# MA National & Transnational Studies – Guidelines for Research Module II
*(version from 11 April 2022)*

This module enables students to further refine their research skills at postgraduate level. This is done through the following components:

## Postgraduate class (4 LP):

The postgraduate class provides advice and supervision on independent study projects, as well as being a forum for the presentation and discussion of students' results. The class also helps students to develop other aspects of their academic profile. In semester 4, the postgraduate class also prepares for the disputatio, discusses students' perspectives for their future careers, gives information on career opportunities in different academic and non-academic sectors (e.g. in cooperation with the University's Career Service), reviews important transferable skills, gives more specific guidance on career strategies for the academic sector, discusses opportunities for PhD study and PhD project planning, and provides advice on applications.

## Independent study (5LP):

Students further enhance their research skills as well as their knowledge of national and transnational studies through a programme of **independent study**. This consists of several parts:

### Part 1:

**1 LP** (equivalent to 30 hours of study time) is acquired by **attending guest lectures, literary readings and other events** inside and/or outside the university (e.g. theatre performances, exhibitions in museums or galleries, conferences, festivals) which are thematically relevant to this M.A. programme. As a rough guideline, we assume that students will have spent c.3 hours altogether for each guest lecture, literary reading, theatre performance, or exhibition – these 3 hours comprise potential pre-event preparation, event attendance and post-event reflection / looking up further details etc. Certain events (e.g. academic conferences) usually last longer than 3 hours; here, the student can also be credited for more than 3 hours if they can prove that they spent more hours on this event.

*Examples:* A student who has attended 5 guest lectures and 5 exhibitions gets credit for 3 hours per event, i.e. 10 x 3 = 30 hours = 1 LP. Another student who has spent 9 hours attending a one-day conference, 4 guest lectures (worth 3 hours each = 12 hours) and 3 exhibitions (worth 3 hours each = 9 hours) likewise gets credit for 30 hours altogether, i.e. 1 LP.

Naturally, students can only count events for credit in independent study if these events are not already part of a taught course they attend for credit.

> *Examples:* A Münster professor gives a 15-week lecture course on "Postcolonial African Literature" and decides that 1 of the 15 lectures will be replaced by a visit from a Nigerian poet who will read from his latest book. All students who attend this lecture course every week have to attend this reading as part of their normal study in this course. At the same time, the professor permits interested students from outside this course to listen to the poetry reading as well. An MA student who attends the lecture course "Postcolonial African Literature" for credit (e.g. in the module "Culture Contact, Culture Conflict" cannot count attendance of this reading for his/her independent study in the "Research Module" because it is already part of his/her workload in another module. I.e., the same event cannot be credited twice. However, an MA student who does not attend the whole lecture course and just comes to this one poetry reading can count it for credit in independent study because it does not count anywhere else.

### Part 2:

The remaining **4 LP** are acquired through an **individual research project.** Students either deepen their knowledge of the research area they had already chosen for "Research Module I" or choose a new research area. The research area chosen for "Research Module II" will typically lead to (and later complement) their Master theses. Advice and supervision on independent study projects is provided in the postgraduate class, and later also by their MA supervisors. The number and kind of texts will vary depending on the subject in question and the length of complexity of the texts involved. **A rough guideline: 1–2 books, 5–6 shorter texts** (e.g. essays, poems, short stories etc.). The **results** of students' research will be **presented and discussed in the postgraduate class**. Further supervision, presentation and discussion opportunities may be provided online.

## Portfolio:

The portfolio documents the work which students have done in the different module components. It is compiled over the course of the third and fourth semesters and submitted to the teacher of the Postgraduate Class towards the end of semester 4.

In some ways, the portfolio for **Research Module II** resembles the one from **Research Module I**. However, there are also some **differences**: RM II has fewer credit points (and thus a smaller workload) than RM I because we wanted to leave you enough time to work on your other demanding second-year modules. Moreover, RM II can build on synergies with the 4th-semester MA Thesis Module. We also assume that by now you'll be used to the way in which our Research Modules work, so we can dispense with some of the tasks we set you in RM I to help you find your way in. For instance, in RM I, you submitted lists of events attended and of texts you read, but also had to add some *written reflection* on how these furthered your studies. In addition, RM I asked for an essay on your 1st-year individual research project. The long portfolios you submitted at the end year 1 also helped your teachers to assess whether you were on a good track or whether you needed further guidance to improve your self-study and research for year 2. However, by the start of year 2, most issues of this kind will probably be sorted. Moreover, by the time you hand in your 2nd-year portfolio at the end of semester 4, you will also have received important guidance on reading and research from your MA thesis supervisor(s) and need less guidance from the postgraduate class teacher who marks your portfolio. This is why the 2nd-year-portfolio contains less written reflection on events and reading, and no essay. Its **main function is not assessment, but** to provide **brief formal documentation** of what you've done over the course of the module.

As such, the portfolio for RM II must contain all of the following elements:

1. **List of events attended / activities pursued for part 1 of independent study** (guest lectures, readings, exhibitions, conferences etc.). The list should only include the title, place and date of each event, but not the further reflections that were required in RM I.

2. **Bibliography** of texts read **for independent study, part 2.**
   This should only consist of ordinary bibliographical entries, formatted according to the preferred style sheet of your subject area (MLA for Literary & Cultural studies, Chicago Manual of Style for Book Studies, APA for Linguistics).
   There is now no need for the annotations/reflections that were required in RM I.

3. **Material from the presentation of students' individual research project** (i.e. PowerPoint slides, handout, presentation notes, etc.– **specifics to be determined by the lecturer** in question)

We advise you to start documents 1 & 2 (list of events and the bibliography) at the start of semester 3 and add new items as soon as they come up. Thus, the lists will grow gradually over the course of year 2, you will not forget anything, and there will be less work left to do when portfolio submission time comes at the end of semester 4. The same applies to item 3 (presentation / research discussion materials): At portfolio submission time, this may no longer reflect the way in which your thesis evolved in the meantime, but this is OK – it is <u>not</u> compulsory that you revise portfolio item 3 to reflect the current state of your thesis (the latter is marked separately in the MA thesis module by your supervisors). It merely shows the teacher who grades your portfolio that you have indeed worked on the issue over the course of year 2.
So, most work on the portfolio will be done well before submission time. When submission time comes, you'll just need to spend a little time putting things together, brushing it over and doing a last quick proofreading. As long as the portfolio is complete and well put together, we'll probably be satisfied, so this should be a fairly easy way of getting a good grade.

**Submission deadline** for the Portfolios: **31 July**