

Assessment report
Limited Programme Assessment

**Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation (joint degree)
Media and Politics specialism**

Aarhus University/University of Amsterdam

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the assessment panel presents their main considerations which have led to the assessment of the quality of the academic master's programme Erasmus Mundus Master Journalism, Media and Globalisation, Media and Politics specialism of Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam, which has been assessed according to the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (Staatscourant nr. 36791, 19 December 2014) and the Protocol for Dutch Applications for Accreditation leading to a Joint Degree (7 June 2010, February 2011 version). The panel has also taken into account the explanatory notes of NVAO with regard to post-initial academic master's programmes (10 July 2012).

Since the initial accreditation procedure in 2010, the programme design changed fundamentally. In 2010, the University of Amsterdam specialism was a 30 EC part of a one year programme. Now this specialism is a full year, leading to a joint degree. The programme management took up the recommendations of the assessment panel in 2010, such as clarifying the distinction between the specialisms, adjusting the teaching methods to allow for more diversity and scrutinizing the level of the master's theses.

The panel considers the name of the programme to be an appropriate representation of the programme objectives and the programme curriculum.

The institutions participating in the consortium which organize this programme drafted a memorandum of agreement, indicating the obligations and rights of each of the partner institutions. The panel considers this to be a sound basis for the programme. Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam play major roles in the consortium and comply fully with the rules and regulations laid down. The panel recommends the programme management to draft a medium term plan in order to state clearly the direction and the results to be achieved in the coming years and to meet potential threats, such as the end of EU funding and a possible drop in student numbers.

From the comparison with other English-spoken programmes in this field, the profile of this programme as a primarily academic, analytical and research-oriented programme is evident. The programme is not about journalism as a profession but about the study and understanding of the relationship between societal developments and journalism. The panel welcomes this research-orientation of the programme. At the same time, students may easily misread the programme profile, mistaking it for a hands-on journalistic programme. Therefore, the panel recommends the programme management to be very clear in the communication of the intended learning outcomes, specifying that this is not a journalistic programme but a research-oriented programme. In Amsterdam, the programme is embedded in a social sciences environment, whereas in Aarhus it seemed to be mainly an arts or humanities environment. The programme representatives, however, informed the panel that the relationship with the social sciences departments in Aarhus is very strong, strengthening the social sciences character of the programme. The programme objectives have been appropriately converted into the intended learning outcomes. From the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin-descriptors and from their own inspection, the panel concludes that the learning outcomes reflect the master's level appropriately. The international dimension of the programme is strong and the relationship with the professional field has been organized satisfactorily.

The panel is impressed with the governance, organization and quality assurance of the programme, extending over Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam. For the panel, maintaining a good quality level, is far from being self-evident, as the programme is quite complex in set-up and operation. The memorandum of agreement serves as a solid foundation of the cooperation between these institutions, the board of studies manages the programme very effectively, the quality assurance systems, both in Aarhus and in Amsterdam, are functioning appropriately and the coherence committee oversees the contents and the coherence of the curriculum. The panel recommends programme management to further strengthen the position of the coherence committee, in order to ensure recommendations of the committee to be effectively incorporated in the decision-making process of the programme.

The admission requirements are relevant for the programme and allow to select the most talented students for this programme. The admission procedure is conducted very thoroughly. Although students with a bachelor's degree are admitted to this post-initial academic master's programme, the panel is convinced these students are academically very strong and will be trained more than adequately in academic skills and in research capabilities in the course of the programme.

The curriculum meets the learning outcomes. The courses cover the subjects to be addressed, including an extensive research component in the curriculum, in the first year and even more so, in the second year. The panel considers the teaching-research nexus in the curriculum to be very strong. The literature in the courses is of the required level. Also, the curriculum is very much up-to-date, as could be seen by the introduction of wikileaks-related subjects. The panel recommends to give the students the opportunity to either choose qualitative or quantitative research methods in the Social Sciences Methods for Journalists course in the foundational year, so they may deepen their knowledge of one of the research methods.

The lecturers are renowned academics, doing their research in excellent research institutes and presenting their research results in the classes, giving the students the opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding on recent developments in the domain of the programme. The panel rates the lecturers and their performances very highly. The lecturers are experienced teachers, the majority of them having a teaching certificate and they meet regularly, so the panel observed.

The panel assesses the study load and the study guidance to be adequately organized and the housing and the facilities to be up to standard for this programme. The students can turn to their teachers quite easily.

The examination and assessment regulations of the programme are appropriate, as they meet either the Danish or the Dutch laws. The examination board oversees the application of the rules and regulations in a satisfactory way. Although the external examiner and the test coordinator of the programme are active in checking tests, assessments and grades, the panel recommends reviewing the quality of the tests systematically and under the authority of the examination board. In addition, the panel recommends to create more distance between the programme management and the examination board, members of the examination board no longer sitting on the board of studies. The methods of examination are adequate and the processes for preparing and drafting the master's thesis are well-elaborated. The panel was pleased to see the master's theses evaluated by at least two examiners, using a thesis assessment form with relevant criteria.

For the achieved learning outcomes a number of observations have been made, leading the panel a very favourable assessment of the level achieved by the graduates. The graduation rates in the programme are very high, 90 % of the students graduating within two years, the nominal programme duration. The panel is positive about the quality of the theses, notwithstanding the obvious differences between the individual students. The research components, in most of the theses, are appropriately designed and executed. The average grade of the theses, being 7.3 in the last three years, is relatively high. In most of the cases, the panel agreed with the grade. The graduates have succeeded in securing for themselves some prominent positions. Not only do the graduates find positions on the labour market relatively easily, they also obtain positions in high-ranking and prestigious organizations like well-known national and international governmental and non-governmental bodies. The unemployment rate among the graduates is only 2.0 % over the last years.

The panel concludes that the programme meets the requirements of the NVAO Assessment Frameworks (19 December 2014) as well as the requirements of the NVAO Joint Degree Protocol (7 June 2010, February 2011 version) and advises NVAO to grant re-accreditation to the master's programme Erasmus Mundus Master Journalism, Media and Globalisation, Media and Politics specialism of Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam, assessing the programme as a whole to be good.

Rotterdam, 20 July 2015

Panel chair
prof. K. Roe Ph.D

Secretary
W.J.J.C. Vercouteren MSc, RC

2. Assessment process

Certiked VBI received a request to assess the Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation programme, Media and Politics specialism for re-accreditation. The request was submitted by Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam. The assessment regards only the foundational year of Aarhus University and the Media and Politics specialism year of University of Amsterdam and does not include the other specialisms which are offered as part of this two-year programme.

Upon Certiked's request NVAO gave their approval to the proposed panel of experts to conduct this assessment. The panel consisted of (for more detailed information please refer to Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel):

- prof. K. Roe Ph.D, active emeritus professor of Communication, KU Leuven University, Belgium (panel chair);
- prof. H.D.Y. Van den Bulck Ph.D, professor of Communication Studies, Antwerp University, Belgium (panel member);
- T. Hanitzsch Ph.D, professor of Communications, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany (panel member)
- R.C.A. Wink MA, student in the master's programme Dutch Discourse Studies, Leyden University, Netherlands (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, W. Vercouteren MSc, RC was responsible for the process co-ordination and for drafting the panel's report. All panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel conducted this assessment on the basis of the standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework (Staatscourant 36791, 19 December 2014) as well as the and the Protocol for Dutch Applications for Accreditation leading to a Joint Degree (7 June 2010, version February 2011). In addition, the panel has taken into account the explanatory notes of NVAO regarding post-initial academic master's programmes (10 July 2012).

The following procedure was adopted. The panel members studied the documents submitted by the programme management prior to the site visit, including a total number of 15 theses (please refer to Annex 2 and 3: Documents reviewed and Theses reviewed). The panel studied additional theses in the course of the site visit.

On 7 June 2015, the panel members met to discuss their findings and preliminary considerations with regard to the quality of the programme, including their findings about the theses they studied. The panel members presented a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives. On the basis of this input, the secretary drew up a list of questions, which was used during the site visit.

On 8 June 2015, the panel conducted a site visit at the premises of the programme on the University of Amsterdam campus. The site visit was conducted in accordance with the schedule drawn up beforehand (please refer to Annex 1: Site visit schedule). The programme management communicated the open office hours to the students in the programme and the staff. No one presented himself.

Immediately after the site visit, the members of the panel shared their considerations for each of the standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework. These considerations were based on the findings during the site visit, building upon the evaluation of the documents submitted by the programme management. The chair of the panel presented a broad outline of the findings to the representatives of the programme.

A draft version of this report was finalised by the secretary having taken into account the information presented as well as the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was then sent to the members of the panel. The panel members corrected and amended the draft report. Finally, the secretary drew up the final report. This report was sent to the programme management to correct for errors. These errors having been corrected, the report was then sent to the Universities to accompany their request for re-accreditation.

3. Overview of the programme

3.1 Basic information about the programme

The Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation is a two-year master's degree programme with a first foundational year for all of the students offered by Aarhus University and a second specialism year. For this second year students may apply for the specialisms War and Conflict (offered by University of Swansea), Business and Finance Journalism (City University of London), Journalism and Media across Cultures (University of Hamburg) or Media and Politics (University of Amsterdam). Students may also take a number of courses at University of California, Berkeley, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile or University of Technology Sydney.

This master's programme was recognized under the European Commission Erasmus Mundus programme. Subsequently, the master's programme received positive assessments on the part of Erasmus Mundus expert panels. This assessment only regards the foundational year offered by Aarhus University and the Media and Politics specialism offered by University of Amsterdam.

Administrative information about the programme

Name programme as in CROHO:	M Erasmus Mundus Master Journalism, Media and Globalisation
Orientation and level programme:	Academic Master (post-initial)
Grade:	MA
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specialization:	Media and Politics
Location:	Aarhus (year 1), Amsterdam (year 2)
Mode of study:	full time
Registration in CROHO:	75082

Administrative information about the institutions

Name of institution:	Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam
Status of institution:	Government-funded universities
Institution's quality assurance test:	Positive (University of Amsterdam) Not applicable (Aarhus University)

Quantitative data about the programme

Percentage of students who completed the Media and Politics specialism within two years

Cohort (cohort size)	2010 (11)	2011 (13)	2012 (20)
Percentage of students	91 % (10)	92 % (12)	90 % (18)

Percentage of lecturers with the following qualifications

Qualification	Master	Ph.D	BTQ
Percentage of lecturers	100 %	100 %	75 %/100 %*

*In Amsterdam 75 % of the lecturers possess a basic teaching qualification. In Aarhus 100 % of the lecturers have completed the teaching training programme.

The average staff-student ratio for the two years together is 1 to 25, being composed of the staff-student ratio of 1 to 39 in the first year (Aarhus) and 1 to 10 in the second year (Amsterdam).

The number of contact hours is 11.3 hours per week in the first year (Aarhus) and 8.2 hours per week in the second year (Amsterdam).

3.2 Main facts about the institutions

The Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation programme is organized by the Centre for University Studies in Journalism of Aarhus University and the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of University of Amsterdam.

The Centre for University Studies in Journalism of Aarhus University is a cooperation of the Danish School of Media and Journalism and the Department of Political Science and Media Studies of Aarhus University. The center offers a number of programmes, such as master's programmes Society, Culture and Media, Analytical Journalism and, of course, this Erasmus Mundus programme. Aarhus University employs over 8,000 staff and about 38,000 students study at this university. The university's strategy is directed towards offering solid research-based degree programmes, international teaching and research programmes and high-quality research. Aarhus University has a quality assurance system in place, aimed to provide a good study environment, maximize learning outcomes and teach students to be innovative and capable of transforming knowledge and ideas into action.

The Media and Politics specialism of the programme is organized by the Graduate School of Communication of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of University of Amsterdam. This university has over 31,000 students and employs over 5,000 staff. University of Amsterdam seeks to offer an inspiring international academic environment in which both staff and students can develop their talents. Characterized by a critical, creative and international atmosphere, the University wants to maintain a tradition of open-mindedness and engagement with social issues, in keeping with the spirit of the city with which it is linked. University of Amsterdam strives for international prominence as a research university, aiming to maintain and strengthen the University's reputation in both fundamental and socially relevant research. The University's doctoral programmes are meant to provide a foundation for engaging in high-quality teaching and research.

University of Amsterdam and Aarhus University are recognized educational institutions in Denmark and the Netherlands, their respective countries. In Denmark this master's programme was accredited in 2013 by the Danish authorities for a period ending in June 2020.

3.3 Intended learning outcomes

The students who have completed the Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation programme, Media and Politics specialism, are to have mastered the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding

- Broad perspectives and background information necessary to understand and report on changing Europe in the context of globalization, including but not limited to knowledge of:
 - The media systems of Europe and globally;
 - The economic and political context of globalization;
 - Contemporary global trends, including the movements towards localism and political devolution, state policies, and the global flows of people, products and capital;
 - Policy factors affecting the place of media and publics in a global context; fundamental concepts, methods, principles and theories relevant to the study of global journalism;
- How to formulate and study research questions about the media;
- The role of the journalist in democratic societies;
- The challenges to contemporary journalism;
- The interplay between political institutions and journalism in a European context;
- The impact of cultural and national identity on the theory and practice of journalism.

Intellectual skills

- Plan, conduct and communicate original research in journalism studies, whether in the form of journalistic or academic writing;
- Critically analyze media coverage of European issues in a global perspective;
- Identify new and creative angles on European issues in a global perspective;
- Recognize the issues, processes and complexities of globalization;
- Situate current events within a wider perspective;
- Evaluate the merits of a variety of theoretical approaches to globalization.

Discipline-specific skills

- Use a variety of research methods useful to the field of journalism studies, including content analysis, discourse analysis, interviews, focus group research, survey research, statistical analysis, archival and policy research, and ethnographic field work;
- Write journalistically, and have the knowledge and confidence to report competently on European issues, and cultural issues from at least two European countries;
- Critically reflect on issues in Global and European Journalism Studies;
- Conduct independent analysis of the economic, political, social and historical factors affecting countries other than the ones studied on the programme;
- Discuss the factors that are currently changing the nature of global and European Journalism;
- Specialization within one field of journalism. The specialisms are as follows:
 - Swansea University: War and Conflict
 - University of Hamburg: Media and Journalism: Comparative & Transcultural Approaches
 - City University of London: Business and Finance
 - University of Amsterdam: Media and Politics

Transferable skills

- Communicate effectively, both in writing and orally, within and across national and cultural borders;
- Access and utilize information in a variety of research resources, including library and Internet;
- Employ a systematic approach to gathering, analyzing and communicating knowledge;
- Manage resources and time;
- Use critical reading and writing skills in broader contexts;
- Work in a self-organized way, individually or in teams;
- Undertake lifelong learning, particularly for continuing professional development.

3.4 Outline of the curriculum

In the table below, the curriculum has been presented.

Courses	Credits
Reporting Global Change	10 EC
Globalization and World Order	10 EC
Globalization, Culture and the Roles of the Media	10 EC
Social Sciences Methods for Journalists	10 EC
Researching Journalism	10 EC
Analytical Journalism	10 EC
Total foundational year	60 EC
Communicating Europe	6 EC
Citizens and Public Opinion	12 EC
Transformations in European Media, Journalism and Governance	6 EC
Elective course	6 EC
Dissertation or thesis (including preparatory and methodology courses)	30 EC
Total specialism Media and Politics year	60 EC
Total credits of the programme	120 EC

4. Overview of the assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Good
Standard 3: Assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Good
Erasmus Mundus Master Journalism, Media and Globalisation programme	Good

5. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

5.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to contents, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Findings

The Media and Politics specialism, consisting of the foundational year and a second specialism year, are organized by Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam. Both institutions are part of a consortium of eight institutions, being together responsible for this master's programme. These institutions signed a memorandum of agreement to govern their cooperation and installed a board of studies as the primary decision-making body within the consortium (for further details on the working of this consortium please refer to standard 2). The two programme directors in Aarhus and Amsterdam are especially responsible for the coordination of the foundational year and the Media and Politics specialism year.

The programme is partly financed by the Erasmus Mundus grants of the European Commission. Upon a question by the panel in this respect, the dean of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of University of Amsterdam informed the panel the programme would be continued, even if this grant would no longer be available.

In the words of the management of this programme, the programme objectives are to teach students to study and understand the mutual relationship between economic, political, social and cultural developments and the practice, profession and performance of journalism. The programme is to enrich students' academic, analytical and research competencies in this field, so they may comprehend and interpret phenomena and trends in the global information society. In addition, the aim of the programme is to train students to become critical-thinking professionals in this field.

The programme management compared this programme to about 30 English-spoken programmes in different countries. Whereas there are some similarities, this programme distinguishes itself through the emphasis on the academic, research-oriented study of the role of media in society instead of teaching practical, journalistic skills like many of the other programmes do. In their meeting with the panel, the programme management expressed the research-orientation of the programme which is the prominent feature in the programme profile.

The international dimension of the programme is rather prominent. The intended learning outcomes refer to the study of subjects or trends in European, international or global contexts. Nearly all of the courses, to be discussed in more detail under standard 2, reflect this international perspective. The students come from various parts of the world and the student group is to a large extent international, being composed of 30 to 40 nationalities per cohort. The lecturers, in Aarhus as well as in Amsterdam, come from different countries, adding to the international perspective of the programme and stimulating transnational and global comparisons.

The programme management drafted a series of intended learning outcomes, specifying the knowledge, understanding and skills the graduates of the programme should have mastered. These intended learning outcomes, which have been listed in section 3.3 of this report, distinguish between knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, discipline-specific skills and transferable skills.

The programme management has compared the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin-descriptors in order to assess the master's level of these learning outcomes. From this comparison may be derived that all of the Dublin-descriptors are appropriately and evenly addressed by the learning outcomes.

In order to be abreast of the latest developments in the professional practice and to adjust the programme to these developments, the programme management decided to meet regularly with an external advisory board, composed of representatives of the professional field. Meetings between this advisory board and the board of studies are arranged once a year. On the advisory board sit, among others, representatives of BBC Academy, Spiegel Online and Cranfield University.

Considerations

The panel considers the memorandum of agreement of the participating institutions in this consortium to be a solid basis for the cooperation between these institutions and for the governance of the programme. The panel also noted that Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam play major roles in the consortium and comply fully with the rules and regulations laid down.

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be sound and relevant for the academic study of topics and trends in the information society, focusing on the role journalism plays in this society and addressing the relationship between developments in society and journalistic contents. From the comparison with other programmes in this field in a number of countries, the distinct profile of this programme as a primarily academic, research-oriented programme is evident. The programme is not about journalism as a profession but about journalistic contents and their effect on audiences as research subjects. The panel welcomes this research-orientation of the programme. At the same time, students may easily misread the programme profile, mistaken it for a hands-on journalistic programme. Therefore, the panel recommends the programme management to be very clear in the communication of the intended learning outcomes of the programme, specifying that this is not a journalistic programme but a research-oriented programme, directed towards communication issues and trends.

The panel noted the programme in Amsterdam is organized by the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, constituting a distinct social sciences environment, whereas in Aarhus the programme is embedded in the Department of Political Science and Media Studies, being a definite arts or humanities environment. The programme representatives informed the panel that the relationship with the social sciences departments and social scientists in Aarhus is very strong, strengthening the social sciences character of the programme.

The panel regards the international dimension of the programme to be very prominent. The objectives of the programme testify to the international orientation, which is appropriately reflected in the intended learning outcomes.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme specify the programme objectives clearly, leading to a set of concrete items of knowledge and skills items which the graduates ought to command. From the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin-descriptors the panel has been able to deduce that all of the descriptors are represented in the learning outcomes. From this analysis and from their own inspection, the panel concludes these intended learning outcomes to reflect the master's level appropriately.

The panel recommends the programme management to draft a plan for the medium term. This will enable the programme management to phrase clearly the direction of the programme in the coming years and the results which could be achieved within a few years as well as to meet potential threats, such as the end of EU funding and a possible drop in student numbers.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the standard 1 *Intended learning outcomes* as satisfactory.

5.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

As has been indicated under standard 1, this master's programme is a joint-degree programme involving a consortium of no less than eight partner institutions, five institutions in Europe offering distinct parts of the programme and three institutions outside of Europe offering students opportunities to take a number of courses there. The cooperation between these institutions is important to be able to set common standards for the programme quality and to maintain these standards. The cooperation of the institutions is governed by the memorandum of agreement they signed. In this agreement, the institutions laid down their mutual rights and obligations and specified the decision-making structure of the consortium. The main body of the consortium is the board of studies, being composed of senior management of the partner institutions and meeting bi-annually. The board of studies has the authority to make the major decisions in the programme and is responsible for the programme quality. In 2012/2013, the coherence committee was installed. This committee evaluates the curricula in the different countries for gaps or overlap, monitors the exit qualifications of the programme and evaluates the foundational year in terms of preparing students for any of the specialisms. The consortium drafted a general handbook, specifying rules and regulations the institutions should observe for their part of the programme. These include, among others, rules and regulations with respect to student support, special needs, complaints and appeals, assessments, grades, unfair practice and plagiarism.

As Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam are partner institutions in the consortium, the Media and Politics specialism (first, foundational year in Aarhus and second, specialism year in Amsterdam together) is governed by the memorandum of agreement as well. The board of studies includes representatives of Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam and the general handbook applies to these parts of the programme as well. The programme management, composed of the programme directors in Aarhus and in Amsterdam, oversees the day-to-day management of the Media and Politics specialism (both years), as well as being responsible for keeping the programme quality of these combined two years at the required level. The programme quality of the Media and Politics specialism years is monitored through student surveys, student panels, lecturers' surveys and data on completion rates and student careers. Surveys in Aarhus are conducted at the end of each semester, whereas surveys in Amsterdam are at the end of each of the courses. Survey results are available for each of the courses in Aarhus and Amsterdam. Two staff members and two students, from Aarhus and from Amsterdam, sit on the educational committee, advising the programme management on the quality of the programme and voicing students' and staff concerns. The results of the students' surveys for the cohorts 2011 – 2013 and 2012 – 2014 show scores ranging from satisfactory to more than satisfactory, indicating the programme quality. For one of the courses the results for one of the cohorts were not satisfactory. This was explained by the programme representatives to the panel as being caused by exceptional circumstances. The Aarhus and Amsterdam parts of the programme have a joint examination board, being responsible for applying the examination rules.

Every year, about 100 students enroll in the programme for the first foundational year offered by Aarhus University. The programme management employs a rather strict admission procedure, in order to allow the most motivated and for this programme most gifted students to enter the programme. The number of students applying tends to be about 500 each year. Representatives of both Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam check the application files of candidates and assess these, using a quantitative scoring table. Candidates must have a strong academic record, meaning at least a bachelor's degree with more than average grades, at least three months of paid, full-time journalistic experience, show a convincing motivation for the programme and have a good command of the English language (IELTS score of at least 7.0). In a limited number of cases, students with extended life experience are admitted. As the tuition fees are quite high, the programme management offers grants to support students. European students tend to have been graduated recently from bachelor's programmes, whereas non-European students mostly are older and more experienced. The students have to indicate their specialism before they are admitted. About 25 % of the students entering the foundational year, go to Amsterdam to do the Media and Politics specialism. The programme management monitors these numbers. Before the classes start, the students are informed about the programme and the facilities.

The examination board informed the panel that the students have the right to submit requests for exemptions. There are, however, very strict rules in this respect and exemptions are only rarely granted.

The programme management drafted a table, showing the relations of the courses in the curriculum to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. From this table may be derived that these courses reflect all of the learning outcomes and that the learning outcomes are evenly distributed over the courses. For each of the courses, the programme management drafted course descriptions, indicating the number of credits, the duration of the course, the set of learning goals, the course contents in brief, literature to be studied by the students and the way in which the course will be assessed, specifying the assessment methods. In the foundational year, the students are taught theoretical frameworks of political science and media studies, analytical journalism and research methods and techniques. In the specialism year, a number of advanced courses are offered and the students are required to write a 30 EC dissertation or master's thesis.

Although the curriculum is strongly research-oriented, in the first year the students are given lectures by guest lecturers, introducing them to a number of journalistic topics. This is, however, not so much in the curriculum itself but more in extra-curricular classes. In the second year, the students are to write a journalistic article about their thesis subject.

The panel inspected the list of literature the students ought to study in Aarhus as well as in Amsterdam and concludes the literature to be studied perfectly meets the requirements of the programme. The panel welcomes the efforts on the part of the programme management to offer more diversified literature, not only coming from Western European and North American sources.

The lecturers in the programme all have a PhD. In Aarhus, the lecturers are all researchers in this domain, being researchers at the Department of Political Science and Media Studies or in the Danish School of Media and Journalism. The lecturers publish in peer-reviewed journals. In Amsterdam, most lecturers are researchers of the Political Communication and Journalism programme group of ASCoR, the communication science research institute of University of Amsterdam. This is a very reputed research institute, having been awarded an excellent score in their external research assessment. The lecturers publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals. In Aarhus, all of the lecturers have teaching qualifications, whereas in Amsterdam, 75 % of them have teaching qualifications. The lecturers in the programme, coming from Aarhus and Amsterdam meet twice per year, to discuss the programme and to exchange views on how to lecture effectively these rather critical and demanding students. The turn-over rates of the staff are very low. So, most lecturers are very experienced.

The courses are especially designed for the students of this programme. In the elective courses in the second year, they may sit together with students from other programmes. Normally, courses are given by at least two lecturers. In the first year, every one of the students has his or her individual mentor, a fellow student, to give advice on practical and social matters. The students may also turn to the programme coordinator for study matters. In this first year, the students are to attend the classes. If they fail to attend, they are to do additional assignments. In the second year, the students may obtain advice on study-related issues from two senior lecturers, in their academic advisors capacities and from the study advisor. The students with whom the panel met, were content with the study guidance arrangements in the programme.

Considerations

The panel studied the governance, the organization and the quality assurance system of the programme quite extensively and is impressed by the accomplishments in this respect of the partner institutions, including Aarhus University and University of Amsterdam. The memorandum of agreement is a solid foundation of the cooperation of these institutions and the board of studies manages the programme very effectively, maintaining the programme quality at satisfactory or above satisfactory levels. The quality assurance systems, both in Aarhus and in Amsterdam, are functioning appropriately. The outcomes of the student surveys testify to the programme quality. In their meeting with the panel, the students expressed contentment with the way in which the educational committee is functioning and the way in which the programme management follows up on student recommendations. For the panel, maintaining a good quality level, is far from being self-evident, as the programme is quite complex in set-up and operation. The panel regards the coherence committee as an important body to further improve the course contents and strengthen the coherence of the curriculum. The panel recommends the programme management to further strengthen the position of this committee vis-à-vis the board of studies, in order to ensure recommendations of the committee to be effectively incorporated in the decision-making process of the programme.

The panel regards the admission procedure to be conducted very thoroughly. The admission requirements are relevant for the programme and allow the programme management to select the most talented students for this programme. Although students with a bachelor's degree are admitted, the panel is convinced these students are academically very strong and will be trained more than adequately in academic skills and in research capabilities in the course of the programme.

The panel studied the curriculum and the table connecting the courses to the intended learning outcomes and assesses the curriculum to effectively meet these learning outcomes. The courses cover the subjects to be addressed, including an extensive research component in the curriculum, in the first year and even more so, in the second year. Therefore, the panel assesses the curriculum to be more than appropriate, allowing the students to gain in-depth knowledge and skills and considers the teaching/research nexus in the curriculum to be very strong. The panel further noted the curriculum to be very much up-to-date, as the introduction of wikileaks-related subjects showed. The panel recommends to give the students the opportunity to either choose qualitative or quantitative research methods in the Social Sciences Methods for Journalists course in the foundational year, so they may deepen their knowledge of one of the research methods. The panel has studied the compulsory and recommended literature in the courses and considers the literature to be of the required level and appropriate for this programme.

In the panel's view, the lecturers are renowned academics, doing their research in excellent research institutes. These lecturers include their research results in their classes, giving the students the opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding on recent developments in the domain of the programme. The panel rates the lecturers and their performances very highly. The lecturers are also experienced teachers, for the most part having a teaching certificate. The lecturers in Aarhus and Amsterdam and Aarhus meet regularly, so the panel observed.

Having seen the number of contact hours and the arrangements made for the study guidance, the panel assesses the study load and the study guidance to be adequately organized. The students can turn quite easily to their teachers. On the basis of the descriptions provided by the programme management, the panel considers the housing and the facilities to be up to standard for this programme.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the standard 2 *Teaching-learning environment* to be good.

5.3 Standard 3: Assessment

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

Findings

The examination rules and regulations of the programme comply with the Danish and Dutch laws. As these are different, there are no uniform education and examination regulations. These comply, however, for the first year with the Aarhus University rules and for the second year, with the University of Amsterdam rules.

As has been indicated under standard 2, the programme installed an examination board. Members both from Aarhus University and from University of Amsterdam sit on this board. The responsibilities and tasks of this board have been stipulated, being the quality control over the tests and assessments, issuing guidelines for the grading, determining the results of the tests, granting exemptions and imposing sanctions in cases of fraud or plagiarism. The examination board is expected to work in line with Dutch applicable law. An external examiner, commissioned by the programme management, reviews examinations and grades, given across courses. The examination board and the test coordinator of the programme are in the process of further harmonizing test and assessment procedures. Members of the examination board sit on the board of studies of the programme. Thus far, no systematic reviews of the quality of tests and theses has been conducted. The examination board is in the process of arranging for these reviews to be conducted.

In the courses, assessment methods such as written examinations, oral examinations, assignments, papers, essays, in-class participation and portfolios are used to assess the students' performances. As the courses are given by two lecturers, these lecturers review each other's tests, assignments and paper instructions, aimed at ensuring the validity of the tests and the reliability of the assessments. Students who fail an examination, are entitled to one re-sit.

The thesis' process in the programme has been outlined. As the first step, in the third semester the students come together in the thesis preparation group and, in a number of sessions, draft and present their thesis proposals. In a second step, they take the Method and Statistics Tailored to the Thesis course, in which they extend their methodological knowledge and skills and select the research methodology for their thesis (e.g. quantitative research or critical analysis). The third step is the actual writing of the thesis. The students are entitled to the guidance of an individual supervisor, who is an expert on the research methodology chosen. The thesis ought to be a qualitative or quantitative empirical study, written as a research paper in the field of the programme. Theses about international politics, business topics or media are not accepted. The assessment of the theses is done by the supervisor and a second, impartial examiner from the programme. If the grades of these two examiners differ more than 1.0 point, a third examiner is called in. The third examiner is an examiner, overseeing the quality of all of the theses. For their assessment, all examiners use the criteria in the standardized thesis assessment form. As the fourth step, the students write a journalistic article on the subject of their thesis, presenting this subject to a wider audience.

Considerations

The panel considers the examination and assessment regulations of the programme to be appropriate, as they meet the Danish and Dutch laws.

The panel observed the examination board to oversee the application of the rules and regulations in a satisfactory way. The panel would recommend creating more distance between the programme management and the examination board, members of the examination board no longer sitting on the board of studies. Although the external examiner in the programme and the test coordinator are active in checking tests, assessments and grades, the panel recommends reviewing the quality of the tests systematically and under the authority of the examination board.

The panel considers the methods of examination to be adequate and to reflect the contents and the learning objectives of the courses.

The process for preparing and drafting the master's thesis is well-elaborated. The panel welcomes the distinct stages in this process, allowing the students to proceed in an organized way with their thesis project. The panel was pleased to see the master's theses evaluated by at least two examiners, using a thesis assessment form with relevant criteria.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3 *Assessment* to be satisfactory.

5.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

As may be derived from the figures presented in section 3.1 of this report, the graduation rates of the programme are very high, amounting to about 90 % of the students graduating within the nominal duration of the programme of two year.

The panel studied a number of theses, not only prior to the site visit but also in the course of the site visit itself. The panel is pleased with the quality of these theses and with the results the students have been able to accomplish. Of course, student performances tend to differ, but some general observations may be made. First of all, in the theses the research-orientation of the programme is strongly reflected, the theses demonstrating the students being able to do empirical research to address the subjects they have chosen. Secondly, the students manage to apply different methodologies, presented in the programme, ranging from quantitative social research methods through critical analysis to literature review. The average grades of the theses in the last three years has been 7.3. In most of the cases, the panel agreed with the grade given by the examiners. In some instances, the panel would have given a lower grade. In even less cases, the panel would have awarded a higher grade.

The graduates of the programme are very successful on the labour market. Even in situations with few job opportunities, like in recent years, the graduates of this programme tend to acquire positions relatively easily. The unemployment rate of the graduates the last few years was limited to about 2 %. Graduates do not so much apply for positions as journalists but for positions as information coordinators, project managers or information and communications employees. Also, the graduates do not primarily work for newspapers or magazines but for non-governmental organizations, broadcasting corporations or international political bodies, like the European Commission, NATO or the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Considerations

The panel is very positive about the graduation rates in the programme. These are high, demonstrating the accomplishments of the students, in particular being able to complete the studies within the time set.

Although there are, obviously, differences in the individual performances of the students, the panel is generally positive about the quality of the theses and the level the students reach at the end of the programme. The research components in the theses are very prominent and, in most of the theses, very adequately designed and executed. The average grade of the theses, given by the examiners in the programme, is relatively high. In most of the cases, the panel agreed with the grade.

The panel is impressed by the positions the graduates have succeeded in securing for themselves. Not only do the graduates find positions on the labour market relatively easily, they also obtain positions in high-ranking and prestigious organizations like well-known national and international governmental and non-governmental bodies. In some of these organizations like the European Commission, the chances of obtaining a position are very slim.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4 *Achieved learning outcomes* to be good.

6. Recommendations

In the text of this report, the panel made a number of recommendations to the programme management to further improve the programme. For the sake of clarity, these recommendations have been brought together here. The recommendations are the following.

- To draft a plan for the medium-term, in order to express clearly what the programme could be or ought to be in two to three years and to meet potential threats, such as the end of EU funding and a possible drop in student numbers.
- To be very clear in the communication of the intended learning outcomes of the programme: that this is not a hands-on journalistic programme but a research-oriented programme, geared towards the study of communication issues and trends.
- To formalize the relationship of the coherence committee and the board of studies of the programme, in order to ensure the recommendations of this committee to be discussed at the highest level and to be incorporated in the decision-making process of the programme.
- To allow students to choose either qualitative or quantitative research methods in the Social Sciences Methods for Journalists course in the foundational year, so they may deepen their knowledge of one of these research methods, the one they may adopt in their master's thesis.
- To make arrangements for the programme's examination board to have a more independent position from the programme management and to start the procedure of systematically assessing the quality of the tests and theses.

Annex 1: Site visit schedule

Amsterdam, 8 June 2015

08.30 h. – 09.30 h.	Arrival and deliberations panel (closed session)
09.30 h. – 10.00 h.	Dean and programme management prof. E. Fischer Ph.D (dean, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam), prof. E. Smit Ph.D (director Graduate School of Communication, University of Amsterdam), associate prof. U. From Ph.D (director Centre of University Studies in Journalism, Aarhus University)
10.00 h. – 11.00 h.	Programme management prof. E. Smit Ph.D (director Graduate School of Communication, University of Amsterdam), associate prof. U. From Ph.D (director Centre of University Studies in Journalism, Aarhus University), D. Weerts MSc (policy advisor, Graduate School of Communication, University of Amsterdam), B. Andersen cand. scient. (programme coordinator, Aarhus University), E. Weijers MSc (policy advisor, Graduate School of Communication, University of Amsterdam)
11.15 h. – 12.15 h.	Core lecturers, thesis' examiners (including education committee member) A. Schuck Ph.D (lecturer, chair education committee), prof. C. de Vreese Ph.D (lecturer), H. Bødker Ph.D (lecturer), T. Ngomba Ph.D (lecturer), P. Sheets Ph.D (lecturer), S. Lecheler Ph.D (lecturer)
12.15 h. – 13.30 h.	Lunch, documents review (closed session), open office hours 12.15 h. – 12.45 h.
13.30 h. – 14.00 h.	Examination board prof. J. Bardeel Ph.D (chair examination board), prof. H.H. Holm Ph.D (chair board of studies), P. Sheets Ph.D (lecturer), R. van der Wurff Ph.D (co-chair examination board, test coordinator)
14.00 h. – 15.00 h.	Students and alumni E. Degafe (student), N. Jakobsson (student), F. Bushehri (student), K. Andersen (student), J. Gunnarsson MA (alumnus), K. Resman MA (alumnus), N. Bax MA (alumnus), M. Seckler MA (alumnus)
15.00 h. – 16.30 h.	Deliberations panel and documents review (closed session)
16.30 h. – 17.00 h.	Presentation of main findings by panel chair to dean, programme management, lecturers and students

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

The assessment panel studied the following documents, submitted by programme management prior to the site visit:

- Self-assessment report Erasmus Mundus Master in Journalism, Media and Globalisation
- Dutch Accreditation decision, NVAO, 2010
- Danish Accreditation decision, EVA, Denmark
- Memorandum of Agreement
- Education and examination regulations
- Course catalogue
- Non-European exchange opportunities
- List of recent theses
- Thesis assessment form and thesis quality master regulations
- List of members of programme boards
- Teaching staff composition and teaching staff profiles
- General handbook
- Amsterdam specialism handbook
- Specification course evaluations

On the day of the site visit, the programme management presented the following documents:

- Course syllabi
- Reading list Amsterdam specialism
- Brochure for applicants
- Additional theses
- Grading explanation Aarhus
- Board of studies minutes
- Examination board minutes
- Education committee minutes
- Semester evaluation reports

Annex 3: Theses reviewed

The theses of the following 15 students have been selected for review by the panel.

- 10397027
- 10390707
- 10394044
- 10397728
- 10583580
- 10583599
- 10586679
- 10583564
- 10583475
- 10583661
- 5738792
- 10583351
- 10583424
- 10583858
- 10583912

Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel

The assessment panel had the following composition:

- prof. K. Roe Ph.D, active emeritus professor of Communication, KU Leuven University, Belgium (panel chair);
- prof. H.D.Y. Van den Bulck Ph.D, professor of Communication Studies, Antwerp University, Belgium (panel member);
- T. Hanitzsch Ph.D, professor of Communications, Department of Communication Studies and Media Research, Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich, Germany (panel member);
- R.C.A. Wink MA, student in the master's programme Dutch Discourse Studies, Leyden University, Netherlands (student member).

prof. K. Roe Ph.D, panel chair

Mr Roe, currently, is emeritus professor of Communication at KU Leuven University. He obtained a Ph.D in the Sociology of Communication from University of Lund in Sweden. He held academic positions at, among others, University of Gothenburg, University of Pennsylvania and Princeton University. From 2000 to 2003, he served as the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of KU Leuven. Mr Roe was a member of expert panels, assessing educational programmes and research projects in a number of countries. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles as well as a number of books.

prof. H.D.Y. Van den Bulck Ph.D, panel member

Mrs Van den Bulck, currently, is professor of Communication Studies, director of the Research Group Media, Policy and Culture and dean of Faculty of Political & Social Sciences of Antwerp University. She studied Communication Studies at KU Leuven University and University of Leicester (United Kingdom) and obtained her Ph.D at KU Leuven. Her research interests are, among other, the role and position of public service broadcasting and the role of media in celebrity culture. Mrs Van den Bulck has been involved in Flemish media policy as the vice chair of the Flemish Media Council. She has published widely.

T. Hanitzsch Ph.D, panel member

Mr Hanitzsch, currently, is professor of Communications at the Department of Communication Studies and Media Research of Ludwig Maximillian University of Munich. Prior to this appointment, he held academic positions at, among others, Ilmenau University of Technology, University of Zürich and Karlstad University. He obtained a Ph.D in Applied Media Studies from Ilmenau University of Technology. For a number of years, Mr. Hanitzsch was a freelance journalist. Mr Hanitzsch received a number of grants and has published many journal articles as well as a number of books in his field of expertise.

R.C.A. Wink MA, student member

Mr Wink subsequently completed the bachelor's programme History and the research master's programme History of Leyden University. Parallel to his studies, he was, among other, a member of the education committee of the research master's programme and was employed as an auditor and a researcher at Lloyd's Register Netherlands. Mr Wink, currently, is a student of the master's programme Dutch Discourse Studies at Leyden University.