



## **ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Extensive Programme Assessment &  
Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation

Bachelors programme  
**European Studies**

Fulltime

**The Hague University of Applied Sciences**

**De kracht van  
kennis.**



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Fulltime

**The Hague University of Applied Sciences**

Croho registration: 34419

Hobéon Certificering BV

**Dated: 7-4-2016**

**Audit Committee**

Drs. W.G. van Raaijen, chair

Professor E. Jones

MA. R. Maijer

MA. V. Delaere

M. Magnus

**Secretary**

V. Bartelds



# CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>FINDINGS AND JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1.	Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	11
4.2.	Standard 2. Orientation of the programme	13
4.3.	Standard 3. Coherency and feasibility of the curriculum	14
4.4.	Standard 4. Nourishing structure of the curriculum	16
4.5.	Standard 5. Qualifications of incoming students	17
4.6.	Standard 6. Staff	18
4.7.	Standard 7. Facilities	19
4.8.	Standard 8. Student information	20
4.9.	Standard 9. Quality assurance	21
4.10.	Standard 10. Assessment	22
4.11.	Standard 11. Learning outcomes achieved	24
<b>5.</b>	<b>OVERALL CONCLUSION</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>DISTINCTIVE QUALITY FEATURE INTERNATIONALISATION</b>	<b>29</b>
6.1.	Conclusions	29
6.2.	Finding and Judgements	30
6.3.	Standard 1. Intended internationalisation	31
6.4.	Standard 2. International and intercultural learning	33
6.5.	Standard 3. Teaching and learning	35
6.6.	Standard 4. Staff	37
6.7.	Standard 5. Students	39
6.8.	OVERALL JUDGEMENT	40
	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>43</b>
ANNEX I	Overview of judgements	45
ANNEX II	The intended learning outcomes of the course	47
ANNEX III	Overview of the Bachelor's programme	49
ANNEX IV	Programme of site-visit	51
ANNEX V	Documents examined	57
ANNEX VI	Composition of the audit panel	59



# 1. GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

## General data

### *Institution*

Name	The Hague University of Applied Sciences
Status	Government-funded
Outcomes of Institutional Quality Assessment	Not yet carried out

### *Programme*

Name of programme in Central Register of Higher Professional Education (CROHO)	European Studies
ISAT-code CROHO	34419
Orientation and level	University of Applied Sciences, Bachelor level
Number of credits	180/240
Variant(s)	3 year English, 4 year English, 4 year English/Dutch (phasing out)
Eventual new name	n.a.
Specialisations	n.a.
Potential new specialisations	n.a.
Location(s)	Johanna Westerdijkplein 75, The Hague
Special Quality Feature	Internationalisation

<i>Date of site-visit</i>	16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> of February 2016
<i>Contact person (name and e-mail address)</i>	R. van Vliet, r.e.c.vanvliet@hhs.nl H. Leijdesdorff, h.leijdesdorff@hhs.nl

## Basic data concerning the programme

Cohort	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of incoming students</li> </ul>	ES4N: 224 ES4E: 203 ES3: -	ES4N: 215 ES4E: 232 ES3: -	ES4N: 168 ES4E: 257 ES3: -	ES4N: 216 ES4E: 283 ES3: -	ES4N: 147 ES4E: 284 ES3: 40	ES4N: - ES4E: 363 ES3: 46
<b>Drop outs after 2 years</b>						
Cohort	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
ES4N	55%	56%	46%	45%	47%	47%
ES4E	33%	44%	46%	49%	47%	47%
ES3						40%
<b>Output Main Phase (nominal + 1 year)</b>						
Cohort	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Output</li> </ul>						
ES4N	68%	76%	68%	63%	62%	52%
ES4E	88%	89%	90%	78%	90%	61%
ES3 (n.a.)						
<b>Teacher quality</b>						
Qualification				Master		PhD.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage</li> </ul>				95%		8%
<b>Teacher – student ratio</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio</li> </ul>				1 : 25		
<b>Contact hours</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year of study</li> </ul>	1	2	3	4		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours per week</li> </ul>						
ES4N/ES4E	18	19	16	12		
ES3	23	21	21	-		

Source: Critical Reflection Report from European Studies THUAS, based on NVAO's data format for programme assessments, 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2015.



## 2. SUMMARY

In this chapter the key findings and judgements of the audit committee are presented, as well as the main recommendations for improvement of the course, the overall outcome of the assessment and the panel recommendation to the NVAO.

### **Preface**

European Studies in The Hague emphasises in its challenging programme internationalization, language skills and professional experience. The programme fosters an international community of learners.

### **Standard 1. Intended Learning Outcomes**

The audit panel has established that the intended learning outcomes of the programme have been constructed in close co-operation with the other European Studies (ES) programmes in The Netherlands, using the Tuning-template that links the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors and safeguards international recognition of the level to be achieved. The 7 core competencies that the Tuning group for ES provides have been extended by an ambitious 13 extra competencies, validated by the professional field.

These 20 competencies are enabling students to be well prepared for the demands of the European professions at Bachelor level and the entry requirements of subsequent Master studies, both according to the experts in the panel as witnessed during the discussions with representatives of the vocational board on the visiting days.

The audit panel found that ES uses the terms Europe and European in different ways, not only to indicate a geographical area but also in a more cultural sense. Keeping in mind the prominent position that intercultural competencies have in the intended learning outcomes this made sense to the audit panel. The panel would suggest to install stipulated definitions to further clarify these distinctions.

The emphasis ES attributes to language skills as instrumental for being effectively employable in the international labour market is highly appreciated by the audit panel.

In summary, the panel considers the intended learning outcomes of the course relevant with regard to content, level and orientation. They lend a solid vocational profile to the course, lay a foundation for academic continuation, tie in with international standards and provide direction to the curriculum.

The panel therefore considers Standard 1 to be 'good'.

### **Standard 2. Orientation of the curriculum**

The audit panel is confronted with a curriculum that is highly vocational in character whilst not underestimating the need for research aptitude, which in a European professional context can be regarded as vocational as well.

Students are in contact with the professional environment throughout the curriculum, be it in simulations or in work placements. Through the extensive and impressive network of professional contacts and an active Vocational Advisory Board, the programme frequently touches base with the volatile demands of the professions, both public and private.

During the propaedeutic phase of the programme students get an intensive orientation to the profession which enables them to deepen their knowledge of the professional field. Students have indicated that they would like an even clearer view on their professional future. The audit panel feels that in this phase in their studies, the groundworks are under construction, this requires a very pro-active approach by students themselves. During the subsequent stages the picture will be more clear and students do report in the National Student Enquiry that they feel well prepared at the end of their studies. The alumni corroborated this feeling during the visit of the programme.

All in all the panel is impressed by the amount of time and depth in the curriculum spent at confronting students with the demands of the labour market and rates Standard 2 as 'good'.

### **Standard 3. Coherency and feasibility of the curriculum**

The panel has studied and probed the curriculum in both ES4 and ES3 and found that the competency profile of ES is realised in the learning outcomes of the different components of the curriculum. These learning outcomes are systematically aligned and articulated as part of a series of continuums that the programme is built on and that stretch across the three or four year curriculum. The continuums or pillars of the programme are the body of knowledge, professional skills, language skills, research and project management. During their whole studies students are immersed in a highly international and intercultural environment which deliberately fosters the development of their intercultural competencies as an overarching continuum aiming for truly global citizens.

These continuums indicate the vertical progression. Horizontally courses are intertwined to acquire synergy for students and staff and to emphasize the multidisciplinary character of the professions the students are educated for. After the first year students specialise in either the private or the public domain. As a kind of 'diagonal' integration (quoting one of the lecturers) every year contains a course that connects both specialisations, since public and private: in the European praxis the twain shall frequently meet.

Research skills and attitude are trained and developed starting in year one until the final project or dissertation. Both in an applied manner as in a more academically oriented way students are enabled to grow curiosity, see the need for solid argumentation, apply a range of methods and report on their findings in a structured manner.

Internationalisation or as the programme invented *interculturality* is in the DNA of European Studies. Not only do the international classrooms and the topics at hand stimulate an outward perspective of students that regularly have that attitude to begin with, also in group composition and courses students are taught how to deal with cultural differences. Especially the components *I-start* and *I-reflect* respectively at the beginning and at the end of the curriculum do force students to critically look at their personal development of intercultural competences.

Because of the number of students, the programme is able to cater for a wide variety of languages at different starting levels. During these language-timeslots in the schedule students can study German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Dutch.

Students are doing three minors of 15 ECTS during the curriculum, although for most students 2 of these are studied abroad. The minors are checked for compatibility with the programme and the quality is monitored by the exam board.

Apart from the credit-earning curriculum ES is very active in what the programme defines as the informal curriculum, which is an instrumental component of their concept *interculturality*. The fact that much of the effective learning of students is done outside of classrooms and is less assessable does not mean it is less essential. Both management and staff are highly committed to a variety of extracurricular activities. The panel witnessed presentations of the Student Debating Club, the drama club and Political Engagement (their 1<sup>st</sup> speaker was the former PM of Ireland).

In conclusion the audit panel is impressed by the inherent intercultural nature of the curriculum, the ingenious interlinkage of all the different courses and informal curriculum to the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is challenging but feasible and most of all enjoyable.

The audit panel deems Standard 3 as 'excellent'.

#### **Standard 4 Nourishing structure of the curriculum**

The programme is designed to guide students from a rather prescriptive year 1 towards a sense of ownership of their studies at the end phase of the curriculum. During that process all students receive intensive guidance, not only by staff but also by peers, for instance language buddies.

Students with learning difficulties receive additional tutoring. Not only in cases of dyslexia, visual or physical impairment, but also students with difficulties like culture shock or homesickness. Specialised student counsellors are available and reach out to the exam board if necessary.

The workload of students, especially in ES3 is formidable. Yet both students and alumni stressed that putting in the effort greatly enhanced the joy of education.

The former stream of ES4N (mostly Dutch groups) was merged with ES4E in 2014. The audit panel was interested to learn whether these students were able to switch smoothly. During the visiting days the panel was convinced that this merger was quite natural. According to students of ES4N the Dutch programme had become practically redundant since the learning community was so international by nature. The curriculum still has a course for writing in Dutch about European affairs, to cater for the specific professional needs of Dutch civil servants.

The panel considers the overall structure of the curriculum and the support systems in place as an indicator of a high level of commitment of staff to students, in this corroborated by students according to the NSE-score on average of 3,7 on commitment to students.

Therefore the audit panel qualifies Standard 4 as 'good'.

#### **Standard 5: Qualifications of incoming students**

The panel has observed the struggle of the programme to manage the balance of attracting the right students while discouraging students that will not be able to complete the curriculum in a reasonable period of time. An impressive number of preselection instruments is in place, all within the framework of the law of course. Yet the selective nature of the propaedeutic phase is needed to ensure good success rates in the main phase of the programme. A dropout rate of between 35% and 45% in ES4 and a first year result of ES3 of 30% does indicate the problem is still significant. The recently introduced Negative Binding Study Advice of 50 out of 60 ECTS helps students to realise in an earlier stage to either step up their performance or start orienting towards switching to a programme more suitable for them.

With respect to the quality of the programme and the lively learning environment the panel would expect a higher number of foreign students than the current 20%. Increasing this number would be beneficial to the international character of the classroom and might attract the more ambitious (thus suitable) students in the Dutch system as well, especially in the ES3 stream that aims for students having the option of deliberately choosing the applied sciences programme over a scientific research university.

Based upon the number of efforts that the programme installed and the commitment staff display to the preselection process, but observing a high percentage of drop outs in the primary phase of the European Studies leads the panel on Standard 5 to a 'satisfactory'.

#### **Standard 6: staff**

The audit panel studied the curriculum vitae and had intense conversations with approximately 20% of the lecturers during the visiting days at European Studies.

Quantitatively staff provisions seem quite generous with a student-teacher ratio of 25:1. The perceived workload among staff is quite high, especially during exam periods. Responsive management is fully aware of this issue and has taken appropriate measures such as immediate replacement in case of sickness. The impression of the panel is that the high workload is partially self-inflicted by the laudable commitment of lecturers to their students and the programme.

Qualitatively the composition of teaching staff is truly exemplary. Virtually all lecturers have a master degree, 8% have received a doctorate, 2% are working on their PhD. Over half of the staff have been educated abroad and 25% have non-Dutch nationalities. A staggering 76% have international work experience.

These statistics translate to a high level of student satisfaction with the staff in survey results and in the conversations with students during the visiting days. The lecturers were praised for their commitment to the formal and the informal curriculum, their accessibility, their connection to the professional field and their command of English.

Many examples were given of the opportunities to further professional development. The panel would like to pay special attention to the rESCU-programme that enables lecturers to initiate smaller research projects. This programme is instrumental to ensure the lasting connection to applied research among staff and the results do benefit both the curriculum and the students. This is a true sign of a learning community. In combination with the Professorship, the more substantial and institution wide research platform of THUAS, rESCU is in the eyes of the panel a unique model to nourish the intellectual atmosphere throughout the programme.

The qualifications and attitude of staff in ES combined with the intrinsically motivated and stimulated research orientation brings the audit panel to qualifying Standard 6 as 'excellent'.

### **Standard 7: facilities**

Study facilities of European Studies are tied in with the facilities of THUAS that can be regarded as state-of-the-art. Library, online-facilities and classrooms are of high quality. The availability of student workplaces is an issue according to students and has the attention of both THUAS and the programme of ES. The observation of the audit panel during the visiting days is that the availability of workplaces seems limited during peak hours and that a more even distribution by students would take care of the problem.

Based upon its observations combined with the limited student satisfaction of the facilities the panel regards Standard 7 as 'satisfactory'.

### **Standard 8: Student information**

The tutoring system of European Studies is extensive in caring for the progress and the wellbeing of their students, including the 250 exchange students. Students have access to a personal supervisor during the first two years of the programme. Thereafter supervision is organised on the basis of the activities of each particular student at a given time in the curriculum. This ties in with the shifting focus from guidance to self-management of the studies in the final phase of the curriculum.

The providing of information by the programme is intensive, but in some cases the communication seems to be less effective. This could well be a problem at the receiving end, i.e. the students, but that does not make the issue irrelevant. Exam registration, schedule changes and the management of student expectations were mentioned in the conversations with students as areas with room for improvement.

Weighing the efforts and responsiveness of the programme and the limited satisfaction from students the audit panel deems the information provision to students as 'satisfactory'.

### **Standard 9 Quality assurance**

The findings of the audit panel suggest that the programme is well aware of the importance of quality assurance and systematically tries to fulfil the Deming cycle of Plan-Do-Check-Act. The Programme Committee provides a constant communication between student representatives and management and is active and appreciated. The visibility of the programme committee and the improvements made are not optimal yet, according to both regular students and members of the committee. The appreciation by regular students to quality assurance is often quite low, bridging this gap may enhance the sense of joint ownership of the ES programme.

Balancing the structured way of quality assurance with the relatively low appreciation by students concerning the visibility of improvements, the audit panel qualifies Standard 9 as 'satisfactory'.

### **Standard 10 Assessment**

The audit panel has reviewed tests of several courses and observed a consequent high quality of assessment across the board. Assessment matrices are in place linking the performance of students to the intended learning outcomes. Intercultural Competences has such an important and overarching role in the curriculum that this continuum has an assessment plan stretching over four years of its own. The fact that the assessment of the innovative *I-start* and *I-reflect* modules is still being improved convinces the panel that the programme keeps developing and fine-tuning its assessment praxis. In the eyes of the audit panel this is not a sign of weakness but of strength. The perfect assessment is not to be found but always to be strived for.

For a wide variety of assessments, ranging from multiple-choice tests to portfolio and dissertation, detailed outlined assessment forms have been designed and all tests are stored in a separate server with supervised access.

The exam board and delegated assessment committee are robust and highly qualified. Both have an independent position and keep close track of the achieved learning outcomes compared to the intended outcomes. Systematically, the assessment of courses is scrutinized. For further improvement the audit panel would recommend to have all test results available for post-test analysis by the assessment committee, not only the below 5.5 or higher than 8. After all, courses that reward all students a 7 might not cause a 'blip' on the radar of management, but can be a signal of hasty and/or non-discriminative assessment. The audit panel, however, stresses the fact that it did not find examples of this phenomenon in the available test results.

The audit panel appreciates the intrinsic urge to adequately test the progress of students and the continuous improvement of the assessment methods. Combined with the active and knowledgeable exam board and assessment committee the audit panel considers Standard 10 as 'good'.

### **Standard 11: Learning outcomes achieved**

The audit panel has randomly selected 15 dissertations and final projects of student of ES3, ES4N and ES4E. The panel reviewed and cross-reviewed the work, assessed them keeping the intended learning outcomes in mind and studied the comments and grades of the examiners of the programme. All end products were certainly showing the level that can be expected of Bachelors of Applied Science. The maximum deviation of the expert auditors from the grades of the examiners was within 1 point. All comments made sense and two of the auditors checked

the dissertation that was rewarded a straight 10 by the examiners.

To their own surprise both auditors came independently to the conclusion that they would have judged the work as a 10 as well.

It surprised the audit panel that the final assessment form did not contain knock out criteria, that students could compensate unsatisfactory criteria by outperforming in other areas of the thesis.

Alumni of European Studies continue generally successfully. An impressive 50% of the alumni are pursuing a Masters degree and 80% of all alumni end up in jobs that they were trained for. The audit panel spoke with several alumni in outstanding positions. All showed fierce determination and quite a few alumni were so appreciative and committed to the programme they offered work placements for ES-students on a regular basis.

The audit panel, taking into account the level of theses, the quality of the assessment of examiners and especially the visible success of alumni, judges Standard 11 as 'good'.

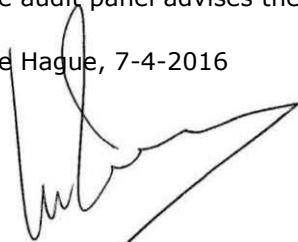
### **Overall conclusion:**

The intended and achieved learning outcomes of European Studies match according to the audit panel. The transparency, validity and reliability of the assessment safeguarded by the exam board reassures the audit panel that the challenging and lively curriculum leads students to a final examination level that meets and surpasses the standards and prepares students for a successful professional future.

Taking into account the calculation rules of the NVAO, with 4 standards satisfactory, 5 standards good (among which standard 11) and 2 standards excellent, the audit panel rates the programme of European Studies as 'good'.

The audit panel advises the NVAO to prolong the accreditation for 6 years.

The Hague, 7-4-2016



W.G. van Raaijen,  
chair



V. Bartelds,  
secretary

### 3. INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter a brief introduction to the course is given, its position within the faculty/institution and the relevant historical and contextual information on the course is shared. A conclusive paragraph is dedicated to the key developments that have taken place in the wake of previous accreditation and/or internal audits.

The UAS Bachelor of European Studies of The Hague University of Applied Science (Isat 34419) is assessed separately from its fellow bachelor programmes. Similar programmes of the Noordelijke Hogeschool Leeuwarden and Zuyd Hogeschool in Maastricht have been accredited previously, the status of assessment of European Studies of NTI is pending. The accreditation of ES of The Hague University of Applied Science ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2016.

European Studies is part of the faculty of Management and Organisation and shares the exam board with (International) Communication Management of THUAS. Recently, 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2015, the programme director of ES has been promoted to faculty director of Management and Organisation. Both the former and the current programme director participated in discussions during the visiting days of the audit panel.

The public and private specialisations of ES will be only discussed separately if there is obvious reason to do so in this report. ES has a three year and a four year track (ES3 and ES4), this report will indicate and discuss differences when useful. European Studies merged the previous Dutch stream (ES4N) into ES4E. The audit panel addressed this merger to see if previous ES4N students experienced possible difficulties due to this merger.

ES has been issued a distinctive quality feature Internationalisation in 2010 in the NVAO pilot Certification of Internationalisation. The programme aims to renew this distinctive quality feature, this assessment will be discussed in Chapter 6 of this report.

The previous accreditation report of 2010, when the programme was named Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding, asked special attention for benchmarking in an international perspective, the success rate of students, quality assurance and assessment.

The programme of ES is fully active in the process of benchmarking internationally. The name change to European Studies does improve the international recognition, programme management is an active member in the cluster of programmes in Isat 34419 and has provided a detailed plan to further improve benchmarking called "On the Road".

ES is trying to manage expectations of prospective students by giving realistic information and requiring active participation of prospects. The programme has increased the number of credits needed to avoid a Negative Binding Study Advise to 50. The dropout rate during the propaedeutic phase is still relatively high as the selective nature of this year is emphasised. The success rate of students in the main phase is comparable to other programmes in this field. Quality assurance is perceived as instrumental at ES, the programme provides a structured and detailed approach to quality assurance. Improvements and feedback are shared with students in a structured manner, however the active reception of this information still leaves room for improvement.

The audit panel had four members with assessment expertise, both Dutch and foreign and closely observed the assessment policies and praxis of ES.

During the internal audit that The Hague University of Applied Science performed in 2013 the programme of ES was invited to improve linking the learning outcomes to the competency profile, the supervision of students, the practical orientation, the quality assurance and the safeguarding of test procedures. The programme responded to these remarks by a number of measures to be discussed at the appropriate standards.





## 4. FINDINGS AND JUDGEMENTS

This chapter deals with the panel members' findings and judgements based on the documents delivered by the course staff and the subsequent discussions during the site-visit. The text is ordered according to the standards of the NVAO assessment framework.

### 4.1. Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

**Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.**

#### Findings

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are in line with the revised competency profile provided by the European Studies National Platform in 2013. The applied Tuning-template ensures international transparency across Europe and ties in closely with the Dublin Descriptors that safeguard the general level of the bachelor programme.

The national competency profile provides 7 core competencies and the programme has added another 13 competencies. These 20 competencies provide a clear set of learning outcomes that should enable graduating students to meet the demands of the professional field or further education.

The intended learning outcomes maintain a clear balance in skills, knowledge and attitude.

The least measurable outcome being attitude, the programme of ES pays special attention to this aspect without understating the importance of skills and knowledge.

The audit panel finds the use of the terms Europe and European within the intended learning outcomes reflecting the ambiguity that connotes geographical, political, economical and cultural concepts of Europe.

ES functions logically within the economic domain and has adopted a profile that emphasises an intercultural attitude and language skills.

An international orientation is *sine qua non* in European Studies and is recognisable in all intended learning outcomes. The fact that the study is (now completely) in English and requires additional languages is reflected in the intended learning outcomes.

Research in this programme has both an applied and a scholarly character. In the intended learning outcomes this is reflected in competencies 6 and 7 (annex II).

The intended learning outcomes are frequently validated in the national platform, with the vocational board, with internship supervisors and with international partner universities.

#### Considerations and Judgement

The intended learning outcomes are clearly recognised by the experts in the audit panel and validated with the professional field and educational peers.

The panel supports the decision to merge the previous Dutch curriculum with the English one, it supports the unequivocal international orientation.

The audit panel considered the orientation and domain of the programme as truly international and vocational.

The vocational character of the programme is even reflected in the high number of students that enter master programmes, because the professional field very frequently demands advanced higher education.

In summary, the panel considers the intended learning outcomes of the course relevant with regard to content, level and orientation. They lend a solid vocational profile to the course, lay a foundation for academic continuation, tie in with international standards and provide direction to the curriculum.

The panel therefore considers Standard 1 to be 'good'.

## 4.2. Standard 2. Orientation of the programme

**Standard 2: The orientation of the programme ensures the development of professional and/or research skills.**

### Findings

The orientation of the ES programme is highly vocational in character whilst not underestimating the need for research aptitude, which in a European professional context can be regarded as vocational as well.

Students are in contact with the professional environment throughout the curriculum, be it in simulations or in work placements. Through the extensive network of professional contacts and an active Vocational Advisory Board, the programme frequently touches base with the volatile demands of the professions, both public and private.

During the propaedeutic phase of the programme students get an intensive orientation to the profession that enables them to deepen their knowledge of the professional field.

First year students have indicated that they would like an even clearer view on their professional future; final phase students, however, do report in the National Student Enquiry that they feel well prepared at the end of their studies. The alumni corroborated this feeling during the visit of the programme.

### Considerations and Judgement

The audit panel considers the curriculum well connected to the international developments of the work field. Panel members were impressed by the number and quality of professional contacts and the role they play in fine tuning the curriculum and intended learning outcomes. Considering the comments of first year students the audit panel feels that in this phase in their studies, the groundworks are under construction, this requires a very pro-active approach by students themselves. During the subsequent stages of the curriculum the picture will be clearer.

All in all the panel is impressed by the amount of time and depth in the curriculum spent in confronting students with the demands of the labour market and rates Standard 2 as 'good'.

### 4.3. Standard 3. Coherency and feasibility of the curriculum

**Standard 3: The content of the programme enables students to qualify for the intended learning outcomes.**

#### Findings

The curriculum of ES has a three (ES3) and four year (ES4) track. The former (partially) Dutch track was merged with ES4 in 2014. ES3 covers 180 EC and ES4 240 EC.

Students choose a specialisation, public or private, at the start of the second year.

Students take three minors, of which typically two consist of study abroad. Students gain work experience during the internship. In many cases students choose to do a final project in the professional field or write a dissertation in preparing for a subsequent master programme. A schematic overview of the programmes can be found in Appendix III.

The audit panel observed that the competency profile of ES is realised in the learning outcomes of the different components of the curriculum. These learning outcomes are systematically aligned and articulated as part of a series of continuums that the programme is built on and which stretch across the three or four year curriculum.

The overarching continuum of ES is formed by Intercultural Competencies.

The curriculum consists of five other continuums: the body of knowledge (primarily taught in the first two years as a foundation), professional skills as in writing, presentation, debating and negotiating, language skills (two foreign languages throughout the curriculum), project management and research skills.

These continuums indicate the vertical progression. Horizontally courses are intertwined to acquire synergy for students and staff and to emphasize the multidisciplinary character of the professions the students are educated for. After the first year students specialise in either the private or the public domain. As a kind of 'diagonal' integration (quoting one of the lecturers during the audit) every year contains a course that connects both specialisations.

The programme balances different teaching formats, individual courses mingled with group work, simulations, et cetera.

The programme caters for a wide variety of languages at different starting levels. During these language-timeslots in the schedule students can study German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Dutch.

Research skills and attitude are trained and developed starting in year one until the final project or dissertation. Both in an applied manner and in a more academically oriented way students are enabled to develop curiosity, see the need for solid argumentation, apply a range of methods and report on their findings in a structured manner.

Internationalisation or as the programme invented *intercultureality* is in the DNA of European Studies of The Hague University of Applied Science. Not only do the international classrooms and the topics at hand stimulate an outward perspective of students that regularly have that attitude to begin with, also in group composition and courses students are taught how to deal with cultural differences. Especially the components *I-start* and *I-reflect* respectively at the at the beginning and the end of the curriculum do force students to critically look at their personal development of intercultural competences.

Apart from the credit earning curriculum ES is very active in what the programme defines as the informal curriculum, which is an instrumental component of their concept *intercultureality*.

The fact that much of the effective learning of students is done outside of classrooms and is less assessable does not mean it is less essential. Both management and staff support a variety of extracurricular activities. The panel witnessed presentations of the Student Debating Club, the Drama Society and Political Engagement (their first speaker was the former PM of Ireland).

### **Considerations and Judgement**

The audit panel admires the ability of ES to use the large numbers of students to the advantage of the curriculum. The sheer abundance of classes and courses is challenging and it would have been understandable if the coherency of the curriculum of two streams and two specialisations would have suffered. In contrast ES has built a detailed curriculum that caters for a wide diversity of students and allows student preferences.

The ambitious goal to deliberately create an intercultural community instead of a collection of nationalities by integrating the informal curriculum with the formal curriculum is strongly supported by the audit panel.

Of particular note are the iStart and iReflect elements of the curriculum. iStart supports students preparing for, during and following their period abroad and iReflect encourages students to consider their intercultural competence development across the whole programme. These represent the pinnacle of good practice as far as current research suggests. The programme is to be particularly commended for their achievements here, especially as students are asked to base their reflections on a theoretical framework but with a clear link to employability skills.

In conclusion, the audit panel is impressed by the inherent intercultural nature of the curriculum, the ingenious interlinkage of all the different courses and informal curriculum to the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is challenging but feasible and most of all enjoyable.

The audit panel deems Standard 3 as 'excellent'.

#### 4.4. Standard 4. Nourishing structure of the curriculum

**Standard 4: The structure of the programme stimulates studying and enables students to qualify for the intended learning outcomes.**

##### **Findings**

The programme is designed to guide students from a rather prescriptive year 1 towards a sense of ownership of their studies at the end phase of the curriculum. During that process all students receive intensive guidance, not only by staff but also by peers, for instance language buddies.

Students with learning difficulties receive additional tutoring. Not only in cases of dyslexia, visual or physical impairment, but also students with difficulties like culture shock or homesickness. Specialised student counsellors are available and reach out to the exam board if necessary.

The workload of students, especially in ES3 is formidable. Yet both students and alumni stressed that putting in the effort greatly enhanced the joy of education.

##### **Considerations and Judgement**

The former stream of ES4N (mostly Dutch classes) was merged with ES4E in 2014. The audit panel was interested whether these students were able to switch smoothly. During the visiting days the panel was convinced that this merger was quite natural. According to students of ES4N the Dutch programme had become practically redundant since the learning community was so international by nature. The curriculum still has a course for writing in Dutch about European affairs, to cater for the specific professional needs of Dutch civil servants.

The panel considers the overall structure of the curriculum and the support systems in place as an indicator of a high level of commitment of staff to student, in this corroborated by students according to the NSE-score on average of 3,7 on commitment to students.

Therefore the audit panel qualifies Standard 4 as 'good'.

## 4.5. Standard 5. Qualifications of incoming students

<b>Standard 5: The programme suits the qualifications of incoming students.</b>
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### Findings

The panel has observed the struggle of the programme to manage the balance of attracting the right students while discouraging students that will not be able to complete the curriculum in a reasonable period of time. An impressive number of preselection instruments is in place, all within the framework of the law of course. Yet the selective nature of the propaedeutic phase is needed to ensure good success rates in the main phase of the programme. A dropout rate of between 35% and 45% in ES4 and a first year result of ES3 of 30% does indicate the problem is still significant. The recently introduced Negative Binding Study Advice of 50 out of 60 ECTS helps students to realise in an earlier stage to either step up their performance or start orienting to switch to a programme more suitable for them.

### Considerations and Judgement

With respect to the quality of the programme and the lively learning environment the panel would expect a higher number of foreign students than the current 20%. Increase of this number would be beneficial to the international character of the classroom and might attract the more ambitious (thus suitable) students in the Dutch system as well, especially in the ES3 stream that aims for students having the option of deliberately choosing the applied sciences programme over a scientific research university. Close monitoring of both the competencies of foreign degree-seeking students and exchange students is needed to prevent huge differences between groups of students in one class.

Based upon the number of efforts that the programme installed and the commitment staff display to the preselection process, but observing a high percentage of drop outs in the primary phase of the European Studies leads the panel on Standard 5 to a 'satisfactory'.

## 4.6. Standard 6. Staff

**Standard 6: The factual expertise available among the staff ties in with the requirements set for professional or academic higher education programmes.**

### Findings

The audit panel studied the curriculum vitae and had intense conversations with approximately 20% of the lecturers during the visiting days at European Studies.

Qualitatively the composition of teaching staff is truly exemplary. Virtually all lecturers have a Master degree, 8% have received a doctorate, 2% are working on their PhD. Over half of the staff have been educated abroad and 25% have non-Dutch nationalities. A staggering 76% have international work experience.

These statistics translate to a high level of student satisfaction with the staff in survey results and in the conversations with students during the visiting days. The lecturers were praised for their commitment to the formal and the informal curriculum, their accessibility, their connection to the professional field and their command of English.

### Considerations and Judgement

Quantitatively staff provisions seem quite generous with a student-teacher ratio of 25:1. The perceived workload among staff is quite high, especially during exam periods. Responsive management is fully aware of this issue and has taken appropriate measures such as immediate replacement in case of sickness. The impression of the panel is that the high workload is partially self-inflicted by the laudable commitment of lecturers to their students and the programme.

Many examples were given of the opportunities to further professional development. The panel would like to pay special attention to the rESCU-programme that enables lecturers to initiate smaller research projects. This programme is instrumental in ensuring the lasting connection to applied research among staff and the results do benefit both the curriculum and the students. This is a true sign of a learning community. In combination with the Professorship, the more substantial and institution-wide research platform of THUAS, rESCU is in the eyes of the panel a unique model to nourish the intellectual atmosphere throughout the programme.

The qualifications and attitude of staff in ES combined with the intrinsically motivated and stimulated research orientation brings the audit panel to qualifying Standard 6 as 'excellent'.



## 4.7. Standard 7. Facilities

**Standard 7: The accommodation and the facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.**

### **Findings**

Study facilities of European Studies are tied in with the facilities of THUAS. Library, online-facilities and classrooms are of high quality.

The availability of student workplaces is an issue according to students and has the attention of both THUAS and the programme of ES.

Study counselling is available and of good quality, according to students.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

The study facilities of THUAS can be regarded as state of the art, according to the panel after a site visit to the library, classrooms and other facilities.

The observation of the audit panel during the visiting days is that the availability of workplaces seems limited during peak hours and that a more even distribution by students might take care of the problem.

Based upon its observations combined with the limited student satisfaction of the facilities, the audit panel regards Standard 7 as 'satisfactory'.

#### **4.8. Standard 8. Student information**

**Standard 8: Tutoring and student information provision bolster students' progress and tie in with the needs of students.**

##### **Findings**

The tutoring system of European Studies is extensive in caring for the progress and the wellbeing of their students, including the 250 exchange students. Students do have access to a personal supervisor during the first two years of the programme. Thereafter supervision is organised on the basis of the activities of the particular student at a given time in the curriculum.

##### **Considerations and Judgement**

According to the audit panel the shifting focus from guidance to self-management of the studies in the final phase of the curriculum ties in with the intended development of students towards starting professionals.

The providing of information by the programme is intensive, but in some cases the communication seems to be less effective. This could well be a problem at the receiving end, the students, but that does not make the issue irrelevant. Exam registration, schedule changes and the management of student expectations were mentioned in the conversations with students as areas with room for improvement.

Weighing the efforts and responsiveness of the programme against the limited satisfaction from students the audit panel deems the information for students as 'satisfactory'.

## 4.9. Standard 9. Quality assurance

**Standard 9: The programme monitors the quality of the intended learning outcomes, the curriculum, the staff, the services and facilities, the assessments and the learning outcomes achieved through regular evaluations.**

### Findings

Evaluation data is gathered in a systematic and consistent fashion with evaluations run each term as well as on a semester basis. The entire evaluation cycle covers a range of data collection tools, such as: exam result data, digital surveys for individual modules, student interviews for semester evaluation, annual focus groups, module manager improvement plans, student mobility surveys and external tools such as NSE and HBO Monitor.

The quality assurance of the teachers is clearly observable. Especially through peer reviews they safeguard the quality of their colleagues' classes. This system of peer review, as explained by the staff, appears to be a strong motivation for staff to learn and improve.

The Programme Committee provides a constant communication between student representatives and management and is active and appreciated. The visibility of the programme committee and the improvements made are not optimal yet, according to both regular students and members of the committee. The appreciation by regular students to quality assurance is often quite low.

Some key documentation does not appear to be available in English, which is an important element for such an international group of teachers whose Dutch may not enable them to access these documents.

### Considerations and Judgement

The findings of the audit panel suggest that the programme is well aware of the importance of quality assurance and systematically tries to fulfil the Deming cycle of Plan-Do-Check-Act.

Balancing the structured way of quality assurance with the relatively low appreciation by students concerning the visibility of improvements, the audit panel qualifies Standard 9 as 'satisfactory'.

## 4.10. Standard 10. Assessment

**Standard 10: The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The examining board of the programme safeguards the quality of interim and final tests.**

### Findings

ES assessment procedures reflect its international dimension and uses a variety of tools. They aim to reflect the multiplicity of talents, diversity in educational backgrounds and learning styles, make full use of the range of methods available, and also reflect the variety of teaching methods of the programme. This diversity is spread over the years throughout the curriculum. Students are assessed as individuals, members of intercultural teams, and peers. The basis of all assessment starts with the (international) learning outcomes that are formulated at module level driven by the competency profile. The outcomes are translated into an assessment matrix, which is in turn used as a basis for the actual assessment. In this way the whole process is made transparent to the students as this information is shared with them.

The assessment policy is based on the THUAS framework of testing and assessment and on the action points formulated in the programme's plans for curricular development and improvement. The variety of assessments tests knowledge, skills and attitudes. They may be derived from the workplace or be more research related. In virtually all cases they will involve an international dimension – knowledge or opinion forming and illustrating intercultural learning and understanding. Students are expected to express this knowledge in various forms – orally, textually and even visually.

Validity and reliability of assessment is taken seriously and the quality assurance of testing is anchored in the programme.

For a wide variety of assessments, ranging from multiple-choice tests to portfolio and dissertation, detailed outlined assessment forms have been designed and all tests are stored in a separate server with supervised access.

The exam board and delegated assessment committee keep close track of the achieved learning outcomes compared to the intended outcomes. Systematically, the assessment of courses is scrutinized.

### Considerations and Judgement

The audit panel reviewed tests of several courses and observed a consequent high quality of assessment across the board. Assessment matrices are in place linking the performance of students to the intended learning outcomes. Intercultural Competence has such an important and overarching role in the curriculum that this continuum has an assessment plan stretching over four years of its own. This assessment plan is being adapted at the moment. The fact that the assessment of the innovative *I-start* and *I-reflect* modules is still being improved convinces the panel that the programme keeps developing and fine-tuning its assessment praxis. In the eyes of the audit panel this is not a sign of weakness but of strength. The perfect assessment is not to be found but always to be strived for.

For further improvement the audit panel does recommend to have all test results available for post-test analysis by the assessment committee, not only the below 5.5 or higher than 8. After all, courses that reward all students a 7 might not cause a 'blip' on the radar of management, but can be a signal of hasty and/or non-discriminative assessment. The audit panel stresses the fact that it did not find examples of this phenomenon in the available test results.

The audit panel appreciates the intrinsic urge to adequately test the progress of students and the continuous improvement of the assessment methods. Combined with the active and knowledgeable exam board and assessment committee the audit panel considers Standard 10 as 'good'.

#### 4.11. Standard 11. Learning outcomes achieved

**Standard 11: The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in subsequent programmes.**

##### **Findings**

In the ES final project/dissertation students make use of the skills and knowledge that they have gained from the first year of their studies onwards. Courses in research skills, written assignments and knowledge courses have laid the foundations for this final step, which entails formulating, researching, drafting and defending their final project/dissertation. Students are offered a choice between a final project or a dissertation depending on whether they wish to pursue further academic study upon graduation or start their professional work life. Both options test the same competencies and are subject to rigorous checks and controls. The final project allows students to research a specific issue assigned by an external company, governmental institution or third sector organisation, thereby being directly involved in their future field of work and enhancing their professional orientation even more. The dissertation provides students with more of a theoretical challenge and encourages them to hone their analytical and research skills deeply. In both cases the assignment requires students to set up research in the relevant field of studies; assess and analyse an interdisciplinary problem in an international context; design and justify their research and the research methods utilised within an appropriate theoretical framework; and present the research findings professionally, both in writing and orally, in English.

The audit panel has randomly selected 15 dissertations and final projects of student of ES3, ES4N and ES4E.

The maximum deviation of the expert auditors from the grades of the examiners was within 1 point and never crossed the passing mark.

The programme facilitates external validation by calibration, both nationally with peer educators as well as internationally with an external reviewer from Sheffield (UK). The level of English in the final products was generally high, in no reviewed work did the command of English give cause for serious concern.

##### **Considerations and Judgement**

The panel reviewed and cross-reviewed the graduating products, assessed them keeping the intended learning outcomes in mind and studied the comments and grades of the examiners of the programme. All end products were certainly showing the level that can be expected of Bachelors of Applied Science.

The panel could see no pattern in the way its own and the examiners judgement deviated. The panel studied the remarks of examiners on the grading sheets. These remarks were clear and consistent with the opinion of the panel.

Two of the auditors checked the dissertation that was rewarded a straight 10 by the examiners. To their own surprise both auditors came independently to the conclusion that they would have judged the work as a 10 as well.

Alumni of European Studies continue generally successful. An impressive 50% of the alumni are pursuing a masters degree and 80% of all alumni end up in jobs that they were trained for. The audit panel spoke with several alumni in outstanding positions. All showed fierce determination and quite a few alumni were so appreciative and committed to the programme they offered work placements for ES-students on a regular basis. The audit panel, taking into account the level of theses, the quality of the assessment of examiners and especially the visible success of alumni, judges Standard 11 as 'good'.

## **5. OVERALL CONCLUSION**

The intended and achieved learning outcomes of European Studies match according to the audit panel. The transparency, validity and reliability of the assessment safeguarded by the exam board reassures the audit panel that the challenging and lively curriculum leads students to a final examination level that meets and surpasses the standards and prepares students for a successful professional future.

Taking into account the calculation rules of the NVAO, with 4 standards satisfactory, 5 standards good (among which standard 11) and 2 standards excellent, the audit panel rates the programme of European Studies as 'good'.

The audit panel advises the NVAO to prolong the accreditation for 6 years.





## **PART II - DISTINCTIVE QUALITY FEATURE INTERNATIONALISATION**



## **6. DISTINCTIVE QUALITY FEATURE INTERNATIONALISATION**

### **6.1. Conclusions**

#### **Standard 1: Good**

The programme has eloquently expressed its view on internationalisation and *interculturality*. Combined with the responsiveness to feedback that the programme displays, the audit panel rewards this standard with 'good'.

#### **Standard 2: Excellent**

Because of the advanced assessment techniques, the level of end products and especially the sense of a truly intercultural learning community at ES brings the audit panel to judge this standard as 'excellent' and consider it exemplary for other institutions.

#### **Standard 3: Excellent**

Due to the internalised *interculturality* the ES programme provides a truly intercultural learning environment. The deliberate selection of teaching methods and the solid and in cases innovative content areas, the audit panel deems this standard as 'excellent' and a beacon of good practice.

#### **Standard 4: Excellent**

The qualifications and experience of the staff of ES, combined with the appreciation of students for their commitment and language skills and the research-stimulation are applauded by the audit panel. This standard is judged 'excellent'.

#### **Standard 5: Good**

The learning community of ES is truly an important matter for students, staff and management at ES and the audit panel judges this standard as 'good'.

#### **Overall judgement**

On the basis of ECA's assessment rules, the panel nominates the Bachelor European Studies of The Hague University of Applied Sciences for the Certificate for Quality in Programme Internationalisation.

## **6.2. Finding and Judgements**

In this chapter of the report the panel evaluates to what degree the programme European Studies complies with the criteria of the Assessment Framework for the ECA Distinctive Feature in Internationalisation. As internationalisation is also part of the NVAO Framework for Accreditation, if and when applicable, ample references are made to the panel's findings and conclusions as stated in the previous part.

### 6.3. Standard 1. Intended internationalisation

**Criterion 1a, supported goals: The internationalisation goals for the programme are documented and these are shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.**

#### Findings

The topic of study and the professional field are clearly aimed at internationalisation and the programme has eloquently worded its specific goals.

The concept of interculturality as developed by the programme has a strong appeal to all stakeholders.

Internationalisation goals are clear in the philosophy of the programme, in particular the development of intercultural competence which is clearly defined. This is shared with all stakeholders and is seen as a unique feature of the programme by its alumni.

#### Considerations and Judgement

According to the audit panel the vision of the programme and its goals are well documented and strongly supported.

The audit panel is impressed with the way the international ambitions are reflected in the daily praxis of the learning community.

**Criterion 1b, verifiable objectives: Verifiable objectives have been formulated that allow monitoring of the achievement of the programme's internationalisation goals.**

#### Findings

The intended learning outcomes clearly formulate the objectives of the programme. Sixteen of the twenty competencies (see appendix II) are directly linked to internationalisation.

Intercultural competence and other learning outcomes for internationalisation are identified within a matrix to ensure these competences are assessed across the programme.

#### Considerations and Judgement

In terms of the stated objectives to develop students' intercultural competence and international orientation, the audit panel considers this an exemplary programme.

**Criterion 1c, measures for improvement: As a result of periodic evaluations of the programme's internationalisation, the successful implementation of measures for improvement can be demonstrated.**

#### Findings

The programme has responded to various comments and feedback and seems to be relentlessly striving for improvement.

The previous certification audit for internationalisation in 2010 recommended improvements in alumni involvement and structured benchmarking.

During the auditing days the panel was exceptionally impressed by the involvement of alumni, some of them graduated over a decade ago. The programme developed a feasible and structured method of benchmarking against other institutions.

Staff and curriculum build on student diversity in all its forms in order to meet learning outcomes and there is a deliberate and careful approach to mixing students for group work.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

The audit panel found the programme highly responsive and committed to the Deming cycle.

As all the sub-criteria of this standard were met and clearly above average the panel deems Standard 1 'good'.

## 6.4. Standard 2. International and intercultural learning

**Criterion 2a, Intended learning outcomes: The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its internationalisation goals.**

### Findings

The intended learning outcomes pay tribute to internationalisation and interculturality overwhelmingly. Virtually all learning outcomes are worded to align the international and intercultural professional that ES wants to develop.

### Considerations and Judgement

Intended international and intercultural learning outcomes clearly reflect programme philosophy and internationalisation is embedded throughout and in all aspects of the programme.

The audit panel was truly impressed by the intercultural community that is formed at ES, by students, staff and management.

**Criterion 2b, Student assessment: The methods used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.**

### Findings

Creative approaches to pedagogy and the assessment of intended international and intercultural learning outcomes are evident across the programme.

Of particular note are the iStart and iReflect elements of the curriculum. iStart supports students preparing for, during and following their period abroad and iReflect encourages students to consider their intercultural competence development across the whole programme.

### Considerations and Judgement

These advanced instruments represent the pinnacle of good practice as far as current research suggests, and yet implementation in other countries and institutions has proved to be challenging.

The programme is to be particularly commended for their achievements here, especially as students are asked to base their reflections on a theoretical framework but with a clear link to employability skills.

**Criterion 2c, Graduate achievement: The achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes by the programme's graduates can be demonstrated.**

### **Findings**

The achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes is demonstrated, but not exclusively, by the alumni who proceed to Masters education (50%) or land a job in the professional field they were trained for (80%).

Some of the final project reports and dissertations really impressed the audit panel.

The academic and vocational level of these graduation products was generally high and without exception proof of an internalised sense of international and intercultural maturity.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

Because of the advanced assessment techniques, the level of end products and especially the sense of a truly intercultural learning community at ES brings the audit panel to judge this standard as 'excellent' and exemplary for other institutions.



## 6.5. Standard 3. Teaching and learning

**Criterion 3a, Curriculum: The content and structure of the curriculum provides the necessary means of achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.**

### Findings

Content-wise the programme of ES lays the groundwork of knowledge in the first phase for all students. The specialisations, public and private, create space for personal preference as do the internship, minors and final project. Especially projects like *Zukunft Deutschland* are extremely beneficial to create deeper understanding and employability in specific job markets.

### Considerations and Judgement

Exemplary practice was evident in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and support for student learning in order to achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The audit panel encourages the existing plans to see if the model of *Zukunft Deutschland* can be achieved in other job markets as well. The French and Spanish communities seem to be most promising, according to the audit panel.

**Criterion 3b, Teaching Methods: The teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.**

### Findings

Curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are all clearly entwined to ensure effective delivery and achievement of student learning outcomes. The content and range of opportunity available through the assessed and unassessed elements of the informal curriculum are also noteworthy. Students expressed appreciation for this.

ES applies a wide variety of teaching methods that reflect and are justified by the diverse student and teacher population.

### Considerations and Judgement

The ES programme is very consciously applying different teaching methods that align with the topic of study in a particular phase. The teaching methods allow students with varying learning styles and cultural backgrounds to learn and flourish. Once more a beacon of good practice.

**Criterion 3c, Learning Environment: The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.**

### Findings

Both in The Hague as well as abroad students are constantly exposed to intercultural learning situations. In addition to excellent facilities in the university itself, students take part in study abroad and work placements which also support achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Classes are truly international, also because ES places the 250 exchange students in regular classes, and the teaching staff have formidable experience in international professional environments.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

Due to the internalised *interculturality* the ES programme provides a truly intercultural learning environment. The deliberate selection of teaching methods and the solid and in cases innovative content areas, the audit panel deems this standard as 'excellent' and a beacon of good practice.

## 6.6. Standard 4. Staff

**Criterion 4a, Composition: The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.**

### Findings

Staff have clearly been recruited both in terms of their own diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and commitment to the philosophy of the programme. This enables innovative approaches to delivery, enabling achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

### Considerations and Judgement

**Criterion 4b, Composition: Staff members have sufficient internationalisation experience, intercultural competences and language skills.**

### Findings

Staff were described by students as 'inspiring' and their backgrounds offer a strong platform for delivery of the programme's objectives. International mobility is also encouraged, both as a learning tool and in order to frame staff experience in line with that of students.

The teaching staff of ES are highly qualified and experienced, one in four is of foreign nationality, three in four have working experience abroad and over half of them have experienced foreign education. Language skills are strongly appreciated by students.

### Considerations and Judgement

Both in qualifications as well as experience during the visiting days the audit panel was thoroughly impressed by the cohesion and knowledgeability of the lecturers in ES.

**Criterion 4c, Composition: The services provided to the staff (e.g. training, facilities, staff exchanges) are consistent with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.**

### Findings

Excellent practice was observed in terms of staff reflecting on and reviewing practice, innovation, reflexivity, care for students and support for each other.

It was also clear that research-informed practice and internationalisation research feeds into programme development. The RESCU programme which encourages all staff to engage in research is of particular note, as is the generous time allocation for staff who choose to study for PhDs.

There is also an exemplary approach to personal development and mutual support through observation of each others' teaching. 'Mobility windows' are being explored with partners to enable more to take part in staff exchange.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

The qualifications and experience of the staff of ES, combined with the appreciation of students for their commitment and language skills and the research-stimulation are applauded by the audit panel. This standard is judged 'excellent'.

## 6.7. Standard 5. Students

**Criterion 5a, Composition: The composition of the student group (national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme's internationalisation goals.**

### Findings

There is a diverse international and intercultural student body and diversity in the local population is seen as an advantage for the programme's objectives.

The significant (20%) amount of international students added to the multicultural background of the urban environment of The Hague and the constant influx of exchange students (yearly 250) safeguards an international and intercultural learning environment.

The programme of ES would like to attract more international students.

### Considerations and Judgement

The audit panel considers the international character of the student population as more than sufficient. The programme needs to be critical to the influx of the right student population, both domestic and foreign. The low success rate during the first year indicates there is still room for improvement during the selection process. Underlining the ambition to raise the bar may be helpful in this.

**Criterion 5b, Experience: The internationalisation experience gained by students is adequate and corresponds to the programme's internationalisation goals.**

### Findings

The programme seeks to foster intercultural classrooms rather than focus on student nationalities. Curriculum and pedagogy build on student diversity in all its forms in order to meet learning outcomes and there is a deliberate and careful approach to mixing students of different backgrounds for group work.

### Considerations and Judgement

The audit panel observed that the verifiable intercultural character of the learning community in The Hague, combined with the experiences of study abroad and international work placements makes the programme successful in reaching its internationalisation goals.

**Criterion 5c, Services provided to students: The services provided to the students (e.g. information provision, counselling, guidance, accommodation, Diploma Supplement) support the programme's internationalisation goals and correspond to the composition of the student group.**

### **Findings**

There is special support for students from other countries both on the full programme and for those taking part in exchange. Exchange students were impressed by the quality of information on the website in comparison with others they considered. In an international perspective student support across the whole programme appears exceptionally good and responsive to the diversity of students.

### **Considerations and Judgement**

The audit panel considers the mentoring and counselling of students by the programme highly customised and effective. Not only in the usual aspects students with learning difficulties are supported, but also intercultural issues such as home sickness and culture shock are taken seriously.

The learning community of ES is truly an important matter to students, staff and management at ES and the audit panel judges this standard as 'good'.

## **6.8. OVERALL JUDGEMENT**

The programme is awarded a 'good' for Standards 1 and 5, and an excellent rating for Standards 2, 3 and 4.

Based on the programme's documented internationalisation goals, the programme has successfully implemented effective internationalisation activities which according to the panel demonstrably contribute to the quality of teaching and learning.

In tune with ECA's assessment rules which decide that a programme certifies for Quality in Internationalisation when at least three out of the five standards are assessed as good or excellent and no standard is assessed as unsatisfactory, the panel proposes that the bachelor European Study of The Hague University of Applied Sciences be awarded the Certificate for Quality in Programme Internationalisation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Intended learning outcomes**

The audit panel found that ES uses the terms Europe and European in different ways, not only to indicate a geographical area but also in a more cultural sense. Keeping in mind the prominent position that intercultural competencies have in the intended learning outcomes this made sense to the audit panel. The panel would suggest to install stipulated definitions to further clarify these distinctions.

### **Services and facilities**

The observation of the audit panel during the visiting days is that the availability of workplaces seems limited during peak hours and that a more even distribution by students would take care of the problem.

### **Quality assurance**

More effective communication of lessons learned and adaptations with the student community may enhance the sense of joint ownership of the ES programme.

A systematic overview, which would bring all the peer feedback of lecturers together, would allow for structural improvement of courses.

Some key documentation does not appear to be available in English, which is an important element for such an international group of teachers whose Dutch may not allow them to access these documents. The audit panel would urge the programme, and THUAS as an institution, to make sure that all relevant documents are available in English.

### **Assessment**

For further improvement the audit panel does recommend to have all test results available for post-test analysis by the assessment committee, not only the below 5.5 or higher than 8. After all, courses that reward all students a 7 might not cause a 'blip' on the radar of management, but can be a signal of hasty and/or non-discriminative assessment. The audit panel stresses the fact that it did not find examples of this phenomenon in the available test results.

The assessment praxis during the curriculum is rather time-consuming, adding to staff workload. The audit panel would recommend the consideration of more synoptic assessment in line with the integrated approach to curriculum which was evident throughout.

Though the audit panel was impressed and pleased by the commitment and professional attitude of the exam board and assessment committee, the panel would advise the team to consider a schedule for membership. In this way a knowledge gap at the changing of the guards can be prevented and former members of the exam board are known to be strong ambassadors of assessment quality.

### **Learning outcomes achieved**

It surprised the audit panel that the final assessment form did not contain knock out criteria, so that students could compensate unsatisfactory criteria by outperforming in other areas of the thesis. The audit panel would advise the team to consider implementing such knock out criteria for those elements that are indispensable in professional praxis.

A good proportion of students go on to Masters programmes and the application of research skills are in evidence across modules in the programme. Given this, the programme would be advised to incorporate Masters preparation into the programme itself.





## **ANNEXES**



## ANNEX I Overview of judgements

<b>Overview of judgements on the HBO Bachelor European Studies (fulltime) of The Hague University of Applied Sciences</b>	
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Judgements</b>
<b>Standard 1. Intended Learning Outcomes</b>	good
<b>Standard 2. Orientation of the curriculum</b>	good
<b>Standard 3. Coherency and feasibility of the curriculum</b>	excellent
<b>Standard 4. Nourishing structure of the curriculum</b>	good
<b>Standard 5. Qualifications of incoming students</b>	satisfactory
<b>Standard 6. Staff</b>	excellent
<b>Standard 7. Facilities</b>	satisfactory
<b>Standard 8. Student information</b>	satisfactory
<b>Standard 9. Quality assurance</b>	satisfactory
<b>Standard 10. Assessment</b>	good
<b>Standard 11. Learning Outcomes Achieved</b>	good
<b>Overall judgement</b>	<b>good</b>



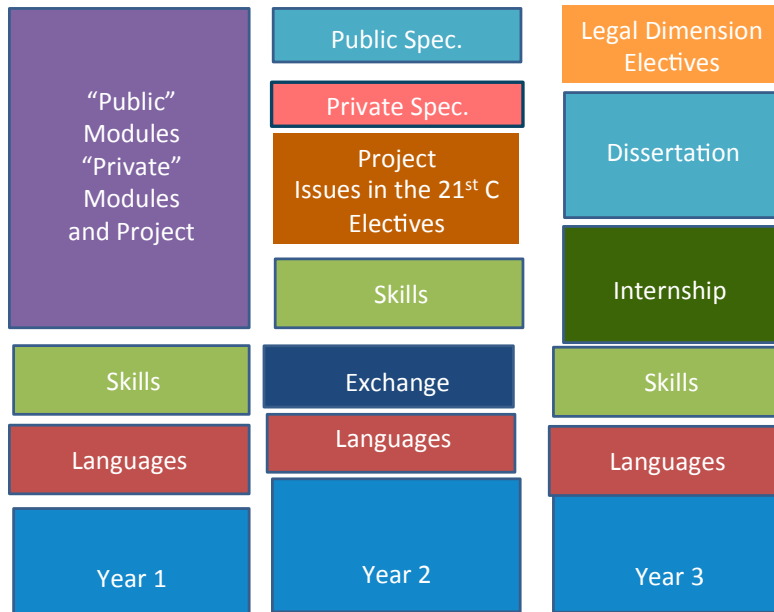
## ANNEX II The intended learning outcomes of the course

<b><i>Generic Competencies of Special Relevance</i></b>	
1	Ability to communicate in one's own and foreign languages using appropriate terminology
2	Ability to identify and utilise appropriately sources of information in all relevant areas
3	Ability to work in multicultural/intercultural teams
4	Ability to work in an interdisciplinary area
5	Ability to reflect on one's own values and to question concepts ideas and theories
6	Awareness of and ability to different disciplinary methodologies in an integrated way
<b><i>Specific Competencies on General European Issues</i></b>	
7	Ability to comment on or annotate documents appropriately in relation to critical issues in European Studies
8	Ability to interpret European events, developments and policies in national, regional and local frameworks
9	Awareness of the complexity of the process of wider European Co-operation
10	Awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from different European national and cultural backgrounds
11	Awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from different non-European national and cultural backgrounds
12	Awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from different non-European national and cultural backgrounds
13	Awareness of the relevance of European Studies in the contemporary development of Europe
<b>14</b>	<b>Knowledge of modern European history in a comparative perspective</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Knowledge of ideas/concepts of Europe</b> <b>Knowledge of Europe's changing role in the world</b>
<b><i>Specific Competences on General European Union issues</i></b>	
16	Awareness of the complexity of the EU enlargement and integration processes
17	Knowledge of integration theories
<b>18</b>	<b>Knowledge of (the history) of European integration</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Knowledge of European Union institutions and decision-making processes</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Knowledge of European Union policies</b>

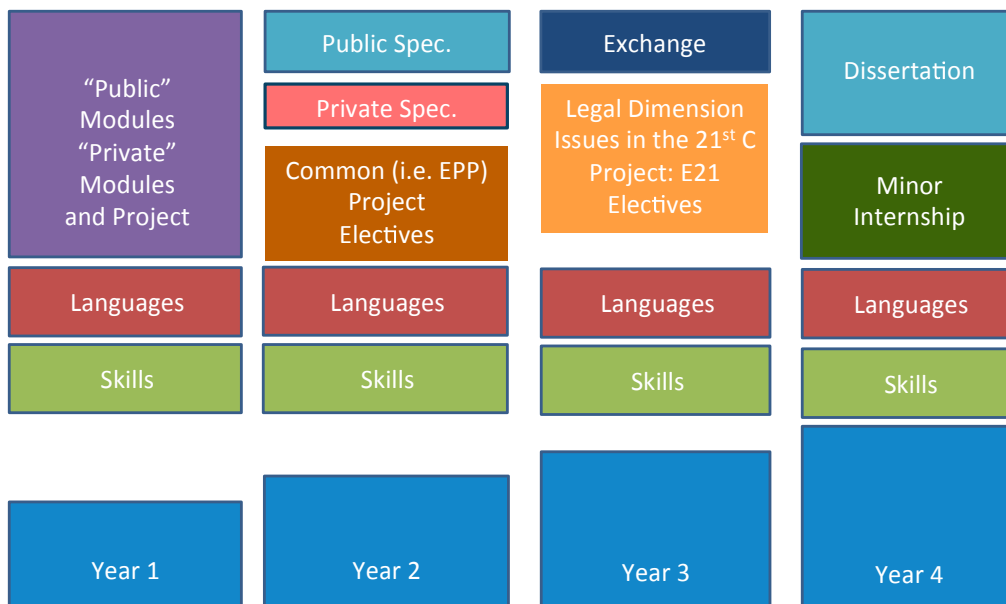


## ANNEX III Overview of the Bachelor's programme

### ES3



### ES4







## ANNEX IV Programme of site-visit

Programme date: 16th and 17th February 2016

Location: Johanna Westerdijkplein 75, The Hague

Tuesday 16th February 2016			
Time	Location	Panel group	Topics
9.00-10.30	Slinger 1.30	<b>Preparatory meeting for panel members</b>	
10.30-11.30	1.30	<b>Programme Management</b> <b>Rajash Rawal</b> , Faculty Director Management & Organisation, previous Programme Director <b>Ronald van Vliet</b> , Programme Director since 1 November 2015 <b>Maarten van Munster</b> , teamleader, country tutor for Brazil, Portugal and South Africa <b>Janet van der Star</b> , teamleader, country tutor for USA <b>Magnus Magnusson</b> , teamleader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic policy, mission, vision</li> <li>• Relationship and developments in professional field</li> <li>• Profile and market position</li> <li>• International focus</li> <li>• Vision on research</li> <li>• Quality policy</li> <li>• HRM policy and training</li> <li>• Results and study success</li> </ul>
11.30-12.30	1.30	<b>Internationalisation</b> Starts with 5 minutes presentation <b>Eveke de Louw</b> , coordinator of Internationalisation <b>Claudia Bulnes Sanchez</b> , mobility coordinator, country tutor for Spain, Argentina, Chile and Mexico <b>Geoffrey Lord</b> , Study Abroad Policy Advisor, country tutor for USA and Canada <b>Refiya Scheltinga</b> , lecturer Intercultural Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internationalisation policy</li> <li>• Learning outcomes</li> <li>• Curriculum</li> <li>• Recruitment (students)</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Mobility (students and staff)</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Monitoring quality</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>
12.30-13.30	1.30	Lunch	
13.30-14.15	1.30 1.29	<b>Open consulting for students and ES-staff</b> <b>Study of documents</b> <b>THUAS-Building facilities tour by Herman Leijdesdorff</b> , Secretary Faculty Management & Organisation	
14.15-15.00	1.29	<b>Presentations</b> 1. Presentation by 1st year ES-students Project Focus on Europe Today: Minorities in Europe (Moroccans in Spain) 2. Presentation of the module "Decision Making in the European Union" by ES-lecturer Enitsa Gabrovská	

Tuesday 16th February 2016			
15.00-16.00		<p><b>Programme Coordinators</b></p> <p><b>Marjo van den Haspel</b>, lecturer European Law, chair final project committee</p> <p><b>Tineke Swart</b>, lecturer communicative skills, coordinator year 1 ES4 and career supervision ES4, chair curriculum committee</p> <p><b>Anneke Schuurmans</b>, lecturer French, coordinator main phase</p> <p><b>Leo Tunderman</b>, lecturer German, coordinator Modern Foreign Languages</p> <p><b>Daria Brygiert</b>, lecturer English, coordinator year 1 ES3</p> <p><b>Bart Kuijpers</b>, lecturer Business Management, chair placement committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum evaluation, innovation and development</li> <li>• Characteristics of the programme</li> <li>• Coherency of the programme (link-up between previous training and programme)</li> <li>• Practice components</li> <li>• Internationalisation</li> <li>• Test policy</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Career supervision</li> <li>• Doability of the programme, study load</li> <li>• Quality control</li> </ul>
16.00-16.30	1.30	Review panel members and tea break	
16.30-17.30	1.30	<p><b>Placements, professional field and alumni including Vocational Advisory Board (VAB)</b></p> <p><b>Sigrid Segeren</b>, coordinator placements</p> <p><b>Bart Kuijpers</b>, lecturer Business Management, chair placement committee</p> <p><b>Wil van Leeuwen</b>, lecturer Business Management, member placement committee, member Kruisingafonds.</p> <p><b>Amine el Morabit</b>, alumnus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague</p> <p><b>Haaïke Braakhuis</b>, alumna, member VAB, Marketing Manager KPN Telecom Company</p> <p><b>Femke van Moorsel</b>, alumna, chair Kruisingafonds, Consultancy Business</p> <p><b>Anke Keijzers</b>, alumna, member VAB, Verdel Flowers and Plant export, Westland, placement supervisor</p> <p><b>Evelien Bouwman</b>, alumna, The Hague City Council (international affairs), placement supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality control of placements</li> <li>• Involvement external placements supervisors in feedback</li> <li>• Involvement alumni in quality control</li> </ul>
17.30-18.00	1.30	Review panel members	

Wednesday 17th February 2016			
Time	Location	Panel group	Topics
8.45-9.00	1.30	Preparatory meeting panel	
9.00-10.00	1.30	<b>Lecturers</b> <b>Dave van Ginhoven</b> , lecturer English and research skills <b>Anabel Diaz Santana</b> , lecturer Spanish, country tutor Spain <b>Rebecca Kleiweg de Zwaan</b> , lecturer English <b>Ernst van Weperen</b> , lecturer Business Management <b>Mihaela Anghel</b> , lecturer Political Science and Government, country tutor for Bulgaria and Romania <b>Enitsa Gabrovska</b> , lecturer European Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship professional field</li> <li>• Developments in professional field</li> <li>• International focus</li> <li>• Programme development</li> <li>• Programme body of knowledge?</li> <li>• Testing and assessments</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Professional space/training</li> <li>• Workload</li> </ul>
10.00-11.00	1.30	<b>Research</b> Session starts with a 5 minute presentation <b>Paul Nixon</b> , principal lecturer European Studies, head of research (Rescu), country tutor for Denmark, Finland, Baltic States, Iceland <b>Dave van Ginhoven</b> , lecturer English and research skills <b>Andreas Funk</b> , lecturer Politics, PhD in Political Philosophy, Researcher International Cooperation Group <b>Agota Szabo</b> , lecturer Business Management, Researcher Corporate Governance Group (PhD study), country tutor for Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of research in the programme</li> <li>• Cooperation within THUAS in research</li> </ul>
11.00-11.30	1.30	Review panel members and coffee break	
11.30-12.30	1.30	<b>Students and Programme Committee</b> <b>Guillaume Mitterrand</b> , French, ES3 1st year <b>Karolina Schwabova</b> , Slovak, ES3 1st year <b>Marieke Gabriels</b> , Dutch, 2ES4 2nd year <b>Harriet Basford</b> , UK, ES4, 1st year <b>Kimberly Castillo Romero</b> , Caribbean, ES4, 2nd year, secretary programme committee <b>Lucie Guo</b> , Chinese, ES4 3rd year, chair programme committee <b>Samuel Neret</b> , French, ES4, 4th year, member of programme committee <b>Jahyr Elshot</b> , Caribbean Dutch, ES4, 4th year <b>Anife Muzafarova</b> , Turkish, exchange student <b>Nicoletta Obradovicova</b> , Czech, exchange student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of programme and lecturers</li> <li>• Student communication</li> <li>• Link-up previous training with programme</li> <li>• Testing and assessments</li> <li>• Supervision (incl. exchange and placements)</li> <li>• Doability/study load</li> <li>• Involvement in quality control</li> </ul>

<b>Wednesday 17th February 2016</b>			
<b>12.30-13.15</b>	<b>1.29</b>	Lunch Presentation extracurricular activities by students (supervision Paul Treanor, lecturer English)	
<b>13.15-14.15</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>Exam board and Test committee</b> <b>Bert van Midden</b> , lecturer French, chairman exam board <b>Elise van Walstijn</b> , secretary <b>Rob Nijman</b> , lecturer English, member exam board <b>Johanna Eisinger</b> , lecturer Italian, member exam board and chair of test committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks and roles of exam board</li> <li>• Authorities of exam board</li> <li>• Relationship with programme management</li> <li>• Guarding of quality in testing and assessments</li> <li>• Position of test committee</li> <li>• Guarding level of end competences</li> </ul>
<b>14.15-15.30</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>Review panel members</b>	
<b>15.30</b>	Speakers Corner	<b>Panel feedback</b>	Feedback by audit team for ES staff and students.

## **Working methods**

### ***Selection of the delegations / the auditees***

In compliance with the NVAO regulations the audit panel prior to the audit decided on the composition of the delegations (auditees) in consultation with the course management and on the basis of the points of focus that had arisen from the panel's analysis of the course documents.

An 'open consultation session' was scheduled as part of the site-visit programme. The panel verified that the scheduled times of the consultation session had been made public to all parties involved in the school community in a correct and timely manner. No students or staff members attended the open consultation session.

During the site-visit the audit panel members spoke randomly to students, briefly visited a lecture and reviewed a number of course modules, assessments, assessment matrices and a selection of the literature used during the programme.

### ***Auditing process***

The following procedure was adopted. The panel studied the documents regarding the programme (Annex II: Documents examined) and a number of theses. The panel secretary organised input from the auditors and distributed the preliminary findings among the panel members prior to the audit. A preparatory meeting of the panel was held before the site visit took place at the institute, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 (Annex IV: Programme of the site visit).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

A first version of the assessment report was drafted by the secretary and circulated among the members of the panel for review and comments. The final draft was subsequently forwarded to the institute to correct factual inaccuracies. The panel finalized the report on April 7<sup>th</sup> 2016.

## **Assessment rules**

The assessment panel evaluates the programme against the standards of the assessment framework applying the following assessment scale: unsatisfactory - satisfactory - good - excellent.

For a positive final conclusion regarding the programme, each theme must at least be judged as satisfactory.

The final outcome of the programme assessment will always be "unsatisfactory" if standards 1, 3 or 4 are judged "unsatisfactory". In case of an unsatisfactory score on standard 1, no improvement period will be assigned and the programme will have to close down.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "good" if at least two standards are judged "good", one of which must be standard 4.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "excellent" if at least two standards are judged "excellent", one of which must be standard 4.

The final conclusion regarding a programme will always be "unsatisfactory" if standards 1 and/or 3 are judged "unsatisfactory". In case of an unsatisfactory score on standards 1 or 3, NVAO cannot grant a conditional initial accreditation.



## ANNEX V Documents examined

### List of documents examined

- Critical Reflection
- Educational Vision – European Studies (THUAS) Policy plan regarding research;
- Staff (policy) plan;
- Services and facilities plan;
- Quality assurance plan;
- Policy plan regarding the accessibility and feasibility of the programme for students with functional disability;
- Summary and analysis of recent evaluation results and relevant management information;
- MTO and NSE;
- Reports on consultations in relevant committees / bodies;
- Test questions with corresponding assessment criteria and requirements (answer models) and a representative selection of actual tests administered (such as presentations, work placements, portfolio assessments) and assessments; in particular: Y1 Institutions of the EU, Y2 Legal Dimensions of the EU, Y3 Personal Leadership, Minor Powerhaus Germany, elective Schrijven over Europese kwesties, Y4 Advanced research skills.
- Representative selection of final projects, selected by the panel, of the past two years with corresponding assessment criteria and requirements;
- Reference books and other learning materials.
- List of 15 final projects/papers examined prior to the audit<sup>1</sup>:

11014318
10077316
11014237
10073981
10014411
10033866
11041013
10002812
11097914
11102969
07002823
09056475
10060634
12027383
11074345

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<sup>1</sup> Following NVAO regulations student enrolment numbers have been denoted here. For reasons of privacy names of students and projects are known to the panel members and panel secretary only.





## ANNEX VI Composition of the audit panel

Panel members	Expertise					
	auditing and quality assurance	education	professional field	discipline	International	student-related
W.G. van Raaijen, <i>chair</i>	x	x			x	
E. Jones	x	x		x	x	
R. Maijer		x	x	x	x	
V. Delaere			x	x	x	
M. Magnus					x	x

certified secretary V. Bartelds
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On the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 the NVAO approved the composition of the panel of European Studies, number 004361 – The Hague University of Applied Science.

### Succinct CVs of panel members and secretary/co-ordinator

1	Willem van Raaijen is an experienced lead-auditor and senior partner at Hobéon
2	Elsbeth Jones is Emirata Professor of the Internationalisation of Higher Education at Leeds Beckett University (UK)
3	Rick Maijer is senior lecturer European Studies at Zuyd Hogeschool in Maastricht
4	Vincent Delaere is OPCW advisor at the New Zealand embassy in The Hague
5	Mickèl Magnus is 4 <sup>th</sup> year student of European Studies at Zuyd Hogeschool Maastricht
	Vladimir Bartelds is NVAO-certified secretary for Hobéon

On 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2016 the NVAO endorsed the composition of the panel to assess European Studies of The Hague University of Applied Sciences, registration 004361.

Prior to the audit all panel members undersigned declarations of independence and confidentiality which are in possession of the NVAO. This declaration certifies, among other things, that panel members do not currently maintain or have not maintained for the last five years any (family) connections or ties of a personal nature or as a researcher/teacher, professional or consultant with the institution in question, which could affect a fully independent judgement regarding the quality of the programme in either a positive or negative sense.



**Strategische dienstverlener voor kennisintensieve organisaties**



Lange Voorhout 14  
2514 ED Den Haag

T (070) 30 66 800

F (070) 30 66 870

E [info@hobeon.nl](mailto:info@hobeon.nl)

I [www.hobeon.nl](http://www.hobeon.nl)