

**BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME**  
**LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
**LEIDEN UNIVERSITY**

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This report was finalised on 5 March 2020





# REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

### Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies

Name of the programme:	Latijns-Amerikastudies
International name:	Latin American Studies
CROHO number:	56052
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location:	Leiden
Mode of study:	full time
Languages of instruction	Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/05/2020

The visit of the assessment panel Region Studies to the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University took place on 5, 6 and 7 June 2019.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Leiden University
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

## COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 4 March 2019. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies consisted of:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies];



- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies].

The panel was supported by dr. E. (Els) Schröder and drs. E.G.M. (Mariette) Huisjes, who acted as secretaries.

## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The bachelor's programme Latin American Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University was part of the cluster assessment Region Studies. Between March 2019 and November 2019 the panel assessed 38 programmes at five universities: Radboud University, Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Groningen.

Leiden University has 19 programmes in the cluster Region Studies. To ensure that the workload for panel members was evenly distributed and all programmes were properly assessed, two site visits were planned (in June and November 2019).

### *Panel members*

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. A. (Umar) Ryad, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gunnar) De Boel, professor in (Greek) Linguistics and Modern Greek and Byzantine Literature (Department of Literary Studies) at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. I. (Inge) Brinkman, professor in African Studies at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- R.A. (Rianne) Clerc-de Groot MA, teacher in Classics at the Cygnus Gymnasium in Amsterdam;
- Dr. D. (Dario) Fazzi, lecturer in North American Studies and International Studies at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. A.F.R. (Ann) Heirman, professor in Chinese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. V. (Vincent) Houben, professor Geschichte und Gesellschaft Südostasiens at Humboldt Universität Berlin (Germany);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. D. (Daeyeol) Kim, professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INaLCO) of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (France);
- L. (Lotte) Metz MA, teacher in Greek and Latin at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Nijmegen;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Andreas) Niehaus, professor in Japanese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. J.L.M. (Jan) Papy, professor in Latin Literature at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff-van der Voort, teacher Islam studies and coordinator Graduate School for Humanities at Radboud University;
- C. (Charlotte) van der Voort, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture, and pre-master's student Dutch Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];

- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- G.M. (Gerieke) Prins, bachelor's student in Social and Migration History with a minor in Latin American Studies at Leiden University [student member];
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies at Leiden University];
- Em. prof. dr. C.H.M. (Kees) Versteegh, emeritus professor in Arabic and Islam at Radboud University [referee Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Amsterdam];
- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies at Leiden University];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jaap) Wisse, professor in Latin Language & Literature at Newcastle University (United Kingdom) [referee Greek, Latin and Classics at the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].

For each site visit, assessment panel members were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence.

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Els Schröder. She acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University and in the first site visit to Leiden University. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the start of the site visits as well as the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at the other site visits and reviewed the draft reports. During her leave of absence, she was replaced by her colleagues at QANU. Dr. Irene Conradie acted as project manager in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and in the second site visit to Leiden University. Dr. Anna Sparreboom acted as project manager in the site visit to the University of Groningen.

Several secretaries assisted in this cluster assessment: drs. Trees Graas, employee of QANU, also acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University; drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretary for QANU, also acted as secretary in the first site visit to Leiden University and in the site visit to the University of Groningen; drs. Erik van der Spek, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the second site visit to Leiden University; drs. Marielle Klerks, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The QANU project managers and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

#### *Preparation*

On 22 November 2018, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework. Prior to the site visit, the panel members received instruction by telephone and e-mail on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit, the programmes wrote self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the project manager. She checked these on quality and completeness, and sent them to the panel members. The panel members studied the self-evaluation reports and formulated initial questions and remarks, as well as positive aspects of the programmes.

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms, based on a provided list of graduates between 2016-2018 (see Appendix 4).

#### *Site visit*

The site visit to Leiden University took place on 5, 6 and 7 June 2019.



At the start of each site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners. Members of the Programme Committee were included as part of the interviews with staff and students. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received concerning this programme.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

Separate from the site visit, two representatives of the programme and one panel member conducted a development dialogue for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies in Leiden on 20 June 2019. The results of this conversation are summarised in a separate report, which was harmonised with the panel and which will be published through the programmes' communication channels.

#### *Report*

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the project manager for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project manager sent the draft reports to the faculty in order to have it/these checked for factual irregularities. The project manager discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Humanities and University Board.

#### *Definition of judgements standards*

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:

#### **Generic quality**

The quality that, from an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

#### **Meets the standard**

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

#### **Partially meets the standard**

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

#### **Does not meet the standard**

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

#### **Positive**

The programme meets all the standards.

#### **Conditionally positive**

The programme meets Standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.



**Negative**

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets Standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.





## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

### *Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes*

The panel considers the multidisciplinary profile of the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies original, appealing and clearly defined. The programme has seen its student numbers dwindle, possibly as a consequence of the popularity of broader programmes such as International Studies. The panel asks the faculty to bear in mind that programmes like International Studies are made possible only by the collaboration of the staff of the smaller programmes. It recommends differentiating the programme's profile more clearly from broad programmes such as International Studies and emphasising explicitly its assets, such as in-depth knowledge, interdisciplinarity and language proficiency.

The intended learning outcomes meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors and the intended learning outcomes concerning language skills reflect the European Reference Framework for Language Proficiency. The panel finds the intended learning outcomes of the programme adequate in this sense, although those pertaining to the component 'knowledge and understanding' remain somewhat vague on the required level of knowledge. It recommends defining this more precisely. The panel also advises the Faculty of Humanities to harmonise the intended learning outcomes for all of its programmes and check any reformulation in terms of terminology and categorisation to other programmes within the faculty. This will enhance transparency.

### *Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment*

The panel found that the curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff of the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum has some excellent features, such as the flexible learning paths, the consistent study of original texts, the full immersion semester in Chile or Brazil, the dedicated methodology courses for each of the three disciplines in the programme, the diverse and enthusiastic staff and the way the thesis trajectory is built up. All these aspects are worthy of a compliment.

On the other hand, the panel found some imbalance and imperfections in the programme. Tackling these will improve the curriculum even further and realise the programme's ambitions. Firstly, the panel recommends finding a new balance between the three disciplines in the programme: history, linguistics and cultural analysis. History is now overrepresented. For instance the imbalance of staff should be corrected, more space should be given in the Leiden curriculum to the latter two disciplines and it should be ensured that students can deepen their knowledge of each of the three disciplines when studying abroad.

Secondly, the panel suggests that enriching the curriculum with a couple of multidisciplinary courses where staff of the history, culture and linguistics disciplines work closely together, may make the curriculum more coherent, ambitious and challenging. It will also make the programme's profile stronger, more distinctive, and more attractive for students.

Thirdly, there is an inconsistency in the way language is used in the second and third year of the curriculum. History courses are mostly taught in English, linguistics and cultural analysis courses are mostly taught in Spanish or Portuguese. Some students write their thesis in English or Dutch, other students in Spanish or Portuguese. This is too flexible, in the panel's view, and risks that there are differences in the language level reached by the students in the History track on the one hand and those in the Culture and Linguistics tracks on the other. The panel strongly endorses the programme's idea to teach more history courses in the target language. It also suggests obliging all students to write their bachelor's thesis in Spanish or Portuguese. It is convinced that both these measures – finding a new balance between the three disciplines in the programme and adopting a consistent attitude towards the target languages in all three tracks – will have a positive effect on the



distribution of the students over the three disciplines. Thus it may perhaps also provide some relief in the staff's excessive workload.

Finally the panel suggests that student who have outgrown the language courses given in the programme, should be or supported in reaching an even higher level. They could for instance be offered courses in the target language, or have the option to combine both Spanish and Portuguese or be able to work on special assignments.

The panel is firmly convinced that by addressing the points mentioned above, this already unique and appealing programme can be raised to a higher level. Teaching methods, feasibility, student support, student-specific services and labour market orientation the panel found good, and contributing to the students achieving the intended learning outcomes.

The workload for lecturers in the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies is very high, even higher than in other humanities programmes the panel has looked into. Particularly the linguistics and cultural analysis disciplines are hard hit. The panel finds the workload worrying, but was relieved to find that tackling this problem has a high priority for the Faculty Board. The panel commends the faculty for its directive and supportive approach in these matters. Work load monitoring and relief needs continuous attention at Faculty level.

#### *Standard 3: Student assessment*

According to the panel, the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies has a sound and transparent assessment system. Its quality is safeguarded by applying the four-eye principle in the design and the use of rubrics. The assessment plan links the courses to the intended learning outcomes and categorises the assessment methods. These assessment methods are sufficiently varied, in the panel's view. The programme is experimenting with new assessment methods, which the panel welcomes. The tendency to innovate may meet students' wish to be assessed in a more challenging way than is presently the case for certain history courses.

The assessment of bachelor's theses is clearly designed and its quality is guaranteed by having it done by two independent examiners, with the Board of Examiners aiming to avoid fixed couples. The panel endorses this goal and believes that the keen eye of colleagues from other disciplines or even outside the programme can be of added value to permanently reinforce the objectivity of the assessment. It agreed with the assessment of the theses in the sample set and found it well substantiated.

Finally, the panel notes that the Board of Examiners for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies is adequately performing its task to assure quality of assessment, even though it is clearly troubled by lack of time. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can continue to create support for further professionalisation.

#### *Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes*

Based on the quality of the bachelor's theses and its discussion with alumni, the panel ascertained that graduates of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies achieved the intended learning outcomes. The panel found the theses in the sample it studied of very satisfactory and in some cases excellent quality, testifying to a good thesis guidance. It suggests that students could be stimulated more to synthesise the insights they found, reflect on their work in a self-critical way and combine cultural, linguistic and historical methodologies or use an interdisciplinary methodology. Also, the panel recommends the programme to encourage all students to write their bachelor thesis in either Spanish or Portuguese.

From the programme's own survey and from discussions with students and alumni, the panel distils that the bachelor graduates not only profit from the regional knowledge they acquired, but also from transferable skills such as reading and writing at an academic level, problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. The panel accepts the programme's view that these

skills are currently in high demand. It is also pleased to note that the students who continue with a master's programme in Latin American Studies experience a fluid transition.

The panel assesses the standards from *the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

*Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies*

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

The chair of the panel, prof. dr. Peter Van Nuffelen, and the secretary, dr. Els Schröder, hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 5 March 2020





# DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

## Context

The bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies is one of 24 bachelor's programmes offered by the Faculty of Humanities at Leiden University. The faculty is shaped as a matrix of study programmes and institutes. The institutes harbour research and appoint academic staff members, the study programmes are the units within which teaching is organised. The bachelor's programme is led by a Programme Board, that falls under immediate responsibility of the Faculty Board. It consists of a head of department from the academic staff and a student member. The Faculty Board is advised by a Programme Committee, consisting of equal numbers of lecturers and students. In addition, assessment within the bachelor's programme is supervised by the Board of Examiners, that also serves the master's programme in Latin American Studies and the research master's programme Latin American Studies. The programme has an annual intake of about 20 students.

### **Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes**

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

## Findings

### *Profile*

The bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies aims to educate students in the cultural, historical and linguistic diversity of contemporary Latin America. This region, comprising Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Chile, is both complex and diverse. The programme is therefore broad, reflecting the staff's research and expertise in fields of history, culture and linguistics. Students choose either a Spanish or Portuguese track, and, after a first year of compulsory courses, have much flexibility in tailoring their own programme in the second and third year of their bachelor's programme. Graduates of the programme possess knowledge and understanding of a vast region, with a significant economic, ecological and political impact. They also reach a strong level of competence in Spanish or Portuguese and are equipped with transferable skills regarding critical and creative thinking, intercultural competences, digital literacy, time management and self-reflection.

The programme is unique in the Netherlands because of its multidisciplinary outlook in combination with the teaching of Spanish or Portuguese to an advanced level and a semester of full immersion in the region of the language chosen. Other Dutch bachelor's programmes (in Utrecht, Groningen, Nijmegen) offer Spanish language training, but their emphasis is different: for instance on European Spanish literature and culture, or transatlantic dialogue. The bachelor's programme 'Spaans en Latijns-Amerikaanse studies' offered by the University of Amsterdam comes close to the Leiden programme, but does not offer the full multidisciplinary package right from the start, nor advanced learning of Portuguese as well as Spanish. The Leiden programme in Latin American Studies compares well to similar programmes abroad, such as that offered by King's College London, the University of Manchester, the University of Illinois or the University of California.

The panel finds that the bachelor's programme has a modern, original, clearly defined and very interesting profile, with a unique position in the Low Countries. Its graduates possess skills that make them very adaptable to our increasingly globalised times.

The bachelor's programme in Latin-American Studies has seen its recruitment numbers dwindle over the past few years. It therefore strives to improve its visibility and strengthen its unique profile. In order to do this, it will be helpful, in the panel's view, to enhance the relevance of the programme by fortifying the language component and to fully exploit its interdisciplinary potential.



Given the low student numbers, the panel fears that in the long run it will be hard to maintain solidarity between very broad programmes like International Studies that attract many students and small programmes like Latin American Studies that are relatively expensive. The panel asks the faculty to bear in mind that solidarity works both ways and that broad programmes like International Studies are made possible in collaboration with the smaller programmes' staff. With regards to profiling of and publicity, the panel underscores the importance of stressing the differences between broad programmes like International Studies on the one hand, and region-specific programmes like Latin American Studies on the other, with the latter offering a more thorough in-depth knowledge of a region, its culture and its languages. The panel sincerely hopes the faculty will succeed in maintaining solidarity, for it is impressed by the diversity and depth of Leiden University's cultural profile, to which the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies contributes.

The panel strongly emphasises that such programmes are of vital importance, not only to Leiden University but to the Netherlands as a whole. If academic research is no longer done in certain specialised subfields of the humanities, the university can no longer offer broad programmes with sufficient depth, nor electives to students in other programmes. Also, academics from other faculties and universities in the Netherlands will be deprived of this specialised knowledge. And if expertise in a wide variety of cultures and diversity of languages is no longer passed from one generation to the next, the Netherlands will weaken its international position. In cultivating knowledge of many cultures, Leiden University has a long-standing tradition; it is an essential part of its identity and gives the university a unique position in the Netherlands. The faculty is committed to keep this tradition alive and protect small fields like Latin American Studies, the panel found. It wholeheartedly supports this ambition, in the interest of Dutch society as a whole.

#### *Intended learning outcomes*

The programme aims to provide students with sound academic knowledge about the Latin American region in three academic disciplines: history, linguistics and cultural analysis. They should be able to apply the research methods of one of these disciplines and write a thorough paper. In accordance with the Dublin Descriptors, the intended learning outcomes of the programme are categorised in 'knowledge and understanding', 'application of knowledge and understanding', 'making judgements' and 'communication'. They are formulated in Dutch. One example of an intended learning outcome in the knowledge category is: 'beschikken over kennis en inzicht in de culturen van Latijns-Amerika vanuit taalkundig, cultureel, analytisch en geschiedkundig oogpunt'. The language skills apply for either Spanish or Portuguese and are defined as B2 ('advanced user') for listening, speaking and writing and C1 ('very advanced user') for reading. These levels correspond to the European Reference Framework for Language Proficiency. Students should be able to write an academic report in Spanish or Portuguese.

The panel finds that the intended learning outcomes meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. In this sense, they are adequate, but in the 'knowledge and understanding' category the panel finds the intended learning outcomes somewhat vague. It recommends the programme defining the level of knowledge that is required more precisely. For language skills, the acquired level is explicitly defined, which is good, in the panel's view.

The panel recommends all programmes in the Faculty of Humanities harmonising the intended learning outcomes of different programmes within the faculty. Obviously they will differ, but it would enhance transparency if all programmes use the same terminology and categorisation.

#### **Considerations**

The panel considers the multidisciplinary profile of the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies original, interesting and clearly defined. The programme has seen its student numbers dwindle, possibly as a consequence of the popularity of broader programmes such as International Studies. The panel asks the faculty to bear in mind that programmes like International Studies are made possible only by the collaboration of the staff of the smaller programmes. It recommends



differentiating the programme's profile more clearly from broad programmes such as International Studies and emphasising explicitly its assets, such as in-depth knowledge, interdisciplinarity and language proficiency.

The intended learning outcomes meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors and the intended learning outcomes concerning language skills reflect the European Reference Framework for Language Proficiency. The panel finds the intended learning outcomes of the programme adequate in this sense, but somewhat vague as to the level at which knowledge is to be required. It recommends defining this more precisely. The panel also advises the Faculty of Humanities to harmonise the intended learning outcomes for all of its programmes and check any reformulation in terms of terminology and categorisation to other programmes within the faculty. This will enhance transparency.

## Conclusion

*Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies*: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

### **Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment**

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

## Findings

### *Curriculum content and structure*

The curriculum's structure is based on the Leiden 100-600 level structure. The bachelor's programme starts with level-100 courses. During subsequent semesters, the course level is gradually expanded with level-200 and -300 courses and finally conclude with a level-400 graduation project.

A full overview of the bachelor's curriculum can be found in appendix 2. The first year provides students with a general grounding in the study of the region and an introduction to the three disciplines within the programme: modern history, cultural analysis and linguistics. During this year, the thematic courses (all 5 EC) are shared by all students. They are the history courses 'Introduction to Latin American modern history' I and II, 'Nation building in Latin America' and 'The Latin American City', the cultural analysis courses 'Latin America in literature and images' and 'The construction of the other' and the introductory linguistics course 'Trajan's legacy', shared with students from other Roman languages. On top of these shared courses, students take 20 EC language acquisition courses in either Spanish or Portuguese, plus 5 EC 'Phonology and morphology' in the chosen language. In several courses throughout the first year, students work on assignments that enable them to acquire academic skills such as correct reference, oral presentation and essay writing.

For their second year, courses are organised in parallel Spanish and Portuguese tracks. Within these tracks, students deepen their knowledge and skills in each of the three disciplinary fields (one course in each of the disciplines for a total of 15 EC), the Spanish track concentrating on Spanish speaking countries in Latin America and the Portuguese track on Brazil. Language acquisition is also deepened in the second bachelor year (10 EC), and students from both tracks take a 5 EC course 'Philosophy of science'. The second semester of the second bachelor year is spent abroad, fully immersed in the target language. The programme has working agreements with Diego Portales University in Santiago, Chile and with the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Florianópolis, Brazil. Here, students take advanced language and linguistics courses specially tailored for them as well as content courses together with local students.

In their third and final year, students follow a personalised learning path. They can choose three 5 EC electives offered by each of the disciplines, so that they can specialise in one of them. Furthermore, they have 30 EC discretionary space for a minor, which can be spent outside of the



programme or within, for instance to acquire an intermediate level in the language of the other track. All students take a 'Research methodology' course (5EC) dedicated to the discipline they chose for their bachelor's thesis. Students from the Spanish and Portuguese tracks take this course together, but its structure enables them to work in their target language. The 'Research methodology' course prepares students for their bachelor's thesis. It ends with a thesis proposal and preliminary literature review.

#### *Thesis trajectory*

Students discuss their thesis proposal with the thesis supervisor they envisage. After advice from the disciplinary section, the Board of Examiners appoints the supervisor for each thesis. The 'Research methodology' course is followed by a thesis seminar, consisting of five meetings per discipline, where students present their proposal to fellow students and receive feedback. During the writing process, students have at least three meetings with their thesis supervisor. Besides that, they receive written feedback. The bachelor's thesis comprises 10.000 words (about 20 pages) of academic writing on a subject in the chosen discipline. In the academic year 2018-2019, about half of the students wrote their thesis in the target language, others write their thesis in Dutch or English. In general, students are happy with the thesis trajectory and the guidance they receive, though some students found their supervisors had too little time for them. This should not happen. It can be seen in the light of the high workload that is troubling this programme and that will be discussed later. But the availability issues of supervisors seem to be incidental and on the whole, the panel found that the thesis guidance works well.

#### *Opportunities*

Roughly speaking, the panel is satisfied with the content and structure of this complex programme. It has some excellent features, such as the flexible learning paths, the consistent study of original texts, the full immersion semester in Chile or Brazil, the dedicated methodology courses for each of the three disciplines in the programme and the way the thesis trajectory is built up. The students as well are generally happy with the programme, the panel found, both from its dialogue with the students and from the student chapter in the self-evaluation. However, the panel identifies some opportunities to make the programme stronger. These will be discussed below.

#### *Programme languages*

In the first year, the non-language courses are taught in Dutch to support the transition from secondary school to university. Beyond the first year, history courses are mostly taught in English, while linguistics and cultural analysis courses are taught in Spanish or Portuguese. In the same vein, theses written in the fields of linguistics and culture use sources in Spanish and Portuguese, while the papers in the field of history are limited to sources in English. This seems inconsistent. The panel therefore fully endorses the programme's intention to teach the history courses in the target language as well, starting in the second year. This will contribute not only to students' proficiency in the target language but to the coherence of the programme as well. The panel also recommends that the supervisors of papers in the History track make sure that sources in Spanish and Portuguese are used.

In the same vein, the panel identifies a tension between the programme's intended learning outcomes for language proficiency on the one hand and the flexible learning paths on the other. While all students' language performance is assessed during the language acquisition courses, during the thesis trajectory they may choose for the challenge to write in Spanish or Portuguese, or write it in Dutch or English. This is flexible, but creates the risk that the levels of language proficiency reached by different students varies considerably. The panel recommends the programme obliging students to write their thesis in the target language, and making sure that they get sufficient practice to do this by writing their papers and assignments for different courses also in the target language.

#### *Balance between history, linguistics and cultural analysis*

The programme has itself identified a lack of balance between the three disciplines: history is overrepresented in the curriculum, while linguistics and cultural analysis are underrepresented.

Students are not happy with this imbalance either, as they state in their contribution to the self-evaluation. They consider history to be overrepresented. Because of this, it is possible that students lack the solid base in linguistics and cultural analysis that is needed to make an informed choice for one of the disciplines, in the panel's view. The discrepancy between the number of students who choose the History track and those choosing Cultural Analysis or Linguistics may be partly due to the lack of balance in the curriculum, which does not offer students the possibility to gain equal confidence in all three disciplines. The panel recommends the programme restoring the balance between the three disciplines, by redividing the number of EC's spent on each subject.

Another issue that needs to be addressed, in the panel's view, is the needs of students who enter the programme already knowing some Spanish (or Portuguese) and who therefore quickly outgrow the language courses that are offered. It should be avoided that these high performers experience a void, the panel judges, nor should students who come back from their full immersion abroad and wish to keep practicing their language skills be disappointed. The panel agrees with the Programme Board that after a certain point, language skills can no longer be acquired through specific language courses. However, by teaching more courses in the target languages, including the history ones, and by writing essays and giving presentations in the target language as well, students will be able to receive further training. Alternatively students could be given the option to combine both Spanish and Portuguese or to work on special assignments to improve their oral and written language skills.

#### *Multidisciplinarity*

The panel is enthusiastic about the programme's idea to create a multidisciplinary team-taught course. As it is, the interdisciplinary potential of the programme is not fully exploited, in the panel's view. It therefore encourages the programme to be ambitious and teach not one but two multidisciplinary courses: in the first and third year. In these courses the staff's varied expertise can be brought together, which will make them very interesting and challenging for students. Such courses – in combination with an equal distribution of credit hours between the three disciplines as suggested above – could also help to restore the balance and fortify the cohesion between courses. They would also give the programme a more truly multidisciplinary character, where it is at present more a juxtaposition of disciplines (with a predominance of history), in the panel's view.

#### *History courses*

From the course files and student reactions, it became clear to the panel that the course 'Introduction to Latin American modern history' has seen some problems in the past, particularly that it was not challenging enough. Also, students are under the impression that the different history courses overlap. The Programme Board reassured the panel that it is conscious of these perceptions and that there is a new lecturer for the introductory history course, who has improved the setup. Concerning the overlap, the panel suggests that this can be addressed by rebalancing the three disciplines and by creating interdisciplinary courses as suggested above. Also, it is important that students and lecturers keep up a personal dialogue about the courses. The panel understood that this has been introduced recently and that students are very happy with the possibility to talk directly to their lecturers. This is better than evaluating the courses solely by written student surveys and questionnaires, the panel agrees.

#### *Studying abroad*

The study period at Diego Portales University or Santa Catarina is much appreciated by students, the panel found, as a period where they can apply and enhance the skills they acquired and grow personally by their experiences. In the past, there have been some problems with the academic level of courses, which was too low. The panel heard that there is now an adequate system of quality control, with a liaison officer visiting the host universities twice a year. It encourages the programme to keep up a system of permanent quality evaluation.

Part of restoring the balance between the three disciplines in the programme should be, in the panel's view, making sure that the exchange partners chosen for the semester abroad offer courses in all three disciplines, or that there are more exchange partners who complement each other. In either



case, students should have the option to deepen their knowledge in each of the three disciplines while studying abroad.

The panel also recommends that the range of possibilities for the students to study abroad should be more representative of the variety of Latin American countries and universities. At the moment, both exchange partners are situated in the south of the region. The panel recommends the addition of one or more exchange partners in the northern countries, such as Mexico.

#### *Teaching methods*

The teaching methods show a balance between lectures and tutorials. In the first year, lecturers are in the lead, giving lectures and leading the students through close-reading of texts and discussions. From the second year onwards, an active participation is expected of the students, for instance in the form of presentations. The panel judges the teaching methods up to date and adequate for enabling students to reach the intended learning outcomes. It does recommend perhaps revising some teaching methods with a view on making them more challenging and keeping students on their toes all the time. Writing a blog or recording a video-essay could for instance make a good change from traditional exams. The panel noticed a tension between the intention of the staff to innovate and the high workload. It recommends making it possible for the staff to realise these intentions of teaching methods innovation.

#### *Feasibility*

The panel found no major obstacles in the curriculum. Indeed, the programme's success rate is higher than the faculty average (an average study duration of 3,4 years, where the faculty's average is 3,7 years). The introductory linguistics course Trajan's legacy is a relative stumbling block for students in this programme; that is to say success rate of students in the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies is lower than that of the students in French and Italian language and culture, with whom they share this course. The programme states that a possible explanation is that the other students have a second linguistics course in the same semester to solidify their background in linguistics. The panel finds this explanation plausible. When the balance between the three disciplines is restored, the knowledge gap for the Latin American students will be closed.

#### *Labour market orientation*

Improving labour market orientation is one of the challenges currently taken up by both the programme and the faculty. Some students still lack confidence in their professional abilities and chances and have trouble in finding their way after graduating, as alumni told the panel. The faculty organises events where students can gain perspectives on their possibilities on the labour market. There is for instance the annual Humanities Career Event, where potential employers such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Google, publisher Das Mag and the General Intelligence and Security Service offer workshops. The Humanities Career Service supports students with their internships and job application procedures. At the programme level, some students nevertheless have no clear image of how the programme relates to possible career prospects. The Programme Board is aware of the need to connect education with professional practice. Starting from the 2019-2020 academic year, it makes the transferable skills in each course and their value to future employers more explicit. The panel considers this a good idea. Also, relations with alumni are being intensified. These are good developments, according to the panel.

#### *Student support*

The programme's coordinator of studies also serves as a study advisor. In that capacity, he/she is responsible for guiding and advising students during their studies. He or she invites first- and second-year students for introductory and progress meetings. To monitor their study progress, students draw up an individual study plan, which they discuss with their study advisor. The study advisor is available to provide individual guidance for study choices, answer study-related questions, discuss study-related problems and present possible solutions. Furthermore, the study advisor serves as the contact for students who complete part of their studies abroad. At the programme level, the student guidance is intensive. Because students come from different backgrounds and the learning paths are

flexible, there is no 'one size fits all'. Therefore the coordinator of studies is an active guide and counsellor, frequently sitting down with individual students. The panel is satisfied with the support the students receive. It especially appreciates that there is a substitute programme for students who cannot manage to study abroad for one semester, for instance because they have care responsibilities. The panel finds this a considerate gesture, worthy of a compliment.

#### *Lecturers*

Staff members in the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies are well-prepared for teaching. They have the appropriate teaching qualifications, or are in train of doing so if recently hired. The faculty stimulates lecturers in their professional development by offering them workshops at the university's teachers training centre ICLON and expert meetings with other lecturers. In the faculty wide Expertise Centre Online Learning, they can share best practices and in the university-wide Leiden Teacher's Academy they can work out innovative didactic tools. Students in the programme praise the programme's atmosphere, which they call 'nice and cosy', and the generally good contact with the staff.

The panel likes that many of the staff members in this programme are native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese. This allows students to reach a high language level. On the down side, the panel found that the programme has full professors only in the history discipline. The full professor in the field of cultural analysis left and has not been replaced, whilst for linguistics as well there is no full professor. The panel fears that this contributes to the perceived imbalance between the three disciplines. It recommends securing associate or full professors for both the cultural analysis and linguistics discipline.

Keeping the workload within limits is a great challenge for the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies. In fact, the panel found that – because of the complexity and individualised character of its curriculum – workload in this programme is even more pressing than in the other humanities programmes it assessed. Lecturers told the panel 'there is not a Sunday they do not work'. The panel finds this worrying; it needs to be fixed. The panel discussed the workload issue with the Programme Board and Faculty Board and found that the problem is high on their list of priorities. Dealing with it is complicated by the fact that the educational staff is made available for teaching by the Leiden University Institute for History, the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society and the Leiden Centre for Linguistics. The institutes, not the Programme Board, are directly responsible for personnel management. This may also get in the way of a fair division of labour amongst all members of staff. For instance, some institutes allocate more hours to certain tasks than others. The panel fully supports the faculty in trying to harmonise this, and calls on the institutes to stick to the list of compensation hours per task that is provided by faculty management.

The faculty management tried to analyse what causes excessive workload and came up with a ten points action plan, it provided extra funds for the research institutes to reduce workload, it brought more stability in the programmes, it weeds out superfluous administrative obligations and courses that do not really fit into the programme anymore, it considers to merge committees and it encourages the institutes to harmonise the allocation of hours. The panel applauds and encourages the faculty's awareness and decisiveness in this respect, both to protect their staff and to safeguard the connection between education and research. For if lecturers spend so much time on education that they have hardly any time left for research, this connection is in danger. For the bachelor's programme in Latin-American Studies the panel recommends considering to limit the number of courses if necessary. It also recommends balancing the staff between the three disciplines, where now the Linguistics and Cultural Analysis branches are most understaffed and heavily burdened. Finally the panel recommends solidifying the staff by limiting the number of temporary contracts to the unavoidable minimum.

#### *Programme-specific services*

The programme possesses a dedicated library collection within the University Library, including many works in Spanish and Portuguese, managed by a specialised librarian. Students are united in the



study association Interlatina, that organises social events as well as academically oriented excursions. A distinguishing feature of the programme is SCOLAS, the Student Conference on Latin American Studies, annually organised in Leiden for undergraduate and graduate students from the Netherlands and abroad. This offers a great opportunity to present one's own research and be inspired by that of other students.

The panel finds the programme-specific services of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies quite good. In particular, it considers SCOLAS a very effective platform for collaboration and cross-fertilisation between teaching and research and compliments the students and staff who are working together on this initiative.

### **Considerations**

The panel found that the curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff of the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum has some excellent features, such as the flexible learning paths, the consistent study of original texts, the full immersion semester in Chile or Brazil, the dedicated methodology courses for each of the three disciplines in the programme, the diverse and enthusiastic staff and the way the thesis trajectory is built up. All these aspects are worthy of a compliment.

On the other hand, the panel found some imbalance and imperfections in the programme. Tackling these will improve the curriculum even further and realise the programme's ambitions. Firstly, the panel recommends finding a new balance between the three disciplines in the programme: history, linguistics and cultural analysis. History is now overrepresented. For instance, the imbalance of staff should be corrected, more space should be given in the Leiden curriculum to the latter two disciplines and it should be ensured that students can deepen their knowledge of each of the three disciplines when studying abroad.

Secondly, the panel suggests that enriching the curriculum with a couple of multidisciplinary courses where staff of the history, culture and linguistics disciplines work closely together, may make the curriculum more coherent, ambitious and challenging. It will also make the programme's profile stronger, more distinctive, and more attractive for students.

Thirdly, there is an inconsistency in the way language is used in the second and third year of the curriculum. History courses are mostly taught in English, linguistics and cultural analysis courses are mostly taught in Spanish or Portuguese. Some students write their thesis in English or Dutch, other students in Spanish or Portuguese. This is too flexible, in the panel's view, and risks that differences emerge in the language levels reached by the students in the History track on the one hand and those in the Culture and Linguistics tracks on the other. The panel strongly endorses the programme's idea to teach more history courses in the target language. It also suggests obliging all students to write their bachelor's thesis in Spanish or Portuguese. It is convinced that both these measures – finding a new balance between the three disciplines in the programme and adopting a consistent attitude towards the target languages in all three tracks – will have a positive effect on the distribution of the students over the three disciplines. Thus it may perhaps also provide some relief in the staff's excessive workload.

Finally the panel suggests that student who have outgrown the language courses given in the programme, should be supported in reaching an even higher level. They could for instance be offered courses in the target language, or have the option to combine both Spanish and Portuguese or be able to work on special assignments.

The panel is firmly convinced that by addressing the points mentioned above, this already unique and interesting programme can be raised to a higher level. Teaching methods, feasibility, student support, student-specific services and labour market orientation the panel found good, and contributing to the students achieving the intended learning outcomes.

The workload for lecturers in the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies is very high, even higher than in other humanities programmes the panel has looked into. Particularly the linguistics and cultural analysis disciplines are hard hit. The panel finds the workload worrying, but was relieved to find that tackling this problem has a high priority for the Faculty Board. The panel commends the faculty for its directive and supportive approach in these matters. Work load monitoring and relief needs continuous attention at Faculty level.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies:* the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

### **Standard 3: Student assessment**

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

### **Findings**

#### *Assessment policy at the faculty level*

The Faculty of Humanities safeguards the system of assessment for all programmes in the cluster Region Studies at Leiden University. The Faculty drafted a general assessment policy, which is shared amongst the programmes. In it, teachers are assigned a central role in assuring the quality of assessment; as content experts they know the requirements of the relevant fields. Fraud and plagiarism are considered intolerable; the various boards of examiners active within the faculty are expected to closely monitor academic integrity.

Assessment at the programmes is structured according to shared principles. The design of all assessment methods is always peer-reviewed: assessments and exams are checked on their validity and coherence prior to being run. Also, exams are designed in such a way that students are invited to continuously sharpen their skills and broaden their knowledge, based on the principles of structural alignment. In this way, students develop their knowledge and skills from a basic to a more advanced level, appropriate for their degree level. Knowledge acquisition and application are continuously assessed, just as academic and communication skills. Preferably, students are assessed multiple times within a course allowing for a diversity of assessment methods. At least two independent examiners are involved in the assessment of students' theses.

The faculty developed various guidelines and materials to support the boards of examiners, programmes and their staff in order to develop and enhance their assessment practices and design. Notably, the panel verified that a newly developed Manual for Boards of Examiners proves helpful to align assessment practices at the various programmes. It also considered the support materials available to staff very useful. These contain advice regarding the quality assurance of assessment, practical tips and suggestions regarding exam design. These guidelines currently only exist in Dutch; an English version may be useful for international staff members, especially for bachelor's programmes with a high number of international specialists. In addition, the faculty recently introduced a standard online evaluation form for thesis assessment to enhance the transparency of their assessment across all programmes under its remit.

The panel is pleased with the increased uniformity of assessment procedures, which add to the transparency and clarity of assessment at all programmes. It appreciates the faculty's efforts in reaction to recommendations regarding its assessment level, resulting in a good support system for all programmes within the cluster Region Studies. During the site visit, the panel found the various boards of examiners engaged and in line with faculty policies and principles. It noted, however, that not all boards interpreted the faculty's guidelines regarding the handling of fraud cases in a similar way. At some programmes, staff members still seemed to deal with individual occurrences on a case-to-case basis. While the panel has no concerns regarding staff members' integrity, it still advocates the boards and faculty to step in. According to the panel, fraud cases should always be handled by



the responsible Board of Examiners, not by lecturers. The panel advises to clearly communicate the faculty guidelines regarding fraud, and to adjust these if and where necessary.

#### *Board of Examiners Latin American Studies*

In addition to faculty guidelines, the panel studied the programme's Course and Examinations Regulations and its assessment plan, and the rules and regulations of the Board of Examiners that is responsible for the bachelor's programme and the master's programme Latin American Studies. The Board of Examiners consists of three staff members (each with a PhD and specific substantive expertise) and an external member with long-standing assessment expertise. It closely collaborates with both programme directors and study advisors and is supported by a secretary. Over the last years, all members of the Board of Examiners have invested in further professionalisation regarding their assessment practices and knowledge about assessment methods.

The Board of Examiners is responsible for guaranteeing the quality and standard of examinations and degrees at both the bachelor's and the master's programme under its responsibility. In order to do so, it appoints examiners for all courses, sets a number of ECs for individual internships prior to their approval and ratifies every student's full dossier with assessment results before they receive their diploma, including decisions regarding honours (*cum laude*; *summa cum laude*). Additionally, the Board of Examiners advises on matters regarding assessment and is involved in the further development of teaching staff's assessment practices.

In order to guarantee the quality of assessment, the Board of Examiners works with an Assessment Committee. This committee uses assessment forms that reflect the intended learning outcomes to evaluate the quality of assessment in the programme's courses. Twice a year, a sample of courses is evaluated in this way. In addition, the Board of Examiners monitors the average grade per course and subjects any outliers to a quality check. Every year, the Board of Examiners takes a sample of at least six master's theses, spread over the specialisations and final grades and re-assesses these on the basis of a quality assurance form. In the recent past, the Board of Examiners had an extra thorough look at thesis assessment, because the grades seemed high in relation to the comments on the assessment form. But after due diligence, the Board of Examiners judged that the thesis assessment was sound. It encouraged the examiners to mention on the assessment forms not only the aspects of the theses that can be improved, but the good aspects as well.

The panel shares the Board of Examiners' opinion that assessment practice for the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies has improved in recent years, driven by the professionalisation that the entire faculty has gone through. The panel learned from both the Board of Examiners and staff members that they now feel more supported and that communication about assessment methods and assessment policy in the study programme has been intensified. However, the panel noted that there is still some resistance among members of staff against this professionalisation, which seems to be considered time-consuming and, in the eyes of some, infringes on the integrity and professionalism of individual teachers. This resistance sometimes means that the recommendations of the Board of Examiners are not followed.

The panel found that the Board of Examiners in Latin American Studies does a good job, even though it is clearly troubled by the aforementioned workload issues. This also results in students complaining that the Board of Examiners does not meet often enough, so that they have to wait too long for the Board's approval on chosen study paths. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can (continue to) create support for further professionalisation.

#### *Assessment practice within the programme*

The programme has an assessment plan, which links the intended learning outcomes to the courses and categorises the assessment methods used. All courses include formative assessments (such as reading assignments, text analyses and in-class debates) and summative assessments. In the first year, there is an emphasis on written exams while the subsequent years see an increasing focus on



essay-writing, supporting students' progress towards the more independent writing of the bachelor's thesis.

All exams are designed subject to the four-eye principle, it is anchored in a formal procedure where lecturers must submit a signed form declaring that a colleague has seen the exam. For oral examinations, the programme has rubrics in place to enhance the reliability of the assessment. The programme experiments with new forms of assessment such as blogs and formative peer feedback on group assignments, which the panel finds interesting. Now there is a cap on innovation because of the workload issues. Hopefully this will improve, so that innovation can progress. Innovation may also meet students' wish to be assessed in a more challenging way than is presently the case for certain history courses. In general, however, the panel found the assessment methods well suited to the modules in which they are used and the skills they aim to measure. The panel also likes the laddered assessment strategy. It encourages the programme to continue its innovative experiments, in order to make them more diverse and stimulate students to get the most out of themselves and the programme.

When students study abroad, examination is organised by the programme's local partners. The Board of Examiners strives to be more involved in these procedures and align the grading systems and assessment methods, but has not got around to it yet due to the high workload and intensity of the procedures at home. It does get to evaluate the exams *ex ante*, and keeps an eye on the average exam results. The panel finds this sufficient for the moment, and for the long run recommends looking at the procedure the bachelor's programme 'Russische Studies' developed for students studying abroad, which the panel finds excellent.

#### *Thesis assessment*

Thesis assessment at the bachelor's programme follows faculty policy. Every thesis is assessed by two examiners, who fill in a digital assessment form individually and independently. The criteria on the evaluation form are in accordance with the programme's intended learning outcomes. Once the two forms have been completed, they are combined and thus the final mark is determined as the average between the marks of the two examiners, unless one of the examiners disagrees, in which the Board of Examiners steps in. The student receives written feedback from both examiners.

In appointing examiners, the Board of Examiners tries to avoid standard pairs and now also allows examiners from another discipline to assess theses, so that for instance one examiner may come from the Leiden University Institute for History and another from the Leiden Centre for Linguistics. The panel approves this practice, which demonstrates awareness of the potential dangers involved in allowing fixed assessment pairs in programmes with limited staff. It recommends even stimulating the appointment of second examiners across programmes, to further diversify assessment pairs. This would allow for exchange of examination practices, while simultaneously introducing an additional element of objectivity to thesis grading. Such an element can be especially valuable for programmes with a limited student intake, in the panel's view.

Prior to the visit, the panel examined a sample of eight bachelor's theses, including the accompanying assessment forms. It generally agreed with the assessment given by the examiners and found these assessments well substantiated. The new online thesis assessment forms are well designed, in the panel's view, with clearly defined categories and no overlap. The panel does advise the programme management and the Board of Examiners to continue critically following the assessments handed out. It is precisely in a small community like the Latin American Studies staff that subjective colourings of judgement based on personal preferences may lurk.

As stated above, the panel recommends a fuller use of the target language in the courses, in the papers written and in the theses, which, according to the panel, should be written in Spanish or Portuguese. After all, this is the ideal way to assess the language level reached at the end of the programme and check if the requirements are met.



## Considerations

According to the panel, the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies has a sound and transparent assessment system. Its quality is safeguarded by applying the four-eye principle in the design and the use of rubrics. The assessment plan links the courses to the intended learning outcomes and categorises the assessment methods. These assessment methods are sufficiently varied, in the panel's view. The programme is experimenting with new assessment methods, which the panel welcomes. The tendency to innovate may meet students' wish to be assessed in a more challenging way than is presently the case for certain history courses.

The assessment of bachelor's theses is clearly designed and its quality is guaranteed by having it done by two independent examiners, with the Board of Examiners aiming to avoid fixed couples. The panel endorses this goal and believes that the keen eye of colleagues from other disciplines or even outside the programme can be of added value to permanently reinforce the objectivity of the assessment. It agreed with the assessment of the theses in the sample set and found it well substantiated.

Finally, the panel notes that the Board of Examiners for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies is adequately performing its task to assure quality of assessment, even though it is clearly troubled by lack of time. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can continue to create support for further professionalisation.

## Conclusion

*Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies:* the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

### **Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

## Findings

The assessment plan, the assessment system and the quality assurance role of the Board of Examiners safeguard that the intended learning outcomes per course and thus ultimately the intended learning outcomes of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies are achieved. This is also evident from the quality of the bachelor's theses. The panel studied a sample of eight theses and finds the quality very satisfactory and in some cases excellent. Furthermore, the theses read by the panel all complied with the demand of using a minimum of fifty pages of sources in the target language, with some demonstrating a much more ample use. In combination with the assessment of language skills in language courses and the stay abroad where students are fully submerged in the target language at a host institution, this proves that the language competences set in the intended learning outcomes are reached. Nevertheless, the panel has suggested above that all theses should be Spanish or Portuguese to ensure the continuity of language training throughout the programme and to stimulate all students to reach the highest levels of language competence.

Language aside, the theses fit well with the learning objectives and are based on a sound methodological basis. They bear witness to a good knowledge base and are on the whole well-focused on a central problem. The panel is of the opinion that the students have received excellent support in writing their theses. It suggests that students could be stimulated more to combine different methodologies or use interdisciplinary methodology, synthesise the insights they found and reflect on their work from a self-critical point of view. Master's students Latin American Studies at Leiden University who come from the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies confirm that the switch from bachelor's to master's programme is a flowing continuum.

The Faculty of Humanities performed a labour market study in 2016. This survey shows that its alumni feel supported in their professional lives not only by the regional knowledge they acquired



from the programme, but also by the transferable skills they obtained, such as problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. This result was confirmed by the panel's own discussion with alumni. They emphasised their skills in reading and writing at an academic level and critical thinking. The programme states that these skills, as well as time management and team work skills that the curriculum also provides, are increasingly appreciated by employers because they are key to our communication-based interconnected world. The panel finds this plausible and therefore endorses that graduates of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies laid a foundation of knowledge and skills that will prove to be fruitful in their subsequent studies as well as their professional lives.

### **Considerations**

Based on the quality of the bachelor's theses and its discussion with alumni, the panel ascertained that graduates of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies achieved the intended learning outcomes. The panel found the theses in the sample it studied of very satisfactory and in some cases excellent quality, testifying to a good thesis guidance. It suggests that students could be stimulated more to synthesise the insights they found, reflect on their work in a self-critical way and combine cultural, linguistic and historical methodologies or use an interdisciplinary methodology. Also, the panel recommends the programme to encourage all students to write their bachelor thesis in either Spanish or Portuguese.

From the programme's own survey and from discussions with students and alumni, the panel distils that the bachelor graduates not only profit from the regional knowledge they acquired, but also from transferable skills such as reading and writing at an academic level, problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. The panel accepts the programme's view that these skills are currently in high demand. It is also pleased to note that the students who continue with a master's programme in Latin American Studies experience a fluid transition.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Latin American Studies:* the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The panel assessed standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies as 'meets the standard'. Based on the NVAO decision rules regarding limited programme assessments, the panel therefore assesses the programme as 'positive'.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Latin American Studies* as 'positive'.





## APPENDICES





# APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Afgestudeerden van de opleiding hebben de onderstaande eindkwalificaties bereikt, gerangschikt volgens de Dublin-descriptoren.

## A Kennis en inzicht

Bachelors Latijns-Amerikastudies:

- beschikken over kennis van en inzicht in de culturen van Latijns-Amerika vanuit taalkundig, cultureel analytisch en geschiedkundig oogpunt;
- beschikken over kennis van en inzicht in de onderlinge verwevenheid van taal, cultuur en geschiedenis van Latijns-Amerika;
- beschikken over kennis van en inzicht in de hedendaagse geschiedenis van staat en maatschappij van Latijns-Amerika vanuit sociale, politieke en economische perspectieven;
- beschikken over kennis van en inzicht in de processen van beeldvorming in literatuur, film en andere culturele uitdrukkingsvormen;
- beschikken over kennis van en inzicht in de basisbegrippen van de fonologie, morfologie, syntaxis en semantiek en beschikken over kennis en inzicht in de geografische, historische en sociale varianten van het Spaans of Portugees van Latijns-Amerika;

## B Toepassen kennis en inzicht

- zijn in staat onder deskundige begeleiding de onderzoeksmethodes van de geschiedenis, de taalkunde of de culturele analyse op het Latijns-Amerikaanse gebied toe te passen;
- zijn in staat hun kennis en inzicht in de geschiedenis, de taalkunde of de culturele analyse van het Latijns-Amerikaanse gebied te hanteren bij de studie van een specifiek thema en over dit onderzoek een gedegen werkstuk te schrijven;
- zijn in staat tot het schrijven van een wetenschappelijk verslag (ook in het Spaans of het Portugees van Latijns-Amerika).

## C Oordeelsvorming

- zijn in staat om correct, beargumenteerd en kritisch verslag te doen, in woord en geschrift, van de stand van zaken betreffende onderwerpen binnen één of meer deelgebieden van de Latijns-Amerikastudies;
- zijn in staat uit deze bevindingen verantwoorde conclusies te trekken.

## D Communicatie

Doelen in termen van het Europees Referentiekader taalvaardigheid. Bachelors bereiken de volgende taalvaardigheidsniveaus ten aanzien van het Spaans ofwel het Portugees:

	Propedeuse	Bachelor
Luisteren	B1	B2
Lezen	B1	C1
Gesproken interactie	A2	B2
Gesproken productie	A2	B2
Schrijven	A2	B2



## APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

	General courses	Spanish track	Brazil track
<b>1.I</b>	Introduction to Latin American modern history I (5 EC)	Spanish 1 (10 EC)	Portuguese 1 (10 EC)
	Introduction to Latin American modern history II (5 EC)		
	Latin America in Literature and Images (5 EC)		
	Trajan's Legacy (5 EC)		
	Academic Skills		
<b>1.II</b>	Nation building in Latin America (5 EC)	Spanish 2 (10 EC)	Portuguese 2 (10 EC)
	The Latin American City (5 EC)	Phonology and Morphology of Spanish (5 EC)	Phonology and Morphology of Portuguese (5 EC)
	The Construction of the Other (5 EC)		
	Academic Skills		

	General courses	Spanish track	Brazil track
<b>2.I</b>	Core Curriculum: Philosophy of Science (5 EC)	Spanish 3 (10 EC)	Portuguese 3 (10 EC)
			Nation and Imagination in Brazilian Literature, Arts and Culture (5 EC)
		Identity, Social Masks and Latin American Literature (5 EC)	Sociolinguistics and Dialectology of Brazilian Portuguese (5 EC)
		Latin American International Relations (5 EC)	Brazil: The Construction of a World Power (5 EC)
		Latin American Sociolinguistics and Dialectology (5 EC)	
<b>2.II</b>	Studying abroad (30 EC) (students who cannot travel abroad follow the courses mentioned for this semester at Leiden University)	Spanish 4 (10 EC)	Portuguese 4 (10 EC)
	Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices (5 EC)	The Structure of Spanish (5 EC)	The Structure of Portuguese (5 EC)
	Social Policies in Latin America (5 EC)	Art and politics in Latin America (5 EC)	Global Crossings: Brazil and Cultural Dialogues in the Portuguese-Speaking World (5 EC)



	General courses	Spanish track	Brazil track
3.I	Research Methodology: History (5 EC)	Economic processes in Latin America (5 EC)	Economic processes in Latin America (5 EC)
	Research Methodology: Linguistics (5 EC)	Bilingualism in the Hispanic and Portuguese speaking world (5 EC)	Bilingualism in the Hispanic and Portuguese speaking world (5 EC)
	Research Methodology: Cultural Analysis (5 EC)	Popular Genres in Latin American Culture (5 EC)	Cinema and Literature in Brazil: Intermedial Journeys (5 EC)

	Choice of electives	General courses
3.II	Public Policy in Latin America (5 EC)	Thesis seminar
	Global Crossings: Brazil and Cultural Dialogues in the Portuguese-Speaking World (5 EC)	
	Arts and politics in Latin-America (5 EC)	BA thesis (10 EC)
	Topics in Latin American Linguistics (5 EC)	



## APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

**Day 1: Wednesday 5 June 2019** – Bachelors International Studies, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics (GLTC), Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations

08.30 – 08.45	Brief welcome
08.45 – 09.00	Installation of the panel
09.00 – 11.30	First meeting and reading of documentation
11.30 – 12.15	Faculty Board
12.15 – 12.45	Lunch
12.45 – 13.15	Programme Board and Coordinator of Studies of International Studies
13.15 – 14.00	Students and alumni International Studies
14.00 – 14.30	Staff International Studies
14.30 – 14.45	Panel meeting International Studies
14.45 – 15.00	Break
15.00 – 15.45	Programme Boards and Coordinators of Studies Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
15.45 – 16.30	Students Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
16.30 – 17.15	Staff Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
17.15 – 18.00	Panel meeting
18.00 – 18.30	Open consultation hour Area Studies I

**Day 2: Thursday 6 June 2019** – Bachelor & Master Latin American Studies, Bachelor & Master Middle Eastern Studies, Bachelor & Master Russian (and Eurasian) Studies, North American Studies

08.30 – 09.00	Panel meeting and reading of the documentation
09.30 – 10.00	Programme Board and Coordinator of Studies Latin American Studies
10.00 – 10.30	Students Latijns-Amerikastudies and Latin American Studies
10.30 – 11.00	Staff Latin American Studies
11.00 – 11.15	Break
11.15 – 11.45	Programme Board and Coordinators of Middle Eastern Studies
11.45 – 12.15	Students Middle Eastern Studies
12.15 – 12.45	Staff Middle Eastern Studies
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.15	Programme Board and Coordinators of Studies Russische Studies, Russian and Eurasian Studies, and North American Studies
14.15 – 15.00	Students Bachelor and Master Russian (and Eurasian) Studies, and North American Studies
15.00 – 15.45	Staff Russian (and Eurasian) Studies and North American Studies
15.45 – 16.00	Break
16.00 – 16.30	Alumni Russian and Eurasian Studies, North American Studies, and Latin American Studies
16.30 – 17.00	Alumni Middle Eastern Studies and Classics and Ancient Civilizations
17.00 – 18.00	Panel meeting

**Day 3: Friday 7 June 2019** – Boards of Examiners

08.30 – 09.30	Panel meeting and reading of the documentation
09.30 – 10.30	Boards of Examiners Russian Studies, Art and Literature and American Studies, and Latin American studies
10.30 – 11.30	Boards of Examiners Middle-Eastern Studies, International Studies, and Classics and Ancient Civilizations
11.30 – 12.00	Panel meeting
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch
12.30 – 13.30	Final meeting management
13.30 – 16.30	Composing of final judgment
16.30 – 16.45	Break
16.45 – 17.30	Development dialogues – parallel
17.30 – 18.30	Report and drinks



## APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

### *Thesis selection*

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied eight theses of the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies. The programme has outlined learning paths, but these are not official specialisations. As such, these paths are not registered separately. Because they do cover different aspects of the programme, the panel ensured that both languages were represented in the thesis selection: five theses were selected from the Spanish track and three from the Brazil track (Portuguese); the three disciplines were represented as well: four theses focused on modern history, two on cultural analysis and two on linguistics. The project manager and panel chair assured that a variety of topics and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection and that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses. Further information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

The bachelor's programme Latin American Studies shares a Board of Examiners with the master's programme Latin American Studies and the research master's programme Latin American Studies. The programme shares two mandatory courses with other bachelor's programmes (10 EC); with B Franse taal en cultuur, B Italiaanse taal en cultuur, B Film- en Literatuurwetenschap and B Kunstgeschiedenis. In addition, the mandatory course 'Philosophy of Science' (5 EC) is shared amongst most bachelor programmes at the Faculty of Humanities. As part of their study trajectory, students choose electives (30 EC). Many of these electives are shared with other master's programmes: M International Relations (40 EC), M Linguistics (45 EC) and M Literary Studies (10 EC).

### *Documents studied*

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment).

#### Faculty-wide documents:

- Transferable skills at the Faculty of Humanities;
- Flyers Career Services Humanities (including: *Your Future: From university to a career*);
- Flyer Humanities Master's Buddy Programme;
- Overview Leiden University Master's Programmes 2019-2020;
- Flyer education vision: *Learning@LeidenUniversity*;
- *Tips bij Toetsen*;
- Expertisecentrum Online Leren Evaluatierapport 2017-2018.

#### Specific reading material bachelor's programme Latin American Studies:

- Course material on 'Latijns-Amerika in woord en beeld' (BA1), 'Portugees 1' (BA1), 'Sociolinguïstiek en dialectologie van Braziliaans Portugees' (BA2), 'Publiek beleid in Latijns-Amerika' (BA3);
- Programme Board reports 2015-2017;
- Board of Examiners reports 2015-2018;
- Minutes of Programme Committee 2016-2019;
- Factsheets of Nationale Studentenenquête 2018;
- Course evaluations;
- 'Onderwijsvernieuwing'
- Programme metrics (*Opleidingsjaarkaarten 2015-2018*);
- Assessment plan I and II.

#### Links provided on laptops:

- Learning environment selected courses;
- Structure of the Faculty of Humanities movie;
- Study association Latin American Studies – Interlatina.

