

Regulations for student researchers

as of academic year 2018-2019

Part I: goal and tasks

The goal of the student researcher programme is to acquaint students with the tasks and work of assistants and researchers. Its focus lies on the personal and mental enrichment of student researchers; it aims to prepare them for a research career. Ideally, the programme will help student researchers prepare to submit research funding applications.

With this in mind, each student researcher is given a role in the work of a research group and assigned a limited number of tasks related to teaching and/or research which will help them become acquainted with academic work. The main focus for student researchers is the preparation – under the supervision of a member of the ZAP – of a preliminary piece of scientific writing that is suitable for publication. This text may be submitted as a dissertation during the student researcher’s Master programme. Being involved in a research group requires more than simply working on a publishable text, however. Active participation in the other activities of the research group is an equally important element of the programme which may be fulfilled in various ways.

Part II: selection criteria and procedure for student researcher candidates

Preamble: Definition of “extra examination period”

Extra examination period: The standard Bachelor programme contains six examination periods (always in January and June; four for abridged Bachelors and bridging programmes). Extra examination periods are considered those in which a student takes an examination for a subject which was not taken or passed in the semester in which the student was first enrolled for that subject.

Article 1: standard regulations

Following an interview with the supervisor and the conferral of his/her approval, student researcher status is granted to students who fulfil the following criteria:

- a) the student obtained his/her Bachelor degree within a three-year period (two-year period for abridged Bachelors and bridging programmes)
- b) with an average of 70% and participation in max. two extra examination periods
- c) 12/20 for the Bachelor programme annual dissertation
- d) sufficiently motivated

Note on Criterion b: The strategic spreading of examinations over multiple examination periods by students studying in optimum conditions, participation in examinations without proper preparation (i.e. results of 0 or 1 out of 20) and taking examinations *pro forma* will increase the required average percentage by 5% for students who wish to make use of the standard regulations, except in the event of a unanimously supported deviation.

Note on Criterion d: In the event that Criterion d is not fulfilled, the supervisor should submit a short report on the student's motivation to the Research Reflection Group (Dutch: *Reflectiegroep Onderzoek*, ROZ).

Article 2: derogations from the regulations

In derogation from Article 1, and following an interview with and additional justification by the supervisor, student researcher status may also be granted to students who fulfil the following criteria, except in the event of a unanimously supported deviation:

- a) the student obtained his/her Bachelor degree within seven **semesters** (five semesters for abridged Bachelors and bridging programmes)
- b) with an average of **at least 65%** and participation in max. two extra examination periods
- c) 12/20 for the Bachelor programme annual dissertation
- d) sufficiently motivated

The strategic spreading of examinations over multiple examination periods by students studying in optimum conditions, participation in examinations without proper preparation (i.e. results of 0 or 1 out of 20) and taking examinations *pro forma* will mean students are not eligible to make use of these derogations from the regulations, except in the event of a unanimously supported deviation.

Article 3: procedure

All candidatures are presented for a vote in a closed and confidential meeting of the ROZ, the results of which are communicated to the student(s) by email. Students who are not granted student researcher status receive a report explaining the reason for the decision. Unsuccessful candidates are also allocated a dissertation topic from the list of standard dissertation topics.

Candidature for and granting of student researcher status occurs simultaneously with the allocation of dissertation topics. The procedure therefore involves the same deadlines.

The list of topics for student researchers is made available on Blackboard along with the document that students should fill in to propose their candidacy. Students may propose their own topics in consultation with their supervisors.

Students should submit the completed documents to the research secretariat.

- If the student wishes to make use of any derogation from the regulations, the application should be accompanied by a justification written by the supervisor. Without the supervisor's justification, no derogation from the standard regulations can be admitted.
- If the student has obtained any degree other than a Bachelor in Law from the University of Antwerp, the application should also be accompanied by a written justification from the supervisor.

The ROZ decides whether to grant student researcher status and informs the Master dissertation commission of its decision. Students are then notified. The ROZ reports to the Faculty Board with a short explanation of the number of candidatures received, approved and rejected, taking care to ensure that all potentially identifying elements are left out.

Part III: developing projects for student researchers

The member of ZAP staff who is requesting a student researcher submits a concise description of the project in the form of a dissertation topic, which should have the potential to develop into a PhD topic. The description should include the nature and scope of the tasks. Besides writing their dissertation, student researchers may also be asked to complete a limited number of additional tasks per year, not exceeding 30 hours of work.

ZAP members may submit a maximum of two non-binding dissertation topics to be reserved for student researchers. These reserved topics are not included in the standard list of dissertation topics. The name of each supervisor is included on the list next to the topic. Students should contact the relevant supervisor in advance. This step is mandatory for all candidates, regardless of whether the student wishes to make use of a derogation from the regulations.

Once the results are announced, the appointment of successful candidates is considered complete and they are free to begin their activities in the research group.

Any issues can be reported to the chair of the ROZ.

Part IV: unremunerated position

Student researchers receive no remuneration. They may apply for reimbursement of any relevant expenses, however, such as registration fees for study days that are directly related to the project.

Student researchers are not entitled to separate office space.

Part v: assessment

Assessment is carried out the ROZ on the basis of a short report (max. 20,000 characters), compiled and signed by the student, which concludes with the recommendation (positive and negative) and signature of the supervisor. The report should cover all tasks that the student has actually undertaken and which belong to the activities of the research group concerned, but which bear no relation to the requirements of the student's Master dissertation or other course components. The student should leave sufficient space in the report for the supervisor to add his or her assessment of each activity. Completed reports, including the supervisor's comments and signature, should be submitted by the student researcher to the research secretariat before the start of the resit period in the academic year following the year in which student researcher status was granted. On the basis of the report, the ROZ confirms or rejects the supervisor's conclusions, taking care to assess all of the faculty's student researchers fairly. Students are notified of the ROZ's conclusions before the Saturday of the 'deliberation' week in the above-mentioned resit period.

Obtaining good or excellent results on a Master dissertation is not sufficient grounds for positive assessment of the student researcher.

- *Positive* assessments grant students, research groups, supervisors and the faculty the right to communicate that the students concerned were successful student researchers during their Master in Law. Successful students receive a written declaration from the faculty.

- *Negative* assessments are handled with the utmost confidentiality and are not to be made public in any form, except by the unsuccessful student researchers themselves.