

Thesis criteria to facilitate the evaluation and grading of MSc theses within Sustainable and Innovative Natural Resource Management (SINReM)



**SINReM**  
INTERNATIONAL MSc

| Criteria/ Key competences*                                                                                                          | Grades (UGent)                                            | 9                                                                                        | 10 to 12                                                                                                                              | 13 to 14                                                                                                                                               | 15 to 17                                                                                                                                         | 18 to 19 (20)                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research                                                                                                                            | Grades (TU Freiberg)<br>Equivalent for UU**<br>Descriptor | 5<br><i>U</i><br>Fail                                                                    | 3,4 to 4<br>3<br>Satisfactory                                                                                                         | 2,6 to 3,3<br>Good                                                                                                                                     | 1,6 to 2,5<br>4<br>Very Good                                                                                                                     | 1 to 1,5<br>5<br>Excellent                                                                                                                                 |
| Define a research problem (1)<br><i>Task clarification</i>                                                                          |                                                           | Little input into designing the project.                                                 | Relied heavily on supervisor for direction and assistance with identifying and formulating the project goals.                         | Collaborated with supervisor(s) to identify and formulate scientific problem.                                                                          | Independently and creatively identify and formulate the scientific problem. Requires some guidance.                                              | Critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate the scientific problem.                                                                    |
| Formulate research questions, approach and how the scientific problem is addressed (2) <i>Problem analysis and clear objective.</i> |                                                           | Approach and method lack clear description and do not align with the scientific problem. | Poorly described and explained approach and methods used to address the problem. Connection with the scientific problem is not clear. | Adequately described and explained approach and methods used to address the problem. Clear connection between the scientific problem and the approach. | Well described and explained approach and methods used to address the problem. Clear connection between the scientific problem and the approach. | Independently describe and justify the approach and methods used to address the problem. Clear connection between the scientific problem and the approach. |

\*numbers in brackets link to UGent key competencies as outlined in the course syllabus. Link to TU Freiberg thesis evaluation procedure in italics.

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|  | <b>Descriptor</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Fail</b>                                                                                       | <b>Satisfactory</b>                                                                          | <b>Good</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Very Good</b>                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Excellent</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Critically review and interpret relevant scientific literature and show in depth subject knowledge (4) <i>Information procurement, scientific gain of knowledge and clear motivation.</i>    | Inadequate presentation of the literature. No consideration of or misplaced relevance to society. | Poor presentation of the background literature. Weakly developed relevance for society.      | Relevant literature is adequately evaluated to place the study in the context of previous work. The relevance of the study for society is adequately developed.                                                         | Relevant literature is critically evaluated to place the study in the context of previous work. Discuss the importance and relevance of the study for society.           | Relevant literature is extensively and critically evaluated. The thesis makes strong connections with previous work. Critically evaluate the importance and relevance to society and offers suggestions for future directions.          |
|  | Use of applicable methods (3) <i>Search for solutions: Methodological approach. Traceability of the tests used. Chemical and equipment used. Spectroscopic documents, tables and figure.</i> | Unclear presentation of the methods. It is hard to tell what has been done.                       | Poorly described methods. No discussion of the uncertainties. Contains a few key references. | Adequate description of the methods cover some of the following; sampling, sample preparation, analysis, data processing and modelling. Minimal consideration of sources of uncertainty. Contains a few key references. | Good reporting of the methods from sampling to sample preparation, analysis, data processing and modelling. Includes an assessment of the data quality. Well referenced. | Excellent presentation of the methods from sampling to sample preparation, analysis, data processing and modelling. Includes a critical assessment of the data quality. The choice of the methods are clearly justified and referenced. |

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|  | <b>Descriptor</b>                                                                            | <b>Fail</b>                                                                                           | <b>Satisfactory</b>                                                                                               | <b>Good</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Very Good</b>                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Excellent</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Collect data meticulously (5)<br><i>Appropriate execution of the work and documentation.</i> | Poor data collection and unclear presentation of the data.                                            | Protocols poorly followed. Random dataset that is not clearly presented in tables and figures.                    | Adequately followed protocols. Data set is a suitable size. Data is adequately presented in tables and figures.    | Conscientiously followed protocols. Data set is a suitable size. Data is well presented in tables and figures.                                                          | Conscientiously followed protocols. Comprehensive data set given the procedures. Data is excellently presented in tables and figures.                                                                                               |
|  | Process data appropriately (6)                                                               | Poor use of data processing techniques. Lacks understanding of choice, assumptions and uncertainties. | Adequate use of data processing techniques. Lacks understanding of appropriateness, assumptions or uncertainties. | Uses appropriate data processing techniques. Little justification of the chosen technique or assumptions involved. | Employs appropriate data processing techniques. Good justification of the chosen techniques. Shows a sound understanding of the inherent assumptions and uncertainties. | Employs appropriate data processing techniques. Presents the benefits of the chosen technique and compares output with other studies or techniques. Shows an excellent understanding of the inherent assumptions and uncertainties. |

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|                                                                                                                                               | <b>Descriptor</b> | <b>Fail</b>                                                                                        | <b>Satisfactory</b>                                                                                                  | <b>Good</b>                                                                                                                              | <b>Very Good</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>Excellent</b>                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Critically analyse and interpret data (7)                                                                                                     |                   | Inadequate description of results. Unclear links between evidence and interpretations.             | Results of experiments, analysis or modelling are poorly described. Weak links between evidence and interpretations. | Results of experiments, analysis or modelling are well described. Interpretations are drawn and weakly connected to supporting evidence. | Results of experiments, analysis or modelling are clearly described. Interpretations are drawn and connected to supporting evidence. | Results of experiments, analysis or modelling are very clearly described. Interpretations are clearly drawn and strongly connected to supporting evidence. |
| Show appropriate independence, motivation, dedication and initiative (10)<br><i>Creatively and Independently. Commitment and reliability.</i> |                   | Required continual input and support from supervisor at all stages. No original input or interest. | Relied heavily on supervisor and did not consistently follow instructions. Little original input to the project.     | Progressed mainly as directed by the supervisor. Need assistance from supervisor for the details.                                        | Introduced useful ideas and was able to independently progress. Overcame detailed problems with little reliance on supervisor.       | Made a major input to the content and direction of the work. Substantial initiative shown in taking the project in new directions.                         |

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|                          | Descriptor                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Fail                                                         | Satisfactory                                            | Good                                                                                               | Very Good                                                                                                               | Excellent                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Oral presentation</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                              |                                                         |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                             |
|                          | Give a clear presentation of the goals, results, interpretations and implications of the work (11). <i>Content of the presentation, completeness, clearly formulated task, presentation organisation, layout and formatting, use of visual aids and referencing.</i> | Very poor presentation and organisation.                     | Satisfactory organisation and presentation of material. | Good presentation, well illustrated and structured.                                                | Very good presentation. High quality of visual aids with appropriate citations. Clear take home message or conclusions. | Excellent presentation. High quality of visual aids with appropriate citations. Clear take home message or conclusions. The relevance is clearly presented. |
|                          | Defence questions. <i>Queries</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Poor answers to questions. Shows significant knowledge gaps. | Satisfactory answers to most of the questions.          | Consistently good, slightly hesitant answers to questions. Adequate knowledge of the subject area. | Very good and spontaneous answers to questions. Good knowledge of the subject area.                                     | Excellent and highly spontaneous answers to questions. Excellent knowledge of the subject area and further applications.                                    |

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|                       | Descriptor             | Fail                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Satisfactory                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Good                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Very Good                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Excellent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Written report</b> |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                       | Synthesis of ideas (8) | Lacks consideration of issues from a multidisciplinary or inter-disciplinary perspective. Lacks links between values and concepts. Very poor use of evidence, synthesis, summary and evaluation of data. | Basic ability to consider issues from a range of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Weak use of links between values and concepts. Satisfactory use of evidence, synthesis, summary and evaluation of data. | Reasonable ability to consider issues from a range of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Reasonable links between values and concepts. Reasonable ability to synthesise, summarise and evaluate data. Good use of evidence to make logical arguments. | Well developed ability to consider issues from a range of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Draws upon appropriate values and concepts to provide a critical assessment. Good ability to synthesise, summarise and evaluate data. Very good use of evidence to build up arguments. | Excellent ability to consider issues from a range of multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary perspectives. Eloquently draws upon appropriate values and concepts to provide a critical assessment. Excellent ability to synthesise, summarise and evaluate data. Very good use of evidence to build up arguments. |

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|--|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                                             | Difficult to read or follow. Lacks structure, train of thought or arguments. Very poor presentation and organisation. No use of external data. Inadequate referencing and bibliography. | A poor style of writing that is difficult to follow in parts. Little structure and poor organisation of the material. Little comparison to external data. Incomplete or inextensive referencing and bibliography. | Well written with a good structure and organisation. Some comparison of data with other sources. Good referencing and bibliography. | Very well written, with very good organisation and structure. Clear explanations and very good technical content. Good integration of data with external sources. Very good referencing and bibliography. | Excellent presentation, highly organised and very well structured. Advanced technical content and integration of data with external sources. Extensive bibliography with very good referencing. |
|  | Popular science description (if applicable) | Poor translation of abstract.                                                                                                                                                           | Translation of abstract, no effort to make it understandable to a non-scientific audience.                                                                                                                        | A good attempt to explain technical concepts for non-scientists.                                                                    | Interesting and informative account understandable to non-scientists.                                                                                                                                     | A highly entertaining account on a level that is interesting and informative for the general public.                                                                                            |

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