

Besluit **Besluit strekkende tot het verlenen van accreditatie aan de opleiding wo-master Biomedische Wetenschappen van de transnationale Universiteit Limburg**

	Gegevens	
datum	11 september 2013	Naam instelling : transnationale Universiteit Limburg
onderwerp	Definitief besluit accreditatie wo-master Biomedische Wetenschappen van de transnationale Universiteit Limburg (001710)	Naam opleiding : wo-master Biomedische Wetenschappen (120 ECTS)
uw kenmerk	2013.L0.0494	Datum aanvraag : 8 april 2013
ons kenmerk	NVAO/20132662/ND	Variant opleiding : voltijd
bijlagen	3	Afstudeerrichtingen : Clinical Molecular Sciences; Cardiovascular Biology and Medicine; Nutrition & Metabolism; Oncology and Developmental Biology.
		Locatie opleiding : Maastricht
		Datum goedkeuren panel : 27 maart 2012
		Datum locatiebezoeken : 18-19 september 2012
		Datum visitatierapport : 12 december 2012

Beoordelingskader

Beoordelingskader voor de uitgebreide opleidingsbeoordeling van de NVAO (Stcrt. 2010, nr 21523).

Bevindingen

De NVAO stelt vast dat in het visitatierapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden het panel de kwaliteit van de opleiding voldoende heeft bevonden.

Advies van het visitatiepanel

Samenvatting bevindingen en overwegingen van het panel (hierna ook: committee).

This report provides the findings and considerations of the Biomedical Sciences committee on the master programme in Biomedical Sciences at the transnationale Universiteit Limburg. The committee assessment is based on information in the critical reflection, interviews during the site visit and a selection of theses. For one of the sixteen standards, the committee assessed the programme as 'unsatisfactory'. For two of the sixteen standards, the programme was assessed as 'good'. The remaining 13 standards of the programme were assessed as satisfactory. The committee assessed the overall programme as satisfactory.

The master's programme Biomedical Sciences (M-BMS) is a joint programme offered by and taught at Maastricht and Hasselt University. It aims at training professional researchers who are able to 'help unravel the molecular and cellular mechanisms that underlie health and disease'. The M-BMS programme aims to combine specialization and multidisciplinary. It is the result of a merger of different (research) master's programmes, now combined in one master's programme, Biomedical Sciences. Its main focus is a broad knowledge of the molecular and cellular mechanisms that determine health and disease. The aim of the programme has been translated into a set of intended learning outcomes which are explicitly linked to the Dublin descriptors.

The committee is of the opinion that the M-BMS programme aims at high quality and is well aware of the wishes of the professional field. The intended learning outcomes are satisfactory, but broad. According to the committee, the level and orientation of the programme's objectives are at an academic master level. The committee is positive about the fact that the programme pays explicit attention in its learning outcomes to designing and writing an academic research project.

Towards the end of the programme, students choose between one of four specialization tracks. The committee finds that more attention should be paid to these different tracks. It advises the programme to choose between (earlier) specialization and multidisciplinary. If the programme aims to maintain various specialization tracks, the committee advises developing track-specific objectives and intended learning outcomes in order to clearly differentiate between the tracks as well as to highlight common aspects between them. The possible development of new specialization tracks only makes more urgent the call for elaboration of the current tracks in the objectives and profile of the programme. The committee advises the programme management to take time to reformulate these objectives.

Programme

The curriculum of the master's programme Biomedical Sciences consists of five blocks: three in the first and two in the second year. Of these five blocks, three have a theoretical and introductory character. The last blocks of both years are reserved for, respectively, a junior and senior internship. The senior internship defines the specialization.

The programme fulfils the criteria described in the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. Research forms an essential element of the programme. Students are taught in an international academic environment by formulating and working on their own research questions. At an international level, the programme ties in with the international field of biomedical sciences by: teaching on two campuses (in Maastricht and Diepenbeek, Belgium), by its increasing number of international students and staff, and by using the university's international network to provide students with a choice of host laboratories abroad for their (junior or senior) internship.

The committee does have a few critical remarks about the orientation of specific parts of the curriculum. The committee is convinced that the first two blocks are of a too general character and need to be reconsidered. Furthermore, students should be able to choose a certain specialization track much earlier in the programme.

The committee is aware that, at both a national and international level, the M-BMS programme holds a special position in the Netherlands, as a joint programme of Maastricht University and Hasselt University. The committee is convinced that the unique possibilities this co-operation provides should be exploited and stimulated more. Following the advice of both the staff and the Educational Committee, the committee urges the programme to mix student from Maastricht and Hasselt in tutor groups.

Pagina 3 van 8 Only by working together will students come to appreciate the complementary expertise of both universities which are brought together in their master's programme.

A point of concern for the assessment committee is the amount of attention that is paid to ethics in the programme. Thinking critically about the ethical implications (and practical limitations) of using animal models should be a compulsory part of the programme. In general, the understanding of ethical issues should be addressed more extensively in the programme.

The committee concludes that the chosen didactic form (Problem Based Learning) is beneficial for the programme as a whole. By working in small groups, students and teachers feel very much involved and appreciate each other's input. The committee thinks that the possibilities that the Problem Based Learning sessions provide could be explored even more widely, for instance by paying more attention to methodology, professional behavior, ethical issues and feedback.

The M-BMS programme is aimed at students who have successfully completed a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, at university or non-university level, either in the Netherlands or abroad. A distinction is made between different categories of applicants. Some students will have to undergo an additional admission procedure. The committee appreciates that insufficient knowledge can be brought up to standard in the first part of the curriculum. However, it also finds that certain skills (such as laboratory skills and generic academic skills) cannot be acquired so easily. Therefore, it strongly advises the programme to offer additional training in the form of a pre-master or summer school courses.

Completion grades for the M-BMS programme are very high. The committee thinks that the didactic form, the different work forms and good supervision create a positive study climate which prevents students as much as possible from dropping out.

Staff

The programme is organized and delivered by a team of 16 core staff members based at Maastricht and Hasselt University, together with tutors and guest lecturers from the different departments within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) and the professional field. The committee has gained a positive image of the staff's research and educational expertise.

The committee is especially impressed with the staff policy of the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences. The M-BMS teaching staff is well supported by the professional organization and structure of various departments and task groups designed especially for this task. The staff is more than sufficiently equipped to deliver the programme and reach the attainment targets. Tutors seem easily accessible to students. Staff and students both attest to a positive study climate, which the committee considers beneficial for the programme as a whole.

Services and facilities

At Maastricht University, the M-BMS programme benefits from good accommodation, facilities and services to deliver its programme. Lecture rooms and ICT-facilities such as Student Desktop Anywhere are of a high standard, laboratory rooms are adequately equipped and so are the University Library and computer rooms. Because the concept of Problem Based Learning entails consulting various sources, the programme makes use of a Learning and Resource Centre. The facilities tie in well with the aims of the programme. One point for improvement, the committee concludes, is the electronic provision of study information. Despite the fact that there is an abundance of practical and useful information available in various advanced electronic systems, the committee concludes that students do not know where to find this information.

Pagina 4 van 8 The programme should take a more active role in providing students with the necessary information regarding their study. Information should be offered in a more concise manner and guidance should be offered when necessary.

Internal quality assurance

The M-BMS programme makes use of an evaluation cycle, consisting of four steps: gathering and processing evaluation data (1), discussing them with relevant parties (2) summarising important findings and formulating action points (3) and inspection if the action points have been implemented and have resulted in improvements (4). Various evaluation data are collected and processed by external parties and by the programme itself. The committee appreciates the efforts to gather as much information as possible, which might lead to improvement measurements. However, it concludes that the evaluation system is fragile and insufficiently formalized. Firstly, it depends too much on the efforts of one person. Secondly, because the current evaluation system is insufficiently formalized, not all stakeholders who might be able to contribute to the process of quality assurance are involved. The Educational Committee is too often overlooked and is not as well informed or consulted as often as it should be. For instance, it does not see evaluation data and does not have regular meetings with the programme management. The committee urges the programme to reconsider and formalize its quality assurance cycle and to formulate attainment targets for different parts of the evaluation process.

Testing and final qualifications

The committee concludes that the programme does have an adequate assessment system in place. It also concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes. The master's programme aims at preparing students for a career in research and/or the professional field. The majority of students (66%) goes on to carry out PhD-research. The committee is impressed with the active role of the Board of Examiners, proof of which is given by a number of measurements the Board has taken, such as exam training for staff members and close involvement with exam evaluations. During the visit, the Board of Examiners put forward a few ideas for further improving the quality of examining in the master's programme. The committee is positive about these plans and advises the Board to carry them out.

Before and during the site visit, the committee looked at a random sample of 15 master's theses and a number of block exams. It considers the quality of the thesis and exams sufficient. The block exams tie in with the intended learning outcomes. A point of concern for the assessment committee is the assessment of the master's thesis. The committee was surprised to learn that the senior internship, although individually marked and a prerequisite for graduation, plays no role in the assessment of the master's thesis. The committee considers practical laboratory techniques essential for future researchers. Therefore, it urges the programme to not only mark the senior internship individually, but to include this mark in the final mark for the thesis.

Aanbevelingen

Pagina 5 van 8 De NVAO onderschrijft in het bijzonder de sterke aanbeveling van het panel om een adequaat pre-mastertraject te ontwikkelen waarbij HBO-bachelors voorafgaand aan de masteropleiding een pre-mastertraject volgen.

Verder onderschrijft de NVAO de aanbeveling van het panel om de oriëntatie op de specialisatie al in het eerste jaar van de master te laten plaatsvinden en bijbehorende beoogde leerresultaten te herformuleren, alsmede een transparant protocol te ontwikkelen waarbij de beoordeling van de masterstage meetelt voor het eindcijfer voor de masterthesis.

Het panel heeft standaard 15 met een onvoldoende beoordeeld omdat niet alle stakeholders voldoende betrokken werden bij de interne kwaliteitszorg. De NVAO stelt vast dat de opleiding een verbeterplan heeft opgesteld om deze onvoldoende te remediëren.

Besluit


Ingevolge het bepaalde in artikel 5a.10, derde lid, van de WHW heeft de NVAO het college van bestuur van de transnationale Universiteit Limburg te Maastricht in de gelegenheid gesteld zijn zienswijze op het voornemen tot besluit van 17 juni 2013 naar voren te brengen. Bij brief van 10 juli 2013 heeft het college van bestuur ingestemd met het voornemen tot besluit.

Op grond van het voorgaande besluit de NVAO accreditatie te verlenen aan de wo-master Biomedische Wetenschappen (120 ECTS; variant: voltijd; locatie: Maastricht) van de transnationale Universiteit Limburg te Maastricht. De opleiding kent de volgende afstudeerrichtingen: Clinical Molecular Sciences; Cardiovascular Biology and Medicine; Nutrition & Metabolism; Oncology and Developmental Biology. De NVAO beoordeelt de kwaliteit van de opleiding als voldoende.

Dit besluit treedt in werking op 1 januari 2014 en is van kracht tot en met 31 december 2019.

Den Haag, 11 september 2013

De NVAO
Voor deze:



R.P. Zevenbergen
(bestuurder)

Tegen dit besluit kan op grond van het bepaalde in de Algemene wet bestuursrecht door een belanghebbende bezwaar worden gemaakt bij de NVAO. De termijn voor het indienen van bezwaar bedraagt zes weken.

Onderwerp	Standaarden	Beoordeling door het panel <i>voltijd</i>
1. Beoogde eindkwalificaties	1. De beoogde eindkwalificaties van de opleiding zijn wat betreft inhoud, niveau en oriëntatie geconcretiseerd en voldoen aan internationale eisen	V
2. Programma	2. De oriëntatie van het programma waarborgt de ontwikkeling van vaardigheden op het gebied van wetenschappelijk onderzoek en/of de beroepspraktijk.	V
	3. De inhoud van het programma biedt studenten de mogelijkheid om de beoogde eindkwalificaties te bereiken.	V
	4. De vormgeving van het programma zet aan tot studeren en biedt studenten de mogelijkheid om de beoogde eindkwalificaties te bereiken.	V
	5. Het programma sluit aan bij de kwalificaties van de instromende studenten.	V
	6. Het programma is studeerbaar.	V
	7. De opleiding voldoet aan wettelijke eisen met betrekking tot de omvang en de duur van het programma.	V
	3. Personeel	8. De opleiding beschikt over een doeltreffend personeelsbeleid.
9. Het personeel is gekwalificeerd voor de inhoudelijke, onderwijskundige en organisatorische realisatie van het programma.		G
10. De omvang van het personeel is toereikend voor de realisatie van het programma.		V
4. Voorzieningen	11. De huisvesting en de materiële voorzieningen zijn toereikend voor de realisatie van het programma.	V
	12. De studiebegeleiding en de informatievoorziening aan studenten bevorderen de studievoortgang en sluiten aan bij de behoefte van studenten.	V
5. Kwaliteitszorg	13. De opleiding wordt periodiek geëvalueerd, mede aan de hand van toetsbare streefdoelen.	V
	14. De uitkomsten van deze evaluatie vormen de basis voor aantoonbare verbetermaatregelen die bijdragen aan realisatie van de streefdoelen.	V
	15. Bij de interne kwaliteitszorg zijn de opleidings- en examencommissie, medewerkers, studenten, alumni en het afnemend beroepenveld van de opleiding actief betrokken.	O
6. Toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties	16. De opleiding beschikt over een adequaat systeem van toetsing en toont aan dat de beoogde eindkwalificaties worden gerealiseerd.	V
Opleiding als geheel		V
Eindoordeel		V

De standaarden krijgen het oordeel onvoldoende (O), voldoende (V), goed (G) of excellent (E). Het eindoordeel over de opleiding als geheel wordt op dezelfde schaal gegeven.

Tabel 1: Rendement

Cohort	2007- 2009	2008- 2010	2009- 2011
Rendement	92%	100%	94%

Tabel 2: Docentkwaliteit

Graad	MSc	PhD	BKO
Percentage	-	100%	22% betreft facultair niveau

Tabel 3: Docent-studentratio

Ratio	1 : 18
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Tabel 4: Contacturen

Studiejaar	1	2
Contacturen	12	12

- Prof. dr. Frans Kroese (chair), professor Education and training in the medical sciences, department of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, University of Groningen/University Medical Center Groningen;
- Prof. dr. Dirk Snyders, professor, department of Biomedical Sciences, University of Antwerp, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Jannie Borst, professor Experimental Oncology, University of Amsterdam;
- Koen van de Ven, master's student Biomedical Sciences, University of Amsterdam.

Het panel werd ondersteund door secretarissen (gecertificeerd) dr. J. Corporaal en drs. L.C. te Marvelde.