



Dear supervisor of a Biology BSc thesis (and research project if applicable),

Thank you for your willingness to act as a supervisor of the graduation project of one of our students of the Bachelor's program Biology of Utrecht University. In this document you will find important information about the compulsory BSc literature thesis course ('Onderzoekschriftie'; B-B3ONSCR) and the facultative research project course ('Onderzoekstage'; B-B3ONST). The surplus research project can be followed in addition to the literature thesis course during the same 10 week period that is reserved. Both courses have a study load of 7.5 EC (being 10 weeks halftime or 5 weeks fulltime; equivalently 200 hours).

If you have any remaining questions after reading this document, do not hesitate to contact us by email ([scriptie.bio@uu.nl](mailto:scriptie.bio@uu.nl)) or by phone (+31(0)30 253 4143/3111). Also, we would like to invite you to visit the course website that you can approach via <http://students.uu.nl/beta/biologie/onderwijs/studieprogramma/major-biologie/scriptiecursus>. Here you can find answers to frequently asked questions as well as all documents and forms that you need.

In case that you are not the daily supervisor and/or other members of your team are also involved in the supervision, we kindly request you to inform them about this letter and the attachments.

## GENERAL

- A student who has not registered in OSIRIS for B-B3ONSCR (and B-B3ONST, if applicable), is not allowed to start the course(s). If this nonetheless happens, no final score can be assigned.
- The bachelor thesis (B-B3ONSCR) and research project (B-B3ONST) are two separate courses. In the research project a practical internship will be conducted, next to writing a literature-based thesis (the theoretical component).
- The BSc thesis is a well thought-over paper based on scientific literature and comprises about 20-25 pages (6000-8000 words). The results of the research internship need to be written up in the form of a report that describes the work that has been done and the main results from those activities. This report may be a 'standard' research report or can be in the form of an extended lab journal, diary or notebook, in which at least the performed experiments are (shortly) introduced, the research question is formulated and the methodology, analysis and conclusions are described.

Note that the BSc literature thesis course and the research project are different courses, with own assessment and own end products. That's why, **two separate documents need to be handed in; the theoretical literature thesis AND the research report. Merging both in one document is NOT allowed in any case.**

- It is important that you and your student timely make agreements about mutual expectations. You can use the attached form if you like, but any written agreement will do. Supervisors may have different opinions about matters and to avoid conflicts and disappointments a clear agreement can help. Make agreements with the student about planning and holidays, dates for handing in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> versions and when he/she will receive your feedback. It is also important to timely arrange a second assessor. This is a shared responsibility of the student and supervisor.
- Deadline for handing-in the thesis and research report by the student to the supervisor is the last day of the course period. Deadline for handing-in the filled-in assessment form, final thesis, report and rubric(s), as specified below, to the coordinators is 10 workdays after the end of the course period. Extension is only possible with permission of the coordinators and only if you and your student both agree. It is important in that case to explicitly set new deadlines.

## THESIS (compulsory)

- The course guide with the formal course description can be found at <http://students.uu.nl/beta/biologie/onderwijs/studieprogramma/major-biologie> (in Dutch).
- Three lectures about writing a thesis, and about finding and referencing literature are mandatory. These lectures are organized in the very beginning of the course period.
- The student hands-in a compulsory thesis plan (the so called 'scriptieplan'), which is a rough version of main question and ideas, on the set deadline date (approx. 2 weeks after the start of the course). This plan should be discussed with the supervisor shortly before or shortly after this deadline. A writing plan is handed to just the supervisor within 3-4 weeks. The supervisor may decide otherwise (regarding the writing plan) if necessary.

- The thesis is delivered in two versions: a concept version and a final version. The student receives feedback on both versions. You may want to use the progress form for this.
- The final version is assessed with the aid of a compulsory **rubric** (thesis). Assessment of this type of course contains subjective elements, like how spelling and grammar errors are judged. Moreover, the gain and/or progress may be judged differently by different assessors. The rubric describes criteria for all parts of the thesis, each with an outcome of *insufficient – sufficient – good*. It is a tool for the assessment of many aspects and has the advantage that all students are assessed in the same way. Additionally, it makes clear to the student how the assessment was made. A rubric is not a calculation table; ultimately, the grade is the judgement and the responsibility of the assessor and 2<sup>nd</sup> reviewer.
- The final assessment includes assessment of the content, structure, effort and the progress of the student using the rubric.
- The supervisor and student timely ask a second assessor for the final thesis assessment. The second assessor should use maximally 2 hours to read the report and to grade it, independent of the main supervisor. The two assessors agree on the final mark. The role of the 2<sup>nd</sup> assessor is in general affirmative, if the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reviewer disagree strongly, the matter should be handed over to the Board of Exams after consulting the coordinators.
- Grading and assessment of the thesis by an examiner with at least a BKO (basic teaching qualification) is mandatory. This can be you as a primary supervisor, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> reviewer. Daily supervision, however, can be done by an experienced PhD student or postdoc. The PhD student or postdoc may also grade the student and sign the assessment, but in all cases the signing examiner (with BKO) is ultimately responsible for the grade.
- The student is informed that his/her final work needs to be checked for plagiarism. This check is the responsibility of the supervisor and examiner, but the student need to upload the thesis to Ephorus (<https://student.ephorus.com/students/>). After receiving the plagiarism score the supervisor needs to declare that the report has been checked – and no plagiarism was detected - on the assessment form. If you do not have an Ephorus account and cannot apply for one via your faculty key user (Hans Goedemans; j.h.j.goedemans@uu.nl, in the case of the UU Faculty of Science), the students may in exceptional cases upload the thesis using Scriptie.bio@uu.nl as unique delivery code.

## INTERNSHIP

- The aim of the practical work during the internship is to experience the research cycle at least once. The idea is not to explicitly assess the practical skills of the student but the learning progress.
- Technical assistance of the practical work (*e.g.* laboratory or field work) can be done by a PhD student, technician or even an experienced master student. The supervisor is nevertheless responsible for the quality of the deliverables and the learning progress of the student.
- It is possible that the students do their practical work in pairs and this can result in a joined research report. The theoretical part (thesis), however, is an individual assignment.
- If it proves to be complicated for a student to do a complete experiment within the time given, it is possible that the student joins a PhD student, post-doc or technician who is doing an experiment. If the student can think along and can follow the experiment or performs/analyses parts of it, this may be sufficient.
- Assessment of the practical work and the progress report is in line with the criteria of the lab. This part of the research project is also assessed using a **rubric (research and research report)**. This rubric is comparable to the rubric for the thesis as described above. The student should also hand in a research report.
- Assessment of the literature thesis by a second assessor is mandatory. However, grading and final assessment of the research part can be done by the supervisor and the daily supervisor.

**The compulsory bachelor thesis course (B-B3ONSCR) is officially finished when:**

1. a signed and filled-in assessment form,
2. a filled-in rubric (thesis),
3. a digital final version of the thesis,

are handed to the coordinators by mailing it to [scriptie.bio@uu.nl](mailto:scriptie.bio@uu.nl)

**The facultative research project course (B-B3ONST) is officially finished when in addition to the above-mentioned:**

4. a digital final version of the research report,
5. a filled in rubric (research project),

are handed to the coordinators by mailing it to [scriptie.bio@uu.nl](mailto:scriptie.bio@uu.nl)

On behalf of the Biology Department we would like to thank you for supervising our students. Any feedback and comments on the course and its content is much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Dr. Ton Peeters and Dr. Martijn van Zanten

Coordinators Bachelor Thesis and Research Project

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