Educationalists in the Netherlands (NVO), the ethics code of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the protocol of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FSW). The most important points are that you show professional conduct in relation to participants in your research, and that you respect their privacy. Also, your communication with researchers should be respectful, you should show initiative, have an active attitude, and keep your appointments. Please remember to sign the *Student declaration research ethics* that you can find [here](#).

Your **professional conduct** will be assessed in the *Process* category of the assessment form (see Appendix 4.5). When you have done approximately half of your research activities, you will get an interim evaluation with your day-to-day supervisor. Your supervisor will give you feedback on your conduct; if your assessment is insufficient, you will get the opportunity to improve your conduct based on this feedback. You can view this opportunity as the “resit” for your professional conduct. Failing to improve your conduct will mean that you get an “insufficient” on the *Process* category of your thesis assessment form (which highly increases the probability of an insufficient final grade). To prevent this from happening, regularly ask for feedback on your conduct from your supervisor and be aware of opportunities for development.

2.2.2 Analysing data

Research data can be analysed in different ways, and this naturally depends on the research design, the main questions and sub-questions, and the measuring instruments used. The Master's course Conducting and Evaluating Empirical Research was intended to prepare you for the data analysis that you will perform during your Master's project. Therefore, you should use the resources provided to you in either of these courses as support. For the data exploration, Data Inspection for Students is a useful document, while Regression for Students gives guidelines for performing a multiple regression analysis.

2.2.3 Writing the report

The thesis is the final report of your Master's project. In principle, you should use the structure of scientific articles for your thesis. Appendix 4.4 gives the format for the thesis, as well as tips on how to approach the various sections.

2.3 Phase 3: Completion

2.3.1 Presentation

You will present the results of your Master's project in a symposium for other students of the various specialisations of the MSc in Education and Child Studies, teaching staff, and guests. The discussion that follows the presentation can be very useful for writing the Discussion section of your thesis. You should therefore try to plan your presentation just after you have written a draft version of your Discussion. Be sure to discuss the planning of your presentation with your supervisor, as you can only be scheduled after your supervisor has signed a registration form. This form, the dates of the presentations and the deadlines for registration can be found [here](#), on the Education and Child Studies website. Giving a presentation is a requirement for graduation. Your presentation will be graded as pass or fail by the symposium chair. If your presentation is graded as insufficient, you should contact your supervisor to discuss a retake.

2.3.2 Layout

The final report of the Master's project (the thesis) must be no more than 30 A4 pages in length (excluding appendices) with 1.5 line spacing and 11 points font size. International students and Research Master's students will always write their thesis entirely in English. The thesis is structured in line with the standard list of contents according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (latest edition). Please check the most recent guidelines on <https://apastyle.apa.org/>. You must submit your thesis to your supervisor for assessment, and you should ask them whether a printed version is required in addition to the digital version.

Points that warrant extra attention, before you definitively submit your thesis:

- ✓ Does the title page contain all the important information (title, subtitle, student's name, student number, specialisation / differentiation, supervisors, and date)?
- ✓ Check the Contents: are the titles, chapter numbers and page numbers correct?
- ✓ Are indents and blank lines used consistently?
- ✓ Are abbreviations explained and used consistently?
- ✓ Is the text free of clumsy sentences and spelling errors?
- ✓ Are all the references cited in the text included in the References section, and vice versa?
- ✓ Is everything compliant with the APA guidelines?
- ✓ Do all tables fit on the page?
- ✓ Are all tables and figures numbered correctly, and are they correctly referred to?

2.3.3 Assessment

Your thesis will be graded by two independent assessors, based on the criteria in the grading form (Appendix 4.5). The first assessor is always your thesis supervisor, because they will be able to assess both your thesis and the process that led to its production. Your second assessor is involved with your thesis process at two points: 1) approving your proposal and 2) assessing the final thesis. This second assessor will be a member of teaching staff who has sufficient understanding of the subject matter of your thesis, but who was not involved in the thesis process. The assessment procedure is as follows:

1. You discuss with your thesis supervisor when you will submit the first complete version of your thesis. You will receive feedback on the complete version just once. You must incorporate this feedback when writing the definitive version, which you submit for assessment.
2. Your supervisor checks your thesis for plagiarism with Turnitin. You cannot do this yourself. If plagiarism is suspected, the Fraud Protocol will come into effect. This Protocol can be found in the Rules and Regulations of the [Board of Examiners](#).
3. When it has been established that the thesis is unique work, the definitive version of your thesis will be assessed independently by both assessors, based on the grading form in Appendix 4.5. An exception to this is Criterion 6: Process, which is only assessed by the first assessor (your thesis supervisor).
4. The two assessors each independently fill in a grading form. The first assessor proposes a grade, the second proposes a one-point wide range (e.g., 6.0 – 7.0). The grades are automatically compared:
 - a. If the grade proposed by the first assessor falls within the range proposed by the second, the first assessor determines the final grade.
 - b. If the grade proposed by the first assessor falls outside of the range proposed by the second, the two assessors discuss their views to arrive at a balanced final grade.
 - c. If the assessors are unable to reach agreement, the Board of Examiners will appoint an independent third assessor, who again proposes a range for the grade. If the grade proposed by the first assessor falls within this range, the first assessor will assign this grade. If the grade of the first assessor falls outside of this range, but the ranges proposed by third and second assessor overlap, then the first assessor needs to move the grade within these ranges. In the very unlikely situation that there is no overlap between the first, second, and third assessor, the Board of Examiners will make the final decision.
5. Your supervisor will inform you of the outcome of the assessment.
 - a. If the grade is a pass, your supervisor will plan a final meeting to explain your grade based on the final grading form. Also, there will be room for a two-way evaluation of the thesis process.
 - b. If the grade is insufficient, you will have one opportunity to retake the thesis. In that case, you must rewrite your thesis based on the feedback from the two assessors. This feedback will relate to the most important points for improvement that prevent you from passing. The revised version will be resubmitted to both assessors. Your supervisor will explain your grade during the final meeting. If the final grade is still insufficient, you will not be able to complete your Master's project. In that case, you can discuss with the study adviser what the most appropriate next steps will be.
 - c. If you do not agree with your grade or the way it has been determined, you can file a complaint with the Board of Examiners.

2.3.4 Digital evaluation form

As you know, all parts of the programme in the Institute of Education and Child Studies are evaluated, and the Master's project is no exception. You give your evaluation by completing a digital evaluation form, which is available in the Brightspace module *Masterproject*.

Before your supervisor gives you the definitive grade for your Master's project, they will ask you to fill in this form (anonymously). Please save and print the last screen that you see when filling in the digital evaluation form, using the Print Screen function, and give the printout to your supervisor. They will then know that you have filled in the evaluation form (but not *what* you filled in). The content of your evaluation will only be communicated to your supervisor when enough forms have been collected to guarantee students' anonymity. Your supervisor will be able to benefit from your evaluation in the future.

2.3.5 Publishing and copyright

Please note that you can only publish your research results after consulting your thesis supervisor and obtaining their permission. After all, they have control over what happens to the results, because they are the leader of the research study in which you executed your Master's project. If your Master's project was part of an ongoing research study, then the primary researcher is the owner of the collected data. This means that you are not permitted to store any of the data, conduct further research with them, or publish any results based on these data without first obtaining the owner's permission.

2.3.6 Graduation

If the Master's project is the last component of your Master's programme, you can apply for your Master's examination. The Master's examination is the check carried out by the Board of Examiners to verify whether you meet all the conditions for obtaining the Master's diploma. Do not forget to fill out the Master's project evaluation form (which you can find on the Brightspace module *Masterproject*).

2.3.7 Thesis Repository

The Thesis Repository is a digital database of Leiden University's libraries, which stores the theses of graduates. Students of the MSc in Education and Child Studies and the Research MSc in Developmental Psychopathology in Education and Child Studies are required to upload their thesis to the Thesis Repository as a condition for graduating. Your application for the Master's examination will only be approved after the **definitive** version of your thesis, graded as a pass, has been included in the Thesis Repository.

You can upload the definitive version of your thesis in the repository yourself, using the Vireo-app. You can read how this works in this brief manual:



Manual_student_repository.pdf

In most cases, Master's theses are part of ongoing research and it is not desirable to publish research results ahead of the the researcher's own publications. All theses are therefore included in the Thesis Repository *under embargo*. Make sure you check the right box in Vireo to place your thesis under embargo. In addition, be careful to upload **exactly the same version** as was graded by your supervisor.

You can find general information about the Thesis Repository on the University Library website.

3 THESIS STRESS

3.1 What to do if you 'get stuck'

Some phases of your Master's project will run smoothly, but there may also be times when you are unsure of what to do next. At times like these, you should not wait too long. There are many ways in which you can obtain support. If you feel that you are running into problems, you should actively seek help; this can reduce stress and the risk of falling behind schedule. You should be aware, however, that you are still in charge of your own process; the sources of assistance will support you, but will not take over any responsibility. The table below shows the best person to contact at each point in the process.

Phase	Difficulty with...	Sources of assistance
Preparation	Choice of Master's project	Study adviser; Brightspace; Education and Child Studies website
	Literature search	Supervisor; Library; study materials
	Producing a time schedule	Supervisor; study adviser
	Writing a research proposal	Supervisor; thesis writing workshop
	Supervisor	Study adviser
	Motivation/doubts	Study adviser/psychological counsellors
Execution	Data collection	Supervisor; study materials
	Data analysis	Supervisor; Master Thesis Lab; study materials
	Time management and planning	Supervisor; study adviser
	Motivation	Supervisor; study adviser; psychological counsellor (graduation group); fellow students
Completion	Writing the report	Supervisor; website of the psychological counsellors (writing tips); Library (references); study materials
	Presentation	Supervisor; study materials
	Publication	Supervisor
	Thesis Repository	Thesis Repository website (see: Library); Student Services Centre
	Master's examination	Student Services Centre

3.1.1 Thesis supervisor

Your thesis supervisor is the first person to contact if you have any questions. Your supervisor will help you not only with questions relating to the content of your thesis, but also with questions about literature, planning, data collection, data analysis, etc. It is important that you also make efforts to engage in open communication with your supervisor and are open to her/his suggestions and tips.

3.1.2 Study materials

Look through the textbooks, readers, lecture slides and notes from your studies. Look for the topics that you found interesting as a source of inspiration for your thesis (both in terms of content and research methods). Do not make indiscriminate use of *Google*. Even though searching on the internet can often yield useful information, internet sources will usually lack (didactical) structure and context. Your study materials were specifically designed or selected for your learning purposes and should therefore be your first frame of reference. Although it may not seem like it at first sight, it can save you a great deal of time!

The Master's course Conducting and Evaluating Empirical Research (international) was intended as preparation for your Master's thesis. Look carefully at the materials from either of these courses, and especially use the Data Inspection for Students and Regression for Students documents as your basis. These documents will serve as guidelines for designing and conducting your analyses.

You should also look again at your notes, books, readers and lecture slides from all the courses in the area of research methods and statistics that you took during your studies (e.g., courses on research methods, SPSS, bachelor's project). Repeating a few exercises from your readers can sometimes be very helpful in regaining an understanding.

3.1.3 Study advisers

Study advisers can help you with problems and doubts that may arise during the Master's project. They can help you to think about the best way to tackle a problem, for example around supervision, planning or organisation. You can also contact them if you have more general study-related problems and questions. To make an appointment, send an email to: studieadviseurspedagogiek@fsw.leidenuniv.nl.

3.1.4 Master Thesis Lab

The Master Thesis Lab (MTL) in the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences provides information, tools and support in writing a thesis to all students in our faculty in any stage of their Master Thesis. In addition, it provides workspaces where you can work quietly on your thesis.

Master Thesis Lab Brightspace Module

The Thesis Lab [website](#) contains only basic practical information and a booking tool (see below). Detailed information and interaction is available through the Brightspace module, to facilitate flexibility and the use of modern tools for our services and centralized information to you. You can register for the Master Thesis Lab via uSis using the course code 6400MTLY_2223_HS. *Supervisor forms are not required (anymore)*. The module provides background information on topics such as writing, language, structuring your workload, structuring your thesis, literature support and statistical analysis. Solutions to questions posed are continuously collected in a FAQ section. You can interact through an online discussion board for questions pertaining to, for example, literature norms, APA changes,. Please email the lab when you experience problems with access or issue with booking individual consultations.

Individual support

The MTL provides different types of individual support. Statistical support is provided by experienced consultants, by appointment only. Consultation meetings can be requested through the online booking tool (see the MTL website and Brightspace). Thesis support related to language and to literature can be provided after formal referral through the MTL team. You can send requests through email for formal redirection to experts. Finally, any other individual questions and requests can be sent to the MTL email box.

Location

The Master Thesis office space is located on the 6th floor in room 6c.02. You can find the office by taking the blue elevators to 6th floor or by taking the stairs at the central hall on the 5th floor. The available desk spaces are (now) fully equipped to connect your own laptop to an external screen, keyboard and mouse (via USB-C, USB-A and HDMI). There are 3 high-performance desktop PCs with additional specialized software. Contact the MTL via email for access.

Contact

You can always contact the MTL directly through scriptieatelier@fsw.leidenuniv.nl, or through either Ralph Rippe (rrippe@fsw.leideuniv.nl) or the practical coordinator Gabrielle Luykx (luykx@fsw.leidenuniv.nl) for further questions.

3.1.5 Library

Several tutorials are available on the Library website on how to use the Library and the search options. Go to the Library website and then to: *Direct to > Need help?* You can find answers here to general questions about the Library, the catalogues, and on how to search for literature. You can also read about the courses offered by the Library for students who are writing their thesis, such as a course on EndNote. Under the heading Toolbox, there are various useful tutorials (digital courses) on using the Library, searching for literature and using the search engines.

In conjunction with the Master Thesis Lab, the Library offers workshops for students who are having difficulty finding the right literature. For more information, look on the Master Thesis Lab website. Of course, the Library is also a good place for working without disturbance.

Library website: www.library.universiteitleiden.nl

3.1.6 Psychological counsellors

The psychological counsellors are there to help Leiden University students if they have study-related or personal problems. You can speak to a psychological counsellor during open consulting hours, or you can make an appointment. The psychological counsellors offer a range of services especially for students who are writing their thesis, such as a thesis writing workshop. There is also a webpage with study tips, including tips on writing. It is also possible to take a workshop on study skills and study management, or a workshop on studying strategically. For information about workshops and training courses, open consulting hours and making an appointment, see the psychological counsellors' website.

Contact: Location: Plexus, Kaiserstraat 25, Leiden
Tel.: 071 527 80 26
Email: psychologen@sea.leidenuniv.nl

Website: <https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en/study--studying/guidance--advice/study-guidance-and-advisors/student-psychologist/social-and-behavioural-sciences/education-and-child-studies-msc?cd=education-and-child-studies-msc&cf=social-and-behavioural-sciences>

Study skills: <https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en/study--studying/guidance--advice/study-tips/study-skills/social-and-behavioural-sciences/education-and-child-studies-msc?cd=education-and-child-studies-msc&cf=social-and-behavioural-sciences>

Writing skills: <https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en/study--studying/guidance--advice/study-tips/writing-skills/social-and-behavioural-sciences/education-and-child-studies-msc?cd=education-and-child-studies-msc&cf=social-and-behavioural-sciences>

3.2 Pitfalls & tips

When you think of your thesis, you only see a big black hole; you have no idea where to start

- **Tip:** Think about which components of the study programme you found most interesting; this might give you a possible direction. You can also look in the Thesis Repository and read a few theses for inspiration (please note: you don't know whether a thesis was graded as 6 or 8, so maintain a critical view).
- **Tip:** The Institute of Education and Child Studies website gives information about all the staff members, and you can also read more here about the research they have done and interesting articles they have published.
- **Tip:** On the basis of the study materials and the thesis format, produce an overview of the headings you want to use in your thesis. This will give you a direction and stop you staring at a blank screen.

Study avoidance behaviour: Instagram suddenly has priority, you really have to clean your room RIGHT NOW or an outdoor cafe is much more appealing than the University Library

- **Tip:** Don't expect to be able to suddenly spend 8 hours a day, 7 days a week, working on your thesis. Instead, for example, work steadily until 4 PM and then do something else for a while. In short: make sure you have some variation.
- **Tip:** Produce a feasible time schedule and stick to it (however difficult that can sometimes be). If necessary, ask a housemate to occasionally check whether you're really doing your work.
- **Tip:** Find a quiet place to work, preferably with like-minded people. The Master Thesis Lab is a good place for this, but you can also choose the University Library or Plexus. You can all take a 15-minute break every two hours, and then go back to work.

Your supervisor is on holiday, just at the wrong moment, or is taking a long time about checking the documents you've submitted, so you are failing to meet your deadlines

- **Tip:** Always ensure that you make clear agreements with your supervisor about submitting your work and having it checked. Discuss in advance when your supervisor will have time to check your work and agree on a date during that period when you will submit it.
- **Tip:** Communicate! If you would like your supervisor to check something before a specific date, you should ask whether this will actually be possible for her/him. It is better to know in advance that it won't be possible and to adjust your time schedule accordingly, than to grumble in retrospect!

You break into a cold sweat when you think about data analysis or SPSS, and all you dream about is numbers.

- **Tip:** Right at the start, when you write your research proposal, set down a clearly specified research question, stating precisely which dependent and independent variables you are going to use and which statistical analysis is appropriate for them. Your data analysis will then just be a matter of going through the steps.
- **Tip:** Look again at your old lecture slides, books and materials from SPSS, research methods courses, the bachelor's project and Practice of Empirical Research/Conducting and Evaluating Empirical Research.
- **Tip:** Ask for help from your thesis supervisor or the Master Thesis Lab.

The participant you need to interview is ill, parents fail to turn up or children don't cooperate, so you overrun your schedule

- **Tip:** Always schedule plenty of time for collecting your data. Leave space in your time schedule for the (lots of!) extra time that will be needed for unforeseen circumstances.
- **Tip:** Adjust your communication to your participants, because you may not have been entirely clear about arrangements, or perhaps your language style is not appropriate for the target group.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 Contract for Master's project

Institute of Education and Child Studies
Leiden University
Wassenaarseweg 52
2333 AK Leiden

The participants named below hereby declare that they have entered into a contract for the Master's project under the following terms and conditions.

The institution:

Institute of Education and Child Studies,
represented by:
..... (researcher/supervisor)

and

The student:

..... (name and student number),
Master's programme in Education and Child Studies (Leiden University)

Article 1:

The student will start the Master's project on (date) and finish it on (date)/ before the end of the 20..-20.. academic year.

The student will acquire research skills and will write his/her Master's thesis within the '.....' project for approx. hours per week on specific days that are yet to be determined.

The institution must make it possible for the student's supervision to take place during his/her participation in the project activities.

Article 2:

The institution determines the periods of attendance and the length of these periods, subject to the legal regulations and the provisions of Article 1 of this contract.

Article 3:

During the Master's project, the student will engage in the following tasks and activities (a total of 20 EC = 560 hours):

.....	(approx. ... EC / ... hours)
.....	(approx. ... EC / ... hours)
.....	(approx. ... EC / ... hours)
writing the Master's thesis	(approx. ... EC / ... hours)

Article 4:

The institution will not reimburse any travel and/or subsistence expenses incurred in the context of the Master's project, unless permission has been given for this.

Article 5:

The institution will designate a supervisor, who will ensure that the student has good working conditions and will be responsible for supervision and grading of the Master's thesis. The institution will also designate a second, independent assessor, who will give an opinion about the thesis proposal and the end product (the thesis).

The day-to-day supervision will be undertaken by (name).

Article 6:

The interim and final evaluation will take place between the supervisor(s) and the student.

Article 7:

With regard to his/her activities, the student will comply with regulations given by or on behalf of the institution relating to orderly conduct, safety and behaviour. The student will also comply with the professional code of ethics and ethical guidelines. The student will only undertake a project after it has received ethical approval.

Article 8:

The student is obliged to keep confidential everything that has come to his/her attention while participating in the research activities.

The obligation referred to in the first paragraph does not apply in relation to those who share the responsibility for the participant's performance in the position, nor in relation to those whose cooperation can be considered essential to the participant's performance, if and insofar as they are themselves obliged or undertake to maintain confidentiality.

Article 9:

The student has no say whatsoever in policy decisions.

Article 10:

During the Master's project, the student is responsible for taking out his/her own insurance against personal liability and accidents.

Article 11:

Any work produced by the student in the context of the Master's project is the property of the institution in terms of copyright.

Article 12:

Termination of this contract, other than upon expiry of the agreed period, can only take place in consultation between the participants.

Drawn up in duplicate in Leiden.

Date:

The student:

The institution:

4.2 Basis for time schedule

This is just a basis for the time schedule of your thesis. It only offers guidelines and principles for producing your own time schedule. You must decide in consultation with your supervisor what time schedule will be best for your project. You should therefore always submit a more detailed, personalised time schedule with your thesis proposal. Remember to always allow sufficient time for feedback from your supervisor (assume that your supervisor will need two weeks) and plan your activities in such a way that you can work on the next part while waiting for feedback.

Timing	Date	Activity	Version	Feedback from supervisor
Sept-Dec		Orientation on project		
		Submit research proposal and References	1	
		Submit definitive version of research proposal	2	
Jan-March		Submit Introduction (incl. References)	1	
		Submit Method*	1	
		Submit Introduction	2	
		Submit Method	2	
		Submit Results	1	
April-June		Submit Discussion	1	
		Submit Results	2	
		Submit Discussion	2	
		Submit draft version (incl. English abstract)		
		Apply for presentation		
		Submit definitive version		
July		Assessment of Master's project		
		Retake (if grade is insufficient)		

* Depending on your supervisor's preference, on each occasion you can submit either the complete document up to that point (i.e., both Introduction *and* Method, for example), or separate sections. You should also ask your supervisor whether she/he would like to have a version with Track Changes or not. Make clear agreements about these points.

4.3 Format of research proposal

Below you will find a description of the different parts you need to address in your research proposal. Make sure your proposal is clear and to the point, and focuses mainly on the relevance of your project, and on your specific research questions and methods. Your proposal is short (just a few pages A4).

Research proposal	
1. Title	The title (or provisional title) of the thesis.
2. Student's details	Your name, e-mail, student number, Master's specialisation, academic year, number of EC.
3. Supervisor's details	The supervisor's name and e-mail.
4. Relevance	Write down in no more than 200 words why you will do this research. Why is the study relevant? Think of possible implications for the field, or a contribution to fundamental scientific knowledge. Support the relevance of your study with a maximum of three central sources from the literature.
5. Research question and hypotheses	Describe your research questions and hypotheses. These should be formulated so clearly that it is immediately evident how they can be investigated. Make clear what your dependent and independent variables are, and whether they are numerical or categorical.
6. Method	<p>Procedure: Specify the research design¹ that you will use to answer your research question. Give a short and general description of your research process: how will participants be recruited and what procedures will they go through?</p> <p>Ethical approval: Check (with your supervisor's assistance) how your research project has been ethically reviewed, and describe this briefly in your proposal, supported (if possible) by a file number.</p> <p>Target group: Here you should state what the target group of your research project is (e.g., age, region, type of school, specific characteristics). In most cases, you will only receive the data after your research proposal has been approved, so as yet you do not need to give a precise description of your research group here; this will be given later in your thesis, under the heading Sample.</p> <p>Measurement instruments: Name the instruments you will use to measure your variables.</p> <p>Data analysis/methods: Here you should particularly describe the data analysis that you will use directly to answer your research questions (e.g., <i>t</i>-test, ANOVA, regression, etc.). Ensure that your methods follow logically from your research question. N.B. The methods that you use for the data inspection do not need to be described here; however, you will have to describe them in your thesis.</p>

¹ For example: experimental design, descriptive research, relational research.

7. Time schedule (in weeks)	Produce a time schedule showing as specifically as possible what you are planning to do each week. You should make allowance for both your own diary (examination periods, etc.) and your supervisor's (e.g., peaks in the research schedule, holiday periods) and schedule enough time for feedback (allow at least two weeks for each section of your thesis; discuss this with your supervisor). Each section of your thesis will probably need to be rewritten a few times. Remember that the Master's project must take no more than one year. A general basis for a time schedule is given in Appendix 4.2.
9. Central sources	Present the sources you have used up to now, presented according to the APA guidelines (latest edition). There should be a maximum of three references.
10. Signature	<p>Both your supervisor and an independent second assessor will review your proposal. If both approve, you and your supervisor will sign the proposal.</p> <p>N.B. You must carefully read the mandatory <i>Student declaration research ethics</i> that you can find here. Make sure you clearly understand exactly what this statement entails (if you have any questions, you are always welcome to ask your supervisor) and then give a signed version to your supervisor. You should be aware that you are obliged to comply with this statement.</p>

4.4 Format of thesis

Below, the sections that must be included in all cases in your thesis are described. You should also ensure that the layout is neat, useful subheadings are used, the tables and figures are correct and easy to read, etc. Follow the APA guidelines for both references and style (e.g., check again in the APA Manual which sections must be written in the present tense and which in the past tense, and how you should report your results). The specific assessment criteria are presented in the grading form.

Section	Description
Front page	<p>Title: Make sure that your title is informative and covers the essence of your thesis. It is nice to choose a catchy title, as long as it remains reasonable. For example, you should not suggest that you are investigating a cause-effect relationship if your research design simply does not permit this.</p> <p>Information: At the bottom of the front page, add your name, student number, Master's specialisation / differentiation, supervisor, second assessor and date of submission.</p>
Foreword (optional)	Personal text, usually about the process of the Master's project.
Abstract	Maximum of 300 words in <i>English</i> , outlining the context of the research, the research question, the research design, the results and the most important conclusions.
Introduction	<p>Your introduction must be a smooth-flowing <i>argument</i>, in which you substantiate why your research is relevant, what is already known about the topic, and where uncertainties or controversies remain. When writing the Introduction, decide on a clear line of narrative and keep it short and to-the-point. Use only literature that is directly relevant for your topic, but also make sure that your narrative is balanced (e.g., do not select only studies that point in the direction of your hypothesis). The description of relevant literature should give a clear picture of the topic under investigation, and the main questions and sub-questions must follow logically.</p> <p>Textbooks are not always good references for a theoretical framework, because they often merely summarise what <i>other people</i> have found or said. You should therefore always look for the original sources. This also applies to references that you find in an article. Be careful not to copy any sentences verbatim (unless you use quotation marks and give the correct reference, see APA); this would be plagiarism.</p> <p><u>Tip:</u> Start by designing the line of your argument; do this by making subheadings. Under each subheading, write the main message(s) that you want to cover. You can then use this design as a "framework" in which to situate your literature. If you find it difficult to produce this design, submit a first version to your supervisor.</p> <p><u>Tip:</u> Check whether you have expressed a logical transition between all your subheadings. You are writing a narrative, so it must be clear how each part of it relates to other parts.</p>

	<p><u>Tip:</u> Make sure that your hypotheses follow from the literature and not vice versa. If you start out from your hypotheses, you run the risk of only selecting literature that agrees with them; this is <u>not</u> scientific!</p> <p><u>Tip:</u> The literature serves as support for your narrative, not as the main topic. You should therefore avoid sentences like: ‘Smit and Jansen (2006) investigated...’ or ‘A study by Donkers et al. (2005) shows...’. These sentences make the researchers and their research the main topic.</p>
Method	<p>The Method section must include in all cases the following subheadings:</p> <p>Sample: Describe your target population, recruitment, number of participants and relevant background characteristics. You should also say whether you think your sample is representative of the target population and why (or why not).</p> <p>Procedure: What procedures did your participants go through? Here you should also describe how ethical review of your research took place (if possible, supported with a file number).</p> <p>Measuring instruments: Description of the questionnaires, observation instruments, etc. that were used. Give attention to the form and content and the reliability and validity of the instruments. If you use numbers to indicate how reliable or valid your instrument is, you should state what kind of reliability or validity you are talking about and what the numbers actually mean.</p> <p>Analyses: For each research question / hypothesis, describe what analysis methods you will use to answer your questions. You should be specific here and make sure that readers will clearly understand why you chose these methods.</p>
Results	<p>In this section, you present the results of your analyses without interpreting them. This section is divided into two parts (with subheadings, if you wish):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Data inspection: descriptive statistics, distributions, outliers, missing data, whether your data meet the assumptions for the tests you are going to use, etc. This subsection must be concise, but must also be clear and complete. Give reasons for decisions that you took regarding unusual observations in your data. 2) Results in relation to your research questions. This subsection should preferably be further subdivided, using your sub-questions (or a shortened version of these) as subheadings. <p>Use tables and figures to support your results; make deliberate choices in this regard. You must also make reference in the text to every table or figure that you include. Readers must be able to understand the most important results simply from the text, without needing to look in detail at the tables (but obviously you don't have to repeat all the numbers from the tables in your text). And vice versa: tables and figures must be understandable without reading the text. You must therefore make sure that you explain any abbreviations and that the title of a figure or table is clear.</p>
Discussion	<p>In this section, the most important conclusions must be discussed on the basis of the results, and placed within a broader context. It must include in all cases the following elements:</p> <p>Conclusions: First, you must briefly repeat the research questions and their relevance. For each research question, interpret the most important conclusions and compare each result with the hypotheses and with the</p>

results of earlier research. If the results are unexpected, you should discuss possible explanations. Place the results in a broader context: how should we view these results in the wider field of Education and Child Studies? Look for connections with the central theories and with important insights from, for example, developmental psychology.

Limitations: Discuss the limitations of your research project, such as a selective and/or small sample, based only on questionnaires, cross-sectional design, etc. For each limitation, state explicitly how it could have affected the results (an additional literature search is often necessary for this). N.B. It is not enough just to say that “caution is needed in interpreting the results”; what does this actually mean in practice? Balance out your limitations by also mentioning the strengths of your research project.

Implications: Make clear what these results contribute to science, society and/or professional practice. What do the results add to our knowledge in this area? How can we use them? Finally: give recommendations for future research.

Tip: Although you write the Discussion at the end of your project, it can be worthwhile to keep a list of all the notable points that caught your attention while executing the project, which you can then use as the basis for your Discussion. This will help to give this section greater depth.

Tip: Make sure that you achieve a good balance in describing the limitations and the strengths. Your research project will never be perfect, but it will always contribute something; you should discuss both of these aspects.

Tip: The Discussion serves to round off your thesis. Make sure you think carefully about a ‘take-home message’ that you wish to impart to your readers. This is preferably an engaging message, which clearly summarises the added value of your research.

References

You must present your References in APA style. Check carefully whether all the references that you mention in the text are actually included here (and vice versa). You should be very meticulous about this.

4.5 Grading form

This form is used to grade your thesis based on six criteria. The first assessor (your thesis supervisor) assesses of all these criteria; the second, independent assessor only assesses criteria 1 to 5 (i.e., excluding criterion 6: *Process*).

All of the criteria are equally important for the grade. If one or more criteria are graded as a insufficient (predominantly level 1), the final grade can only be insufficient. If none of the criteria are graded as insufficient, then generally the final grade will be: predominantly level 2 = sufficient, predominantly level 3 = good.

Tip: Discuss this form with your supervisor during the supervision process, so that you gradually gain more understanding of what is expected of you and what else you need to do in order to achieve your target level.

critierium 1. <i>Introduction</i>	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	niveau 4: aspecten van excellentie
Problem Description and Research Goal(s)	The relevance of the research is unclear.	The scientific/societal problem the study addresses is introduced, and it is made clear why this deserves new research.	The scientific/societal problem the study addresses is introduced, it is made clear why this deserves new research and that it makes an important contribution to the field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original approach in theoretical framework • Own conceptualisation of variables • Clear-cut theoretical framework and research questions • ...
Literature Review	Incomplete or inaccurate review of the literature.	A summary of literature pertinent to the problem is provided.	A reasonably complete summary of the literature pertinent to the problem is provided and critically evaluated.	
Theory and Concepts	The theoretical framework is unclear, incomplete or inaccurate.	A theoretical framework with clearly defined concepts is presented.	A consistent theoretical framework with clearly defined concepts that are logically connected is presented.	
Research Questions and Hypotheses	The research question is absent or lacks focus.	The research question is connected to (or the hypothesis is derived from) the problem description and the literature review.	The research question is logically connected to (or the hypothesis is derived from) the problem description and the literature review, and gives a precise and accurate description of what the researcher wants to find out.	
Explanation:				

criterium 2. Methods	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	niveau 4: aspecten van excellentie
Information about sample, sampling procedures, data collection and study design.	The information provided is unclear, incomplete or inaccurate.	Information is provided about the sample and the sampling procedures, about the methods for data gathering and their reliability and validity, and about the design of the study.	Information is provided about the sample and the sampling procedures, about the methods for data gathering and their reliability and validity, and about the design of the study. The appropriateness of the design and methods for the research questions are made clear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses conducted that were not in the curriculum. • Without help of the supervisor conducted complex analyses. • Combination and integration of multiple methodologies. • Applying an adequate design in complex circumstances. • Applying a complex design with complex research questions. • Invested largely in raising the quality of the instruments. • ...
Variables	The operationalization of the chosen measures is unclear.	The operationalization of the chosen measures is explained.	The operationalization of the chosen measures is explained and justified.	
Replication			The information provided permits experienced investigators to replicate the study.	
criterium 3. Results	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	
Data analyses	The data analyses are not appropriate, or interpretations are incorrect.	The data analyses are appropriate. Findings and results are correctly interpreted.	The data analyses are appropriate and profound. Findings and results are correctly interpreted, distinguishing between empirical statements and interpretation of findings.	
Information about data, analyses and results.	The information provided is unclear, incomplete or inaccurate	Information is provided about the collected data, the analyses and their results. This information enables the reader to evaluate the discussion that is to follow.	The information that is provided about the collected data, the analyses and their results is accurate and complete (e.g. missing data, significance, effect sizes). This information enables the reader to evaluate the discussion that is to follow.	
Explanation:				

criterium 4. <i>Discussion</i>	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	niveau 4: aspecten van excellentie
Conclusions	Fails to answer research question or provide a statement of (non)support of hypotheses.	The results are used to answer the research question and underpin a statement of (non)support of hypotheses.	The results are used to answer the research question and underpin a statement of (non)support of hypotheses. (Non)support of hypotheses is explained in-depth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New (recent) literature added to an existing theoretical framework. • Outstanding practical relevance. • Originality • ...
Reflection on results	The results are not interpreted in relation to the work of others, or discussion fails to address limitations or weaknesses of the study.	The results are interpreted in relation to the work of others. Relevant limitations or weaknesses are mentioned.	The results are interpreted in relation to the work of others and are taking the limitations or weaknesses of the study into account. The implications of relevant limitations or weaknesses are discussed. Alternative explanations of the results are addressed	
Implications	The implications and importance of the findings are missing/illogical.	Based on the interpretation, the implications and importance of the findings are discussed	Based on the interpretation, the implications and importance of the findings are discussed and related to the scientific/societal problem the study addresses.	
Future research	Suggestions for future research are missing/illogical	Possible avenues for future research are suggested and discussed.	Unresolved or newly arisen problems are described. Concrete possible avenues for future research are suggested and discussed, logically connected to the results.	
Explanation:				

criterium 5. <i>Manuscript</i>	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	niveau 4: aspecten van excellentie
Title	Does not justify the content, or suggests incorrect/over interpretation of data.	Represents the content.	The title represents the content concisely .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing style reflects the capacity to write clearly/ engagingly • ...
Abstract	Misrepresents the content, lacks components or is hard to understand.	The abstract is accurate, coherent and readable.	The abstract is accurate, coherent, readable and concise .	
Structure	The manuscript is badly structured. The line of thought is unclear.	The manuscript has an organised structure. The line of thought is mostly clear.	The manuscript has a sound organised structure with concise headings and paragraphs, continuity in words, concepts and thematic development . The line of thought is easy to follow and supported by the structure	
Writing and argumentation style	The manuscript elements are insufficiently connected and organized. Style too wordy or too concise.	All manuscript elements are connected and organised, i.e. research questions, hypotheses, research design, results, inferences and evaluations are related. Grammar and style enable understanding of the information.	All manuscript elements are logically connected and keypoints within sections are organised, i.e., research questions, hypotheses, research design, results, inferences and evaluations are related and form a consistent and concise argumentation . Writing flows smoothly; grammar and style support legibility of the document	
Language	Spelling or grammar mistakes impede interpretation..	Language is precise and correct.	Language is precise, correct, and scientific. Transitional words maintain the flow of thought.	
References	Referral is insufficient, inconsistent, incomplete or incorrect.	Cited references in text and in a reference list, tables, figures, and statistics are according to the latest APA manual.		
Presentation and layout	The appearance and lay-out of all sections do not follow the thesis guidelines. There are errors in Tables and Figures.	The appearance and lay-out of all sections follow the thesis guidelines. Tables and Figures are correct.	The appearance and lay-out of all sections follow the thesis guidelines and are consistent, clear, and transparent . Tables and Figures are correct and (reasonably) self-explanatory .	
Explanation:				

criterium 6. Process	niveau 1: onvoldoende	niveau 2: voldoende	niveau 3: goed	niveau 4: aspecten van excellentie
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student insufficiently meets commitments and obligations The student insufficiently responds to the supervisor's instruction, explanations, and demonstrations The student insufficiently responds to and processes the supervisor's feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student meets commitments and obligations (e.g. meets deadlines, is polite, and prepare meetings with the supervisor) The student responds to the supervisor's instruction, explanations, and demonstrations The student responds to and processes the supervisor's feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responsibility for the research project is shared between student and supervisor The student asks for help, confirmation, guidance, feedback, and information When asking the supervisor for help, the student provides relevant and concrete questions Showed self-regulatory skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced own ideas that exceed the standard curriculum Setting challenging goals and meeting them Proactive attitude during supervision meetings e.g. by setting the agenda Communication with supervisor as equals
Practical input	The student did not invest enough time/effort, or the student's research skills shown are not adequate.	The student's invested time/effort are adequate. The student's research skills shown are adequate.	The student's invested time/effort are more than adequate. The student's research skills shown are more than adequate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-proposed solutions rather than asking the supervisor open ended questions
Intellectual input	The student insufficiently contributed to the final product.	The student contributed to the final product.	The student contributed independently to the final product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructively critical towards supervisor feedback
Ethical aspects	The student showed insufficient awareness of the ethical guidelines of Education and Child Studies. <i>NB. Violation of guidelines will be reported to the Exam Committee, who will decide on appropriate measures.</i>	The student behaved according to the ethical guidelines of Education and Child Studies.	The student behaved according to the ethical guidelines of Education and Child Studies and reflected on ethical issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding willingness to learn ...
Explanation:				

* NB. Violation of guidelines will be reported to the Board of Examiners, which will decide on appropriate measures.