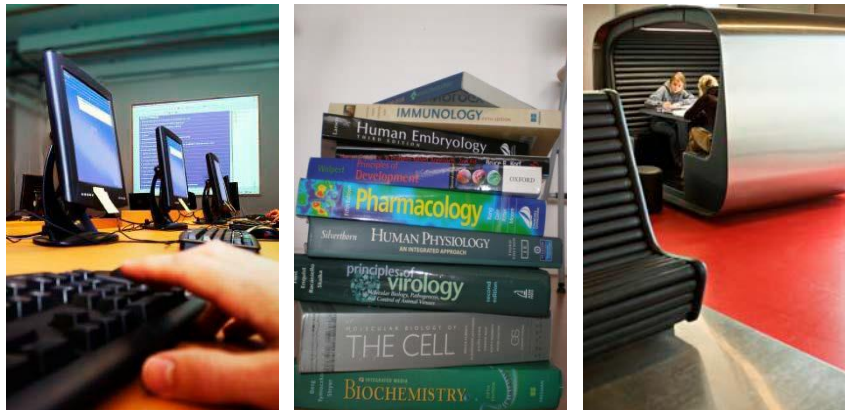


Master Writing Assignment Guide for Examiners and supervisors



Graduate School of Life Sciences

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Preface

This guide is intended for staff members of the Graduate School of Life Sciences or supervisors at host institutes charged with the task of examining and/or supervising students performing a Writing Assignment as part of their Master's programme. A corresponding guide has been drawn up for students. The purpose of this guide is to provide a helping hand, and refer to other sources for additional information or support.

Chapter 1. Quick guide gives you an overview of the most important information you need to know in order to successfully examine and/or supervise a student during their Writing Assignment.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide more extensive information for those that are interested.

Additionally, the [Teacher's Guide website](#) is a useful tool created to provide support to examiners and supervisors. Here you can find a wealth of information on all of the topics mentioned in this guide as well as all forms and documents you may need.

The writing assignment of the GSLS Master' s programmes is governed by a number of rules and guidelines recorded in the GSLS Education and Examination Regulations, the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners and the Student' s Charter. The latest versions are available on the [Teacher' s Guide](#).

The Graduate School of Life Sciences

The Graduate School of Life Sciences (GSLS) at Utrecht University is a higher education institution that combines the expertise and educational facilities of the Faculty of **Science** –departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Pharmaceutical Sciences– are combined with the clinical research and education of the Faculties of **Medicine** (University Medical Centre Utrecht - UMC Utrecht) and **Veterinary Medicine**. The GSLS falls under the responsibility of the Deans of these three participating faculties. The Deans have appointed a [Board of Studies](#) for management of the GSLS.

The GSLS provides research training and education for Master' s and PhD students, incorporating theory and practice at both levels and allowing overall quality control and consistency. All research Master' s programmes at the GSLS are linked to renowned research institutes within Utrecht University.

Master's programmes

The GSLS offers [17 Master's programmes](#) that belong either to **Biosciences** (Faculty of Science) or to **Biomedical Sciences** (University Medical Centre Utrecht). The rules and regulations of the GSLS are the same for every student.

All GSLS Master's programmes follow a general [structure](#) although the Master's programmes can slightly deviate from the general structure (check every programme [individually](#)). Common to all Master' s programmes is the beginning with the Introduction Week ([Introducing Life Sciences](#)) where they get all the information about the GSLS and their individual programme. Additionally, all Master's programmes have a research project and the minimum requirement of 7 months of practical research work mandatory to reach the end goals of the Master' s, as well as a series of [scientific seminars](#) that they should attend during the course of their programme.

GSLS principles on scientific integrity

Plagiarism, falsification and fabrication are the top three actions of scientific misconduct. More information about what precisely these actions entail can be found in the [Education and Examination Regulations \(EER\)](#). More information about the actions expected from the examiner and supervisor can be found on section 3.7 of this guide.

The GSLS follows the principles of [scientific integrity](#), as described in the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) (Pieter J.D. Drenth, 2010) and [The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) (2018). Both codes set out the principles that should be observed by each individual concerned, which are the following basic norms: honesty, reliability, objectivity, impartiality and independence, as well as open communication, duty of care, fairness and responsibility for future science generations. When a student conducts research during the writing assignment, they enter the world of scientific research, with the responsibility of following the scientific code of conduct, based on the above principles of proper scientific behavior.

Chapter 1. Quick Guide

The Graduate School of Life Sciences maintains a high standard of education. With many GSLS writing assignments being supervised both inside and outside the UU and UMC Utrecht, the uniform assessment of these assignments is a major challenge. Although the majority of the writing assignments are carried out at renowned and excellent research groups, each institute/country has its own standards when it comes to assessing student writing assignments. In order to ensure a uniform and high standard of education, including assessment, we hereby provide guidelines for supervision and assessment of the writing assignments performed by GSLS students.

1.1 Learning outcomes:

After finishing their Writing Assignment students are capable of independently:

- conducting literature research using scientific secure literature databases (e.g. PubMed);
- using scientific literature and insights in a critical manner;
- summarizing literature using their own words;
- integrating results and models of papers read into new models;
- formulating hypothesis for future research.

1.2 Start of the writing assignment

The writing assignment can only start if the examiner, supervisor and student have received an email confirming the approval by the Board of Examiners. The application should be submitted in [Osiris Case](#). Note: For approval of the application and assessment access to Osiris Case is needed. If you do not have an account in Osiris Case, an email will be send with instruction on how to log in. Please make sure to check your spam folder, if you did not receive this email.

1.3 Supervision terminology and responsibilities

Definitions

Examiner:

- is affiliated to UU/UMCU, Princess Maxima Centre, or the Hubrecht Institute as a full, associate (UHD) or assistant (UD) professor with a tenured (track) position. Professors on a UU/UMCU special chair (bijzonder hoogleraar), but in daily life affiliated to a non-UU/UMCU institute, can also act as examiner.
- cannot be a postdoc or PhD candidate.

Supervisor host institute (only applicable for projects outside UU/UMCU):

- works at the host institute (outside UU/UMCU, Princess Maxima Centre, or the Hubrecht Institute) where the project is carried out.
- is an expert in the field (cannot be a PhD candidate)
- must be sufficiently capable of supervising a MSc student.

Daily supervisor:

- can be the same as examiner or supervisor host institute. If this is not the case: the daily supervisor can be a PhD candidate or postdoc. If the daily supervisor is still rather junior (e.g., PhD candidate), a senior scientist (e.g., their own supervisor) must provide support.
- works at the institute where the writing assignment is carried out.
- must be sufficiently capable of supervising a MSc student.

Second reviewer (only applicable for projects at UU/UMCU*):

- is an expert in the field (cannot be a PhD candidate) and is not directly involved in the supervision of the writing assignment that the student has been working on. Ideally, the second reviewer is a staff member from a different group than the examiner and daily supervisor.
- can be from outside UU/UMCU, Princess Maxima Centre, or the Hubrecht Institute.

*For projects outside UU/UMCU both examiner and supervisor host institute grade the writing assignment, therefore a second reviewer is not required.

Responsibilities

The examiner:

- is familiar with the research field of the writing assignment
- ensures the academic master level of the proposed assignment
- supervises at a distance if the assignment is preformed outside the UU/UMCU
- discusses grading process and academic level of the writing assignment with supervisor host institute (for projects outside UU/UMCU) or daily supervisor (for projects at UU/UMCU) before the start of the assignment
- discusses rubric/assessment criteria with student and supervisor of the host institute or daily supervisor at the start of the assignment
- discusses the achievement of the student during the final assessment together with the supervisor of the host institute or daily supervisor, preferably using the rubric
- determines the final grade
- supports grades with feedback (preferably using rubrics)
- can only assess maximum two of the following components for the same student: major research project, profile project, writing assignment, and business internship

The supervisor host institute:

- is responsible for the daily supervision
- monitors the achievements and progress of the student
- provides grades
- discusses progress/performance with the student during the final assessment, if possible together with the examiner, using rubric/assessment criteria

The daily supervisor:

- guides the student throughout the assignment
- communicates with student and examiner (for assignments at UU/UMCU) or supervisor host institute (for assignments outside UU/UMCU)
- advises on grades to examiner or supervisor host institute

The second reviewer (only applicable for projects at UU/UMCU*):

- provides grades

*For projects outside UU/UMCU both examiner and supervisor host institute grade the assignment, therefore a second reviewer is not required.

The student:

- is responsible for choosing a topic and finding a suitable research group and examiner/supervisor must apply for approval from the Board of Examiners before starting the Writing Assignment in Osiris Student
- must adhere to the rules of scientific integrity.
- must finish the writing assignment on the agreed end date or takes the appropriate action in case of delay
- must stay in contact with the examiner and if applicable daily or host supervisor
- is responsible for seeking help when problems (either professional or personal) arise
- is responsible for informing the supervisor/examiner about the GSLS guidelines

1.4 Duration of the Writing Assignment and extension

- Five weeks (7.5 EC) are scheduled for the Writing Assignment. The student cannot extend the Writing Assignment for credits.
- The Writing Assignment should be completed preferably within these five weeks from the start date to submission of the assignment.
- To meet the deadline, the scope of the assignment should be limited and clearly defined, the student works diligently, and the agreements between supervisor and student about the content and scope of the assignment are clear.
- If the Writing Assignment cannot be completed before the end date students need to request an official extension. The procedure for this can be found on the [students' site](#).

1.5 Phases and outcome of the Writing Assignment

- A Writing Assignment consists of several key stages: defining the topic, formulating a hypothesis, drawing up a timetable, literature research and the writing phase.
- There are two formats:
 - Literature Review - a review paper in the relevant research field
 - Research proposal - an NWO Open Competition Domain Science – KLEIN-1 grant application
- The Writing Assignment should have an in-depth discussion, in which students demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate hypotheses and results, presents their own views, and draws conclusions that point towards new research opportunities.
- The body of the text (excluding legends, tables, footnotes, references, etc.) should typically be 6000–8000 words long. It should be emphasized that the content is more important than the number of words. The assignment should include minimally 25 and maximally 60 references.
- The assignment should be written in English and contain a summary specifically aimed at informing the general audience about the content (plain language summary – in Dutch or English, 500 words, high school Biology or science level). The assignment is allowed to be written in Dutch, if the writing assignment is conducted at a company or organization that requires a Dutch report. In this case, an English summary is required.
- References: up-to-date reviews, based on recent literature (maximally 5 years old, of which two are maximally 3 years old) are more useful to students and their supervisors than reviews based on older literature. A review based on recent literature has the added benefit of containing fewer references.

1.6 Interim assessment

An interim assessment is not mandatory, but it is important to evaluate the work and progress on a regular basis. The [Writing Assignment rubrics](#) can be used as a tool to discuss the applicable strong points and points of improvement of the draft and first version.

1.7 Fraud and plagiarism

Fraud or plagiarism is absolutely not allowed and will be dealt with as described in the [Education-and Examination Regulations](#). Sanctions vary from the invalidation of a paper and a record in OSIRIS to the permanent termination of programme registration. You cannot graduate with *Cum Laude* and/or honours if you have been found guilty of plagiarism or other scientific misconduct. The examiner:

- has the responsibility to ensure that no fraud or plagiarism took place. When you find or suspect that your student is committing fraud or is plagiarizing during their Writing Assignment, this must be reported to the Board of Examiners (BoE). You are invited to contact the BoE first for advice: [more information on how to deal with plagiarism or fraud](#).
- must check the final research reports for plagiarism using [Ouriginal](#), or an alternative comparable plagiarism checker.
- When the reported percentage of plagiarism in Ouriginal is >10%, but there is no case of plagiarism, a motivation written by the examiner explaining this should accompany the assessment form.

Supervisors should not hesitate to contact the Board of Examiners for an informal discussion before taking formal steps. The contact information for the Board of Examiners can be found on the [Students' Site](#).

1.8 Grading

At the end of the Writing Assignment, the student will be expected to have met the [learning outcomes](#). In order to assess whether they have achieved these learning outcomes, the [Writing Assignment Rubrics](#) can be used.

For writing assignments inside UU/UMCU, the assessment is performed by the examiner in close consultation with the daily supervisor (if applicable) and the second reviewer. For writing assignments outside of the UU/UMCU, the UU/UMCU examiner and supervisor host institute should contact each other in order to make sure that the assessment of all components is performed according to the guidelines of the GSLS.

- First, the supervisor host institute determines the grades according to their grading system (e.g., Anglo-American letter grading (F-A⁺)).
- Next, the supervisor host institute consults the UU/UMCU examiner. The examiner supports the conversion of the grade to the Dutch marking system. A conversion table is available [here](#).

If the examiner's and host supervisor's/second reviewer's marks differ by 2 or more points, the Board of Examiners should be notified by the examiner.

In order to meet the [cum laude requirements](#), the student should receive an 8.5 or higher for your Writing Assignment.

1.9 Final assessment and submission of the assignment

The writing assignment is registered via Osiris Case, the examiner must submit the assessment digitally in [Osiris Case](#) within 10 working days after the student has handed in the final report. The examiner will receive reminders regarding the end date of the project. After the examiner has handed in the final assessment, the second reviewer (for projects inside UU/UMCU) or supervisor host (for projects outside UU/UMCU) will need to approve the assessment in Osiris Case.

The assessment procedure for a Writing Assignment that is registered via Osiris Case is as follows:

- For writing assignments inside UU/UMCU, the examiner performs the assessment in close consultation with the daily supervisor and second reviewer.
- For writing assignments outside UU/UMCU, the examiner contacts the supervisor host institute to be informed about their grading and to make sure that the assessment of all components is performed according to the guidelines of the GSLS. The examiner is responsible for submitting the grades from both them and the supervisor host institute. The supervisor host institute will digitally sign the entered grades.
- The student will be requested to upload their report in Osiris Case after the examiner has submitted the assessment. After uploading the report, the Master's administration will be notified to finalize the results.

Take note that the end report of the student should only feature one author, which is the student. The end report should not be a compilation of efforts from multiple authors. It is essential that only the work by the student is handed in and graded. Should there be an interest in publishing the Writing Assignment in an academic journal, the process to prepare the article should start after grading. The final product for assessment should not have influences of multiple authors.

1.10 Copyrights and publication

The student will always be writing the assignment under experienced supervision, and the assignment will often be part of a larger framework/project. By signing the application form, the student declares to transfer the copyright of all products (including the tangible and intellectual products) of the assignment to the UU/UMCU or host institute. Depending on the magnitude of the scientific contribution, the student has the right to be a (co-)author of publications or to be otherwise acknowledged.

1.11 Problems or questions and further information

In case of any problems or questions, feel free to contact the [programme coordinator](#) first, or otherwise the [academic counsellor](#) or [research project coordinator](#). Students can also be referred to the study guide page about [guidance and counselling](#).

All official regulations of the GSLS are recorded in the Education and Examination Regulations, the Rules and Regulations and all other relevant documents and forms, can be found [here](#).

Chapter 2. The Writing Assignment process from A to Z

The main purpose of the Writing Assignment is to teach students how to independently perform literature research and write a scientific essay or proposal in a limited timeframe. After completing their Writing Assignment, students are expected to have acquired sufficient knowledge and skills to critically analyse and interpret scientific literature, as well as present their own views and formulate a research hypothesis for future research. Both the final level of knowledge and skills acquired by the student and the learning process should be taken into account during the final assessment.

2.1 Approval of the Writing Assignment application

- 1) When a student contacts you with the request to write their Writing Assignment under your supervision, make an appointment to discuss:
 - the possibilities within the group
 - topic and the size and scope of the assignment
 - who the daily supervisor will be
 - what the supervision entails
 - how often you will be in contact, setting milestones and preliminary deadlines
 - confidentiality if applicable
- 2) The student will use the information from this meeting to start a new case in [Osiris Case](#) for the writing assignment and complete the application form. In subsequent meetings, you can elaborate on this information more thoroughly. The Osiris Case form will ask for approval from the Board of Examiners. This form has to be signed by the student, the examiner, the supervisor host institute (in case of an external Writing Assignment), and the student's programme coordinator.
- 3) The student needs to submit the application in Osiris Case at least 20 working days (4 weeks) before the starting date of the Writing Assignment.
- 4) The quality and suitability of the topic will then be assessed by the Board of Examiners. **The student cannot start the Writing Assignment without this approval.**

Note: For approval of the application and assessment access to Osiris Case is needed. If you do not have an account in Osiris Case, an email will be sent with instruction on how to log in. Please make sure to check your spam folder, if you did not receive this email.

2.2 Drawing up a timetable

Having a clear timetable from the beginning of the writing assignment helps the student to conclude their project successfully and avoid delay. It is advisable to start the writing assignment by drawing up a timetable that contains the different phases of writing:

- Specify when the different parts of the process need to be finished and set targets
- Make appointments with the student to discuss the progress of their work and determine when the writing plan, the first draft and final version need to be handed in and when you will provide feedback.

The purpose of the timetable is to keep the student on track. It also provides a warning signal when the target is not met, which is an opportunity to define problems and issues early. Regular check-in moments help with this.

Give the student time to play with ideas. Check if students really understand the topic by asking questions such as: 'In your own words, tell me what you are about to research. What is the research question or the problem? Why is this problem relevant?' Assist students in answering these questions and discuss thoroughly whether their plans are feasible.

Once the topic of the Writing Assignment has been defined, the student can start searching for relevant literature. The three key references that the student has listed on the application form can be used as a starting point. Because it is easy to get lost in the sea of scientific information, it is important that the student stays focused on the chosen topic and doesn't spend (too much) time researching unrelated subjects or collecting too much information. The Utrecht University Library provides [tips, theory and training for searching and using scholarly information](#).

2.3 The Writing Assignment end product

The specific format of the assignment should be discussed before the student starts actually writing.

- The assignment should be written in English. Unless you fall under the exceptions allowing a Dutch report as listed in the [Rules and Regulations](#).
- The body of the text (excluding legends, tables, footnotes, references, etc.) should be 6000–8000 words long, but keep in mind that the content is more important than the number of words.
- The literature section should include between 25 and 60 references.
- The assignment needs to include a summary of the content written for the general public. (plain language summary – in Dutch or English, 500 words, high school Biology or science level).
- The assignment should have an in-depth discussion, in which the student demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate hypotheses and results, present personal views, and draw conclusions that point towards new research opportunities. This often requires the student to read additional literature. Many find this phase particularly problematic. Data needs to be presented in one manageable graph or figure that tells the story. This requires students to select, order, interpret and clearly present data. It's easy for them to lose sight of the objectives at this stage.

2.4 Confidentiality and accessibility of the Writing Assignment.

An external organisation may request confidentiality from the student, both during and after the Writing Assignment. It is however mandatory that the examiner (Utrecht supervisor) has access to the student's Writing Assignment at all times. If confidentiality applies, students will not be asked to provide a copy of the assignment to the Administration Office, but instead hand in a summary with additional contact information. The mandatory plagiarism check can be done without storing the report in the database, choosing the option 'under embargo'.

It is important that the report is available to the Board of Examiners upon request, due to rules regarding accreditation. You as an examiner are requested to keep a copy available for 7 years.

2.5 Publishing

It is not uncommon for the students' Writing Assignments to form the basis for a scientific article. Writing a scientific article is difficult skill to master. Make sure students finish their Writing Assignment and assess this assignment, before they start writing the review article which will be used for publication.

Please note that the product a student will hand in to the school should be an individual product. That means it cannot be edited for publication by you or other co-authors. Of course, feedback can be given. If you / your group decide to publish as a review, you can rewrite it after the student has handed in their individual report.

2.6 Premature termination of the writing assignment

No credits will be allocated to prematurely terminated writing assignments.

Termination by the student: This could be due to a variety of reasons (e.g., the writing assignment has failed to meet expectations, the student is experiencing personal problems that interfere with continuation of the writing assignment, etc.). Before deciding to terminate the assignment prematurely the student is advised to contact the [academic counsellor](#). The student must notify the supervisor and examiner as soon as possible on the decision to terminate the writing assignment and inform the programme coordinator as well. An insufficient grade will be registered by the Master's Administration Office after confirmation by the examiner.

Termination by the examiner and/or supervisor. This may be the consequence if the student fails to honor the agreements or to remain in contact with the supervisor/examiner, without giving substantiated reasons. Please, visit the [Teacher' s Guide](#) about this matter. The following guidelines should be used:

- The student has failed to honor the agreements laid down in the application form (and the internship contract, if applicable) and has been reprimanded clearly on several occasions by the supervisor and/or examiner.
- The student has been granted at least two opportunities to redeem themselves by continuing the writing assignments in the agreed manner. The student must have been notified in writing.
- The supervisor and/or examiner has stipulated a clear deadline in the second communication, warning the student that the writing assignment will be terminated in the event of continued non-compliance. The student will be notified in writing if the writing assignment is deemed to have been terminated.
- The supervisor and/or examiner has sent copies of this correspondence to the programme coordinator.

An insufficient grade will be registered by the Master' s Administration Office after confirmation by both student and examiner. The student is entitled to submit an appeal against this decision to the Board of Examiners.

Chapter 3. Supervision of the writing assignment

3.1 What is supervision?

There is more to supervising a student than giving a first instruction, keeping an eye on how things are going and grading their final product. As a supervisor you are also overseeing students' learning process. At the end of their Writing Assignment, students should have acquired skills, knowledge and competencies needed to become a Master of Science. These are written down in the [rubrics](#) which can be used for an interim assessment and the final assessment and supervisors should be familiar with them.

3.2 Expectations

It is important to determine what supervisors can reasonably expect from their students. The assessment criteria cover the writing process as well as the final product. The students' analytical skills, initiative and attitude to work are also taken into account.

The [rubrics](#) or [SEED tool](#) can be used at the start of the (learning) process as a tool to steer students in the right direction, offer insights into what is expected, and how their performance will be graded. Supervisors should explain to students which elements (if not all) of the criteria are particularly important to them, and why, so that the students know what is expected of them right from the beginning. Students should be able to fill gaps in their knowledge by finding and reading relevant literature, and acquire skills with assistance from their supervisor. These can include but are not limited to formulating a research problem, performing literature research independently, and ordering, critically reviewing and integrating all necessary information.

3.3 Feedback

Constructive feedback is an important part of a successful learning process. In many evaluations, students indicate that they would like more feedback when writing their assignment. Students also express the need for well-motivated feedback and criticism in order to learn.

Giving constructive feedback is not an easy skill to master. It is not only about what they are doing well and what they are doing wrong. More importantly, it is about explaining why something is right or wrong, and providing useful advice on how to improve. Supervisors should adjust the way they give feedback depending on the student. Some students appreciate clear and direct feedback, while others might take such feedback personally. Assure all students that any feedback given is not personal. It is always meant to help them in the learning process. Don't just give your opinion ('I think this is not very good'), but tell the student why you think it is not good (yet) and give advice on how to improve. It is also important to focus on both performance and progress. Start by saying what you like about the work and attitude, and then talk about the things the student could improve upon. 'I think your writing is good, but shortening the sentences might make it easier to read' sounds better than 'The sentences are too long, it's very hard to read. The writing is good however.'

Here are five steps for giving constructive feedback:

1. State the purpose of your feedback. State what you will be talking about and why it is important.
2. Describe what you have observed and your reaction.
3. Give the individual an opportunity to respond.
4. Offer specific suggestions or solutions.
5. Summarize everything discussed.

3.4 Writing phase

During the writing phase, students start to put their ideas into words. Proper guidance and moral support are important during this process.

Encourage students to divide the Writing Assignment into a number of rounds: begin with a rough outline with titles of main sentences and paragraphs, and rephrase and refine this into a text with complete sentences. It is advisable to give feedback in rounds as well: on the rough outlines, on the content and on the details, dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

The supervisor's double role as supervisor and assessor can cause friction with some students. They may delay submitting their 'imperfect' first draft for fear of it affecting their final mark. It is therefore very important to talk about this during the start-up phase. Agree on the number of drafts the student will submit and the specific assessment criteria (the rubrics can be a helpful tool). Discuss if the draft version(s) will be assessed as well, or just the final version.

Next to all of the above, students are expected to indicate when they need additional help or want to consult you. Encourage them to do so, by showing willingness to help and ensuring your door is open for any question they may have. Actively keep in touch with your students to keep an eye on them and the writing progress.

3.5 Final assessment

The examiner must complete the assessment form within 10 working days after the student has handed in the final report and has given an oral presentation. The form is completed in Osiris Case and should be accompanied by the Original summary and the rubrics that were used to motivate the grade. After the examiner has handed in the final assessment, the second reviewer (for projects inside UU/UMCU) or supervisor host (for projects outside UU/UMCU) will need to approve the assessment in Osiris Case.

When assessing the Writing Assignment, keep in mind that above all, it is supposed to be **a learning experience for students**. Take into account both the student's 'end product' (the Writing Assignment) as well as the overall learning process, such as the students' speed of learning, the ability to absorb new information and their work attitude.

[The rubrics](#) contain a list of assessment criteria, which can be used as a guideline for the final assessment. Some supervisors determine the final mark by systematically weighing the assessment criteria they consider particularly important. Others may weigh up these factors more instinctively. Students are entitled to know in which areas they are to be assessed.

For writing assignments inside UU/UMCU, the assessment is performed by the examiner in close consultation with the daily supervisor and the second reviewer.

For writing assignments outside UU/UMCU, the supervisor host institute provides a grade. The examiner and supervisor host institute should contact each other in order to make sure that the assessment is performed according to the guidelines of the GSLS. The examiner established a grade and determines the final grade.

For projects abroad:

- First, the supervisor host institute determines the grades according to the marking system (e.g., Anglo-American letter grading (F-A⁺)) of that country in consultation with the examiner.
- Next, the examiner converts the grade according to the Dutch marking system. The conversion table is available [here](#).

If the examiners and second reviewers or supervisor host institutes marks differ by 2 or more points, the examiner should notify the [Board of Examiners](#).

If advice is needed on grading (for example when there is doubt or something is unclear), the [Assessment Support Panel](#) is available to answer such questions. They can be reached by emailing asp@umcutrecht.nl.

In order to meet the [cum laude requirements](#) a student should receive an 8.5 or higher for their writing assignment.

3.6 Plagiarism check: Ouriginal and/or MOSS

Utrecht University takes fraud and plagiarism very seriously and the examiner is responsible for ensuring that none of these issues take place. The plagiarism-detection software supported by Utrecht University is Ouriginal. As a general rule, all written products from Utrecht University (essays, reports and writing assignments) have to be checked for plagiarism by using this software. It indicates to what extent plagiarism is committed, and which source is used. Check the [teacherguide](#) and the [UU website](#) for more information on how to use Ouriginal.

If a student wrote computer codes as part of the writing assignment, these should be separately checked for plagiarism with specialized software. [MOSS](#) is free and available for examiners to use.

Any act of fraud or plagiarism should be reported to the Board of Examiners. Students committing fraud or plagiarism will be punished by the sanctions described in the [Education and Examination Regulations](#), varying from invalidation of a paper and a record in OSIRIS to permanent termination of registration to the programme. Furthermore, no *cum laude* classification can be obtained. Please do not hesitate to contact the [Board of Examiners](#) first for informal discussion on the case before taking the formal steps.

3.7 Completion of the Writing Assignment

In order to complete the writing assignment and register the grade in Osiris, the student and the examiner need to follow these instructions:

- The student sends the final report to examiner, second reviewer (or supervisor host institute, if applicable) and programme coordinator.
- Student and supervisor check together if there are any restrictions on publication (embargo). If there are, the examiner should upload the final report themselves in Ouriginal so that it can be done under embargo (check guidelines in [Teachers' Guide](#)).
- The examiner will submit the assessment digitally in Osiris Case within 10 working days after the student has handed in their report and gave their oral presentation.
- For projects inside UU/UMCU, the examiner performs the assessment in close consultation with the daily supervisor and second reviewer.
- For projects outside UU/UMCU, the examiner contacts the supervisor host institute to be informed about their grading and to make sure that the assessment is performed according to the guidelines of the GSLs. Examiners are responsible for submitting the grades from both the supervisor host institute and themselves in Osiris Case.
- The student will be requested to upload their report in Osiris Case after the examiner has submitted the assessment.
- After uploading the report, the Master' s Administration Office will be notified to finalize the results.

Additional sources and contact information

Useful websites

[Students' site of the Graduate School of Life Sciences](#)

[Teacher' s Guide of the Graduate School of Life Sciences](#)

Training

The GSLS [PhD Course Center](#) offers several editions every year of the course 'Supervising a Master' s student' . We encourage young researchers to take this course.

Other courses and material provided by Utrecht University for teaching in higher education can be found [here](#).

Contact

[Board of Examiners](#)

[Assessment Support Panel](#)

[Programme coordinators](#)

[Research project coordinators](#)

All other GSLS contact information is given in the [Students' site](#) and [Teachers' Guide](#).