

Master's programmes Earth Sciences

**Guided Research (GEO4-1521)**

**Objective**

In addition to the Graduation Research (MSc thesis project), all Earth Sciences MSc students must carry out a second individual project of at least 15 EC. This second project can be in the form of a Guided Research or an Internship. The credit load of a Guided Research can vary between 7.5 and 30 EC in steps of 7.5 EC. Guided Research projects of 7.5 EC will thus not count as an obligatory second individual project but can be carried out as an extra individual project besides the Graduation Research and an Internship, or as a second Guided Research project. Note that regular Guided Research project of at least 15 EC will be registered under course code GEO4-1521, 7.5 EC Guided Research projects under GEO4-4437, and second Guided Research projects under GEO4-4416.

Typically, a Guided Research project is carried out under direct supervision of a staff member of the Department Earth Sciences or Physical Geography but can also be performed externally at another academic institution or a research institute. A Guided Research is similar to a Graduation Research 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 research objectives and methodology. Furthermore, an oral presentation of the results is not obligatory and not part of the assessment.

**Table 1** Comparison of MSc Research, Guided Research and Internship projects

	<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 of at least 15 EC	
<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)

\* 7.5 EC Guided Research projects are registered under GEO4-4437; second Guided Research projects are registered under GEO4-4416

28 Research projects carried out in the context of summer schools, seminars, or  
29 other courses do not count as Guided Research project. Table 1 provides a  
30 comparison between MSc Research, Guided Research and Internship.  
31

## 32 **Pre-requisites**

33 To start with a Guided Research a student must have obtained at least 30 ECTS  
34 credits of theoretical MSc courses (GEO4-...) from the relevant programme. A  
35 Guided Research can be performed before or after the MSc Graduation Research  
36 project.  
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## 38 **Procedure and content**

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40  
41 The topic of the Guided Research must fit within or has strong links with the Earth  
42 Sciences programmes in which the student is enrolled. The methodology can be  
43 based on literature studies but can also include practical activities such as  
44 fieldwork, lab-work, or computer-based simulation/modelling. A permanent  
45 member of the scientific staff of the department of Earth Sciences or Physical  
46 Geography is responsible for the supervision and research assessment. Postdocs  
47 and PhD-students may be involved in the daily supervision and can act as second  
48 supervisors. It is possible that the Guided Research project is performed at  
49 another academic or non-academic institution. In this case, a staff member at the  
50 host institution will be in charge of the daily supervision, who will typically be  
51 then also the second supervisor. If the project does not involve a second  
52 supervisor, a second reviewer must be assigned to the project. In this case, the  
53 second reviewer is only involved in the assessment of the report. However, the  
54 second reviewer takes over the responsibilities of the first supervisor if necessary.  
55

56 As part of the project prepares an **individual** report written in English. This  
57 report is a stand-alone document, and it is not allowed that its text overlaps with  
58 any other report/thesis, including those produced by the student himself/herself.  
59

60  
61 **Before starting a Guided Research project**, the project must be agreed by  
62 the first supervisor and approved by the Teaching Institute Earth Sciences.

63 If the student and supervisor agree upon the Guided Research project, the  
64 student must enroll for the Guided Research course with the appropriate course  
65 code (see above) using the regular course registration procedure in Osiris  
66 Student (see [https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/enrolment/course-  
67 registration](https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/enrolment/course-registration)).

68 Subsequently, the project needs to be registered and submitted for approval to  
69 the Teaching Institute, before the project is started. A Guided Research project  
70 agreement form needs to be filled out, signed and submitted in Osiris Case. A  
71 template of the agreement form can be found at the end of this document.  
72

- 73 • Log in to *Osiris Student*
  - 74 • Got to *Zaken / Cases*
  - 75 • Start a new case
  - 76 • Read the instructions carefully
- 77

78  
79 The agreement form contains the following information:

- 80 • **Personal data of the MSc student**  
81 • **Title of the project**  
82 The title should reflect the topic of the study, which must be related to the  
83 Earth Sciences master programme.  
84 • **Name of the first supervisor/reviewer.**  
85 • **Name of the second supervisor or reviewer**  
86 • **ECTS credits**  
87 The study load of project can be 7.5, 15, 22.5, or 30 ECTS credits.  
88 • **Project description**  
89 The project description briefly describes the aims of the project and the  
90 approach taken / methods applied to achieve these aims.  
91 • **Project schedule**  
92 The project schedule includes dates of meetings with the supervisor(s) and  
93 should indicate when the supervisor is not accessible for longer time periods.  
94 Furthermore, milestones to evaluate the progress of the project, for  
95 example, accomplishment of the required data set.

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97 Some of the above information also needs to be filled in on the Osiris Case  
98 webpage for administrative and archiving purposes.  
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100 If the project involves fieldwork, a signed *Declaration regarding safety and*  
101 *behavior during excursions and fieldwork* must also be uploaded. The form and  
102 the related safety regulations and guidelines can be obtained/downloaded from  
103 the Master Earth Sciences Guided Research community on Brightspace  
104 (<https://uu.brightspace.com/>). Note that assessing the risks of the planned MSc  
105 fieldwork and discussing these risks with the student is the task of the supervisor  
106 and part of the safety procedure.

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108 Because of insurance purposes and to get a quick overview of the students  
109 abroad in emergency situations, it is required and obliged to register your stay  
110 abroad in the framework of your studies. This is achieved by following the next  
111 steps:

- 112 • Log in to *Osiris Student*
- 113 • Go to *Buitenland aanvraag / Stay abroad request*
- 114 • Start a new case using the yellow + icon
- 115 • Select your MSc programme
- 116 • Select *Internship / (field)research / other stay abroad*
- 117 • Complete the request

118 You can upload the confirmation email you will receive after your Guided  
119 research request has been approved by the Teaching Institute.

- 120 • Submit your request

121  
122 After submission of the above application in Osiris Case, the Teaching Institute  
123 will check whether it is complete and correct, whether the first supervisor and  
124 second assessor possess the required qualifications, and whether the number of  
125 EC credits corresponds to the time planning of the MSc Research project. If the  
126 application does not pass these criteria, the student and supervisor will be  
127 informed and receive information about the next steps to be taken to fulfil the  
128 requirements. If the application passes these criteria, the Teaching Institute will  
129 approve the project. The student and first supervisor will then receive a  
130 confirmation message that the MSc Research project has been registered. Then  
131 the student can start the actual project.  
132

133 **Submission of change request (optional)**

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135 During the Guided Research project, it is expected that the student will do all in  
136 his/her power to fulfill the commitments agreed on in the MSc agreement and to  
137 ensure the progress of the project as planned.

138

139 If a change in plans occurs, the student must inform and discuss this with the  
140 first supervisor. This applies to the following situations:

141

- The MSc research project will be extended in size (number of EC credits)

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- The end date of the MSc Research project will be postponed by more than  
143 four weeks due to personal circumstances.

144

145 If the first supervisor agrees, the student submits a change request in Osiris Case  
146 by taking the following steps:

147

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- Log in to *Osiris Student*
- Go to *Cases > GEO Guided Research Earth Sciences*
- Click the *Change request* tab
- Read the instructions carefully
- Complete and save the 'Change request' form
- Submit your request

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155 The change request must be justified and an updated version of the agreement  
156 form including an updated time planning, which has been signed by both the  
157 student and the first supervisor, must be uploaded. The student and first  
158 supervisor will be informed whether the change request has been approved by  
159 the Teaching Institute. Note that delayed completion of the Guided Research  
160 project without approval may lead to its rejection.

161

162

163 **Submission of first version for feedback**

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165 When the student has finished the first version of the Guided Research report,  
166 he/she submits the document to the first supervisor by email for feedback as  
167 agreed in the agreement form. Note that during this phase, communication  
168 between student and supervisor takes place via email and thus not via Osiris  
169 Case.

170

171 The first supervisor provides this first version with constructive  
172 comments/feedback that helps the student to improve the quality of the report.  
173 Feedback may also be provided by the second assessor instead of or in addition  
174 to the first supervisor's review, if the second assessor has been more intensely  
175 involved in the daily supervision of the project than the first supervisor.

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178 **Submission of final version for assessment/grading**

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180 The student implements the feedback provided by the supervisors and prepares a  
181 revised, final version of the Guided Research report. After finalizing the report,  
182 the student submits his/her final version of the report in Osiris Case for  
183 assessment. For this, log in to Osiris Student, go to *GEO Guided Research Earth  
184 Sciences*, and click the appropriate tab to upload the report.

185

186 Since the uploaded version of the report will be graded, the student is urgently  
187 requested to double check whether the correct version is uploaded. The uploaded  
188 version will be automatically checked for plagiarism using Turnitin. It is not

189 necessary to upload additional outcomes such as datasets or computer models in  
190 Osiris Case. These can be shared directly with the supervisor when requested.

191

192 The supervisor and second assessor will then assess and grade the report using  
193 the standard Guided Research Rubric Earth Sciences (see the Master Earth  
194 Sciences Guided Research community on Brightspace for a pdf copy of this  
195 assessment form).

196

197 *Note that the grading system for Guided Research projects will change as*  
198 *of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. From this date, the ten-point grading system will be*  
199 *replaced by the pass/fail system. Final assessments of Guided Research*  
200 *projects that supervisors upload to Osiris after February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, will*  
201 *be registered according to the pass/fail system, also if you started your*  
202 *guided research project before that date.*

203

204 A final mark of 8.5 or higher will only be approved if it is supported by a third  
205 reviewer. This third reviewer a) should be an expert in the field of the internship /  
206 guided research; b) should not have been involved in any way in the project  
207 and/or writing stage; c) may be a university lecturer or professional from outside  
208 Utrecht University; d) is expected to provide a short, written statement. In this  
209 statement the 3<sup>rd</sup> reviewer declares that the written argumentation in the  
210 evaluation form justifies the exceptional high mark of  $\geq 8.5$ , and illustrates that  
211 the report belongs to the top 15% of the Earth Sciences MSc reports at Utrecht  
212 University. It is the task of the main supervisor to request this statement and to  
213 add this to the assessment form.

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216 Version: August 2025

# 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

1<sup>st</sup> Supervisor