This Master Thesis handbook for Business Administration is a reference for everyone involved in the Master Thesis project: students, supervisors, coordinators, 2nd examiners, external associates, and administrative staff. The present handbook describes the key elements and planning of the trajectory of the Master Thesis project for the academic year 2019-2020. This handbook consists of three parts:

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PART I: THE MASTER THESIS TRAJECTORY

1. Aim master thesis trajectory: What is the goal of the master thesis trajectory?

The aim of the master thesis trajectory is that students demonstrate their ability to conduct a well-substantiated piece of academic research about a scientifically relevant topic in business administration in an independent manner. The student does this by showing that he/she is capable of writing a scientific report (master thesis), presenting it in a comprehensive manner and defending the thesis in front of experts in the field.

Relevant indicators for the academic level of a thesis are an adequate research question and its societal and academic relevance, the theoretical models and arguments the thesis draws on, the research design and results, the recommendations and a critical awareness of ethical aspects and limitations of the research. ‘Relevant in business administration’ implies that the student performs research on a topic that is in line with the research expertise of the academic staff. ‘Working independently’ implies that the student develops the required knowledge and skills to conduct proper academic research in an independent manner. Thus, the thesis is more than just an individual paper. It is an expression of the student’s academic capabilities. Although the student will receive supervision, he/she is responsible him/herself for the continuity and final result of the thesis.

The first part of the master thesis trajectory is organised using thesis circles in which students intensively cooperate in their thesis work, in teams coached by one or more supervisors. In thesis circles, students work on a common topic which is proposed by the supervisor. Thesis circles serve as a ‘sounding board’ in which students give feedback to each other, discuss problems encountered in the various stages of the thesis writing process under guidance of the supervisor(s). Thesis circles consist of 4 to 5 students and their supervisor(s). There will be 3 thesis circle meetings in total. Presence in all thesis circle meetings is mandatory. For a detailed description of the purpose, vision and design of thesis circles, see Appendix 1.

Objectives:
In general terms, writing a thesis has the following objectives:

- to actively participate in thesis circles, and being present at all meetings;
- to demonstrate the ability to formulate and define a problem and independently create an appropriate research design in the field of Business Administration / Management, including a clear research strategy and schedule;
- to demonstrate the ability to independently conduct Business / Management research for which the method(s) are clearly explained and justified;
- to demonstrate the ability to creatively use relevant knowledge and insights for the research;
- to demonstrate the ability to generate new knowledge relating to the investigated problem and be independent and critical towards this new knowledge;
- to demonstrate the ability to report clearly, systematically and responsibly and to present the design, implementation and outcomes of the research and the relevance of scientific findings to peers, colleagues, managers, policy makers and others individuals.
2. Admission criteria: When can I start my Master thesis trajectory?

Each student who is admitted to one of the specializations within the Master of Business Administration has to enrol in the master thesis trajectory. To participate in this trajectory and to receive supervision, the student has to register in the usual way, as for any other course or trajectory.

Students of International Business (IB) and Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E)

Before IB and I&E students can start with the master thesis trajectory they have to be assigned to another specialization within the master of Business Administration. These students will write their master thesis under the supervision of the specialization of which they follow the methodology course. The selection of the specialisation and respective methodology course is conducted during the kick-off meeting at the beginning of the new academic year. Students hand in their first and second choice for their methodology course from the different specializations within the Master of Business Administration. Students select their methodology courses from the following specializations within the Master of Business Administration: Strategy, Marketing and Strategic HRL, Organisational Design & Development and must submit their application form to the designated coordinator of the IB or I&E master specialisation.

Students will be allocated by the Chairs of Business Administration in collaboration with the master thesis coordinators of all specializations within the master of Business Administration. Once students have been allocated to one of the master specialisations, they will follow the same procedure as the other master students. The allocation decision will be made in the first week of the academic year and the methodology course will start in week 2.

3. Master thesis trajectory: What are the key elements in the thesis planning?

For a successful completion of the master thesis project it is vital to know the different elements and the planning of the entire trajectory. To provide an adequate start of the master thesis trajectory we urge students to start thinking about possible topics and projects already in the first block. A project market in the first block will support this search process. After the students have applied for a project and are allocated to a supervisor, the students arrange to meet their supervisor, and start to read the relevant literature and prepare an outline project planning in the second block. In the third block, students further work on their research proposal and conceptual framework. In the fourth block they conduct the (empirical or theoretical) research and write up their thesis.

The development of the research proposal and preparations for possible data collection are a crucial part of the research project. Without an adequate research proposal you will not be able to conduct adequate research for your master thesis project and to write a defendable master thesis. The research proposal of the thesis has to be completed successfully and evaluated as satisfactory at the end of Block 3. After that, the students will work more independently on the completion of their thesis in the fourth block. It is highly recommended that students do not start with this final part of the master thesis if they have failed two or more courses in the first and second period.

Each phase in the thesis trajectory will be further elaborated in the remainder of this handbook. For an overview of all the key elements, see Table 1.
### Table 1: Schedule Master thesis for Business Administration 2019-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>IB students select their methodology course and thus their specialization for their master thesis</td>
<td>Start of Block 1: first week of September 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|       | B        | Project market  

  - Please see all the project descriptions on Brightspace | September / October, Block 1 in 2019 | See announcement on Brightspace |
| 2 + 3 | C        | Submission of preferences and argumentation/application  

  - Please use the form of Appendix 2 | Mid November 2019 | Via master thesis coordinator and see announcement on Brightspace |
|       | D        | Allocation to project/supervision/thesis circle | Date to be set by the master thesis coordinator | See list on Brightspace |
|       | E        | Meet and greet theses circles, including discussing relevant literature and project planning | Supervisor and student jointly schedule meetings. | See Brightspace. Furthermore, your supervisor will provide further details |
|       | F        | Start Thesis circles:  

  1. Problem formulation  

  2. Theoretical background  

  3. Research methodology (including research ethics) and concept version of proposal | 27 March 2020 | Electronic version to the supervisor and second examiner |
| 4     | H        | Assessment of Research proposal * | 10 April 2020 | See Brightspace |
|       | I        | Submission of revised Research proposal | Electronic version to the supervisor and second examiner |
|       | J        | Meetings with supervisor:  

  1. Data collection, analysis  

  2. Analysis  

  3. Discussion, conclusion, implications, reflection, recommendations | Supervisor and student jointly schedule meetings. |
|       | K        | Deadline submission of master thesis | 15 June 2020 | Submit to supervisor and second examiner |
|       | L        | Submission of supplementary documents:  

  - Abstract thesis  

  - Research Integrity Form (see Appendix 6)  

  - Consent Form for submitting a thesis in the Radboud thesis Repository (see Appendix 7) | 15 June 2020 | Electronic versions to secretary of Business Administration |
|       | N        | Second chance for submission master thesis (including supplementary documents) * | 10 August 2020 | Submit to supervisor and second examiner |

*Outcomes:*
- Pass, continue (research proposal) or ready to defend (master thesis)
- Revision, resubmit within 2 weeks (research proposal), 2 months (master thesis).
- Exit trajectory, restart in year 2020-2021.
PART II: SELECTION OF RESEARCH TOPIC AND RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1. Orientation: How do I find an interesting and suitable research topic?

When you start your master year, the master thesis may seem to be a long way off, yet it is critical that you start to explore possible topics and projects as early as possible in the master. There are generally two ways of how students can find a topic for their thesis:

1. The student applies for one of the research projects that are presented by the available supervisors on Brightspace. These projects coincide with the expertise and research interest of the supervisor. The advantage of this approach is that the project already has been approved.

2. The student comes up with a topic of their own interest that is connected to the research interests of the specialization. Please note that you need the explicit approval of your specialization before you can start your research.

To support you in your search for an interesting and suitable research topic/project, there will be a project market for students where supervisors present their research projects (see announcement on Brightspace). This offers also an excellent opportunity for students to discuss the possibilities within the different project proposals and their own ideas. The market offers supervisors a good opportunity to meet students and get an impression of their interests. Next to the specialisations within the master of Business Administration, it is also possible to choose a thesis topic in Innovation Management supervised by the members of the different specialisations.

For students who want to come up with their own project proposal it is also highly recommended to look at the project proposals submitted on Brightspace. For them these proposals provide the opportunity to assess what is normally expected in a master thesis. The project market will be scheduled in Block 1 in 2019 (see announcement on Brightspace). It is also possible to conduct research on a current problem of an organization. Both the subjects that you bring in yourself and some of the offerings on the project market may concern possibilities for such practice-oriented research. In such cases, it is common for students to be temporarily based at the organization. So it is possible to combine your thesis work with an internship at an organisation or company (see website of Business Administration Internship Service, BIS1). However, take into consideration that a thesis project requires more effort than doing an internship. The thesis project combines scientific research with scientific reporting, both independently performed by the student. This is reflected in a large degree of autonomy in choosing the subject within the predefined themes, student ownership of the project implementation, the space for independent recommendations regarding the project and the requirement of writing a scientific report (master’s thesis) about the results of the thesis project. It is therefore advisable when communicating with a company/institution to describe the project as a thesis project – and not as an internship. In this case the proposal first needs approval by both the master thesis coordinator and the supervisor. Crucial criteria are:

- Has the proposal any link with the theoretical models and themes of the master specialisation?
- Is the proposal relevant, concrete, feasible, and of sufficiently academic level?

2. Application and allocation of research project and thesis supervisor

1 https://www.ru.nl/nsm/stip-specific-study-information/international-business-administration/internships-bis/
To obtain a thesis supervisor, students should hand in two project preferences together with a motivation letter using the form of Appendix 2 and hand these in using the deposit marked with their master thesis coordinator at the beginning of Block 2, see announcement on Brightspace. The first project preference can be their own project proposal or one of the projects presented at Brightspace. The second project preference always has to be a project presented on Brightspace. Please keep in mind that it is not possible to apply for two projects from the same supervisor!

In December 2019, on the basis of the preferences, argumentation and supervisor capacity, students will be allocated a project and a supervisor. If demand exceeds supply for a specific project, the master thesis coordinator will make the decision in coordination with the supervisor which students will be admitted on the basis of the student’s motivation for the project.

Therefore it is wise to consider the submission of preferences as a job application: Include a clear motivation for the project in your preference application form and indicate why you are the most suited candidate for this specific project. If the first choice is not granted than the second choice will be considered. When the second choice also cannot be granted the student will be contacted to find a satisfying solution. When the student hands in his/her own project proposal the proposal first has to be approved by the master thesis coordinator. If this is rejected then the second preference will be considered.

### 3. Development: How can I produce a good research proposal?

Generally, the research proposal is equivalent to the first three chapters of the thesis and consists of several key elements (See Appendix 3: Format and formal requirements Research Proposal). Although the text may be adapted when writing your complete master thesis, the research proposal must contain a well-substantiated research question (Chapter 1) based on a thorough review of the relevant theoretical background (Chapter 2). Regarding the methodology part (Chapter 3), indications (including operationalization, sources, sample, etc.) must be provided on how the research will be conducted and why these methodological choices are appropriate for the research question. If required, the student can use some of their time in Block 2 to conduct exploratory interviews with experts and companies about the relevance of the topic.

### 4. Examination: How and when will my research proposal be assessed?

Students have to hand in two copies of the research proposal by the end of 3rd block 2020. The deadline is 27th of March. The research proposal will be assessed by the supervisor and 2nd examiner. In order to continue with writing the master thesis, the student first needs to receive approval that the research proposal is evaluated as satisfactory, resulting in a “go” for the remainder of the thesis trajectory. The assessment will be based on the evaluation criteria of research proposal (see Appendix 5); see Brightspace for further assessment information.

The supervisor and 2nd examiner will assess the thesis proposal with a “go/no go” decision within two weeks after the submission deadline. Both fill in the evaluation form and sign it. In case the decision is a “no go” for the proposal, the student will receive comments from the
supervisor and will be eligible for another opportunity in the second half of Block 4. The improved version must be handed in on 15th of May 2020. *It is important to realize that students will not receive extra supervision for writing the improved proposal beyond the allocated total supervision time. Students should therefore follow the recommended planning from their supervisors.*

Generally, the research proposal will cover the beginning of the thesis: research question, literature review (including a conceptual framework) and methodology. When writing your proposal, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **Thematic fit**: the research has to fit the topics of the specialization and the current research expertise of the researchers/supervisors.
- **Argumentation**: the proposal has to convince the reader of the theoretical and/or practical relevance and make clear to the reader why certain choices, methodologies and conclusions are made. Argumentation has to be scientific and mainly based upon the usage of academic literature.
- **Research Ethics**: the proposal should include a discussion of Research ethics. This includes the conduct of the researcher in the field, the treatment of participants during the research, transparency of research goals and freedom to withdrawn from the research at any time, ways to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, adequate ways of informing all participants about the results, and possible implications of how the findings may be applied in the organisation or the population, society etc.
- **Concrete**: all sections of the proposal have to be sufficiently concrete.
- **Consistency**: Are there no parts missing and form the parts together a consistent story. For example, are the key concepts defined and used in the same way throughout the thesis? Is your theoretical discussion aligned with your problem formulation? Do you promise in your research question the same things as you deliver in your concluding section? etc.
- **Feasibility**: the proposal has to convince the reader of its feasibility. This is partially achieved by developing a focused research question supported by sound arguments. In addition, the proposal should contain schedule of how the research will be planned. It should include what will be done in each research phase, how much time is allocated and what resources are required for the complete master thesis.
- **Relevance**: the research should be of both scientific and societal relevance.
PART III: THE MASTER THESIS

1. Formal requirements: What should I always include in my thesis?

The format of the thesis is a research report that follows the structure of a scientific journal paper and has a maximum size of 50 pages. The thesis should consist of the following main elements (for a detailed explanation of thesis requirements please see Appendix 6):

- A cover with a clear title, sub-title, the student’s name and number and name of supervisor and second examiner.
- An introduction including the scientific and societal relevance, the problem formulation and the research question, outline of the thesis.
- A review of the relevant literature and a conceptual framework, model or derived hypotheses/propositions.
- The rationale for choosing the adopted methodological approach and a detailed account of how the research was conducted, including sample, data collection, data analysis, and research ethics (see APA five principles of research ethics http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan03/principles.aspx or APA's Ethics Code, which offers general principles and specific guidance for research activities, available at www.apa.org/ethics).
- A report of the research results.
- A discussion including the interpretation of the results, the contribution to the knowledge, the practical or managerial implications, critical reflection on the limitations of the research and directions for further research.
- A complete and consistent list of references (according to APA guidelines)
- Appendices (e.g. data sources, questionnaires, interview guides, statistical analyses, etc.)

2. What can I expect from my supervisor?

The student works independently on his/her thesis, which implies that the supervisor has a limited role. Also the time that supervisors have for reading drafts, discussing questions, responding to emails and assessing the final thesis, is limited. The supervisor receives a maximum number of hours to supervise a master thesis trajectory. All master theses receive the same maximum number of hours. To make the best use of this time, you should always submit a written part of the thesis before meeting your supervisor. Furthermore, follow the recommended actions from your supervisors. The researcher / supervisor will support the research process, pose critical questions, give relevant literature references, stimulate and inspire. However, the success of the research project remains the student’s own responsibility and depends on the student’s own initiative, creativity and independence. It is therefore vital to prepare a proper project plan for the thesis. Although studying theories and conceptualizing the problem at hand is pivotal to conduct a proper research, the time required to develop a specific method, conducting the fieldwork and analysing the data is often underestimated. In addition, writing the report generally takes more time than expected from a first draft to the final version.

See also Appendix 1: Description working in thesis circles, Roles and tasks.

In case of unexpected and unsolvable problems between student, thesis supervisor or business coach, students are advised to get in touch with the master thesis coordinator of their specialization.
3. Submission of thesis: What procedural elements should be followed?

The master of Business Administration program with its specializations consists of 60 EC. We have set clear deadlines to ensure that students finish their master within time and to ensure that the staff is able to provide the best supervision in the master thesis process. The deadline for submitting the thesis is 15 June 2020. The student uploads a digital version of the thesis including Appendixes on Brightspace. The thesis will be filed and will also be used to check the thesis for plagiarism or fraud. Data (e.g., interview transcripts, observation notes, SPSS data sets or other) should NOT be included in this digital version, but send to the first supervisor prior to the defense by mail or handed in on USB stick.

If the supervisor and the 2nd examiner have indicated that they wish to receive a hard copy version, the student needs to provide this too.

After the student has submitted his/her thesis, it will be assessed by the supervisor. If the supervisor considers it to be sufficient, he/she will pass it on to the 2nd examiner. The supervisor will check the thesis for plagiarism or fraud with among others the program Turnitin in Brightspace. Furthermore, the student should hand in a signed research integrity form (see Appendix 7 Research Integrity Form). Otherwise the student is not allowed to defend his or her master thesis.

Breaches of the code of conduct with respect to academic integrity (as described / referred to in the thesis handbook) should and will be forwarded to the examination board. Acting contrary to the code of conduct can result in declaring the thesis invalid.

If the 2nd examiner also agrees that the thesis is sufficient and no plagiarism or fraud is identified by the supervisor, the student will be admitted to the defense and final arrangements can be made (see below). The defense will be conducted before the summer break in the last week of June or in the beginning of July 2020.

If the supervisor or 2nd examiner consider the thesis to be insufficient, but see opportunities for adjusting the thesis with minor revisions, then these revisions will be discussed with the student and a revised version may be defended in the first timeslot before the summer. If the supervisor or 2nd examiner consider the thesis as insufficient and if they require major revisions, the student may resubmit his/her thesis at the 2nd opportunity before or on 10 August 2020. Note that there is no supervision during the summer break.

Students who had to revise their research proposal or encountered delays in the empirical work have a second chance to submit their thesis by 10 August 2020 the latest. For these submissions, the defense will be conducted in the last two weeks of August.

Students who want to defend the master thesis in the new academic year have to set another date for their defense in consultation with their supervisor and second examiner and if needed a follow up working plan. (Reminder: The supervisor receives a maximum number of hours to supervise a master thesis trajectory. All master theses receive the same maximum number of hours.)
Thesis repository and submission of the thesis and forms

- The master thesis will be uploaded in the thesis repository of Radboud University as well as in the digital archive of the Department of Business Administration.
- If companies do not want to disclose the data, students need to anonymize these. Certain data, such as the interview or observational data, should not be added to the repository.
- If companies still object, the thesis will not be uploaded in the repository.

The student has to provide the a brief summary (max 200 words) of the thesis, in Word, for the thesis repository, which elaborates the project’s conceptual and technical design. This summary should avoid mentioning company specific information. If a project is conducted within a company, then the company receives as many copies as has been agreed on.

N.B.: The thesis needs to be uploaded on Brightspace. Students also need to send the following documents to the secretary of Business Administration: secretariaatbedrijfskunde@fm.ru.nl.
- A summary which needs to be send (in word),
- A scan of the undersigned research integrity form,
- A scan of the undersigned consent form.

Graduation
There are two graduation ceremonies: in October/November 2020 and February/March 2021. For more information about exact dates and procedures: check Student Information Point and Management Study Centre: www.ru.nl/nsm/stip/. No rights can be derived from this information.

4. Defense of thesis: What is the procedure when I’m allowed to defend my thesis?

Once the supervisor and 2nd examiner have approved the thesis, the defense exam can be arranged. The role of the 2nd examiner is to assess the final master thesis and defense. In this defense exam the student will present and defend their thesis. For this final exam the student has to make several organizational and administrative arrangements.

1. Determination of date and time
   Determine the date and time for the presentation in consultation with the supervisor and 2nd examiner, and if applicable the company mentor.

2. Reservation of room and audio-visual equipment
   The student can make a reservation for a room and additional equipment (e.g., flip chart, data projector, etc.) required for the presentation at the desk of the Student Information Point (STIP). (Tel. 024-3615925).

3. Coffee and tea
   If so desired, coffee and tea can be arranged by contacting the catering service of the Radboud University. Students take care of this and pay for these arrangements.

4. The defense exam
   When the thesis is finished and the 2nd examiner considers it sufficient and all other requirements for graduation are met, the thesis project will be completed with a final
defense meeting. The defense meeting consists of four parts: the presentation, the actual exam, evaluation and awarding of the exam certificate. The language of the defense is English.

The defense meeting:
1. **Presentation**
   The student gives a short presentation (approximately 10-15 minutes) in which he/she highlights the main facets of the thesis project.
   This part of the meeting is public. In consultation with the supervisor, the student is free to invite others (e.g. family, fellow students and friends).

2. **The actual exam: questions, comments, discussion and defense**
   30 minutes during which the thesis project is discussed, and the supervisor and 2nd examiner challenge the student to defend their choices and interpretation.
   This part of the defense meeting is only open to the:
   - student;
   - supervisor;
   - 2nd examiner;
   - company mentor.

3. **Assessment**
   The student leaves the room, and the supervisor, and the 2nd examiner decide on the final mark for the thesis project. The company mentor will have an advisory role.

4. **Awarding the exam certificate**
   In the presence of the student, the supervisor informs the student of the mark he/she will receive, explains the considerations that led to the mark and hands out the exam certificate. Guests are welcome at this occasion, depending on the wishes of the student and the supervisor.

5. **Administrative and examination requirements**
   All information about applying for your master diploma can be found on the faculty website of the Department of Business Administration. Search under “info for students” → study information → applying for master diploma. Once the secretary has received all the required documents from the supervisor, the final grade will be transmitted to the Centre of Education. If the student has passed all courses, the official master- and other administrative declarations can be retrieved from the Centre of Education. The student receives the forms, which have to be signed by the Chairman of the Examination Board and the study advisor. One copy is for to the Centre of Education; the remaining copy is necessary for the student to apply for their certificate at the bureau of exams (Comeniuslaan 2, Aula); on workdays between 10 a.m. – 12 a.m. For the certificate the student should bring a copy of his/her preliminary examination ('bachelor certificate or pre-master certificate), student pass and a passport or driver’s license for identification.

6. **Diploma “graduation” ceremony**
   The diploma will be handed over during a “graduation” ceremony with the other graduates. These ceremonies take place on designated dates throughout the year (October/November and February/March). Family and friends are welcome at this diploma “graduation” ceremony.
5. Property rights

The data from the master thesis project remain the property of the Nijmegen School of Management. The rule is in line with the code of conduct of the American Psychological Association (APA), which also includes information about the authorship of publications. You can find more information on APA website http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx.

Copyrights of images from others

Recently, a photographer demanded compensation for the damages that he suffered because a student had used an aerial photograph that he had taken to embellish the cover of her thesis. The photographer found the thesis on a website and submitted a claim for damages well over 1,500 euros. In view of the fact that theses are becoming more and more often digitally accessible, there is a great chance that in the near future we will face such claims more often. In order to prevent this from happening, the following rules are in effect as of 1 September 2014.

The rules

Dear student,

- if you make use of an image (photograph, cartoon, drawing, map, etc.) in your thesis (on the cover or inside), then you should mention your source and make sure that the image is not protected by copyright.
- If there is a copyright, then you should contact the author of the image and ask if you can have his or her written permission to use the image; it is possible that the author claims compensation for the use of the image; in that case you should settle the financial compensation requested and/or agreed upon;
- If you fail to comply, and the author of the image should demand his or her legal rights, then you will be legally responsible. This means that you will have to remove the image and that you will have to pay the fine and possible compensation.

Warning in regard to fraudulent practice.

Companies, such as AcadWrite, offer students to have their master theses written for some 2,000 euros (if they use SPSS, it will be more expensive). Of course, submitting a thesis which has been written by someone else, no matter whether money has been paid, is always fraudulent. How can we best deal with these matters?

The EER (Ma EER 5.5) states that an examiner should inform the Examination Board when he or she suspects that fraud has been committed. If a thesis supervisor or examiner suspects that the student has not written a thesis him or herself, then this should be reported immediately to the Examination Board. Indeed, a thesis that has been purchased does not enable the lecturer to give 'a correct assessment' of the student’s knowledge (Art 5.5, clause 1).

The Examination Board subsequently will 'provide a hearing' (clause 3) for the supervisor or examiner and the student and then determine whether fraud has actually been committed (clause 4). The Examination Board does not need to base its verdict solely on the thesis that has been submitted; draft versions and databases can also be consulted and the Board can have the student cross-examined.

Cross-examining the student in order to assess whether or not he or she has written the thesis him or herself is to be done by the supervisor or examiner in the presence of a member of the Examination Board. It is the task of the Examination Board to determine whether or not fraud has been committed.
Appendix 1: Description working in thesis circles

General thesis circle principles and objectives

1 Introduction

This manual presents some practical guidance to enhance the efficiency of supervision by way of the thesis circle. A thesis circle consists of one or more supervisors and a number of students who share the responsibility for the supervision process of the student members. As such, a thesis circle is a permanent facility for thesis supervision. In the following, the principles and objectives of thesis circles are described. It is important to understand that this educational instrument is explicitly aimed at *supervision* and not at thesis writing itself (Romme and Nijhuis, 2000/2002, p. 2). Thesis circles serve as a ‘sounding-board’ and are initiated for Master’s thesis students.

**Purpose thesis circles**

Thesis circles provide students with the additional benefit of sharing process experiences and knowledge with their peers. Moreover, the circles support supervisors in their supervising task by sharing feedback responsibility. In contrast to traditional tutor-student relationships, circles provide opportunities for additional insights and inspiration.

**Vision of BA and its circles**

Inspired by the need for self-actualization and academic freedom, the department of Business Administration intends to provide students with analytic skills. To ensure the quality of theses, we use the Dublin Descriptors: (1) knowledge and understanding, (2) applying knowledge and understanding, (3) making judgments, (4) communication, and (5) learning skills. In line with these Dublin Descriptors, the responsibility, independence and creativity of students is to be stimulated. Concomitantly, students have to know how they are doing, and what they can do with this knowledge. Moreover, they have to develop a critical ‘eye’ and acquire skills to evaluate themselves.

The Master's thesis is a serious demonstration of a student's ability to explore, develop, and organize materials relating to a certain research area or problem in the field of Business Administration. The goal of the master's thesis is not only to pursue research and investigation, but also to write an extended scholarly statement clearly, effectively and directly. The Master’s thesis should contribute to increasing the following skills of the student: knowledge and understanding, applying this knowledge and understanding, making judgements, communication and learning skills. The process of producing the Master’s thesis will be based on

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the general educational principles of the Department of Business Administration: the provision of a context in which both students and teachers can on a permanent basis assess how they are doing. The final assessment and quality of the end product should not become as a surprise neither to the student or the supervisor. Both the Master Seminar and the Master thesis Circle are important instruments to help achieve the above objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link between circles and research topics</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To maximize the synergetic benefits of thesis circles, they are constructed around research topics. These research topics ensure relevant background knowledge of circle participants or peer students. Moreover, these research areas are related to the department’s research program, which avoids reinventing the wheel and provides students with fundamental knowledge in their field of research. In addition, research topic-centered circles provide additional opportunities for students, such as participating in current studies or publishing their results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinators and supervisors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The thesis circles are guided by one or two staff members, the first acting as supervisor, and the second as his/her back-up in case of absence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Design of thesis circles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is a thesis circle?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A thesis circle consists of 4-5 participants. Two supervisors - a supervisor and back-up - monitor processes and progress in the background. Supervisors and students organize together the thesis circle meetings for the purpose of receiving feedback on their thesis under construction. Together these circle members bear the responsibility to evaluate each other’s working documents. Decision-making occurs by consent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are informed about the research topics on the project market in September/October. Students will be enrolled on a first-come first-serve basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start-end point and meeting frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In total 3 thesis circle meetings need to be scheduled, starting in February and ending in March (see Table 1 for details).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle meetings take place once every two weeks and take 90 minutes each. If required, students can arrange more meetings and meetings for specific purposes together (without the supervisors). In the meetings, students get the opportunity to deal with general issues in the thesis process, problems and questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before a circle meeting, every participant receives an agenda, composed by the chairperson. Each member is allowed to add agenda points during a meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Opening

- The meeting is structured by an opening, which facilitates transition from the ‘outside world’ to the ‘inside atmosphere’ of
2 Organization part

- Subsequently, domestic business is discussed, e.g., personal events worth noting, meeting minutes, document deadlines and the next meeting, and new agenda points.

3 Content part

- The meeting continues with a discussion of every document handed in. A student can ask for specific feedback, because of questions (s)he is struggling with, or (s)he can let the other participants decide what they would like to address. The other participants make comments and, if necessary, they can ask for some clarification. After having discussed all documents, students announce what they plan to hand in for the next meeting.

4 Evaluation

- The meeting ends with an informal evaluation. In this closing round, participants can express their feelings with regard to the meeting atmosphere, the comments received, et cetera.

Principles

For circle participants to have similar expectations, some guiding principles have been explicated.

- Because thesis writing is considered a course, students are expected to attend all circle meetings.
- By means of active participation and assignment to (circulating) roles of chair and scribe or secretary, collaborative learning is facilitated (Romme and Nijhuis, 2000/2002).
- Commitment among circle participants is generated by open assessment of each other’s theses during circle meetings. The quality of feedback from peers is based on psychological contracts, agreed upon by the circle as a whole. By reading and evaluating other participants’ documents carefully, one can expect valuable feedback in return. Thus, circle participants are inclined to feel mutual responsibility.
- Bearing their own responsibility, students are free to either accept or ignore the comments of their peers.

Rules

In order to facilitate the efficiency of thesis circle meetings some rules have to be agreed upon.

- Decision-making on policy issues of the thesis circle is based on the rule of informed consent, or no argued objection. That is to say that a decision is taken if none of the participants has an argued objection. As a result, supervisors and students are equal to each other as participants in decision-making, which is necessary to substantiate the key principle of shared responsibility. The no-objection rule is used, for instance, when choosing a chairman and scribe, delegating certain powers to members of the thesis circle, or assessing the final version of a thesis (Romme and Nijhuis, 2000/2002, p. 11).
- Feedback is given in a constructive and motivated way. This means circle participants comment by providing suggestions rather than giving commands. Moreover, a positive remark can be started with to avoid attack-and-defense dialogues. By using this tone of voice, an atmosphere of mutual respect and safety is
intended.

- Students receiving comments and questions can answer after all participants have contributed. This is to avoid distracting and repeated dialogues.

**Roles and tasks**

- An elected chairperson structures the meeting and readjusts individual contributions by monitoring relevance of remarks, speech time and expressed feelings.
- An elected scribe or secretary provides meeting minutes, in which every member can read remarks and decisions made during the respective meeting.
- The circle participants in general (including chair and scribe) provide feedback on documents.

### 3 Process

This section includes information about the process of writing a thesis when participating in a thesis circle. Essential questions on, for instance, admission and internal workings are addressed in the following.

**Finding a research topic**

- A list of research fields or research topics is presented by the master coordinators of the master specialisations. They will inform students about specific details regarding the choice of their topics.
- Students have to register themselves for the thesis topics after the thesis project market, by sending their preferences to the master coordinator (see Appendix 3).

**Internal workings thesis circle**

- According to a philosophy of collaborative learning, students arrange thesis meetings. This means that one student is elected as chairperson and another as scribe. Both roles are circulated during the 3 meetings.
- Every participant can bring in additional agenda points, e.g. presenting or discussing articles in a meeting.
- Decisions are made by consent, which means that no one has an argued objection.
- Participants bear the responsibility to provide other participants with valuable feedback. This establishes a psychological contract, which guarantees the quality of feedback.
- Feedback is based on argumentation, which diminishes personal or emotional conflicts. Participants are also advised to start or end with positive feedback.
- In the first meeting, organizational practices/domestic business is discussed.

**Meeting purpose**

- In thesis meetings, students discuss each other’s thesis chapters. For this reason, documents have to be handed in one week before the next meeting. Deadlines have to be agreed upon.

**Timeframe**

- Considering thesis writing means that starting-point and end of
the thesis circles have been defined. As a result of this, students leave the circles after the 3rd meeting.

Receiving and providing information

- Brightspace serves as the platform for information, communication and paper exchange.
- Each thesis circle has its own place on Brightspace.
- Information on Brightspace includes a research topic list, circle history/information database, thesis abstracts, thesis assessment criteria, theses, interviews with participants, grades, articles resulting, et cetera.
- Documents to be handed in are distributed by means of Brightspace.
- The webpages of the individual circles enable participants to obtain feedback of peers within 48 hrs or extend discussions outside meetings.

References

## Appendix 2: Useful addresses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordinators Master thesis Specialization</strong></td>
<td>Name&lt;br&gt;E-mail: &lt;br&gt;Telephone: &lt;br&gt;Address: &lt;br&gt;Visiting hours:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secretariat department Business Administration</strong></td>
<td>Telephone: 024-3611835&lt;br&gt;Address: <a href="mailto:secretariaatbedrijfskunde@fm.ru.nl">secretariaatbedrijfskunde@fm.ru.nl</a>, Heyendaalseweg 141&lt;br&gt;Post address: P.O. Box 9108, 6500 HK Nijmegen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Information Point and Management Study Centre</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ru.nl/nsm/stip/">www.ru.nl/nsm/stip/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Catering Service (URD)</strong></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:reserveringsbureau@fb.ru.nl">reserveringsbureau@fb.ru.nl</a>&lt;br&gt;Telephone: 024-3615825; fax: 024-3615826&lt;br&gt;Web: <a href="http://www.ru.nl/voorzieningenportal/eten-drinken/catering/">http://www.ru.nl/voorzieningenportal/eten-drinken/catering/</a>&lt;br&gt;Post address: P.O. Box 9103, 6500 HD Nijmegen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Writing Centre (ASN)</strong></td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:asn@let.ru.nl">asn@let.ru.nl</a>&lt;br&gt;Telephone: 024-3610077&lt;br&gt;Web: <a href="http://www.ru.nl/asn">www.ru.nl/asn</a>&lt;br&gt;Address: E 1.45 (Erasmus tower)&lt;br&gt;Post address: P.O. Box 9108, 6500 HK Nijmegen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix 3: Preferences form for research projects

## Student
- Name student:
- Address:
- Zip code and city:
- Telephone:
- Student number:
- E-mail:

## Company in case of internship (if applicable)
- Name:
- Address:
- Telephone:
- E-mail:
- Contact person:
- Position/department:

## Proposal 1
(Please state the preferred researcher/supervisor of the project and a short description. Your motivation for this project can be explained in an appendix of 1 A4 max. In case of a self-formulated project, enclose a short description of it in an appendix as well).

## Proposal 2 (supervisor must be different from proposal 1!)
(Please state the preferred researcher/supervisor of the project and a short description. Your motivation for this project can be explained in an appendix of 1 A4 max).

## Remarks
Appendix 4: Format and formal requirements research proposal

1. **Personal information**
   - Name
   - Student number
   - Address
   - Phone
   - E-mail

2. **Supervisors**
   - Name of assigned supervisor
   - Name of assigned 2nd examiner

3. **Title of research project**

4. **Introduction**
   - Introduction of the topic
   - What is the cause and relevance of the problem at hand?
   - How is the problem framed in terms of academic literature?
   - Define objective and research question.
   - Outline of the thesis

5. **Theoretical background**
   - Provide an outline of relevant theories/perspectives with regard to the identified problem (what are the key concepts, central cause-and-consequences, assumptions and conditions?)
   - Develop a conceptual model that reflects the problem (relevant variables and proposed relationship between variables)

6. **Methodology**
   - Indicate which method will be applied and why.
   - Indicate which sample, data sources (databases, public sources, questionnaires, interviews, or experiments) and measures will be used.
   - Indicate intended data analysis procedure.
   - Indicate limitations of research project and how research ethics will be addressed.

7. **Planning**
   - Provide a detailed project plan with milestones and a time schedule.

8. **References**
   - Provide a complete and consistent list of references (Please see APA guidelines on Brightspace).

**Format**
Proposal must be 1.5 spaced with 2.5 margins all around, and should not exceed 30 pages. Page 1 of the proposal should include only the title, student name and number, and names of supervisor and 2nd examiner. Please take care to use correct grammar and appropriate style!!
Appendix 5: Evaluation criteria Research Proposal

A digital form is available at the secretary office: secretariaatbedrijfskunde@fm.ru.nl.

Assessment form for research proposal (equivalent to 3 ECTS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic fit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Theoretical background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concreteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name supervisor:

Name 2nd examiner:

Grading: (circle your choice)

S (sufficient)
I (not sufficient)
Description of the criteria that have to be met:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thematic fit</strong></td>
<td>Capable of positioning the research proposal into the current academic field of research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Argumentation</strong></td>
<td>Capable of developing a sound scientific argument concerning the choices that are made in every element of the proposal: 1. Introduction: e.g. what are you going to research and why (theoretical and practical relevance)? 2. Theoretical background: e.g. what theories are applicable to address your research question and why? What do these theories exactly say about your object of research? 3. Methodology: e.g. what sample, variables and analyses are applicable and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Ethics</strong></td>
<td>Research ethics includes the conduct of the researcher in the field, the treatment of participants during the research, transparency of research goals and freedom to withdrawn from the research at any time, ways to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, adequate ways of informing all participants about the results, and possible implications of how the findings may be applied in the organisation or the population, society etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concreteness</strong></td>
<td>Capable of writing a research proposal in clear and unambiguous language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consistency</strong></td>
<td>Capable of developing a complete (all formal requirements) and integrative proposal in which terms are used consistently and the different elements are adequately aligned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feasibility</strong></td>
<td>Capable of developing a focused research question and a realistic project planning including time, tasks and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td>Capable of showing both scientific and societal relevance of the research. Furthermore, the student should also be capable of explicitly analyzing the implications for business practice in terms of implementation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessment Form for Master thesis

Name of student .................................................................

Student ID no. ………………… Date of defense …………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT (circle your choice)</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Problem formulation</td>
<td>I – S – G - VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Theoretical background</td>
<td>I – S – G - VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Methodology (including research ethics)</td>
<td>I – S – G – VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Analyses</td>
<td>I – S – G – VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Discussion and conclusions</td>
<td>I – S – G – VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Style and structure</td>
<td>I – S – G – VG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Student handed in a signed Research Integrity Form. | Yes / No |
| The thesis is checked for plagiarism or fraud       | Yes / No |
Motivation for final grade

..........................................................................................................................
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..........................................................................................................................

Name of supervisor:  

Tentative grade:

Name 2nd examiner:

Tentative grade:

I = insufficient; S = sufficient; G = good; VG = very good

final grade

Calculating the final grade

The supervisor and the second examiner assess the thesis (including the defense and process) on the eleven criteria and based on this set of criteria they will each subsequently arrive at a tentative grade. They assess the master thesis trajectory in the form of a mark on a scale ranging from 0 (the lowest possible score) to 10 (the highest possible score), where only half and whole marks will be given. However, the mark of 5.5 will not be given. When rounding off a mark between 5 and 6, a mark below 5.5 is rounded off to 5, which means that the master thesis trajectory has not been passed. A mark of 5.5 and above is rounded off upwards to a six (6), which means that the master thesis trajectory has been passed. The master thesis trajectory has been passed if the thesis scores no insufficient on the first eight criteria: 1. problem formulation, 2. theoretical background, 3. methodology, 4. analyses, 5. discussion and conclusions, 6. practical implications, reflection and recommendations, 7. style and structure, 8. consistency. The examiners use the following guidelines for assessing the thesis including master thesis trajectory:

- 5 or lower if the thesis scores insufficient on at least one of the first eight criteria;
- 6 if the thesis scores sufficient on all first eight criteria;
- 7 if the thesis scores good on at least three of the first eight criteria, while sufficient on the remaining ones;
- 8 if the thesis scores good on all first eight criteria (or every sufficient is compensated by a very good on these criteria);
- 9 if the thesis scores very good on at least two of the first eight criteria and good on the remaining criteria;
- 10 if the thesis scores very good on all ten criteria.
Description of the criteria

1. The student has formulated a clear research problem that fits within the field of business administration, which requires a sufficient academic level.

2. The student has presented the problem in a theoretically relevant perspective(s) and knows how to develop a useful theoretical framework, model, or derived hypotheses or propositions in order to research their problem statement. This is evidenced by a critical and in-depth review of theories and models that are:
   - relevant for the problem at hand;
   - state of the art.

3. The student has chosen and reported an appropriate methodology for studying the problem, preferably using an empirical approach, which is reflected in:
   - a clear description of the method (in terms of sources used, sample, data, population, respondents selected, techniques used, research ethics, et cetera)
   - Research ethics includes the conduct of the researcher in the field, the treatment of participants during the research, transparency of research goals and freedom to withdraw from the research at any time, ways to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, adequate ways of informing all participants about the results, and possible implications of how the findings may be applied in the organisation or the population, society etc.
   - correct usage of the methods and techniques.

4. The student is capable of analyzing the problem critically using relevant theories, models and methods.

5. The student is capable to discuss the findings based on the literature and to draw correct, complete, and unequivocal conclusions as an answer to the research question.

6. The student is capable of pointing out practical implications and theoretical recommendations that are based on the analysis and discussion, comprehensible, detailed, relevant, and realistic. The student has reflected critically on the results and limitations of the research, as well as their own role as a researcher.

7. The student has reported the research properly, indicated by:
   - a clear, consistent, and structured presentation;
   - correct use of language;
   - correct and complete list of references used.

8. The student has developed a complete (all formal requirements) and integrative thesis in which terms are used consistently and the different elements are adequately aligned.

9. The student has conducted the research independently, in a timely manner and with a critical (academic) attitude. The student has shown a professional attitude and manners / behaviour when working with others involved in the project and stick to agreements.

10. The student has defended their research by
    - presenting their research verbally in a structured, clear, convincing and interesting way (and correct use of language) within 15 minutes;
    - explaining and defending their research before a committee of examiners. The student should be able to respond adequately (on an academic level) on the questions from the examiners and should be able to start an academic debate and discussion with the examiners.

The supervisor checked the thesis for plagiarism or fraud with among others the program Turnitin in Brightspace. Furthermore, the student handed in a signed Research Integrity Form (Appendix 7), otherwise the student is not allowed to defend his or her master thesis.
Appendix 7: Research Integrity Form

Research Integrity

All parties involved in education and research at the Radboud University Nijmegen have a responsibility in maintaining integrity in science and scholarship. Therefore, the general principles of professional academic conduct will have to be complied with at all times. These principles have been laid down in the Netherlands Code of Conduct on Scientific Practice (Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschapsbeoefening). Radboud University Nijmegen has endorsed this code as a guideline.

Research entails all investigations undertaken in order to acquire knowledge and deeper understanding. It is powered by a drive to discover and understand. This academic freedom is based on the understanding that researcher act according to high expectations with regard to research practice. Standards of professionalism and integrity must always be upheld.

Delivering excellent research does not only require intellect but also a high standard of integrity. We seek to sustain a research environment that fosters integrity in research. Integrity is about how research activities are undertaken. It demands that we pay thorough attention to detail in order to assure the accuracy and credibility of data and analysis.

We should ensure that our behaviour towards those involved in, or affected by our research, meets the highest standards. We should also fully consider our responsibilities towards stakeholders and society at large. Moreover, research integrity is fostered in a supportive culture that is conscientious, reflective and where genuine mistakes are permitted if they are admitted, carefully corrected, and learnt from.

Integrity and professional conduct require researchers to be:

- Honest and ethical;
- Professional;
- Critical of self and others;
- As skilful, careful and rigorous as possible;
- Respectful to anyone involved in and/or affected by the research;
- Working in ways that are lawful and accountable;
- Collegial: sharing, engaging in open discussions with colleagues and assisting others in their personal and professional development;
- Mindful of their duty to keep their knowledge and skills up to date;
- Risk-aware and responsible for risk management;
- Responsible: communicating honestly, accurately and as openly as possible;

The previous listing applies to all research activities undertaken by both staff and students, wherever and whenever they take place. It is critical that good research principles and practices are observed, and that their observation is monitored. The individual researcher is primarily responsible for upholding good research practices when undertaking research activities and is expected to be committed to intellectual honesty. Supervisors of students are expected to be role models of good practice and professionalism.

Should anyone encounter a situation in which unacceptable research practices (irrespective of whether they are deliberate or negligent deviations) are committed, they are expected to act on these concerns by intervening personally or by contacting the confidential advisor (see Master thesis Business Administration 2019 – 2020 28
Some practices are clearly unacceptable, but there are also grey areas. The boundary between creative insight and fabrication may not be obvious in the case of selective use of research data. Open discussions of such grey areas provide an opportunity to critically reflect on the robustness of justifications in research practices.

**Unacceptable Research Practices**

All unacceptable practices are to be avoided, as they can lead to different adverse consequences (such as financial loss, waste of resources, or causing psychological and/or reputational harm). Mending problems once they have occurred may range from advice, guidance, mentoring or formal training through an investigation of potential research misconduct. Any innocent errors or mistakes that result in unacceptable research practice(s) should be disclosed transparently and quickly, immediately when they are discovered, and the appropriate reasonable remedy should be supportive. Such remedy should encourage a constructive discussion of ethical dilemmas and challenges in which errors and mistakes can be learnt from.

In particular, the following research practices are regarded as unacceptable:

1. **Fabrication** of data (creation of/making up false data or other aspects of research including documentation and participant consent).
2. **Manipulation** of data, imagery and/or consent forms).
3. **Plagiarism** (general misappropriation or use of (parts of) others’ ideas or work (written or otherwise), and submitting them as your own without acknowledgement or permission).
   a. Plagiarism can be either intentional or unintentional and may take the form of cutting and pasting, taking or closely paraphrasing ideas, passages, sections, sentences, paragraphs, drawings, graphs and other graphical material from books, articles, internet sites or any other source without proper referencing;
   b. Submitting bought or commissioned work (for example from Internet sites or essay banks) is a serious form of plagiarism. This may take the form of buying or commissioning either the whole piece of work or part of it and implies a clear intention to deceive the examiners.
   c. Double submission (or self-plagiarism) means resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of copying either the whole piece of work or part of it. Usually, credit will already have been given for this work;
   d. Collusion is where two or more people work together to produce a piece of work, all or part of which is then submitted by each of them as their own individual work. This includes passing on work in any format to another student. Collusion does not occur where students involved in group work are encouraged to work together to produce a joint piece of work, that is truly based on all individual partners’ efforts and input, as part of the assessment process.
4. **Misrepresentation**
   a. of data (e.g., suppression of relevant results and/or data, or knowingly presenting a flawed interpretation of data);
   b. of interests (including failure to declare material interests either of the researcher or of those who fund the research);
   c. of qualifications and/or experience (including claiming or implying qualifications or experience which are not held).
5. **Mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary material**
   a. failure to keep clear and accurate records of the research procedures followed and the results obtained, including interim results;
   b. failure to hold records securely in paper or electronic form;
c. failure to make relevant primary data and research evidence accessible to others for reasonable periods after the completion of the research;
d. failure to manage data according to the research funds’ data policy and all relevant legislation;
e. failure to provide careful feedback to respondents if such agreements have been made.

6. **Breach of duty of care**
   a. disclosing the identity of individuals or groups involved in research without their consent, or other breach of confidentiality;
   b. placing anyone involved in the research in danger, whether as subjects, participants, or associated individuals, without their prior consent and without appropriate safeguards even with consent; this includes reputational danger where that can be anticipated.
   c. not taking all reasonable care to ensure that risks and dangers, broad objectives, and sponsors of the research are known to participants or their legal representatives, to ensure appropriate informed consent is obtained properly explicitly and transparently;
   d. a supervisor not working with a student to establish an effective supervisory relationship; and vice versa, a student not working with a supervisor to establish an effective supervisory relationship;
   e. lack of support for researchers’ academic freedom in those situations where researchers are faced with unreasonable pressure from external organizations (for example from a sponsor or other interested party with a vested interest in the research) to produce research results that are in their own interests, or to suppress reporting of results that are not in their interests.

7. **Abuse of status as a member of an academic profession** (deliberately exploiting status and reputation as a research professional in areas which have no relevance to the field of expertise).

8. **Taking reprisals against (an) individual(s) who made an allegation of research misconduct and/or attempting to cover up reprisals taken against (that) individual(s).**

Breaches of the code of conduct with respect to academic integrity (as described / referred to in the thesis handbook) should and will be forwarded to the examination board. Acting contrary to the code of conduct can result in declaring the thesis invalid.
Research Integrity Form - Master thesis

Name: 
Student number: 

RU e-mail address: 
Master specialisation: 

Thesis title: 

Brief description of the study: 

It is my responsibility to follow the university’s code of academic integrity and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study. This includes:

- providing original work or proper use of references;
- providing appropriate information to all involved in my study;
- requesting informed consent from participants;
- transparency in the way data is processed and represented;
- ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data;

If there is any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research, I will complete another Research Integrity Form.

Breaches of the code of conduct with respect to academic integrity (as described / referred to in the thesis handbook) should and will be forwarded to the examination board. Acting contrary to the code of conduct can result in declaring the thesis invalid.

Student’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________

To be signed by supervisor

I have instructed the student about ethical issues related to their specific study. I hereby declare that I will challenge him / her on ethical aspects through their investigation and to act on any violations that I may encounter.

Supervisor’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________
Appendix 8: Consent Form for submitting a thesis in the Radboud thesis Repository

Consent Form for submitting a thesis in the Radboud thesis Repository

Radboud University Nijmegen (hereafter Radboud University) has set up a thesis repository. The purpose of this repository is twofold:

1. To archive theses for a minimum period of seven years, in accordance with legal requirements (Wet versterking kwaliteitswaarborgen hoger onderwijs, Art. 7.3, lid 5).
2. Wherever possible and allowed, make theses available to potential users inside and outside Radboud University.

This supports the process of creation, acquisition and sharing of knowledge in the educational setting.

The repository serves as an archive in which all theses will be included. This consent form serves to also enable the publication of those theses.

By submission and publication in the theses repository copyright is not transferred. Therefore, students can at any time revoke their consent for publication.

Rights and obligations of the student

If the student grants permission to Radboud University to make his/her thesis available within the thesis repository to users inside and outside Radboud University, the student states that:

- Users are allowed to use the thesis private study and/or educational and research purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act (Auteurswet), with full mention of the name of the student and the location of the thesis.

- Neither the organization offering internship nor the client of the thesis has any objections against making the thesis publicly available in the thesis repository.

- The student has obtained permission from the copyright holder of any material used in the thesis to incorporate this material as part of the thesis in the theses repository and make it available to others inside and outside Radboud University.

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