

Teaching and Examination Regulations

MASTER's Degree Programme Theology and Religious Studies (research)

Academic year 2015-2016

VU University Amsterdam, Faculty of Theology



Section A: Faculty section

- 1. General provisions**
 - Article 1.1 Applicability of the Regulations
 - Article 1.2 Definitions

- 2. Previous education and admission**
 - Article 2.1 Previous education
 - Article 2.2 Registration and enrollment
 - Article 2.3 Faculty Admissions Board
 - Article 2.4 Admissions procedure
 - Article 2.5 Refusal or termination of enrolment (*unsuitability/judicium abeundi*)

- 3. Degree programme structure**
 - Article 3.1 Structure of academic year
 - Article 3.2 Organisation of the programme

- 4. Examinations**
 - Article 4.1 Admission to Examinations
 - Article 4.2 Form of Examinations
 - Article 4.3 Oral examinations
 - Article 4.4 Determining and announcing results
 - Article 4.5 Resits
 - Article 4.6 Marks
 - Article 4.7 Exemption
 - Article 4.8 Validity period for results
 - Article 4.9 Right of inspection
 - Article 4.10 Post-examination discussion
 - Article 4.11 Master's final examination
 - Article 4.12 Thesis
 - Article 4.13 Diplomas and transcripts
 - Article 4.14 Fraud and Plagiarism

- 5. Study supervision and study progress**
 - Article 5.1 Records of study progress
 - Article 5.2 Adaptations for students with a disability

- 6. Hardship clause**
 - Article 6.1 Hardship clause

- 7. Transitional and final provisions**
 - Article 7.1 Amendments and periodic review
 - Article 7.2 Transitional provisions
 - Article 7.3 Publication
 - Article 7.4 Effective date

Section B: Programme-specific section

- 1. General provisions**
 - Article 1.1 Degree programme information
 - Article 1.2 Intake dates

- 2. Programme objectives and exit qualifications**
 - Article 2 Aims and exit qualifications of the programme

- 3. Admission requirements**
 - Article 3.1 Admission requirements
 - Article 3.2 Selection procedure and method
 - Article 3.3 Final deadline for registration
 - Article 3.4 English language requirement for English-language Master's programmes

Article 3.5 Free curriculum

4. Curriculum structure

Article 4.1 Composition of programme

Article 4.2 Participation in practical exercise and tutorials

Article 4.3 Maximum exemption

Article 4.4 Degree

5. Transitional and final provisions

Article 5.1 Amendments and periodic review

Article 5.2 Transitional provisions

Article 5.3 Publication

Article 5.4 Effective date

Appendices

Appendix I Structure of the degree programme

Appendix II Transition Regulations

Appendix III Cum Laude

Appendix IV Graduation Procedure

Section A: faculty section

1. General provisions

Article 1.1 Applicability of the Regulations

1. These Regulations apply to the teaching and examinations for the Master's degree programmes: Theology and Religious Studies (research), (hereinafter referred to on occasion as 'the degree programme') provided by the Faculty of Theology (hereinafter referred to on occasion as 'the faculty') of VU University Amsterdam.
2. These Regulations consist of a faculty section (A) and a programme-specific section (B). Section A contains general provisions and applies to the teaching and examinations of the Master's degree programmes of the Faculty of Theology. Section B contains programme-specific provisions. Together, Sections A and B form the Teaching and Examination Regulations for the programme.
3. The Regulations can be declared to apply *mutatis mutandis* to the joint degree programmes and units of study, pursuant to Section 7.3c of the WHW, also provided by the faculty.
4. These Regulations apply to anyone enrolled in the programme, irrespective of the academic year in which the student was first enrolled in the programme.
5. Section B of these Teaching and Examination Regulations may contain additional general provisions for the relevant degree programme.

Article 1.2 Definitions

The following definitions are used in these Regulations:

- a. EC (European Credit): an credit with a workload of 28 hours of study;
- b. examination: the final examination of the Master's programme;
- c. fraud and plagiarism: the student's acts or failures to act which make it wholly or partially impossible to accurately judge his/her knowledge, understanding and skills;
- d. credit: a credit within the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as stated in Article 7.4, paragraph 1 of the Netherlands' Higher Education and Research Act (WHW); one credit equals 28 hours of study for an average student;
- e. component: a unit of study of the programme within the meaning of the WHW;
- f. period: a part of a semester;
- g. practical exercise: the participation in a practical training or other educational learning activity, aimed at acquiring certain (academic) skills. Examples of practical exercises are:
 - o researching and writing a thesis
 - o carrying out a research assignment
 - o taking part in fieldwork or an excursion
 - o taking part in another educational learning activity aimed at acquiring specific skills or participating in and completing a work placement
- h. programme: the totality and cohesion of the course components, teaching activities/methods, contact hours, testing and examination methods and recommended literature;
- i. thesis: a component comprising literature research and/or a contribution to scientific research, always resulting in a written report;
- j. specialization: the student's main subject in the Master's program;
- k. study guide: the electronic guide for the program that contains descriptions of all courses (www.studiegids.vu.nl);
- l. workload: the workload of the unit of study to which an interim examination applies, expressed in terms of credits = EC. (The workload for 1 year (1,680 hours) is 60 EC credits);
- m. academic year: the period beginning on 1 September and ending on 31 August of the following calendar year;
- n. examination: an assessment of the student's knowledge, understanding and skills relating to a course component. The assessment is expressed in terms of a final mark. An examination may consist of one or more partial examinations. A resit always covers the same material as the original interim examination;

- o. Admissions Board: the committee that assesses, on behalf of the faculty board/, whether a candidate meets the requirements for admission to the Master's degree programme of his/her choice. If there is no Admissions Board appointed for the degree programme, the Examinations Board (within the meaning of Section 7.12 of the WHW) functions as Admissions Board;
- p. University: VU University Amsterdam;
- q. WHW: the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*, WHW);
- r. programme charter: the part of the Student Charter specific to the programme in accordance with Section 7.59 of the WHW.;
- s. Examination Board: the Examination Board of the program is established in accordance with section 7.12 of the act;
- t. Final Assessment: assessment (Dutch: examen) whereby it is established by the Examination Board in accordance with section 7.10 of the act that all course examinations of the courses of the Master program have been completed satisfactorily;
- u. Blackboard: The digital learning environment that is intended for the exchange of program information;
- v. tutorial: supervised study of a small group of students;
- w. seminar: a class in the form of discussion of specified topics;
- x. grade: the mark, result, or evaluation of a student's performance during a course, a course examination, or practicum by the examiner;
- y. VUNet: student portal for all information concerning educational concerns like; marks, schedules, registered subjects, Blackboard announcements. Students can register via VUNet for courses and exams, submit changes of and complete their registration details;

The other terms have the meanings ascribed to them by the WHW.

2. Previous education and admission

Article 2.1 Previous education

1. In order to qualify for enrolment in a Master's degree programme, a Bachelor's degree obtained in academic higher education (WO) is required. The requirements that the Bachelor's degree must meet are specified in Section B.
2. In the event that a candidate does not have a Bachelor's degree as referred to in paragraph 1, the Admissions Board of the degree programme will assess suitability for admission to the programme on the basis of the requirements stipulated in Section B.
3. In order to qualify for enrolment in a Master's degree programme for teaching in pre-university education, the individual concerned must have been awarded the Master's degree in the relevant subject area, pursuant to Section 7.10a of the WHW.

Article 2.2 Registration and enrollment

1. The deadline for registering for the Master's programme is stipulated in Article 3.3 (Section B).
2. After registering on time, the student must enroll before 1 September.

Article 2.3 Faculty Admissions Board

The faculty board will establish one or more Admissions Boards. The faculty board will appoint its members after consultation with the programme directors and examinations boards of the relevant degree programmes.

Article 2.4 Admissions procedure

1. The Admissions Board is responsible for admission to the programme.
2. With a view to admission to the programme, the Admissions Board assesses the candidate's knowledge, understanding and skills. The Board may request experts within or outside the University to test certain types of knowledge, understanding and skills, in order to supplement written evidence of the programme the student has already completed. In its assessment, the Board includes knowledge of the language in which the programme will be taught.
3. Candidates receive either confirmation of admission or a negative decision. An appeal against a

negative decision can be lodged with the Examination Appeals Board within six weeks.

Article 2.5 Refusal or termination of enrollment (*unsuitability/judicium abeundi*)

1. In certain cases, the Executive Board may refuse admission to the programme or terminate the student's registration on the recommendation of the Examination Board and the Faculty Board responsible for the programme in question and after careful consideration of the interests involved. These measures will be taken if the student's conduct or statements demonstrate his/her unsuitability to work in the relevant field or discipline, or to take part in the practical training component of this programme. This concerns conduct or statements that may be construed as a threat to others. In such a case, the Executive Board will issue a written decision and state the grounds for its decision. Registration or re-registration for the same programme or a related programme may also be denied on the same grounds.
2. If the board of another institution of higher education decides to refuse or to terminate an individual's registration on the grounds stated in paragraph 1, the Executive Board may decide to adopt that decision. Paragraphs 3 and 4 will apply *mutatis mutandis*.
3. Before the Executive Board takes a decision as referred to in paragraph 1, it will give the individual concerned the opportunity to be heard. At this hearing, the individual concerned has the right to be accompanied by counsel.
4. The individual will be informed immediately of the termination or refusal of registration.

3. Degree programme structure

Article 3.1 Structure of academic year

1. Every degree programme will be offered in a year divided into two semesters.
2. Every semester consists of three consecutive periods of eight, eight and four weeks.

Article 3.2 Organisation of the programme

1. The programme comprises the units of study included in Section B.
2. The size of the degree programme in EC is stipulated in Section B.
3. A unit of study comprises 6 EC or a multiple thereof.
4. By way of exception to paragraph 3, Section B may stipulate that a unit of study comprises 3 EC.
5. The programme is made up of compulsory part and an individual Master's thesis and internship and, if applicable, a subject-specific optional component as specified in more detail in the programme-specific section.
6. If the student wishes to choose a different unit of study than those stipulated in Section B as part of his/her electives, prior permission is required from the Examinations Board.
7. If students must sign up for participation in a unit of study, this will only be possible in the periods designated for that purpose.

4. Examinations

Article 4.1 Admission to Examinations

1. Participants in a course should enroll for the course via [VUnet](https://vunet.vu.nl) (vunet.login.vu.nl). The enrollment ends 4 weeks before the period in which the course that will be offered begins.
2. Participation is granted in the order of registration with the proviso that students registered for the program will be given preference in the courses that are compulsory for their program.
3. The student is given the opportunity to take the examination of a course twice a year:
 - the first time following the course in the period in which the course is offered;
 - the second time in the reexamination period.
4. Section 3 is not applicable to internship and thesis. The examiner will ensure that the student makes sufficient progress. The monitoring will be conducted on a regular base, pre-arranged and agreed on by student and examiner.
5. A planning will be provided in which the regulated examination opportunities of written examinations are announced. This planning will be provided at the start of the academic year.
6. If it is not indicated with respect to an examination how many times a student can take the examination because it concerns a course that is not offered in the program itself, the stipulations in the Degree Regulations of the other program in question apply. The Examination Board can take a different decision with respect to this matter.

7. In the case of a unit of study that is no longer offered, in the academic year following its termination, at least one opportunity will be provided to sit the examination(s) or parts thereof and a transitional arrangement will be included in the programme-specific section for the subsequent period.
8. The Study Guide announces courses, in which students can not be enrolled before acquiring specific examinations.
9. The Examination Board can allow a different number of exams of a course in specific situations.
10. If class attendance is deemed compulsory, the student may take the examination only if the obligation to attend classes has been fulfilled. The standard here is that the student must attend at least 80% of the classes unless otherwise stipulated.
11. Before a written examination begins the examiner requests the student to show his/her valid proof of registration.
12. Participation will take place in order of enrollment. Students are granted priority by enrollment for classes compulsory for the programme in which they are enrolled.
13. The examiner will ensure that the student makes sufficient progress during the course.

Article 4.2 Form of Examinations

1. The means of testing for each course will be indicated in the course description of the electronic Study Guide.
2. At the request of the student, the Examination Board can allow a course examination to be taken in a way different from the one prescribed.
3. In case of courses which are determined, at least one opportunity of examination is granted in the academic year following the year of determination. Programs of transition are provided for the following years in section B.

Article 4.3 Oral examinations

1. Unless otherwise specified for the relevant unit of study in Section B, no more than one student will be examined orally at the same time.
2. An oral examination is public unless the Examinations Board or examiner determines otherwise in an exceptional case. A student may submit a reasoned request to the Examinations Board to depart from the public nature of the oral examination. The Examinations Board will balance the interests of the student against the interests of a public examination.
3. When students take an oral examination, the examination is also attended by a second examiner or an observer appointed by the Examination Board or a full sound recording is made of the examination, unless otherwise determined by the Examination Board.

Article 4.4 Determining and announcing results

1. The examiner determines the result (= mark) of a written examination as soon as possible, but at the latest within ten working days. Contrary to the provisions of the first sentence, the marking deadline for theses and final assignments is no longer than twenty working days. The examiner is responsible for the registration of the result and ensures that the student is notified of the assessment, taking into account the applicable standards of confidentiality.
2. The examiner determines the result (= mark) of an oral examination as soon as the examination has finished and informs the student accordingly. The third sentence of the first paragraph applies.
3. In the case of alternative forms of oral or written examinations, the Examinations Board determines in advance how and by what deadline the student will be informed of the results.
4. Together with the result of an examination, the student's attention will also be drawn to their right to inspect the assessed work and have a post-examination discussion as stipulated in Articles 4.9 and 4.10, as well as his/her option to appeal to the Examinations Appeals Board.
5. A student may lodge an appeal against the way in which the result was reached with the Examination Appeals Board within six weeks of the announcement of the result.

Article 4.5 Resits

1. An opportunity will be offered to resit examinations in the degree programme once in each academic year.
2. Paragraph 1 does not apply in the case of a fail for an internship or a thesis. The options for retaking work placements and theses are detailed in the relevant internship manual or thesis regulations.

3. The most recent mark will apply in the event of a resit.
4. The resit for an examination must not take place within ten working days of the announcement of the result of the examination being resit.
5. The student who has passed all but one of the examinations necessary to meet the degree requirements and who is unable to sit that examination in the next period, may submit a reasoned request to the Examination Board asking for the opportunity to take this examination at an earlier date and, if necessary, by alternate means.

Article 4.6 Marks

1. Marks are given on a scale from 1 to 10, with a maximum of one decimal after the point and completed in whole or half numbers (0 - 0,5 - 1...'- 9,5 -10).
2. The final marks 5.1 to 5.9 are not awarded.

Article 4.7 Exemption

1. At the written request of the student, the Examinations Board may exempt the student from taking one or more examination components, if the student:
 - a) has passed a course component of a university or higher professional education programme that is equivalent in both content and level; or
 - b) has demonstrated through his/her work and/or professional experience that he/she has sufficient knowledge and skills with regard to the relevant course component.
2. the Examinations Board will settle within thirty working days after receiving the request.
3. This exemption does not apply for a Master's thesis or final assignment.
4. If a student wishes to meet the requirements of a specific examination by studying at a different faculty or university, prior approval from the Examination Board is required.

Article 4.8 Validity period for results

1. The validity period of examinations passed and examination exemptions is limited to six years.
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the first paragraph, the Examination Board may require an additional or replacement examination before the student is admitted to the examination if a passing grade was earned more than six years ago.
3. The validity of the results of a constituent examination is limited to the academic year in which it took place, unless the programme-specific section for the relevant educational unit states otherwise.
4. The Examination Board may extend the limited validity of an examination or exemption if a student submits a request stating reasons to this effect. The Examination Board may decide to extend the validity only after the student making the request has passed an additional examination in the relevant subject matter.

Article 4.9 Right of inspection

1. For a period of at least twenty working days following publication of the results of a written examination, the student will be given the opportunity to inspect his or her assessed work on request, including the questions and assignments set, and the standards used for assessment.
2. The Examination Board may decide that the inspection referred to in paragraph 1 will take place at a particular place and at a particular time. The place and time referred to in the previous sentence will be announced at the examination and on the Faculty's website (VUnet).
3. If the student can demonstrate that he or she was unable to attend at the place and time referred to in paragraph 2, due to force majeure, the student will be granted another opportunity to do so.
4. If a student intends to appeal against the way in which his or her work has been assessed, he or she may be issued with a copy of the assessed work.

Article 4.10 Post-examination discussion

1. If a collective post-examination discussion has been organised, individual post-examination discussions will be held only if the student has attended the collective discussion or if he/she was unable to attend the collective discussion through no fault of his/her own.
2. Students who meet the requirements stipulated in the first paragraph can submit a request for an individual post-examination discussion to the relevant examiner. The discussion will take place at a time and location to be determined by the examiner.

Article 4.11 Master's final examination

1. The Examinations Board determines the final examination result and the date on which the student obtains his/her degree after it has been established that the student has passed all the units of study belonging to the programme.
2. A diploma can only be awarded after the Executive Board has declared that the student has satisfied all the procedural requirements, including the payment of tuition fees.

Article 4.12 Thesis

1. For the MA Thesis the MASTER'S THESIS REGULATIONS applies. These regulations can be found at [VU-net](#)
2. If a student wishes to graduate in two Master's specializations (or subprogrammes) of a Master's degree programme, the student must write a separate thesis for each specialization (subprogramme). The student may however (partially) make use of the same literature and may use parts of one thesis for the other. Each thesis has its own research question and perspective (congruent with the learning goals of the specialization or subprogramme).

Article 4.13 Diplomas and transcripts

1. The Examinations Board grants a diploma as proof that the student has passed his/her final examination. The Executive Board sets the model for the diploma. The Examinations Board adds a diploma supplement to the diploma providing information on the nature and content of the degree programme completed. The diploma supplement is drawn up in Dutch or English and complies with the European format.
2. Individuals who have successfully completed more than one or more components of the programme and who cannot be awarded a diploma as stipulated in paragraph 1 will, on request, receive a statement to be issued by the relevant Examinations Board stating at least the components that have been successfully completed together with the units of study they involved, the number of EC obtained and the way in which the examinations were taken.
3. The student can, without needing to provide reasons, request that the Examinations Board not proceed to award a diploma, unless the student him-/herself submitted the request for its issue.

Article 4.14 Fraud and plagiarism

1. The provisions of the Rules and Guidelines for the Examinations Board apply in full.
2. Electronic detection software programs may be used to detect plagiarism in texts. In submitting a text, the student implicitly consents to the text being entered into the database of the detection program concerned.

5. Study supervision and study progress

Article 5.1 Records of study progress

1. The Faculty Board is responsible for the proper registration of students' degree programme results in SAP/SLcM. Once an examination that counts towards the final degree has been assessed, the student may inspect the results of that examination on SAP/SLcM, where the student will also find a summary of the results achieved.
2. Students registered for a programme are entitled for student guidance.

Article 5.2 Adaptations for students with a disability

1. Students with a disability may qualify for special adaptations to the teaching provided, examinations and practicals, based on a written request submitted for that purpose to the study advisor. These adaptations will be tailored as far as possible to the individual disability of the student, but are not permitted to affect the quality or level of difficulty of a subject or examination.
2. The request referred to in paragraph 1 must be accompanied by a recommendation from a student counsellor. This recommendation should be no more than twelve weeks old and partly based on a recent statement from a doctor or psychologist. In case of a chronic disability, a single request is sufficient. In the case of dyslexia, no recommendation from a student counsellor is required and a recent statement from a BIG, NIP or NVO accredited testing centre will suffice. Where possible, the statement referred to in this paragraph should include an estimation of the extent to which study progress will be hindered.
3. With regard to requests for adaptations to the educational programme and logistical

arrangements, decisions will be made by the Faculty Board or the Director of Education or Director of Studies acting on the Board's behalf. The Examination Board will decide on any requests for adaptations relating to the process of examination.

4. If a positive decision is made in response to a request as referred to in paragraph 1, the student will make an appointment with the study advisor to discuss how the necessary adaptations can be facilitated.
5. A request for adaptation may be declined if granting it would constitute a disproportionately large drain on the organizational resources of the faculty or university.
6. If the student's disability constitutes grounds for an extension of examination time, the Examination Board will issue a statement detailing the entitlement to an extension. The validity of the extension may not exceed one year. This period of validity may be extended at the recommendation of a student counsellor.
7. If a student's disability constitutes grounds for other additional facilities, the study advisor can initiate other facilities.

6. Hardship clause

Article 6.1 Hardship clause

In instances not regulated by the Teaching and Examination Regulations or in the event of demonstrable extreme unreasonableness and unfairness, the faculty board responsible for the degree programme will decide, unless the matter concerned is the responsibility of the Examinations Board.

7. Transitional and final provisions

Article 7.1 Amendments and periodic review

1. Any amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations will be adopted by the faculty board after taking advice from the relevant Board of Studies. A copy of the advice will be sent to the authorised representative advisory body.
2. An amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations requires the approval of the authorised representative advisory body if it concerns components not related to the subjects of Section 7.13, paragraph 2 sub a to g and v, as well as paragraph 4 of the WHW and the requirements for admission to the Master's programme.
3. An amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations can only pertain to an academic year that is already in progress if this does not demonstrably damage the interests of students.

Article 7.2 Transitional provisions

Notwithstanding the current Teaching and Examination Regulations, the regulations referred to in Appendix II apply for students who started the programme before 1 September 2015.

Article 7.3 Publication

1. The faculty board will ensure the appropriate publication of these Regulations and any amendments to them.
2. The Teaching and Examination Regulations will be posted on the faculty website and deemed to be included in the course catalogue.

Article 7.4 Effective date

These Regulations enter into force with effect from September 1, 2015

Advice from the Examination Board on and the Board of Studies, on May 18th, 2015

Approved by authorised representative advisory body on October 5th, 2015

Adopted by the faculty board on November 16th, 2015

Section B: Programme-specific section

1. General provisions

Article 1.1 Degree programme information

1. The programme Master Theology and Religious Studies (research) CROHO number 60827 is available in full-time, and part-time form, and taught in English. In case only Dutch speaking students are enrolled in a course, the course may be taught in Dutch.
- 1a. The full-time programme has an official duration of 2 years.
- 1b. The part-time programme has an official duration of 4 years.
2. The programme has a workload of 120 EC
3. An educational unit comprises 6 credits or a multiple thereof
4. The successful completion of all of the requirements of the programme leads to the degree of Master of Arts.

Article 1.2 Intake dates

The programme is offered starting in the first semester of the academic year (1 September). The intake date mentioned in this paragraph ensures that a programme can be completed within the nominal study duration set for the programme.

2. Programme objectives and exit qualifications

Article 2 Aims and exit qualifications of the programme

Students who have completed a Research Master's programme in Theology and Religious Studies have the ability to participate in the academic scholarly discussion in Theology and Religious Studies and to contribute creatively and independently to this field of inquiry. The pragmatic purpose of the Research Master's is to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and insights to enable graduates to enter a PhD programme or to hold positions that require strong academic research skills and experience.

The student

1. Has an in-depth knowledge of the hermeneutical character of research in Theology and Religious Studies and is able to reflect on the implications of this for developing multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to research questions in the field.
2. Has an excellent knowledge of one or a thorough knowledge of several research specializations within the field of Theology and Religious Studies.
3. Understands the Faculty's research structure and has actively taken part in one or several of the Faculty's research projects.
4. Is skilled in finding, integrating and critiquing relevant professional literature on a research subject or other subject in the field of Theology and Religious Studies.
5. Has the skills to independently detect, formulate, analyse and propose solutions to research problems in the field of Theology and Religious Studies. The student is also able to formulate targeted research questions and present these in a plan for a scholarly research project covering a broader scope (such as a PhD research plan).
6. Is proficient in conducting research in the field of Theology and Religious Studies and reporting on the research in accordance with reporting standards generally accepted in the field.
7. Is able to apply the theoretical views in his or her own field to a range of academic disciplines and contexts, for discussion and other purposes.
8. Is eligible for admission to a PhD programme or to hold an academic position requiring research strengths and competencies.

3. Admission requirements

Article 3.1 Admission requirements

1. The programme is a follow-up programme, as referred to in Article 7.30a of the Act, to the following Bachelor's programmes:
 - a. Bachelor's degree in Theology from a Dutch University (WO)
 - b. Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from a Dutch University (WO)

2. The Admissions Board will investigate whether the interested person meets the admission requirements.
3. When the programme commences, the candidate must have fully completed the Bachelor's programme allowing admission to this Master's programme.
4. Students from abroad have to hand in a motivation letter and research proposal.

Article 3.2 Selection procedure and method

For admission to the programme, students must have fulfilled the following requirements:

- a. An average grade of 7.5 (Dutch system) or the equivalent for their bachelor's degree programme.
- b. Evidence of sufficient knowledge of the English Language, as intended in article 3.4 of this section.
- c. Students who have completed a one year Master at VU University with an average score of 8,0 or higher can be admitted to the second year of the programme.

Article 3.3 Final deadline for registration

A candidate must submit a request to be admitted to the programme through Studielink before June 1 in the case students with direct admission and international degree students from the EU/EEA, before April 1 in the case of international degree students from outside the EU/EEA. Under exceptional circumstances, the Board of the University may consider a request submitted after this closing date. The completion of enrollment is set before September 1.

Article 3.4 English language requirement for English-language Master's programmes

1. The proficiency requirement in English as the language of instruction can be met by the successful completion of one of the following examinations or an equivalent:
 - IELTS: 6.5
 - TOEFL paper based test: 580
 - a computer based test: 237
 - TOEFL internet based test: 92-93
 - Cambridge Advanced English: A, B or C.
2. Exemption is granted from the examination in English referred to in the first paragraph to students who, within two years of the start of the programme:
 - met the requirements of the VU test in English language proficiency TOEFL ITP, with at least the scores specified in paragraph 1, or
 - had previous education in secondary or tertiary education in an English-speaking country as listed on the VU website, or
 - have an English-language 'international baccalaureate' diploma.
3. Candidates who obtained a Bachelor's degree at an accredited institution of higher education in the Netherlands, are exempt from the requirements of this article.

Article 3.5 Free curriculum

1. Subject to certain conditions, the student has the option of compiling a curriculum of his/her own choice which deviates from the curricula prescribed by the programme.
2. The concrete details of such a curriculum must be approved beforehand by the Examinations Board.
3. The free curriculum is put together by the student from the units of study offered by VU University Amsterdam or other Dutch universities and must at least have the size, breadth and depth of a regular Master's programme.

4. Curriculum structure

Article 4.1 Composition of programme

1. The programme consists of the following units:
 - a. Compulsory educational units
 - b. Optional subjects
 - a. *Compulsory educational units*
 - a Hermeneutics (6 EC)
 - b Research Skills (6 EC)
 - c Internship (12 EC)
 - d Master Seminar (6 EC)
 - e Classics 1 (6 EC)
 - f Classics 2 (6 EC)

g Research design (6 EC)

h Thesis (30 EC)

b. Optional subjects

a Four Section modules of the chosen Departments (each module 6 EC)

b Three Section modules (each module 6 EC) or Professional Streams Modules (each module 6 EC) (free choice)

Other optional subjects

The student who wishes to take a course other than those specified in this article needs to obtain prior written permission from the Examination Board. The responsible Examination Board is The Examination Board of the Faculty of Theology

2. The structure of the degree programme is listed in the Appendix I of these Teaching and Examination Regulations.

Article 4.2 Participation in practical exercise and tutorials

1. In the case of a practical training, the student must attend at least 80 % of the practical sessions. Should the student attend less than 80 %, he/she must repeat the practical training, or the Examinations Board may have one or more supplementary assignments issued.
2. In the case of tutorials with assignments, the student must attend at least 80 % of the tutorials. Should the student attend less than 80 %, he/she must repeat the study group, or the Examinations Board may have one or more supplementary assignments issued.
3. In exceptional circumstances, the Examinations Board may, at the request of the student, permit an exemption from this requirement if, in the opinion of the Board, the assessment of the intended skills is also possible with a lesser percentage of participation, with or without the imposition of supplementary requirements.

Article 4.3 Maximum exemption

A maximum of 24 EC of the curriculum can be accumulated through granted exemptions, unless the Examinations Board determines otherwise.

Article 4.4 Degree

Students who have successfully completed their Master's final examination are awarded a Master of Arts degree. The degree awarded is stated on the diploma.

5. Transitional and final provisions

Article 5.1 Amendments and periodic review

1. Any amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations will be adopted by the faculty board after taking advice from the relevant Board of Studies. A copy of the advice will be sent to the authorised representative advisory body.
2. An amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations requires the approval of the authorised representative advisory body if it concerns components not related to the subjects of Section 7.13, paragraph 2 sub a to g and v, as well as paragraph 4 of the WHW and the requirements for admission to the Master's programme.
3. An amendment to the Teaching and Examination Regulations can only pertain to an academic year that is already in progress if this does not demonstrably damage the interests of students.

Article 5.2 Transitional provisions

Notwithstanding the current Teaching and Examination Regulations, the regulations referred to in Appendix II apply for students who started the programme before 1 September 2015.

Article 5.3 Publication

1. The faculty board will ensure the appropriate publication of these Regulations and any amendments to them.
2. The Teaching and Examination Regulations will be posted on the faculty website and deemed to be included in the course catalogue.

Article 5.4 Effective date

These Regulations enter into force with effect from September 1, 2015

Advice from the Examination Board on and the Board of Studies, on May 18th, 2015

Approved by authorised representative advisory body on October 5th, 2015

Adopted by the faculty board on November 16th, 2015

Appendix I Structure of the degree programme

Master Theology and Religious Studies 2 year, Research Master - Fulltime and Parttime

Cohort 2015-2016

Year 1

General Required Courses

G_MAHERMN	Hermeneutics	6 EC
G_RESSK	Research Skills	6 EC
G_CLAS1	Classic 1	6 EC
G_CLAS2	Classic 2	6 EC
G_INTERN	Internship	12 EC
G_MASEM	Master Seminar	6 EC

Elective:

One module (6EC) from the Section Modules and/or Professional Stream Modules.

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	
6 EC	6 EC		6 EC	6 EC		
G_MAHERMN	Elective**:		G_CLAS1	G_CLAS2		<i>Parttime Year 1</i>
Hermeneutics	Section modules or Professional Stream modules		Classics 1	Classics 2		
6 EC						
G_MASEM						
Master Seminar ***						
6 EC	6 EC	6 EC	12 EC			
G_SM*131	G_SM*132	G_RESKK	G_Intern			<i>Parttime Year 2</i>
Section module of the chosen Section	Section module of the chosen Section	Research Skills ****	Internship			

Year 2

General Required Courses

G_RMARESD	Research Design	6 EC
G_2MATHES	Thesis	30EC

Electives:

Two modules (12EC) from the Section Modules and/or Professional Stream Modules

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	
6 EC	6 EC	6 EC	30 EC			
G_SM*131	G_SM*132	G_RMARESD	G_2MATHES			<i>Parttime Year 3</i>
Section module of the chosen Section	Section module of the chosen Section	Research Design	Thesis			
6 EC	6 EC					
Elective**:	Elective**:					<i>Parttime Year 4</i>
Section modules or Professional Stream modules	Section modules or Professional Stream modules					

Section Modules (SM) (see digital Study Guide for course descriptions)

Period 1:

Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1 (G_SMDO131)
 Specialization Course Church History 1 (G_SMKG131)
 Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1 (G_SMBW131)
 Specialization Course Praxis 1 (G_SMPR131)
 Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 1 (G_SMGF131)
 Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1 (G_SMCIT131)

Period 2:

Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2 (G_SMDO132)
 Specialization Course Church History 2 (G_SMKG132)
 Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2 (G_SMBW132)
 Specialization Course Praxis 2 (G_SMPR132)
 Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 2 (G_SMGF132)
 Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 3 (G_SMGF133)
 Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2 (G_SMCIT132)

Professional Stream Modules (PSM) (see digital Study Guide for course descriptions)

Period 1:

Media 1 (G_MED1)
 Leadership 1 (G_LEAD1)
 Spiritual Care 1 (G_SPICA1)
 Building Interreligious Relations 1 (G_BIR1)
 Just Peace (G_JUSTPEACE)

Period 2:

Media 2 (G_MED2)
 Leadership 2 (G_LEAD2)

Spiritual Care 2 (G_SPICA2) Building Interreligious Relations 2 (G_BIR2) Just Peace (G_JUSTPEACE)

* Module number depends on the chosen Specialization Course.

** Choose from the Section modules or Professional Stream modules.

*** The course Master Seminar is taught in period 1-6. Part time students will take this course in the same year as their Internship.

****Part time students: the course Research Skills has to be completed in the second year of the study. The study load of this course is a fulltime study load.

Appendix II Transition Regulations

Changes for Students of cohort 2015-2016

OLD		NEW		
Code	Course 2014-2015	E C	Code Replaceme nt	Replacement course 2015- 2016
G_SMBW141	Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1	6	G_SMBW131	Specialization Course Biblical Studies 1
G_SMBW142	Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2	6	G_SMBW132	Specialization Course Biblical Studies 2
G_SMCIT141	Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1	6	G_SMCIT131	Specialization Course Islamic Theology 1
G_SMCIT142	Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2	6	G_SMCIT132	Specialization Course Islamic Theology 2
G_SMDO141	Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1	6	G_SMDO131	Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 1
G_SMDO142	Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2	6	G_SMDO132	Specialization Course Dogmatics and Ecumenics 2
G_SMGF141	Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 1	6	G_SMGF131	Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 1
G_SMGF142	Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 2	6	G_SMGF132	Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 2
G_SMKG141	Specialization Course Church History 1	6	G_SMKG131	Specialization Course Church History 1
G_SMKG142	Specialization Course Church History 2	6	G_SMKG132	Specialization Course Church History 2
G_SMPR141	Specialization Course Praxis 1	6	G_SMPR131	Specialization Course Praxis 1
G_SMPR142	Specialization Course Praxis 2	6	G_SMPR132	Specialization Course Praxis 2
		6	G_SMGF133	Specialization Course Philosophy of Religion 3
G_TRD1	Teaching Religious Diversity 1	6	G_BIR1	Building Interreligious Relations 1
G_TRD2	Teaching Religious Diversity 2	6	G_BIR2	Building Interreligious Relations 2
		6	G_JUSTPEACE	Just Peace

Appendix III Cum Laude

1. The Faculty recognizes a *cum laude* designation.
 2. The *cum laude* designation is granted to students who satisfy the following requirements:
 - a minimum average of 8.0, weighted according to the number of European Credits;
 - no course with a grade lower than 7.0;
 - a grade of 8.0 or above for the thesis;
 - the maximum of delay is set at two months per nominal year of study.
- The *with honours* designation is granted to students who satisfy the following requirements:
- a minimum average of 7.0, weighted according to the number of European Credits;
 - no course with a grade lower than 7.0;
 - a grade of 7.0 or above for the thesis;
 - the maximum of delay is set at two months per nominal year of study.
3. In paragraph 2, a “course” is understood to be a separately evaluated educational unit, and in determining the average, the awarded grades are weighted according to the weight of the educational units as expressed in the number of study load hours (1 European Credit = 28 hours of study).
 4. The educational units that have been achieved through contract education are registered as an exemption and therefore not counted when determining the cum laude designation.
 5. If, within the degree programme, more than one fifth EC of the educational units are exempt, the cum laude designation is not granted.
 6. If, within the degree programme, two specializations are followed, and one of these specializations is completed cum laude, the student has to choose one of the following options:
 - a. the student can choose to graduate without honors, and without the cum laude designation notation on the diploma. The student will receive a supplement of both specializations or
 - b. the student can choose to graduate in only one specialization (the cum laude specialization), with the cum laude designation notation on the diploma. The specialization that is not completed with cum laude will not be listed and the student will not receive a supplement of this specialization. The followed courses for this specialization will be registered as ‘extra curriculaire’ courses on the supplement of the specialization in which the student is graduating with cum laude.

Appendix IV Graduation Procedure

1. Graduating in August:

- The student needs to apply before 1 June to be able to graduate in August;
- To apply the student needs to complete and submit the form entitled 'Application for a degree certificate' (diploma), which he/she can obtain from the faculty's website;
- The student will receive written confirmation of his/her application before 15 June;
- When the student applies, he/she must indicate clearly which examinations he/she will be taking during the summer months;
- To be able to graduate on 31 August, the student needs to have taken all examinations before that date;
- A course examination form including the grade for the thesis must be submitted to the faculty's administration no later than 31 August;
- The student must apply to the Board of Examiners for here/his study programme concerning any exemptions or changes as soon as possible, and no later than 1 June;
- The faculty's administration will determine whether the student has met the requirements of the programme according to the Degree Regulations.
- The student will receive an update message before 15 July by e-mail;
- The thesis examiner turns in one electronic copy in pdf of the thesis together with the matrixes and the final mark to the faculty's administration by onderwijsbureau.thw@vu.nl

3. Graduating between September and June:

- a. The student needs to apply for his/her degree certificate (diploma) by completing and submitting the form entitled 'Application for a degree certificate', available from the faculty's website;
- b. The student will receive written confirmation of his/her application within ten days of its receipt;
- c. The student can apply for his/her degree certificate (diploma) as soon as the result of his/her last examination is known (this includes the thesis);
- d. The last Friday of the month in which the student passes his/her final course examination will be the graduation date;
- e. The thesis examiner will need to submit one electronic copy in pdf of the thesis together with the matrixes and the final mark to the faculty's administration at Onderwijsbureau.thw@vu.nl
- f. Any exemptions or changes to the student's study programme must be approved by the Board of Examiners; if this has not yet occurred when the student applies for his/her degree certificate (diploma), this can delay the graduation and mean that the student has to remain enrolled as a student for longer;
- g. The faculty's administration will determine whether the student has met the requirements of the programme according to the Degree Regulations. The student will receive an update about this by e-mail.

3. It is not possible to graduate in the month of July.

4. The Board of Examiners will organize the presentation of degree certificates three times per year (in October, February and June). The exact dates will be announced on the faculty website.