

# THE EEG - PART 8

## GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT & FINAL PROJECT HANDBOOK

GA/FP HANDBOOK (MASTER)



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This handbook is the official source of information about the Graduation Assignment and Final Project (GA/FP). Its contents have been discussed and agreed at various meetings of the Graduation and Examination Board (GEB) with external members, Academic Supervisors, and administrative staff of Wittenborg as well as advice from external advisors. It is designed to provide students with general information and suggestions to help them complete their final graduation assignment/final project (GA/FP) successfully.

The GA/FP provides students the opportunity to engage, in depth, with an area or issue of professional or intellectual interest. Carrying out a graduation assignment provides an opportunity to read extensively, but with a clear purpose and focus, to develop fresh understanding of a specific question. Writing the graduation assignment, a major piece of work, a thesis, allows you to share that experience and to disseminate the results.

A thesis must provide evidence of students' ability to analyse complex data and to evaluate the implications of their results within the context of your study in the programme.

Students' thesis should include a reflection on the research process itself as well as providing a discussion of the problems and issues raised during the study. Students should also reflect on the limitations of their research study and suggest possibilities for the development of future work in this area, either in terms of more research, or practical implications deriving from this study.

A thesis should be in a formal academic style, a style quite appropriate for many other reports in professional settings. It has certain conventions. The readers/viewers for the graduation assignment will be other members of the students' academic community (students and Academic Supervisors). It is not written for a non-expert audience, so the student can, indeed should, use an academic style of writing and presenting.

Most research reports use roughly the same format. It does not matter whether students have done a customer satisfaction survey, an employee opinion survey, a health care survey, or a marketing research survey. The important thing is that readers of research reports (i.e. decision makers, funders, etc.) will know exactly where to find the information they are looking for. Once they have learned the basic rules for research proposal and report writing, they can apply them to any discipline.

### **1.1 Aims and Objectives – Learning outcomes**

One of the important purposes of GA/FP is to introduce students to original empirical research with the guidance of an academic supervisor. The main contribution of a GA/FP is that the student is obligated to examine a sizeable topic for a sufficient period and to learn to define clearly both the very question and the research findings. By the time a GA/FP is completed the student often should claim to have mastered some aspect of knowledge and is much more aware of the processes of research than before.

In particular, students will gain experience with:

- formulating a research question and research objective
- making critical use of relevant literature
- selecting and using appropriate research methods in your research design to conduct research
- analysing and interpreting results and conclusions
- organising and presenting material in a clear, logical, and convincing way

### **1.2 Learning outcomes of GA/FP**

By the end of the GA/FP students will be able to

- complete a relatively in-depth research project
- demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject area and interpret that information
- produce a coherent, well structured, analytical GA/FP
- define and plan a workable research project to meet given research objectives
- know how to carry out an adequate literature review as a major ingredient of one's master-level graduation research project and final thesis
- know how to design research: defining feasible objectives, presenting a helpful conceptual model and describing the methodology that is to be used
- indicate the strength and weakness of a particular research design
- define research as a manageable project whereby involving the relevant stakeholders and possible contributors

Students will work with their Research Methods and Final Project module lecturers and their academic supervisors to agree on a suitable GA/FP topic. The research topic should be in the context of the specialisation the student is in. For example, if the student is specialising in logistics, the research topic should be related to logistics or supply chain. A general timetable for the work will be set out and a proposal will be submitted. This must be approved by the Research Methods and Final Project lecturer/team as part of the module evaluation, as well as approved by the academic supervisor before the student embarks on the GA/FP itself.

### **1.3 Learning Outcomes Linked to Final Qualifications**

Mapped with Programme Learning Outcomes: 7, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 .

This is direct mapping of the final qualification for this module. A student will achieve the overall qualifications for this programme after successfully completing the GA/FP

See the Education & Examination Guide, Part 2 for further reference.

### **1.4 Prerequisite of the GA/FP**

Normally, students will be admitted to the GA/FP after having gained at least 65 European Credits (ECs) including the completion of Research Methods and Final Project Module. In addition, the Research Proposal must be approved by the Academic Supervisor before the start of research. Students should complete all Multidisciplinary (Phase) Exits Exams (MEEs), i.e., Phase 1 MEEs, Phase 2 MEEs and Phase 3 MEEs, before submitting their GA/FP. Students are expected to have demonstrated in their previous work the capacities to successfully complete a GA/FP and to show that their choice of topic is appropriate for such an assignment of their programme.

### **1.5 Submission of GA/FP**

A student is only allowed to submit a final version of their GA/FP if the following conditions have been met:

- Student has obtained all 65 ECs except for those of the GA/FP.
- Student has submitted all thesis chapters (including questionnaires) and original data used in the research before the designated deadlines. All submitted materials need to be checked and approved by the supervisor.
- Student has returned all library books or any other borrowed materials and cleared all other liabilities due.
- Student has settled all financial obligations to Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences.
- Student has filled up a clearance form before the deadline and obtained an official approval from the study advisor, academic supervisor, and concerned office(s). This is a pre-requisite before the GA/FP is marked. Without the approval of the clearance form, the GA/FP will NOT be marked.

### **1.6 Study Load**

The GA/FP is expected to include a substantial amount of original theoretical, analytic and empirical work and be 12,000 to 15,000 words in length excluding appendices. Precise details about the length of all types of GA/FP are given below.

The GA/FP module is worth 30 ECs on MBA and 25 ECs on MBM, which is equivalent to 840 hours of work or 700 hours of work respectively. The Final Project research and editing time spans 1 full semester (term) which is ½ a year for MBA students, whereas MBM students will have an additional module Professional-based Learning (WP42). The Final Project time span for both programmes include reading, research, field study, writing, review, and defence.

### **1.7 Teaching and Learning Methods**

The GA/FP is an individual piece of work, and students will write it by themselves. This will be supported by regular scheduled tutorial meetings with their academic supervisor, at which students will be expected to produce such work as the Academic Supervisor, and the students shall agree upon.

### **1.8 Assessment Instruments**

Students will be required to demonstrate that they have a good knowledge of the subject area and a clear plan for a GA/FP by producing a Research Proposal in the area on which they are conducting the research. They will be required to reach a Pass level in these parts of the assessment before you are allowed to proceed with the complete GA/FP. The GA/FP will be assessed based on a list of criteria, which includes, among others, the originality of the material presented, the addition of new knowledge, the provision of solution(s) for any research issues/problems, the demonstration of research and presentation skills, the ability to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the subject area, and your ability to apply theory to practice.

See the module guide of the Research Methods and Final Project module.

## **2 GRADUATION**

To proceed for GA/FP Presentation and Oral Defence to successfully graduate, students must submit a completed clearance form before the designated deadline. The online form can be found in the GA/FP online area.

The following outlines the final qualifications required for the International Master of Business Administration. Upon completion of the GA/FP, the final step toward the degree, students should have achieved these qualifications.

## **3 RESEARCH PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT**

Preparing a research proposal is an important part of the research process. The research proposal outlines the research topic, objectives, main research question, methods and so on. The research proposal is part of the Research Methods module, and it requires approval from the Academic Supervisor before students can start their actual research, even if the students have passed the Research Methods module. The next section provides some guidelines for writing a research proposal for writing an academic dissertation.

### 3.1 Guidelines for Research Proposal

To be considered for registration for a final research project (GA/FP), all students must submit a research proposal that outlines their intended research. Students can only submit a research proposal if they have attended the Research Methods module, as the RP is the sole outcome/product of this module. Research proposals should be presented under headings that provide the title and summary of the study as well as addressing each of the points listed below. The research proposal templates and examples are available in the Research Methods module area.

### 3.2 Outline of the Research Proposal

To have their final research project (graduation assignment) considered for registration, students must submit a proposal that specifies their intended research both in the Research Methods module and to their academic supervisor. To help students develop your proposal, an outline or framework for a proposal is presented below, with the headings that should be used and a brief description of the topics that should be covered in that section.

**Title of the study** - The title can be a working title in that it can be changed later. It should convey the essence of the proposed work.

**Introduction** - This is the Introduction to research topic. A clear introduction to the selected research topic should be provided and justified here. Try to focus on the research topic instead of a case/company or context. Start with the broader context and narrow it down to the specific topic within that context, that will be focused on in the research.

**Purpose of the study/problem statement** – a clearly focused statement of the overall purpose of the proposed research. First or all, it should be made clear whether the study has the primary aim of problem solving for the benefit of one particular organisation (consultancy Report) or whether it intends to generate general knowledge (Academic Dissertation).

Next to that, a problem statement should be developed. The problem statement should capture in one sentence the issue that will be addressed in the GA/FP. This can be the issue the organisation needs to be addressed in case of a consultancy report, or the issue in terms of the knowledge gap that needs to be “closed”, in case of an academic dissertation.

**Relevant background literature** – a section outlining key research that has already been carried out in the particular area.

**Research questions (with hypotheses)** – well-defined research questions or testable hypotheses that address a significant, answerable issue within the field.

#### **Research objective(s)**

- must be highly focused and feasible.
- address the more immediate project outcomes (relevance).
- make accurate use of concepts and be sensible and precisely described.

- emphasize how aims are to be accomplished (to explore, to explain, to find out, to establish, to test, to investigate etc.).

In case more than one research objective is formulated, the research objectives are usually numbered so that each objective reads as an “individual” statement to convey the intention of the research.

**Definitions of key terms** – precise definitions of the key terms in the research questions/hypotheses, enabling unequivocal observation, measurement, and identification throughout the study.

**Research methodology** – In this section the methodological decision needs to be described and next to that the methods planned to applied. It is necessary to discuss here why this is the most appropriate way to go in the research plan, i.e., an appropriate choice of research approach for the particular questions or problems under investigation, including a well-defined list of procedures to be followed in carrying out the research, as well as the method of data collection and analysis, and, if appropriate, a broad description of any particular theoretical/conceptual framework to be used in the analysis and the reasons for its selection in the study; a brief statement describing how the study population will be selected for the study and the reason for the approach to selection.

**Significance of the research** – a statement that illustrates why the research question or hypothesis is worth asking.

**Ethical considerations** – consideration of ethical issues involved in conducting the research, such as the need for informed consent and, if necessary, the procedure for obtaining it (considering the templates and guidelines in Appendix 1).

**Timetable for the research** – a proposed timetable is extremely important because it gives an indication as to the feasibility of the proposal. Check the graduation opportunities listed in ... and plan your weekly timetable for your GA/FP, ideally using a Gantt chart.

**Anticipated problems and limitations** – a section that highlights any anticipated problems and limitations in the proposed study, including threats to reliability and validity and how these will be countered.

**References** – a list of sources and references (articles, journals, books, periodicals) cited and referred to in the research proposal in the style of ARU Harvard.

**Appendices** – (if appropriate), which contain any material that will be used or adapted for the study, including any permission that might need to be obtained to use it, and the feedback/suggestion from the supervisor.

For more details of the requirements, check the research proposal template and examples available in the Research Methods module area.

#### 4 GA/FP STYLE AND LAYOUT OF THE GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT

The following highlights the commonalities associated with any type of GA/FP:

A research project is a sustained investigation of an important topic, area, or issue relevant to the programme that the student is studying. It will demonstrate an up-to-date understanding of developments concerning this topic, area or issue. If possible, the concept should be original, or the student should investigate an issue using one of the methodologies/models contained in their programme.

A research project is not merely a collection of all the information that students can find concerning a particular topic. Instead:

- It seeks to explain how something works, or why something happens in the way that it does, and/or critically compares existing practices, knowledge and understandings, and where possible attempts to discover and conceptualise latest information and knowledge.
- For the research project students should select an issue in their field of study that they can pursue in depth; one which allows students to analyse existing ideas, theories, and concepts, and through original research contributes to debates and knowledge relating to the subject in question.
- The topic should always be placed within the context of the disciplinary domains that students have developed in their study to date.

The GA/FP is a substantial piece of work leading to the production of a thesis normally of between 12,000 to 15,000 words, excluding appendices (the word *thesis* here covers all written submissions which will vary in style content and size depending on which type of project is adopted).

Above all, the final project is an opportunity for students to explore an area or topic that students find interesting and important. It is much easier to keep students' motivation high if they find their dissertation topic inspiring.

There are two main types of assignment: dissertation and an applied business assignment.

The next sections identify the key types of research assignments. Students need to be clear at the beginning as to the type of assignment they will be undertaking as the guidelines and final output will be significantly different. It is important that students acknowledge which type of assignment they intend to pursue at the earliest opportunity. The key component parts of each type of assignment are summarised below

#### **4.1 Types of GA/FP**

##### **4.1.1 The Academic Dissertation**

This type of assignment includes a critical review of relevant literature plus independent empirical research carried out by the student:

- Wherever possible the literature review should be based upon academic resources (normally not general textbooks), official statistics/reports, and if possible, articles in refereed academic journals. It should critically compare and evaluate relevant concepts, models and theories.
- The research involves the design of an independent empirical research project integrated with the subjects of the literature review. Students will need to set its overall purpose, plus its aims and objectives, and to choose relevant research methods.
- The empirical research itself can use one or more of a variety of research methods, including quantitative sample surveys, and qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Using secondary data is a valid approach for empirical research if the data is reliable, cannot be replaced by primary data, and is subjected to a comprehensive analysis to draw independent conclusions.
- If a sample survey is used, students will be expected to select and justify the sample population, discuss sampling frames, design their questionnaires, conduct pilot surveys, and analyse their findings.
- If qualitative methods are used, students will be expected to select and justify their qualitative methods (e.g. interviews, observations, focus groups, discourse analysis, etc.) and analyse their findings.
- If analysis of original archive/secondary data is involved, students will be expected to identify and justify relevant archive/secondary data, and critically analyse the data.

##### **4.1.2 Applied Business Assignment: *Consultancy Assignment***

The applied business project can be a consultancy assignment. Consultancy is normally defined as an independent and objective advisory service provided by a qualified person(s) to a client (company and/or organisation) to help them identify and analyse problems and opportunities. A consultancy assignment also recommends solutions or suggests actions with respect to the identified issues and even provides help to the company and/or organisation in the implementation of solutions. Clients are not necessarily interested in the academic context that may underpin a consultancy assignment; they tend to be more interested in the data or market research collected and recommended strategies for a way forward. It is envisioned that while you may deliver a typical piece of consultancy to a client, you

must submit a project to Wittenborg that demonstrates its academic underpinning. This may be something similar to a literature review that is included as part of a typical dissertation.

Students will be responsible for finding a commissioner/client who may wish to have a piece of consultancy undertaken (grounded in a related industry sector). The consultancy should be related to a subject in which you have in-depth knowledge and detailed understanding, so that you are able to combine theory and practice to solve problems and suggest ways forward. This needs to be approved by the module teacher of Research Methodology, the Academic Supervisor and company supervisor. A typical consultancy project would have a commissioner/client identifying the terms of reference and the student consultant submitting a proposal to identify how they would respond to the proposed project's overall purpose.

A proposal normally acts as a contract between the consultant and commissioner/client and identifies key deliverables, such as agreed primary data collection and timings associated with interim draft and final reports. These deadlines must be coordinated with Wittenborg's due dates for the GA/FP. Once the commissioner/client and Wittenborg accept the proposal the student will work with the commissioner/client and with the guidance of the academic supervisor. The student shall submit the final piece of consultancy to the client, which may or may not include the academic literature that underpinned the piece of research. At the same time, the student must submit the consultancy project to Wittenborg which meets the required elements of the content for GA/FP.

### ***Advice on Commissioned Research***

Whatever type of GA/FP chosen, students may focus upon a problem or issue of interest to a particular organisation, which may help them to complete it in various ways. In such cases it should be clear that:

- The research assignment will be assessed based on the same criteria outlined in this document (GA/FP Handbook).
- The copyright to the research and to any findings discovered during the course of the GA/FP rests with Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences. In some cases, the research for your research assignment may be "sponsored" by an external organisation. Such sponsorship can take a variety of forms, which may include:
  - Privileged access to information
  - Help to conduct market research surveys, etc., within the organisation
  - Payment of expenses relating to the research
  - Payment of a fee to you as a researcher

In return for the sponsorship, the commissioner/client may expect their own copy of the research project, or a client report. This is entirely your own responsibility and accountability, and does not affect

in any way the requirement to submit two copies of students' research assignment for assessment as part of their degree.

Our policy regarding this type of sponsored research is as follows:

- If Wittenborg is contacted by a commissioner/client seeking a student researcher, or most commonly seeking an internship student with a research question accompanied, this opportunity will be advertised and the commissioner/client will be expected to select a suitable person from amongst those who apply.
- If students are approached directly by a commissioner/client, whilst the students would be expected to discuss this with their academic supervisor, the sponsorship arrangement is entirely their own responsibility.
- Client satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the students' research will not be taken into account in the assessment of their research project. Their research project should meet the rules and regulations laid down in this Handbook.
- Students must state on their acknowledgement page if their projects are sponsored, and must state the name of the sponsoring organisation or individual, and the nature of the sponsorship. Also, they must identify how the results will or may be used by the sponsor.

Projects may, at the sponsor's request, be marked confidential – in that case the specific results deemed sensitive by the sponsor will be seen only by the assessors. The copies of the report will not be made public for a maximum confidentiality period of two years, if the Organization wishes to impose a temporary embargo (see Appendix 2 for the Non-Disclosure Agreement template).

#### **4.2 The Written Style of a GA/FP**

A master's level thesis should be presented in ways that serve the particular purpose of the research. All research results in the production of a GA/FP, although the word limit may vary depending upon which type of project is undertaken. Above all, the written thesis should be clear and concise, and written to inform rather than to entertain. Avoid too many numbered sub-headings in chapters as this affects discussion and integration (remember you are not writing a report). Be careful about the type of language that you use. Generally, adopt the style of writing in a typical academic paper in the area of study. Check EEG Part 5 Academic Writing Handbook for more information. While writing, students should always have the potential reader(s) in mind. A GA/FP is not written for members of the general public, but rather for the professional field that the research is based upon.

#### ***Important Notes***

From the very beginning, establish an overall research aim (or set of aims) for the project that can be stated in less than 25 words. Make sure that everything in the thesis is relevant to this aim, and that the research methods are appropriate for it. The aim should not normally be simply to describe something, but rather to seek to improve the theoretical understanding or practical application of the phenomenon under investigation/research.

The objectives should be chosen and designed to achieve the overall aim (or set of aims). They should have a clear logical structure and should be related to each other. If the thesis has more than one aim, the objectives should meet each aim set. **The first objective** will normally relate to the general academic context in which the research is set, e.g., marketing, human resources, quality, logistics, motivation, commitment, etc. **The last objective** will normally be an outcome objective, the “so what?” test.

- Begin each section or chapter by setting it in the context of your aim(s) and/or objectives and state how it follows on from the previous section.
- End each chapter by summarising key themes/arguments and by stating how it leads into the next chapter.
- Make sure the findings are laid out logically, step by step.
- In general, guide the reader through the thesis by telling them what is happening.
- Use the layout of a typical GA/FP.

#### 4.3 The Layout of a Typical GA/FP

The layout of a typical GA/FP will now be explained in a little more detail. Some of the sections below may not be necessarily included in the final submission, depending upon the type of GA/FP chosen to complete (refer to the table below to see summary of which sections may be relevant for each type of GA/FP). However, if any of the necessary parts is missing (especially all the grey parts in Table 4.1, the references, the research proposal, and the original data), the GA/FP will be considered as incomplete.

Table 4.1 Guide to Typical Contents of a GA/FP

Guide to typical contents of a thesis	Dissertation	Applied Business Assignment	Creative Output
Contents /Type of Thesis		Consultancy Assignment	
Title page and official front cover	X	X	X
Abstract	X		X
Executive summary		X	
Acknowledgements	X	X	X

Table of contents (including appendices)	X	X	X
Lists of tables and figures	X	X	X
Glossary	X	X	X
Introduction (including your overall aim/s and objectives and terms of reference for consultancy project)	X	X	X
Literature Review/secondary research findings	X	X	X
Research Methodology and Methods	X	X	X
An analysis of the market and business environment appropriate to the selected concept based on a range of secondary sources.		X	
Primary research findings	X	X	
Conclusions	X	X	X
Recommendations or strategy	X	X	
References	X	X	X
Appendices - (Research proposal and any other supporting documents)	X	X	X
Original data (to be submitted separately)	X	X	5,000 -10,000
Word count *	12,000 – 15,000	12,000 – 15,000	

\* *Word count excludes the abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, references, tables and figures, the appendices, and the original data. The grey part shows the 'core text' used for establishing the word count.*

#### **4.3.1 The Title Page**

This should contain the title, which should be indicative of the subject matter (but not just a prosaic description of the subject matter). Have a look at other GA/FP and/or research dissertations in the same field of study for possible examples of appropriately worded titles. On each copy of the thesis the title page should also include the full name of the student and student number, full name of the Academic Supervisor, Type of GA/FP, names of the degree programme and specialisation, institution, and the month and year. All portions of the title page must be double spaced. Nothing else should appear on the title page (see Figure 4.1).

<p style="text-align: center;">Full Title of GA/FP (centred in top quarter of page, Font size 18 and bold)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Figure/Picture (optional)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">by</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Full name of author</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S-Number</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Full name of the Academic Supervisor</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Type of GA/FP (academic dissertation/consultancy report etc.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of the degree programme (e.g. Master of Business Administration)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Specialisation (e.g. International Management)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Month, and year submitted</p>
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**Figure 4.1 Sample Title Page**

#### **4.3.2 The Abstract (for dissertation)**

This is a short paragraph, which effectively summarises the main aims, methods used, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It should be 400-500 words (one page max.). The abstract would be one of the last parts to be written.

#### **4.3.3 An Executive Summary (for applied business assignment)**

An executive summary is normally included for a consultancy. The summary should highlight key findings from any primary data collected and recommended strategies and/or solutions. The summary should be written in a way that comprehensively highlights the contents of the report and can range from 1-3 pages.

#### **4.3.4 Acknowledgements**

It is traditional to acknowledge and thank those who have been of help to you in completing the project. It is equally traditional to acknowledge that any errors or omissions are your sole responsibility. You must also state in this section (at the bottom of the acknowledgements page) that..."I confirm that this project is my own work and no part of it has been previously published elsewhere or submitted as part of any other module assessment".

To ensure transparency, any use of AI-generated content (text, figures, images, code) in the GA/FP must be disclosed in the acknowledgments. This includes identifying the specific AI system/tool and clearly marking sections where AI helped create content. Briefly explain the AI's role in each instance, e.g., "In Chapter 4 Results, [Name of AI tool] was used in analysing and visualising the qualitative data". Common AI editing and grammar tools are generally exempt from this disclosure. However, it is always wise to keep a backup of the original work before making any significant changes, especially when using AI tools. In this way, students can compare in writing and learn, prove their authorship, and revert changes if they need to. The transparency and use of AI system/tool will be considered when assessing the quality and authenticity of the assignment. See the declaration template in Appendix 3.

Also, the acknowledgements must include notes about sponsorship if indeed you received some help or financial aid from an organisation or individual.

#### **Word Count**

One final criterion that must be identified at the bottom of the acknowledgements page is the word count. The word count for a standard research dissertation is 12,000 – 15,000 words.

Where a thesis is accompanied by material other than written form the word count guidance will vary. If students are undertaking the assignment with creative output, then a reduced word limit may be agreed with the Academic Supervisor for the written aspect of the project. Whatever the nature of the thesis, the agreed word count will be strictly adhered to. Any GA/FP with the word count outside of the leeway or more than 20% over the maximum will be penalised (up to 0.5 marks). In addition, if the

word count is more than 20% below the minimum requirement, the paper will NOT be accepted for assessment.

The word count includes all text within the main body of the thesis, not including the abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents, references, tables and figures, and the appendices. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure the word count will be able to be checked when the GA/FP is submitted through Wittenborg-Online. **The use of images containing text as a substitute for written content in the thesis is strictly prohibited.** This includes, for example, screenshots of textual material or quotes from interviews used in place of properly written and formatted text. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in unverifiability of the word count and authenticity, and the thesis will **NOT** be accepted for assessment.

#### ***4.3.5 The Table of Contents***

This should be written on its own page(s) and should show chapter/major section headings and page numbers. The preliminary sections (Abstract, Contents list, etc.) are numbered with small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). Page numbering in Arabic numerals (1,2,3, etc.) usually begins with the thesis itself (i.e. the first page of the Introduction chapter, etc.). The title page, references and appendix should not be numbered. Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis. You need to number tables/figures starting within each chapter (e.g. Table 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, etc.).

#### ***4.3.6 List of Tables and Figures***

This should be placed after the table of content. It should contain a list of tables and figures used in the thesis.

#### ***4.3.7 Glossary***

Sometimes used by students and not mandatory, a glossary is a list of technical terms, esoteric terms or acronyms and their meanings. If the thesis includes any of these, it is helpful to include a glossary either at the beginning or at the end. (If included at the beginning of the thesis, it should be placed before the first page of the introduction chapter and after the lists of figures and tables).

#### ***4.3.8 The Introduction***

*This first chapter should contain:*

An outline of the purpose of the assignment (what type of assignment you are undertaking). Where applicable students should also outline the rationale for the topic or concept, including reasons why they decide upon the area of their research. Include brief details of knowledge and concepts that have inspired your interest (and which will be discussed in detail in the next chapters). Students may like to include brief details of their topic focus, for example, profile/general information of a company, an organisation, an industry, etc.

- An outline of the purpose of the assignment. Where applicable, students should also outline the rationale for the topic or concept, including reasons why they decided upon the area of the research. It is advisory to include brief details of knowledge and concepts that have inspired the interest in the particular topic, for example, profile/general information of selected research case or context. Students should indicate whether it is an exploratory, descriptive and/or explanatory/causal study.
- A statement of the problem that clearly identifies the issue that is going to be studied. Research is done to prevent or solve problems, or to improve situations, or to address an information gap. Mere curiosity is not enough. Clearly state the value of/why this issue must be studied and what the implications could be if the study is not carried out.
- The aims and objectives of the assignment (make sure to show how it holds together, reveal its logic and structure).
- The research questions and/or hypotheses.
- For the applied research where the commissioner or client is involved, provide the original terms of reference from the commissioner or client that demonstrates the overall purpose of work (only applicable for applied research where the commissioner or client is involved).
- A brief introduction to the chosen methodology. For each aim/objective, have a method for achieving it.
- Significance of the research – a statement that illustrates why the research question or hypothesis is worth asking.
- A very brief outline of the content of each chapter.

#### **4.3.9 The Literature Review**

This second chapter comprises the academic underpinning for the whole GA/FP. It should demonstrate that a thorough investigation of relevant secondary sources has been conducted, by evidence of understanding, outlining, comparing and discussing key ideas, explanations, concepts, models and theories. Students are expected to demonstrate the understanding of the material, not merely describe what various authors have said. Students should present these issues in a systematic, well-structured and logical sequence. Do not use too many sub-headings as these interrupt the flow of the work.

Students will be expected to use prominent and up-to-date academic sources (normally peer-reviewed academic journal papers instead of textbooks). In broad terms, the results of this preparatory research should provide students with ideas and research gaps as to what they might find when they conduct

their empirical research. As such, students should make sure that the findings of their literature review are relevant for their planned empirical research and vice-versa.

References to secondary sources should be given in the text, not just for quotations, but wherever ideas and information drawn from the work of others is used. If sources are not acknowledged this will be considered as plagiarism.

At the end of the literature review, a conclusion should be drawn on the theoretical/conceptual framework that the student plans to apply in the research. It should specify the aspect/constructs/variables and their (expected) relations. This framework will form the basis for the development of the data collection tool. It is strongly advised to visualise this framework by adding a figure of it.

As previously stated, commissioner/clients may not necessarily be interested in the academic underpinning or theory that may contribute to a business project. However, this literature must be included in your submission to Wittenborg. It is advisable to discuss with the commissioner/clients as to whether they want an academic "literature review" included in the submission to them. Of course, relevant non-academic sources, such as government statistics or market research reports, would normally be included in consultancy work and would be referenced accordingly.

#### **4.3.10 Research Methodology and Methods**

The discussion of research methodology can be a separate chapter or a section of the chapter in which students critically analyse their findings. However, whichever is selected it should clearly show how the methods chosen relate to the aims/objectives and to the literature review; your method(s) is(are) decided upon the basis of these.

The section on methodology should include a *rationale* for the choice of methodologies, for instance, research approach, research strategy, data gathering and data analysis. In the rationale students should consider what alternative methods might have been employed (particularly those which related studies have employed), together with their advantages and limitations for their research. For instance: Why is a survey instead of a case study or vice versa chosen to be conducted, why is a qualitative or quantitative research approach employed, etc. Students can refer to the relevant citations in the Literature Review if relevant details are provided there.

Remember that the methods should critically relate to issues identified in the literature review. As part of the final write-up, students may want to provide an in-depth reflection on the research methods chosen and its limitations.

It is also important to consider the issue of ethics in relation to the collection and use of the primary data. Ethical considerations should be continuously kept in mind throughout the GA/FP process. It does not mean that students should discuss ethics generally, but should reflect on and discuss how ethical issues relating to their research were actually addressed during the primary research stage. For example, students will have to consider whether it is needed to keep the names of any people interviewed or surveyed anonymous. It must be clear to interviewees or respondents how the

information they provide will be used. Other ethical considerations could include the following: how any visual data such as photographs or films will be "used". What ethical considerations might there be in the uses to which such data is put? If students have collected any data from a company or organisation, is it allowed to use the name of the company, or the name of the individual(s) interviewed? Will any respondents that take part in the data collection be 'harmed' in any way?

When working with a commissioner/client, a consultant (i.e. the student in this case) would normally seek feedback and approval for any primary research instruments that would be used as part of the research process.

### ***Empirical Research Findings (Results Chapter)***

This section reports on and discusses the findings of the study. The findings, their critical analysis and conceptualisation should be presented section by section in a systematic, well-synthesised and logical sequence. All the findings should, of course, be directly relevant to the aims and objectives of the research and consistent with the framework that is presented in the literature review. Students should consider the extent to which the reader can rely on the findings. This part should include any tables or graphs showcasing, displaying the findings in a relevant part of the text, not in an appendix. Describe and discuss them in the main report to provide evidence for the findings/conclusions. Follow the format guidelines of tables and graphs in EEG Part 5.

The discussion of the results should be well argued in relation to each research question or hypothesis. Inferences, projections, and probable explanations of the results should also be included. If any, discuss the implications of patterns and trends, and include any secondary findings.

This section should be soberly argued, especially when students are dealing with controversial or complex issues or concepts. Whenever a claim is made, it should be backed up with argument and evidence (whether from the research or that of others). The result of this discussion will give the students the main conclusions of their research (see below in 4.3.12).

Consultancy project primary findings should be related to wider academic materials in the submission to the institute. However, the separate submission to the client may not necessarily include this element.

#### ***4.3.12 Conclusions***

This section should be a concise critical synthesis of the main findings of the research. Students need to demonstrate explicitly how and to what extent the research has achieved the aim(s) and objectives. Students may need to highlight and critically discuss any differences between the actual findings and what was expected to be found at the outset. Indicate how the research has helped to move issues/debates forward or has helped to redefine existing knowledge and concepts. The conclusions should follow logically from the findings and be supported by them. In particular, they should not contain anything new which was not in the findings.

#### **4.3.13 Recommendations/Strategy (if any)**

Where a master's GA/FP results in recommendations or a suggested strategy these should be appropriate, reasonable, and capable of being implemented. Some recommendations and strategies may have attached timelines and may identify who is responsible for implementation. List them in logical order and ensure they follow from the evidence and conclusions of the findings. Not all assignments will have recommendations; some will produce concluding statements/analyses of the phenomenon under investigation, where appropriate identifying areas for further research.

For consultancy project the recommendations will form a crucial part of the project. The commissioner/client is seeking expert advice as to solutions or ways forward and will expect a series of recommendations, normally associated with a timeline as to when these need to be implemented in a logical order. Associated costing may be attached to each or some of the recommendations. Remember to keep recommendations feasible and grounded in the primary data.

#### **4.3.14 References**

The References includes all references that were used in the research process. Any citation in the References must be cited at least once somewhere within the GA/FP. Do not "pad out" the References with sources never cited with the text – this is an important academic convention that must be adhered to. References must be in the appropriate Harvard-Anglia Ruskin University (ARU Harvard) style. Details can be found in Part 5A and 5B of the EEG.

#### **4.3.15 Appendices**

It is a must to include a copy of the original or modified, approved research proposal in the appendices. A GA/FP without the research proposal will be considered as incomplete. The appendices can be used to present information which is too detailed to include in the main thesis and/or information that is interesting but not essential to the main thrust of the thesis, such as an original copy of a questionnaire, and coding examples of some qualitative interviews.

The original data should NOT be put in the appendices. All interview recordings/ transcripts, data files or observation transcripts, etc., must be uploaded in the submission online area before the submission of the complete draft (see below the requirements of the original data).

Students may also include the standard letter they have sent to the interviewees of their research. No interviewee personal data should be included.

Each appendix should be given a title, a letter (A, B, etc.) and the page numbering continues from the bibliography. They should be included on the contents list. Normally, students should not include brochures, photocopies of articles and in general material that were not written by them.

#### **4.3.16 Original Data (to be submitted separately)**

A GA/FP may involve original qualitative (e.g., interview transcripts), quantitative (e.g., survey data), or secondary data. Regardless of type, ensure data is well-organized with clear labels and a detailed codebook explaining sources, variables, and data cleaning procedures.

Submit all the primary (raw) data (interview transcripts, excel files for survey responses), secondary (processed) data, and codes and scripts to produce the final results in the GA/FP in a common format (e.g., txt, docx, SPSS, Excel) to the designated area, following specific storage and submission instructions. A text file describing the data files in relation to (corresponding sections of) the GA/FP needs to be included.

All file names, metadata and other description files and comment lines in code must be in English. If the transcripts are in another language, English translation of the text should be included. All the data files should be uploaded at the same time of uploading Chapters 1-4, and/or no later than submitting the Final Version GA/FP.

Any GA/FP without original data will NOT be accepted for assessment.

#### ***4.3.17 Extra notes for Consultancy assignments***

The consultancy report should be written using the guidelines supplied for writing consultancy papers. The structure for writing a final GA/FPs follow a general format as outlined in this section of the handbook; however, this type of paper differs in some respects from a standard academic research paper. The structure and layout should reflect the contents enumerated in the guidelines for writing a consultancy report. Students should consult the Academic Supervisor if they have any doubts about what is required.

#### ***4.4 Referencing the Sources***

References refer the reader to the source of specific information, ideas, quotes, figures, tables that have been used in the GA/FP. It is the responsibility of the students to make sure the information provided for all the citations and references are correct and complete. All sources listed in the references must be cited at least once somewhere in the main text of the GA/FP; in other words, students should avoid listing the sources not clearly used. These must be included whenever anything drawn from other sources is used. It is looked upon very seriously if students do not reference the sources. Quoting a reference helps to support the point being made in the report. It indicates the basis for the opinions/arguments and clearly shows how these opinions were reached. Useful phrases include: "according to Smith (2007) many managers believe service quality.....", "research has revealed the importance of..... (Jones 1985; Peters 1997)", or "many academics (Jones 1997; Smith 2007; Zikmund 2009) debate the influence of globalisation...".

Wittenborg insists that students use the Harvard referencing system due to its simplicity and overall acceptance in academic writing. Check EEG Part 5 for the detailed requirements.

#### **4.5 Technical production regulations**

When submitting the GA/FP, it is extremely important that students follow certain technical requirements. These must be adhered to otherwise a penalty may be enforced which can hinder their ability to pass the GA/FP.

- All GA/FP papers must be submitted online to the correct upload area through Wittenborg Online, as well for plagiarism check. There will be instructions provided throughout the programme on how to submit their paper or documents on intranet submission area, on the Wittenborg-Online. This online submission can be used to check for other technical requirements such as the word count.
- Only Word document is accepted. Any other file types such as PDF is NOT accepted.
- It should be typed in a reasonably sized font (Geneva 10, or Times 12 are good examples) single-spaced (except for indented quotations and footnotes).
- Double-spacing or 1.5-spacing, if and where necessary, and in consultation with the Academic Supervisor, is also acceptable. Lengthy quotations (exceeding 40 words) should be presented, indented, with clear spaces above and below the main text. Refer to the EEG Part 5.
- Margins should be as follows: left (binding edge) 40mm/1.5", right, top & bottom 25mm/1". See the detailed guidelines in the GA/FP Checklist in Table 4.1.
- Two copies of the GA/FP have to be submitted to the Wittenborg Registrar's Office before the deadline, which will be communicated to students via email.
- Both copies of the GA/FP will be archived in the Wittenborg Library from date of submission.
- The document should be properly bound (NO spiral binding) and printed on double-sided A4-sized paper. Coloured or black and white is acceptable. Creative output projects that may include some visual artefact or portfolio will require only one submission of this element along with the two bound copies of the written thesis.
- All costs associated with the assignment are borne by the student. If an organisation or individual does give the student a lot of help then it would normally be a courtesy for the student to send them a copy of the final project, or, at least an executive summary.

## 5 OFFICIAL FRAMEWORK DEADLINES

### 5.1 Process and regulations

NB: All work to be handed in by 4 p.m. (16:00 CET) on the due date, including Chapters 1-3 + questionnaire, Chapters 1-4, Final draft, the Clearance Form, and the original data.

The process begins during Semester 1, when the Research Methods module begins; from the beginning students need to start thinking about possible research topic areas that are appropriate for a master's-level GA/FP. Draft version of the research proposal is the required prerequisite for this Module (See Module guide for further details).

The GA/FP is marked by the Academic Supervisor of the student and second-marked by an external second marker (2<sup>nd</sup> marker) from another institution/organisation as a matter of quality control and assurance. The final stage of the assessment process is the Graduation & Examination Board (GEB).

### 5.2 Regulations for late submissions

Late submission of the GA/FP would NOT be accepted because all master students can use the additional period of up to 3 blocks to complete their GA/FP. In case students miss the deadline of submitting their GA/FP, they can always submit it in the following submission opportunity. It is advisable to make a feasible study plan with the help of the study advisor and submit the GA/FP no later than one block before the end of the extended blocks to avoid any unnecessary delay. Refer to Section 11 for more information.

### 5.3 Plagiarism

A formal session on plagiarism is held during Induction Week. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is a form of cheating, as a result of which an individual gains or seeks to gain an unfair academic advantage. It includes the use of another author's words verbatim, summarising or paraphrasing another person's argument or line of thinking, or use of a particularly apt phrase without proper attribution. When working with ideas and concepts that are not familiar, the temptation for some students to lift words or sections of text from other sources is great. Write in one's own words because using the words or ideas of others without a reference (either using quotation marks and/or sourcing the author(s)) will lead to accusations of plagiarism. Learn about plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct in Part 5, 5A, 5B of the EEG.

Academic Supervisors are generally familiar with differences between the writing style of students and experienced authors. Turnitin, a software that monitors plagiarism and the use of AI writing tools, is available and used by the school to detect any suspected cases of academic misconduct such as plagiarism. The software compares the writing used within a thesis to other sources for example websites on the Internet, journal articles, books, and other student work from other universities.

If plagiarism is detected, the Graduation and Examination Board of Wittenborg will become involved, which may ultimately result in a penalty: a serious warning, downgrading, a fail with or without a chance to resubmit, or even dismissal from Wittenborg.

Please remember that the generation of false data is also a serious academic offence. Students are required to upload all empirical data through Wittenborg-Online (see the section of “Original Data”). Failure to upload these to the designated area before the deadline will result in a fail for the GA/FP as it is considered as incomplete.

Further details of the Turnitin submission are provided under the project module on Wittenborg Online as to how and when to submit the GA/FP through Turnitin.

Note that self-plagiarism (submitting the same assignment for different courses) is also a form of plagiarism. If – irrespective of the outcome of Turnitin – there are doubts about whether or not the student is the original author of a piece of work, Wittenborg will insist on an additional hearing.

## 6 GA/FP CHECKLIST - FORMATTING AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### 6.1 Manuscript Formatting and Submission Checklist

This checklist at the end of the general points is **very** important!

- I. Did you achieve sufficient ECs before submitting your GA/FP?
- II. Did you submit the Graduation Clearance Form before the deadline?
- III. Is your GA/FP paginated correctly?
- IV. Did you use your full and official name on the title page?
- V. Are the titles on the title and abstract pages exactly the same?
- VI. Are your margins correct?
- VII. Is the statement of originality of work and use of AI added on the “Acknowledgement”?
- VIII. Did you add the wordcount. Does it meet the wordcount requirements?
- IX. Did you attach your approved Research Proposal as an appendix item?
  
- X. Did you upload your original data to the designated area before the deadline?
- XI. Did you submit two properly bound (tape binding only) copies of your GA/FP to the front desk before the deadline (See GA/FP planning in the GA/FP Handbook)?

### 6.2 GA/FP FORMATTING CHECKLIST

- Order:** Title page, Abstract, Dedication (optional), Acknowledgement page (optional), Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, Manuscript, References, Appendices
- Format:** Use the ARU Harvard Style Referencing
- Font:** 12-point type Times New Roman font, 11-point type Arial or 10-point Geneva or alike

- Justification:** Left justified format is required (except for Title Page), do not use right or full justified margins
- Margins:** Top, Right and Bottom margins 25mm/1", Left margin 40mm/1.5" to allow room for binding
  - Title page, and first page of each chapter: Top Margin 50mm/2"
- Page numbers:** bottom centre of each page, at least 20mm/3/4" from the edge of the paper.
  - Prefatory pages (Title Page, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures) should be numbered with lower case Roman numerals.
  - The page number should be omitted from the Title Page; the second page (Abstract/Executive Summary) should be labelled i, ii, iii...
  - Main body pages are to be numbered using Arabic numerals. The first page of the main body text should start with 1.
  - Continue page numbering through all of the references and appendices.
- Title Page:** The title must be 10 words or less, and double spaced. The title begins from the top of the page. The date should be the month and year the manuscript is submitted for marking.
- Abstract/Executive Summary:** Abstract should be maximum of one page or less. Executive Summary should be 1-3 pages.
- Acknowledgements page:** See the requirements in GA/FP Handbook.
- Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures:** double space, see the requirements in GA/FP Handbook.
- Chapter headings:** Consult the GA/FP handbook for detailed information about how to label chapters. Begin chapters on a new page. Begin "CHAPTER 2" from the top of the page. Centre the word "CHAPTER" in all CAPS followed by the Roman Numeral of one, as follows: "CHAPTER I". Double space and centre the chapter title in all CAPS – "**INTRODUCTION**" Bold. Chapter subheadings should follow Harvard Headings guidelines.
- Main body text:** Mostly 1.5-spaced with a few exceptions. Table/Figure headings and long quotes may be single spaced.
- Paragraphs:** Wherever possible, avoid beginning a new paragraph at the bottom of a page or ending a paragraph at the top of a page, unless at least two lines of text can be included in each case.
- Tables and figures:** The style of tables and figures should confirm to Harvard Style guidelines. Include Appendices in the Table of Contents. Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively starting within each chapter (e.g. Table 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, etc.). Table captions should be above the table,

and figure captions should be directly under the image. Tables and figures need to be referred to in the text. If they are cited/quoted from other people's work, you need to include the citation in the captions. Otherwise, if you haven't used any external data or visuals to create the table/figure, the absence of a citation implies it's your own work. Check detailed requirements in EEG Part 5.

- References:** Single-space references, following the ARU Harvard style. Use hanging indents (the first line begins at the margin and subsequent lines are indented).
- Appendix:** Retain the same margins as in the rest of the GA/FP. Typeface should be the same or similar to what is used in the rest of the document.

### 6.3 Consultancy Report to-do list

- Introduction
- Letter of understanding (formulation of problem and Gap)
  - Consultation with client, and scope and objectives of the project
  - Clarify the objectives, and proposed deliverables are to be stated
  - Formulation of the problem and definition of the research question
  - Formulation of type of consultancy assignment
- Analysis of problem and conceptual framework
  - Internal analysis
  - External analysis
  - Use of models/frameworks (e.g. BCG, INK, Change models, cost analysis models, Value chain models)
- Literature review (see information under academic research)
- Methodology and research methods (see information under academic research)
  - The type of consultancy assignment must be highlighted and explained
- Timelines and milestones
- Analysis and results (see section under academic research)
- Conclusions and recommendations
- References
- Appendices

## 7 SUPERVISION OF THE GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT/FINAL PROJECT

Academic Supervisors are normally members of the academic staff at WITTENBORG. They will be allocated according to various criteria including their familiarity with the proposed topic, their knowledge of the relevant methodologies, their experience in conducting and supervising research projects and their workloads.

Each student is entitled to receive support from their Academic Supervisor. They can request for an Academic Supervisor when they have received approval on their Research Topic in Semester 1. To request for an Academic Supervisor, they must complete the Online Academic Supervisor Request Form. Check the Moodle Online Area for the link and the instructions on how to request for an Academic Supervisor. The allocation of the supervisor will be confirmed by the coordinator after receiving the Request Form. To ensure a diverse and inclusive learning environment, supervisors should aim to avoid taking more than half of their students from the same nationality as their own.

Academic Supervisors will normally be working together with a number of students, so the total time available should, as far as possible, be divided equally between their supervisees. Academic Supervisors are allocated a maximum of **16 hours per master student** for supervision including marking and attending oral defence so when using the supervisor's time, use it wisely. This does not necessarily mean that supervisors will support their supervisees in one-to-one tutorials: different supervisors and students prefer different methods, and very often students will gain more from being part of a small tutorial group than from one-to-one support – especially in the early stages of their research. It is the responsibility of students to make mutually agreeable research agenda and arrangements with their supervisor. Students can see other academic supervisors for advice; however, this is at the discretion of the other supervisors. Students can see other Academic Supervisors for advice; however, this is at the discretion of the other Academic Supervisors.

We strongly advise that students meet their supervisor regularly and to follow with them a structured and planned approach to the dissertation along the lines that we are suggesting in this document. Students who do poorly on the dissertation are usually the ones who have failed to meet regularly with their supervisor and who have not followed a systematic plan. Supervisors are advised to keep details of attendance for each supervisee. We strongly advise students to keep a similar record detailing what was discussed and the actions they need to take. The following highlights the standard level of supervision that students should receive from the school.

### ***Academic Supervisor/Student Supervision***

Students can expect the following level of supervision from their Academic Supervisor:

- Supervisors will make themselves available for appropriate tutorial times in normal office hours during semester times (normally not during the Easter/Summer break period for some supervisors who take annual leave at such times). Discuss supervisory agenda and arrangements with the academic supervisor at the first meeting.

- If students choose to complete their project at a distance (i.e. you are unable to come into the school for supervisory meetings) this can impact upon the effectiveness of the support and guidance that supervisors will be able to offer. If they are planning to be away from the campus and unable to attend face-to-face, please liaise with your supervisor and agree on the support that they will be able to offer at a distance.
- Supervisors will normally review in depth each chapter of the thesis. Students should submit a word-processed full draft of their chapters. Supervisors are normally expected to review the chapters once or twice, and should not be expected to keep reviewing re-submitted versions of the same chapters. It is the responsibility of the students to make sure all the suggestions are addressed in the revision of the chapters. Otherwise, they will be asked to revise sufficiently before moving on.
- Supervisors should normally review a draft chapter and return it to the student within a few working days with an appropriate level of feedback.
- Supervisors will provide constructive advice and guidance on appropriate research methodologies. It is expected that students will also attend relevant lectures in the Research Methods module to support their research as well as reviewing various research methods texts.
- Supervisors will notify students in advance of any leave they wish to take during semester time. At various times some supervisors may be out of the school for reasons such as attending conferences, placement visits and other business. If this absence results in the supervisor being out of the office during term time for more than 5 working days, the supervisor should make appropriate cover for each student and should notify each student.

Supervisors can expect the following from each of their students:

- strive to start their GA/FP as soon as they enter Semester 2 in order to be able to finish in a timely manner.
- develop a regular timeline for their project research process.
- inform supervisors with regard to their holiday plans and general availability throughout the research process.
- regular, punctual attendance at supervisory tutorial meetings. Try to avoid "dropping in" to supervisor's offices and quickly asking for advice since the supervisor may need time to reflect on questions from the student.
- come fully prepared to supervisory tutorial meetings, which means that they have read around the subject area, and/or have drafts of material that need to be consulted.
- make sure the assignment is fully revised according to the feedback from supervisors. Communicate in time with supervisors if there is any disagreement or confusion.

Support all arguments with evidence from literature or authentic research. If students ignore the feedback of supervisors, they will be asked to refer to all previous comments and their GA/FP progress could be delayed.

- openly communicate with their supervisor any other problems or fears with regard to their project.
- keep supervisors and study advisors up to date with any problems that may interfere with the deadline or the successful completion of the thesis.

## 8 THE OFFICIAL PROCESS AND DEADLINES FOR THE GRADUATION

### 8.1 Graduation Clearance Form Guidelines

Students are not allowed to upload and defend their GA/FP without a signed clearance form from the Registrar. The clearance form shows that a student has completed all the required exams except the Final Project and paid all outstanding dues to the institution.

- The Clearance Form should be submitted online as a standard graduation procedure
- Once a student submitted their Clearance Form, the Exam Coordinator will submit their name to all the respective departments (Housing, Library, Registrar & Finance) for them to check and acknowledge in the Clearance Form. If there is any issue that needs to be settled, the student will be contacted by the respective department. Once the Clearance Form is completed and signed, the student's name will be added to the official GA/FP list for assessment and approval by the Graduation & Examination Board (GEB).
- If the student fails to submit his/her GA/FP before the deadline, the name of the student will be removed from the GA/FP list. The student will need to fill in the Clearance Form again before the next submission.

### 8.2 The graduation process

- After the approval of the GEB, the Oral Defence list will be prepared and sent to the students, Academic Supervisors, External Markers and other relevant departments, by 16:00 on Tuesday of Week 6.
- GA Oral Defence is always planned on the Friday of Exam Week (Week 6) each block with the exception of retake blocks. If Friday is a national holiday, the Oral Defence session will be moved to the immediate working day in the same week. For example, if Friday is Good Friday (national holiday), the oral defence will be moved to Thursday of the same week.

- Students must be present physically for their Oral Defence at their respective study locations (Amsterdam or Apeldoorn). Munich students will need to be present physically at the Apeldoorn campus.
- Students must prepare two properly bound (NO SPIRAL BINDING) copies of their GA/FP after the release of the Oral Defence list and submit them before or on the day of the Oral Defence. They can hand them in to the Front Desk for Amsterdam students and to the Registrar's office for Apeldoorn and Munich students.
- Students should upload their Oral Defence presentation (PowerPoint or Prezi) on the online area by Wednesday of Week 6 after the release of the Oral Defence list. However, students are allowed to modify their presentation after uploading. Students should also send their presentations to their Academic Supervisor. The uploaded version of the presentation should contain a 30-second synopsis video, in which the student gives a short overview of the GA/FP.
- The Oral Defence proceeding is a public event and any individual can attend it (for example parents, family members, friends, employers, students etc.). However, they must not interfere with the proceeding.
- Students must be formally and decently attired for the Oral Defence. Slippers, Crocs, flip-flops, pyjamas, shorts, track suits/pants, Bermudas, T-shirts, Spaghetti-strap dress/blouse, caps, sunglasses etc. are strictly prohibited. Students may be denied the Oral Defence or penalised with a deduction of 1-2 marks, if they are not formally and decently attired.

**Note: students are requested to indicate if they would like to make use of any special arrangements/equipment for their Oral Defence. They must arrange this either through their Academic Supervisor/Study Advisor or the education department at least one week in advance of the Oral Defence.**

## 9 GRADUATION ASSIGNMENT/FINAL PROJECT PLANNING

1. This GA/FP planning schedule is for full-time study in order to achieve attributed ECs. According to this planning, the students who are working full-time on their GAs can complete it in time. Students working part-time, or completing any other study requirements, should consider extra time and must discuss this clearly with their academic supervisor and study advisor.
2. Only those students who have started their work before the summer (from Block April) can graduate in Block September.
3. Students should make sure that the submitted content is not a draft and/or final draft but the absolute final, before they press the submission button before or on the deadline for submitting any part and/or final version GA/FP.

4. Students must develop their own planning for each chapter of the GA/FP, data collection and/or analysis to write initial draft versions. These drafts should be used to develop final versions and should be uploaded before the submission deadlines. Only when the drafts of the chapters are approved by the academic supervisor, can students upload their final draft of GA/FP.
5. Students must submit two properly bound copies of their dissertation within one month of their graduation. They can hand them in to the Front Desk of Amsterdam or Apeldoorn study locations.
6. GA/FP oral defence is planned six times a year for both Bachelor and Master programmes during the final week of each block (except for retake blocks) and the schedule is published on the Wednesday of the final week of each block. These six possibilities are arranged along with the six Graduation and Examination Board meetings, during which the submitted GA/FPs are approved for oral defence after the evaluation from two examiners. There is no possibility to submit/defend the GA/FP outside these dates/deadlines. In case of failure to defend the GA/FP in the block where the GA/FP submission was successful, including absence due to unforeseen and inevitable reasons, students can submit their GA/FP again and defend it in the subsequent opportunity.
7. Block Weeks mentioned in this schedule are the standard 6 weeks of each block excluding any Introduction Weeks (IW), Study Weeks (SW) and Catch-up Weeks mentioned in any block in the year calendar. Please check the GA/FP module online area for the specific days and times for upload deadlines.
8. The Turnitin Upload area for GA Final Version of a block CLOSSES at 4 p.m. CET (16:00 hours Dutch Time) on the Monday of Week 4 of a block. Once it is closed, it will become hidden to students and the upload area in the next block will open. If you miss the deadline you will need to submit in the next block's submission area.
9. Technical errors: Make sure that you attempt your upload well before the deadline. If there is an error, you are obliged to contact the Help Desk no later than 30 minutes before the deadline for help.
10. Graduation Ceremonies (2 per academic year) are planned on the 2<sup>nd</sup> week Friday of Retake Weeks Summer and Winter.

GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 1, (BLOCK SEPTEMBER)		
Day	Block Week	Deadlines
<b>Block April (previous academic year)</b>		
Monday	Block April, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block April, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor
Friday	Block April, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block April, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block May (previous academic year)</b>		
Monday	Block May, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block May, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block May, Week 5	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block September</b>		
Friday	Block September, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on student request if necessary
	Block September, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block September, Week 3	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary

Monday	Block September, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline
Monday	Block September, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block September, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block September, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 2, (BLOCK OCTOBER)		
Day	Block Week	Deadlines
<b>Block May (previous academic year )</b>		
Monday	Block May, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block May, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor
Friday	Block May, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block May, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block September</b>		
Monday	Block September, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block September, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary

Monday	Block September, Week 6	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block October</b>		
Friday	Block October, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on student request if necessary
	Block October, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block October, Week 3	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block October, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline
Monday	Block October, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block October, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block October, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 3, (BLOCK DECEMBER)		
Day	Block Week	Deadlines
<b>Block September</b>		
Monday	Block September, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block September, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor
Friday	Block September, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block September, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block October</b>		
Monday	Block October, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block October, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block October, Week 5	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block December</b>		
Friday	Block December, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on Student request if necessary
	Block December, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block December, Week 3	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary

Monday	Block December, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline
Monday	Block December, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block December, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block December, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 4, (BLOCK FEBRUARY)		
Day	Block Week	Deadlines
<b>Block October</b>		
Monday	Block October, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block October, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor
Friday	Block October, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block October, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block December</b>		
Monday	Block December, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block December, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary

Monday	Block December, Week 5	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block February</b>		
Friday	Block February, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on student request if necessary
	Block February, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block February, Week 3	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block February, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline
Monday	Block February, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block February, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block February, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

<b>GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 5, (BLOCK APRIL)</b>		
<b>Day</b>	<b>Block Week</b>	<b>Deadlines</b>
<b>Block December</b>		
Monday	Block December, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block December, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor

Friday	Block December, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block December, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block February</b>		
Monday	Block February, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block February, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block February Week 5	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block April</b>		
Friday	Block April, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on student request if necessary
	Block April, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block April, Week 3	Possible meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block April, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline
Monday	Block April, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block April, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block April, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

GRADUATION OPPORTUNITY 6, (BLOCK MAY)		
Day	Block Week	Deadlines
<b>Block February</b>		
Monday	Block February, Week 1	Contact assigned academic supervisor once your Research Topic is approved in the Research Methods module in Semester 1. You can only continue with the rest of process after you have obtained a pass in your Research Proposal in the Research Methods module.
Monday	Block February, Week 2	Send Research Proposal passed in the Research Methods to academic supervisor
Friday	Block February, Week 4	Approval of passed Research Proposal by the academic supervisor for the official start of GA
Monday	Block February, week 6	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
<b>Block April</b>		
Monday	Block April, Week 1	Deadline for submission of final version Ch. 1-3, including the Questionnaire
Friday	Block April, Week 4	Academic supervisor Feedback on Ch. 1-3 + Meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block April, Week 5	Submission of Research Instruments/Framework, Model /Ethical Issues, etc., or Ch. 1- 4
<b>Block May</b>		
Friday	Block May, Week 1	2nd Feedback and/or Meeting on student request if necessary
	Block May, Week 2	Student working on Final Version based on feedback
	Block May, Week 3	Possible academic supervisor meeting on student request if necessary
Monday	Block May, Week 4	Final Version Submission Deadline

Monday	Block May, Week 6	Approval Graduation and Examination Board (GEB)
Tuesday	Block May, Week 6	Results GEB + Oral Defence Schedule announcement
Friday	Block May, Week 6	GA/FP/Final Project Oral Defence

Note: Take note that if the deadline falls on a national holiday, it will be moved to the immediate (pre/post) working day in the same week. For example, if Monday is 2nd Easter Day (national holiday), the submission deadline will be moved to Tuesday. The time of 16:00 remains the same.

10. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Grade/Criteria	0 – 39%	40 – 49%	50 – 54%	55 – 59%
			<b>Adequate but weak overall. All learning outcomes have been met but at least some barely exceed the 50% pass threshold</b>	
<b>Design and conceptualisation of project</b>	Unsatisfactory and very poorly throughout research redesign and conceptualisation, very weak/very limited engagement with theory. Weak/highly unsatisfactory attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are insufficiently grounded in the wider literature. Design and conceptualisation of the research demonstrates a very poor level of understanding within the confines of the	Unsatisfactory, poorly throughout research redesign and conceptualisation, very weak/limited engagement with theory. Weak/unsatisfactory attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are unsatisfactorily grounded in the wider literature. Design and conceptualisation of the research demonstrates a very limited level of understanding within the confines of the project's aims and objectives	Very basic and/or poorly throughout research redesign and conceptualisation, weak engagement with theory. Weak/limited attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are adequate but insufficiently grounded in the wider literature. Design and conceptualisation of the research demonstrates a weak approach within the confines of the project's aims	A standard but sound research redesign and conceptualisation, which engages with theory. Standard attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are grounded in the wider literature to a standard level. Design and conceptualisation of the research demonstrates a standard critical approach within the confines of the

	project's aims and objectives and in relation to the expectations for the level of study.	and in relation to the expectations for the level of study.	and objectives and in relation to the expectations for the level of study.	project's aims and objectives.
<b>Intellectual engagement, knowledge and understanding</b>	Very limited, weak/poor understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Very limited recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing a highly unsatisfactory grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Several/many significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings evident. Very weak/insufficient identification of gaps in knowledge.	Very limited understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Weak recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an unsatisfactory grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Some significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings evident. Weak/insufficient identification of gaps in knowledge.	Adequate but limited understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Adequate but limited recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing a weak grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Weak/limited identification of gaps in knowledge.	Some good understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Clear and at times good recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing a standard grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Standard identification of gaps in knowledge.
<b>Methodology and research methods</b>	Very poorly throughout justification for and explanation of methods adopted with insufficient links made to the literature	Poorly throughout justification for and explanation of methods adopted with insufficient links made to the literature review and research	An adequate but weak justification for and explanation of methods adopted with limited links made to the literature review	A standard justification for and explanation of methods adopted with links made to the literature review and research

	review and research questions. Very weak/insufficient recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	questions. Weak/insufficient recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	and research questions. Limited/weak recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	questions. Standard recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.
<b>Analysis and Evaluation</b>	<p>Analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research are purely descriptive demonstrating inadequate understanding of reflectivity in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted. Analysis of the research outcomes/findings is highly unsatisfactory within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Very poor/inadequate conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to an unsatisfactory level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Inadequate recognition of</p>	<p>Analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research are too descriptive demonstrating insufficient understanding of reflectivity in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted. Analysis of the research outcomes/findings is unsatisfactory within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Very poor conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to an inadequate/limited level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Unsatisfactory recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.</p>	<p>Analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research are descriptive demonstrating limited understanding of reflectivity in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted. Research outcomes/findings are insufficiently analysed within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Very basic and/or poorly thought through conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to an adequate but limited level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Very basic, weak/limited</p>	<p>Sound analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research demonstrating some understanding of reflectivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings are discussed to a standard level within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Sound conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to a standard level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Standard recognition of</p>

	limitations and areas for further enquiry.		recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.	limitations and areas for further enquiry.
<b>Structure, organisation and presentation</b>	Very poor standard of organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Very poor standard of written and/or visual communication. Very poor compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Some serious/significant grammatical errors and omissions in the references/bibliography.	Poor standard of organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Poor standard of written and/or visual communication. Poor compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Some significant grammatical errors and omissions in the references/bibliography.	Poor standard of organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Adequate standard of written and/or visual communication. Poor compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Grammatical errors and omissions in the references/bibliography.	Satisfactory organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Some good quality written and/or visual communication. Standard compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Some grammatical errors and omissions in the references/bibliography.

Grade/Criteria	60 – 69%	70 – 79%	80-100%
<b>Design and conceptualisation of project</b>	Very good research design and conceptualisation, with potential to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are grounded in the wider literature to a very good level and have generally been achieved to a very good standard. Design and conceptualisation of the research is at times ambitious with very good evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project’s aims and objectives.	An extremely good research design and conceptualisation, which expands, redefines and/or contributes to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are critically grounded in the wider literature and have been achieved to an extremely good level. Design and conceptualisation of the research is ambitious with extremely good evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project’s aims and objectives.	Outstanding research design and conceptualisation, which clearly expands, redefines and/or contributes to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are critically grounded in the wider literature and have been achieved to an exceptional standard. Design and conceptualisation of the research is extremely coherent, appropriate, ambitious and original with excellent evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project’s aims and objectives.
<b>Intellectual engagement, knowledge and understanding</b>	Very good engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Clear and at times insightful recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing a very good grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and	Extremely good critical engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Clear, insightful and in places sophisticated recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an extremely	Outstanding critical engagement with theory, frameworks and debates in a highly persuasive narrative form. Highly sophisticated recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an exemplary

	methods of the study. Very good identification of gaps in knowledge.	good grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Extremely good identification of gaps in knowledge.	grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. In-depth and insightful understanding of the gaps in knowledge.
<b>Methodology and research methods</b>	Very good justification for methods adopted, with clearly discussed and explained in the context of the literature review and research questions. Good recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Extremely good justification for methods adopted, clearly and critically discussed and explained in the context of the literature review and research questions. Methods adopted are appropriate for the research questions, with very good recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Outstanding justification for methods adopted, clear and critically explained demonstrating a sophisticated high quality level of analysis in the context of the literature review and research questions. Methods adopted are highly appropriate for the research questions, with excellent recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.
<b>Analysis and evaluation</b>	Some high-quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research demonstrating very good level of reflectivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings are discussed to a very good level within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project.	Extremely good critical analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research demonstrating an extremely good level of reflectivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings are discussed to an extremely original aims and objectives of the project.	Outstanding and very high-quality critical analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research, demonstrating a very high level of reflectivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings have been critically and comprehensively

	Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to a very good level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Very good, informed recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.	Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to an extremely good level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Very rigorous overt and informed recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.	discussed in the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to an exemplary level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Highly rigorous overt and informed recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.
<b>Structure, organisation and presentation</b>	Very good organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Very good quality written and/or visual communication. Very good compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Few grammatical errors and isolated omissions in the references/bibliography.	Extremely good organisation, structure and presentation of the project. High quality written and/or visual communication. Full compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). No/limited apparent grammatical errors or omissions in the references/bibliography.	Exemplary organisation, structure and presentation of the project. High quality written and/or visual communication with clear narrative style and appropriate structure. Strict compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). No/few apparent grammatical errors or omissions in bibliography.

## 11 MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

### 11.1 Mitigating Circumstances

During the studies students may have certain times when circumstances prevent them performing to the best of their ability. This could be due to family problems, close personal bereavement or illness. In the first instance this should be discussed with the Academic Supervisor and study advisor who will advise the students. See detailed definition of the circumstances in EEG Part 12.

### 11.2 Regulations concerning mitigating circumstances

As with all modules, the GA/FP is covered by the general assessment regulations concerning mitigating circumstances. If students feel that the progress or the quality of their GA/FP is being affected by adverse circumstances (for example, prolonged debilitating illness, or stress due to unavoidable personal circumstances), they can apply for an extension and submit their GA/FP in the next opportunity.

Students need to discuss with/report to their Academic Supervisors and their study advisors about the adverse circumstances and the possibility of extensions **AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE**. Students should be able to foresee, if they require an extension well in advance of the submission deadline (usually at least a week before). Normally, they will be required to produce evidence that they have suffered from adverse circumstances. They must take the application with supporting evidence to their Study Advisor and inform their Academic Supervisor.

### 11.3 Retake of Remaining Module under Mitigating Circumstances

On condition that a student has a mitigating circumstance and/or a minimum of 55 ECs, a request can be made for a special seat if the remaining module is NOT within the block (s) prior to graduation. A maximum of 2 modules can be requested.

A student is permitted to do a retake under mitigating circumstances only once. Otherwise, it reverts to the normal planning of the module and assessments/retakes.

A retake under mitigating circumstances can only be done when a student has attempted the normal exam (1<sup>st</sup> attempt) and achieved above 4 in one of the earlier attempts. Otherwise, if the students have achieved less than 4 in all previous attempts, or have attempted 2 or 3 retakes, they will be required to retake the whole module instead of retaking the exam under mitigating circumstances. In special cases (at the student's written request) the Graduation & Examination Board (GEB) may decide otherwise.

Retake under mitigating circumstances requests should be submitted no later than Week 1 of the block before the planned graduation with the approval of the GEB, i.e. if a student plans to graduate in Block October, they need to attend the special seat in Block September. The request has to be submitted in Week 1 of Block September.

A request for a special seat must be done by completing the "Retake of remaining module/Mitigating Circumstances Form" available in the Students Resources online area.

#### **11. 4 Waiver of Tuition Fee**

A student will be granted a waiver in the tuition fee of one block maximum only once in case of failure in their GA/FP. This waiver is not applicable in case of the following circumstances:

- Incomplete and/or unqualified GA/FP
- Students who missed any of the three submission deadlines for chapters and draft
- Failed GA/FP due to academic misconduct

Incomplete GA/FP is defined by the following conditions:

1. Any of the parts as listed in Table 4.1 is missing
2. The word count is more than 20% below the minimum requirement

Unqualified GA/FP is defined by the following conditions:

1. Students do NOT meet the criteria for graduation outlined in EEG Part 8 (for example insufficient ECs, MEEs not completed etc.)
2. Any parts of the GA/FP is not checked or approved by the Academic Supervisor

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 – RESEARCH ETHICS FORMS

This segment must be read alongside:

- BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research.
- National Ethics Council for Social and Behavioural Sciences.
- Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

#### **How to use**

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the questions in Section A, please, provide an outline of how the potential risks will be addressed against the question number in Section B.

The Academic Supervisor (Tier 1) will use this information to assess whether the risks are insignificant enough, or could be mitigated, to enable the research to proceed with Tier 1 ethical approval, or whether the proposal needs to be referred to Head Academic Supervision (Tier 2), or Head of School (Tier 3) or the Wittenborg Graduation & Examination Board (Tier 4).

Use checklist C to confirm that ethical issues regarding research participants have been identified and addressed appropriately. Based on the information of sections A, B and C, the 'Consent Form' is created. Checklist E provides an overview for accompanying documents.

Students must receive ethical approval before starting collecting data (Section D).

**CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS FORMS SEGMENT**

Section A: Ethical risk assessment checklist..... 53

Section B: Addressing potential risk..... 55

Section C: Checklist ethical issues relating to research participants ..... 57

Section D: Academic Supervisor sign-off (for student research only) ..... 58

Section E: Checklist for accompanying documents ..... 59

Consent form ..... 60

**SECTION A: ETHICAL RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

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Please, tick YES or NO for each question. If you have answered YES to any of the questions from 1 to 15 below, please, provide a brief outline of how these risks will be addressed in the relevant part of the box in Section B or give details of any existing protocols within the Wittenborg School that already cover these specific issues.

#	Question	Yes/No
1	Will participants be likely to undergo vigorous physical activity, prolonged or repetitive testing, or to experience physical harm, more than minimal pain or discomfort or exposure to dangerous situations/environments as part of the research?	Yes/No
2	Does the study involve any physiological or psychological interventions with the potential to be invasive, intrusive or harmful (e.g. administration of drugs or other substances, taking samples of blood, saliva, urine, etc., use of equipment to monitor bodily performance, manual handling of participants, techniques such as hypnotherapy)?	Yes/No
3	Will the study involve participants who could be considered vulnerable (for example due to age, psychological or medical condition, social inequality), or where possible coercion or feelings of obligation to participate may exist (e.g. when recruiting one's own students or colleagues)?	Yes/No
4	Will the study involve the discussion of sensitive topics (for example, painful reflections or traumas, religious or other beliefs, sexual behaviour, experience of violence, abuse or bullying, illness, illegal or political behaviour, people's gender or ethnic status, detailed financial matters, issues relating to body image)?	Yes/No
5	Could participants experience psychological or emotional stress, anxiety, humiliation or other negative consequences, beyond what would be expected to be encountered in normal life?	Yes/No

6	Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation or recording of people in non- public places), or involve deception or conduct of the research without participants' full and informed consent?	Yes/No
7	Will the research require the co-operation or permission of an individual or gatekeeper in order to gain access to participants (e.g. a teacher at a school, a manager of sheltered housing, the organiser of a self-help group, etc.)?	Yes/No
8	Will the research involve access to records of a confidential or personal nature, or documents of a sensitive political, moral, medical or religious nature?	Yes/No
9	Will the research involve collecting visual information of a personal nature, such as taking photographs or making video recordings of participants?	Yes/No
10	Will the research involve accessing participants or data of a personal nature via an online environment or internet setting (e.g. chat rooms, social media, instant messaging, etc.)?	Yes/No
11	Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	Yes/No
12	Does the research have the potential for causing significant negative impact on the environment (including animal or plant populations, or rare or protected species, habitats or sites)?	Yes/No
13	Might the research raise specific ethical issues regarding cultural/political sensitivities (e.g. local customs or gatekeepers, political sensitivities)?	Yes/No
14	Might the research involve the disclosure of confidential information beyond the initial consent given?	Yes/No
15	Are there any other ethical issues that are not covered in the questions above?	Yes/No

**SECTION B: ADDRESSING POTENTIAL RISK**

---

To be completed only if one or more questions in section A above have been answered as 'YES'.

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the questions in Section A above, please, provide an outline of how the potential risks will be addressed against the question number. The Academic Supervisor (Tier 1) will use this information to assess whether the risks are insignificant enough, or could be mitigated, to enable the research to proceed with Tier 1 ethical approval, or whether the proposal needs to be referred to Head Academic Supervision (Tier 2), and ultimately the Wittenborg Graduation & Examination Board (Tier 3).

Please outline potential risks and how they will be addressed.

Question in section A	Outline potential risks and how they will be addressed.	Yes/No
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

Some WITTENBORGGA/FPs may carry out research that involves types of risk on a routine basis (e.g. manual handling of participants or working with specific hazardous substances, involving children as participants in a school setting, taking photographs or videos of participants), and may already have specific protocols that cover procedures and guidelines for dealing with these risks. If activities to be undertaken in the proposed project are covered by such a protocol, please, provide details below.

Where the research is covered by such a protocol and does not raise any additional ethical issues it does not need to be considered at Tier 2.

**Additional details:** <...add, when applicable...>

**SECTION C: CHECKLIST ETHICAL ISSUES RELATING TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Please use the checklist below to confirm that ethical issues regarding research participants have been identified and addressed appropriately.

#	Statements	Yes	N/A
1	Participants will be fully informed regarding the purpose of the study and their participation in it.		
2	It will be made clear to participants that their participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.		
3	Consent will be obtained from participants for taking part in the study.		
4	Recruitment materials (including posters, leaflets and emails), information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires or letters provide sufficient and accurate information, and have been clearly written and presented in a format suitable for the target audience.		
5	Where the research is likely to involve participants, who might not understand English, arrangements will be made for translation of materials and/or provision of interpreters as appropriate.		
6	Appropriate arrangements have been made to consider anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of participants.		
7	Appropriate arrangements have been made for the collection, handling and storage of electronic and/or physical data.		

**SECTION D: ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR SIGN-OFF (FOR STUDENT RESEARCH ONLY)**

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I confirm that I have checked the application and that:

- the student has addressed the relevant ethical issues,
- the student has the necessary skills and experience to carry out the proposed research and has been trained in ethics as part of their course,
- this is a practicable and worthwhile research project, appropriate to the level of study.

Academic Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION E: CHECKLIST FOR ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

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Please, add these documents to this document (do not upload these as separate files).

Please, ensure you have attached copies of any of the following documents where relevant:

- Information sheet
- Consent form
- Advertising or recruitment materials
- Sample questionnaires or interview questions
- Risk assessment forms. Note: See sections A, B, C.
- Letters of support from external organisations involved in the research
- List of references

Submit this form in accordance with the instructions at the beginning of this document.

Student applicants: If you have answered 'no' to all the questions in Section C, or the work is covered by an approved Wittenborg protocol, this form may be submitted with the student dissertation or original data. If you have answered 'yes' to one or more of the questions in Section D, please return this form and all accompanying documentation to the Academic Supervisor.

Wittenborg

**CONSENT FORM**

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The research project to reflect the scope of the participation for which consent is being sought:

<...add title...>

	Please initial or tick box
I agree to take part in this research which is to answer: <...add text...>	
The researcher has explained to my satisfaction the purpose, principles and procedures of the study and the possible risks involved.	
I have read the information sheet and I understand the principles, procedures and possible risks involved.	
I am aware that I will be required to participate in <...add description...>, that are part of the research project. As well as, to answer questions by means of <...add research methods...>. The researcher will make use of <...add additional research methods, and/or technologies...>, of which I am aware.	
I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will normally be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else.	
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without incurring consequences from doing so.	
I agree that should I withdraw from the study, the data collected up to that point may be used by the researcher for the purposes described in the information sheet. Where there is a possibility that data may be reused or shared, in accordance with Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences Intellectual Property (IP) Policy.	
I agree that data collected may subsequently be archived and used by other bona fide researchers.	

Name (please, print) .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**APPENDIX 2 - NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT (NDA) FOR STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT (A TEMPLATE)**

**Parties:**

1. University: Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (shortened as Wittenborg in the following), The Netherlands
2. Organization: [Name of Organization]

**Recitals:**

1. Wittenborg is engaged in research activities, including student research projects.
2. The Organization is interested in collaborating with Wittenborg on a specific research project.
3. To protect the confidential information exchanged between the Parties, it is necessary to establish a non-disclosure agreement.

**Agreement:**

**Definitions:**

1. Confidential Information: Any information disclosed by one Party to the other Party, whether in written, oral, or electronic form, that is designated as confidential or should reasonably be understood to be confidential.
2. Obligation of Confidentiality. Wittenborg can confirm that we can accommodate the confidentially regarding the project organisation, as follows:
  - The Graduation Assignment/Final Project (GA/FP) will not be published online for a maximum confidentiality period of two years, if the Organization wishes to impose a temporary embargo.
  - The GA/FP research proposal and the final graduation assignment will be sent as paper copies (2 copies) by secure post to arrive by the deadline;
  - Only the first (Wittenborg Academic Supervisor), one external second reader (Wittenborg Second Marker), and the GA/FP oral defence panel member will read the GA/FP research proposal and the graduation assignment, as well as one additional internal reader, the secretary to the Examination Board, only;
  - The graduation assignment copies will NOT be openly available under the temporary embargo after all the grading is done following the Wittenborg Examination Board and appeal period.
  - The name of the company and individuals to be interviewed will be changed in the account and will stay anonymous;
  - Documents submitted will be clearly marked as 'COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT TO BE HELD ON FILE' on all sheets;

- This email is to be added as an enclosure to the GA/FP.

Exceptions: Confidential Information does not include information that:

- is already publicly known or becomes publicly known through no fault of the receiving Party;
- is independently developed by the receiving Party without the use of the disclosing Party's Confidential Information;
- is required to be disclosed by law or court order.

Term and Termination:

- This Agreement shall commence on the date of execution and continue until terminated after a maximum confidentiality period of two years.
- Either Party may terminate this Agreement immediately upon written notice if the other Party breaches any of its obligations under this Agreement.

Governing Law and Jurisdiction:

- This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the local laws.
- Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Agreement shall be submitted to the exclusive jurisdiction of the local courts.

The Parties have executed this Agreement as of the date first written above.

[Signature of Wittenborg Representative]

[Name of Wittenborg Representative]

[Title of Wittenborg Representative]

[Signature of Organization Representative]

[Name of Organization Representative]

[Title of Organization Representative]

### APPENDIX 3– DECLARATION ON THE USE OF AI IN THE GA/FP

In the creation of my GA/FP, I have used the following AI tool(s)/system(s):

1. [name of the AI tool/system] in [the step of GA/FP] as incorporated in [number of the GA/FP chapter]
2. [name of the AI tool/system] in [the step of GA/FP] as incorporated in [number of the GA/FP chapter]
3. ...

I declare that I have

- Familiarised myself the capabilities and limitations of the AI tool(s)/system(s) listed above,
- Marked all AI-generated content within the GA/FP,
- Verified the authenticity of the sources of cited/quoted information,
- Verified the accuracy of the AI-generated content,
- Assumed full responsibility for the statements and assertions made in my GA/FP.

Place, Date, Signature

Notes:

1. The above declaration, except the notes, should be included in the acknowledgement.
2. The absence of declaration indicates that no AI tool/system is used in GA/FP.
3. The GA/FP steps:
  - Generation of ideas and conception of research
  - Literature search
  - Literature analysis
  - Literature management and citation management
  - Selection of methods and models
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Generation of codes
  - Creation of visualizations
  - Interpretation and validation
  - Structuring the text
  - Formulating the text
  - Translating the text
  - Editing of the text
  - Preparing a presentation of the text
  - Others