

Master's Dissertation (A006766)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 15.0

Study time 450 h

Course offerings in academic year 2027-2028

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2027-2028

De Soete, Alexander

LW06

lecturer-in-charge

De Wilde, Vanessa

LW22

co-lecturer

Jacobs, Marie

LW22

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2027-2028

[Master of Arts in Language, Diversity and Policy](#)

crdts

offering

15

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Research report, scientific research, reporting of research findings, research methodologies

Position of the course

The master's dissertation constitutes the final component of the master's program. It offers students the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge related to a specialized topic within the research domains of the Master in Language, Diversity and Policy. Through the master's thesis, students demonstrate that they have been academically trained and possess the analytical and synthetic capacity to independently develop a scientific research project within a self-defined domain, drawing on the knowledge and skills acquired over the course of the program. This includes, among other things, formulating a research question in a scientifically sound manner, arriving at nuanced answers through critical reflection and the use of the most appropriate methods, and presenting these answers clearly and in a manner tailored to the target audience in a written dissertation.

Contents

A list of possible topics and supervisors will be provided. Students select their topic, which must fall within one of the research domains of the Master in Language, Diversity and Policy.

Initial competences

Having successfully completed a bachelor's dissertation or having acquired the intended competences through other means.

Final competences

- 1 The student is able to formulate a scientific research question addressing complex issues related to language, diversity, and policy.
- 2 The student is able, under supervision but with substantial independent input, to produce a scientific text based on a relevant research problem.
- 3 The student demonstrates critical insight into the international scientific literature related to the chosen research problem, with attention to recent developments and methodologies within the relevant discipline(s).
- 4 The student demonstrates problem-solving and critical-reflective abilities in applying theoretical models and analytical methods, and is able to translate the study's insights into practical policy recommendations.

- 5 The student is able to communicate coherently and clearly, both in writing and orally, about the conducted study, and can adapt this communication to different target audiences (e.g., academic and professional stakeholders).
- 6 The student is able to substantiate positions related to the research problem in a scientifically sound manner and with the necessary degree of critical self-reflection.
- 7 The student is able to justify any use of GenAI both orally and in writing, and critically reflects on the role of such technologies in academic research and professional practice related to language, policy, and diversity.

Conditions for credit contract

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Master's dissertation, Seminar, Independent work

Study material

None

References

Course content-related study coaching

The research project is guided by the supervisor(s). In addition, this course unit includes seminars on academic/professional writing skills, presentation skills, and commonly used methodologies. These seminars will not be recorded.

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Professional practice, Oral assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Professional practice, written assignment, and oral evaluation.

In the master's dissertation, the student reports in writing on the research that they have conducted. There are two possible formats for the written work: (1) a paper in article format (7000-9000 words), aimed at an academic audience and structured according to the conventions of a scientific article; (2) a research report (7000-9000 words), aimed at a professional audience of domain specialists and/or policymakers, developed as a scientifically grounded report with a more practice-oriented approach and a strong focus on practical applicability.

The format of the oral defense corresponds to the chosen format of the written work. Students who opt for an article-format paper give an academic presentation. Students who opt for a research report give a popularizing presentation, supported by a poster or infographic. Regardless of the chosen format, the student provides a brief introduction to the master's dissertation (topic, method, results). This is followed by critical questions by the supervisor and the second reader.

The master's dissertation and the oral defense are assessed by the supervisor and a second reader. Each assigns a grade, each accounting for 50% of the final mark. The evaluation focuses on the original research conducted independently by the student during the thesis process. In accordance with the Education and Examination Code, the responsible use of generative AI is permitted. The extent to which the student has achieved the intended learning outcomes, and how generative AI has been used responsibly, may be assessed through the product (the thesis), the process (feedback meetings with the supervisor), and the oral defense.

In the evaluation of both the written work and the oral defense, the following criteria are taken into account, among others:

- research problem and positioning
- research design and methodological choices
- analysis and scientific grounding
- findings, implications, and policy relevance
- structure and academic language use
- explanation and justification of any use of generative AI tools
- independence in the research process
- responsiveness to feedback and input

It is a shared responsibility of the student, the supervisor and/or the adviser to hold at least three meetings during the dissertation process. Participation in these meetings is required to submit the written dissertation.

Calculation of the examination mark

The final mark is determined once the three compulsory assessment components (process, written dissertation, oral defence) are completed. It is not simply the sum of these components but reflects the extent to which the student has achieved the intended learning outcomes. In this regard, the oral defence is essential for determining whether the student can justify the content and genesis of the master's dissertation and whether the dissertation meets the criteria for academic integrity. Students who fail to fulfil any one of these three requirements cannot pass the master's dissertation. See the faculty master's dissertation regulations for all modalities.

Facilities for Working Students

It is possible to receive feedback by appointment during office hours.