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Master's programmes Earth Sciences

Guided Research (GEO4-1521)

Objective

In addition to the Graduation Research, all Earth Sciences MSc students have to perform a second individual project. This second project can be in the form of a Guided Research or an Internship. A Guided Research project can be performed externally at another academic or non-academic institution. A Guided Research is similar to a Graduation Research (MSc project) but, in comparison to the Graduation Research, the expectations regarding the autonomy and independence of the student in a Guided Research project are lower. This applies particularly to developing the research objectives and methodology. Furthermore, an oral presentation of the results is not obligatory and not part of the assessment.

Research projects carried out in the context of summer schools, seminars, or other courses do not count as Guided Research project. Table 1 provides a comparison between MSc Research, Guided Research and Internship.

Tab. 1 Comparison MSc Research, Guided Research and Internship

| | <i>MSc Research GEO4-1520</i> | <i>Guided Research GEO4-1521</i> | <i>Internship GEO4-1500</i> |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Compulsory</i> | Yes, for all programmes and profiles | Performing at least one (all programmes) | compulsory for M-profile and EC-profile |
| <i>Possible number of ECTS credits</i> | 30, 37.5, 45 | 7.5, 15, 22.5, 30 | 15 – 30 |
| <i>Type of host institution</i> | Academic (exceptional non-academic) | Academic (exceptional non-academic) | Non-academic |
| <i>Possibility to be performed at external institution</i> | Yes | Yes | Exclusively at external institution |
| <i>Compulsory report, individually written in English</i> | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| <i>Oral presentation</i> | Compulsory | Possible (not part of evaluation) | Possible (not part of evaluation) |

23 **Pre-requisites**

24 To start with an Internship or a Guided Research a student has to obtain at least
25 30 ECTS credits of theoretical MSc courses (GEO4-...) from the relevant
26 programme. An Internship can be performed before or after the Graduation
27 Research.

28

29 **Procedure and content**

30 The topic of the Guided Research must fit within, or has strong links with, one of
31 the Earth Sciences programmes. The methodology can be based on literature
32 studies but can also include practical activities such as: fieldwork, lab-work or
33 computer-based simulation/modelling. In any case, a permanent member of the
34 scientific staff of the department of Earth Sciences or Physical Geography is
35 responsible for the supervision and research assessment. Postdocs and PhD-
36 students may be involved in the daily supervision and can act as second
37 supervisors. It is possible that the Guided Research project is performed at another
38 academic or non-academic institution. In this case, a staff member at the host
39 institution will be in charge of the daily supervision who is typically then also the
40 second supervisor. If the project does not involve a second supervisor, a second
41 reviewer has to be assigned to the project. Typically, the second reviewer is only
42 involved in the assessment of the report. However, the second reviewer takes over
43 the responsibilities of the first supervisor if necessary.

44

45 As part of the project prepares an **individual** report written in English. This report
46 is a stand-alone document and it is inadmissible that it text overlaps with any other
47 report/thesis, including those produced by the student himself/herself.

48

49 The credit load of a Guided Research can vary between 7.5 and 30 ECTS credits in
50 steps of 7.5 ECTS credits.

51

52

53 **Before starting a Guided Research project**, the project has to be agreed by the
54 first supervisor and approved by the Teaching Institute Earth Sciences. An MSc
55 thesis project agreement form needs to be filled out, signed and send to the
56 Teaching Institute via the online webform at

57 <https://fd21.formdesk.com/universiteitutrecht-geo/earthsciencesguidedresearch>

58 The agreement form contains the following information:

- 59
- 60 • **Personal data of the MSc student**
 - 61 • **Title of the project**
62 The title should reflect the topic of the study, which must be related to the
63 Earth Sciences master programme.
 - 64 • **Name of the first supervisor/reviewer.**
 - 65 • **Name of the second supervisor or reviewer**
66 See information about the webform below for the requirements with respect
67 to the supervisors.
 - 68 • **ECTS credits**
69 The study load of project can be 7.5, 15, 22.5, or 30 ECTS credits
 - 70 • **Project description**
71 The project description briefly describes the aims of the project and the
72 approach taken / methods applied to achieve these aims.
 - 73 • **Project schedule**
74 The project schedule includes dates of meetings with the supervisor(s) and
75 should indicate when the supervisor is not accessible for longer time periods.
76 Furthermore, milestones to evaluate the progress of the project, for example,
accomplishment of the required data set.

77

78 The agreement form must be signed by both the MSc student and the first
79 supervisor.

80 Furthermore, the following information needs to be provided on the webform:

81 • **Personal data of the MSc student**

82 • **MSc programme**

83 • **Title of the project**

84 • **Name and affiliation of the first supervisor/reviewer.**

85 • **Name and affiliation of the second supervisor or reviewer**

86 • **Number of ECTS credits**

87 • **Start and end date of the project**

88 The time planning must be consistent with the number of ECTS credits; 1 week
89 (40 working hours) corresponds to 1.43 credits. The length of the project has
90 to be planned in a way that public holidays are excluded in the calculation of
91 the total number of working hours.

92 **Personal data of the MSc student**

93 • **Title of the project**

94 The title should reflect the topic of the study, which must be related to the
95 Earth Sciences master programme.

96 • **Name of the first supervisor,**

97 The first supervisor is a permanent staff member of the department of Earth
98 Sciences or Physical Geography.

99 • **Name of a second reviewer**

100 The second supervisor is another staff member of the department of Earth
101 Sciences or Physical Geography or the daily supervisor at the host institution.

102 • **Host institution and contact person** if applicable.

103 • **Number of ECTS credits**

104 The study load of project can be 7.5, 15, 22.5, or 30 ECTS credits

105 **Project description**

106 The project description briefly describes the aims of the project and the
107 approach taken / methods applied to achieve these aims.

108 • **Time planning of the project**

109 Start and finish date are indicated in the time planning.

110 The time planning has to be consistent with the number of ECTS credits; 1
111 week with 40 working hours corresponds to 1.43 ECTS credits. The length of
112 the project has to be planned in a way that public holidays are excluded in the
113 calculation of the total number of working hours.

114

115 On the webform, it should also be indicated whether the research project involves
116 fieldwork. If the project involves fieldwork, a signed Declaration regarding safety
117 and behavior during excursions and fieldwork must be uploaded. The form and the
118 related safety regulations and guidelines can be obtained/downloaded from the
119 Master Earth Sciences Guided Research Blackboard community
120 (<https://uu.blackboard.com/>). Note that assessing the risks of the planned MSc
121 fieldwork and discussing these risks with the student is the task of the supervisor
122 and part of the safety procedure. Because of insurance purposes and to get a quick
123 overview of the students abroad in emergency situations, it is required and obliged
124 to register your stay abroad in the framework of your studies in Osiris.

125

126 The above information is used by the Teaching Institute for registration and
127 monitoring purposes as part of the quality assurance of the Earth Sciences master
128 programmes.

129

130 **During the Guided Research project**, it is expected that the student does all in
131 his/her power to fulfill the commitments agreed on in the MSc agreement and to
132 ensure the progress of the project as planned. A delay in finalizing the MSc project
133 of more than four weeks after the intended end date has to be reported and justified
134 by the student to the Teaching Institute. A request of postponing the date of
135 completion has to be supported by the supervisor and has to include an updated
136 time planning. **Delayed completion of the Guided Research project without**
137 **approval by the supervisor can lead to its rejection.**

138 **At the end of the Guided Research project**, the first supervisor/examiner
139 grades the MSc thesis project.
140 After sufficient feedback and discussion, the first supervisor/examiner grades the
141 Guided research project. The final assessment is discussed and approved by the
142 second reviewer/examiner. The assessment and grading of the Guided research
143 project will be based on the Guided research Rubric Earth Sciences. The Rubric
144 includes instructions how the grade of the Guided research project is determined
145 and can be found on the Master Earth Sciences Guided research Blackboard
146 community.

147 If the Guided research project is graded with a sufficient grade, the student sends
148 the final version of the thesis in Word or pdf format to
149 i.beekman.uu@analysis.orkund.com for plagiarism check by the Teaching Institute
150 using URKUND/Ouriginal. Note that the supervisor and student will not receive a
151 report of the plagiarism check, unless plagiarism has been detected.

152 The rubric must be signed by both reviewers/examiners and the supervisor
153 forwards the signed document to the Student administration via
154 studadm.geo@uu.nl for processing in OSIRIS.

155
156 **A final mark of 8.5 or higher** will only be approved if it is supported by a third
157 reviewer. This third reviewer a) should be an expert in the field of the internship /
158 guided research; b) should not have been involved in any way in the project and/or
159 writing stage; c) may be a university lecturer or professional from outside Utrecht
160 University; d) is expected to provide a short written statement. In this statement
161 the 3rd reviewer declares that the written argumentation in the evaluation form
162 justifies the exceptional high mark of ≥ 8.5 , and illustrates that the thesis belongs
163 to the top 15% of the Earth Sciences MSc theses at Utrecht University. It is the
164 task of the main supervisor to request for this statement and to add this to the
165 standard thesis assessment form.

166

167 Version: August 2022

Project agreement

Guided Research (GEO4-1521)

Name:

Student number:

e-mail:

telephone (optional):

1st supervisor:

2nd supervisor /reviewer :

If applicable: Host institution and contact person

ECTS Credits:

Title:

Project description

Aims:

Approach/methods:

Schedule

| Date / Period | Activity |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| | |
| | First version of report submitted |
| | Final version of report submitted |

Signatures

Student

1st Supervisor