

Assessment report
Limited Programme Assessment

Research Master African Studies

Leiden University

Contents of the report

1. Executive summary.....	2
2. Assessment process.....	5
3. Overview of the programme	7
3.1 Basic information about the programme	7
3.2 Main facts about the institution	8
3.3 Intended learning outcomes	8
3.4 Outline of the curriculum	9
4. Overview of assessments	10
5. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard.....	11
5.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	11
5.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	13
5.3 Standard 3: Assessment.....	18
5.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	20
6. Recommendations	21
Annex 1: Site visit schedule	22
Annex 2: Documents reviewed.....	23
Annex 3: Theses reviewed.....	24
Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel.....	25

1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which have led to the assessment of the quality of the master's programme Research Master African Studies of Leiden University, which has been assessed according to the NVAO Assessment Framework.

As the panel observed, programme management has taken up the recommendations made in the previous assessment in 2010. In particular, the coherence of the curriculum has been strengthened by linking topics and themes more systematically, professional skills trainings have been designed to prepare students for positions outside of academia, theory and methodology in the theses have been fostered and students have been encouraged to participate in on-going research programmes.

In the panel's opinion, the programme's name matches its contents and corresponds to the names of similar programmes. The panel feels the changing organizational set-up of the programme may be beneficial, because of the intensified focus within Leiden University on research and teaching on Africa.

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to meet the requirements for the scientific practice and the international scientific requirements for this domain and, in fact, to surpass in this respect similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. The emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of this field and the extensive requirements with regard to academic and research skills add to the value and strength of these objectives. The programme's objectives allow graduates to adequately prepare for PhD-trajectories, much more than graduates of non-research master programmes. The panel welcomes the programme's intention not only to train students for academic careers but also for professional careers, as this broadens the students' chances on the labour market. The programme has been compared to other programmes in the Netherlands and abroad, adding to the clarification of the programme's profile. The intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the objectives and correspond to the master's requirements. In the update of the intended learning outcomes for 2016/2017 and onwards, aspects like ethical considerations and communication to non-specialist audiences have, quite rightly, been more explicitly stated.

The entry requirements and the intake procedure of the programme are adequate. A strict selection procedure has been put in place and is well enforced by the selection committee. As the number of rejections in the first phase of the selection process is not known, the panel suggests to monitor these figures more closely.

From a table drafted by programme management, it is evident that all of the intended learning outcomes are covered in the curriculum. The panel feels the curriculum has been adequately designed, giving the students ample opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes.

The panel is of the opinion the interdisciplinary nature of the programme has been well represented in the curriculum. As the interdisciplinary character of the programme is quite important and will probably gain even more weight in future, the panel suggests to think this interdisciplinarity through up to the level of students' own research and encourages programme management to clarify the value added of interdisciplinarity for follow-up PhD-level research, as compared to disciplinary research programmes.

Students are acquainted with a wide variety of methods and reflect on methodological issues in case studies, while studying literature and when doing research. The panel suggests stimulating students to formulate sharper research questions and to determine more appropriate methods to answer these research questions. The research component is strongly represented in the curriculum, as the entire second year is spent on research. The fieldwork the students perform in preparation of the thesis, is regarded by the panel to constitute an asset. The panel recommends programme management to encourage students to choose thesis projects more in line with on-going research programmes at African Studies Centre Leiden.

Lecturers in the programme are definitely renowned researchers with strong international reputations as scholars in their fields. The research institutes, most of the lecturers belong to, have received scores of very good to excellent in recent research evaluations. Although the educational expertise of the lecturers is not in doubt, the panel advises programme management to increase the number of lecturers with BKO-certificates in the coming years.

In the panel's view, the educational policy and the teaching methods adopted in the programme foster the learning processes of students, especially their becoming critically thinking academics. The information provided, the study guidance and the facilities for the students are adequate. Students with whom the panel met, confirmed this. The students informed the panel the second semester of the first year to be more demanding than the first semester. Therefore, the panel suggests to scrutinize the relation between the course contents, the work load and the credits in terms of EC.

The assessment policy, including testing, as formulated for and implemented in this programme is appropriate. The panel approves of the choice by programme management to use assignments and presentations as test methods instead of written examinations, meant to test the students' abilities not to reproduce but to apply knowledge and understanding and meant to test their academic skills. This conforms to the level of ambition of this research master's programme. Processes to arrive at valid examinations and reliable assessments have been put in place. In most of the courses, students have to do more than one examination, which ensures the validity of the testing and almost all of the examinations are assessed by two examiners, which contributes to the reliability of the assessments. The thesis examination and assessment process has been well-designed, having a number of milestones to assess the progress and the results of the students. The Board of Examiners has a solid and independent position and appropriately monitors the examinations and the theses. In addition, this Board is involved in a number of regulations with regard to examinations and assessments.

Most of the courses in the curriculum being at the level 600 in Leiden University terms, the courses are of an above master's level, allowing the students to achieve a high level. None of the theses the panel studied, were considered to be unsatisfactory. Some of these proved to be very rich, being based on extensive and well-executed field work. On the other hand, the panel found the research questions to be sometimes ambiguous or vague and the choice of research method debatable, which results sometimes in purely descriptive work or circular reasoning. The percentage of students having been able to acquire a PhD position, between 40 % and 50 %, is quite substantial, definitely testifying to the high level students at completion of the programme have achieved.

The panel assesses the programme Research Master African Studies of Leiden University to be satisfactory and recommends NVAO to grant re-accreditation to this programme.

Rotterdam, 11 July 2016

Panel chair
Prof. T. De Herdt PhD

Secretary
W. Vercouteren MSc, RC

2. Assessment process

Certiked VBI received a request to conduct a limited programme assessment for the re-accreditation of the academic master's programme Research Master African Studies. This request was submitted by Leiden University.

Certiked requested the approval by NVAO of the proposed panel of experts to conduct this assessment. NVAO has given its approval. The panel composition was as follows (for more detailed information please refer to Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel):

- Prof. T. De Herdt PhD, professor in Development Studies, University of Antwerp and chair of Institute of Development Policy and Management (panel chair);
- Prof. C. Carvalho PhD, associate professor of Anthropology and Development Studies, and director of International Studies Centre of Lisbon University Institute (2007-2016), Lisbon, Portugal (panel member);
- E. Macamo PhD, associate professor of African Studies at University of Basel, Switzerland (panel member);
- D. van Wanrooij LLB, student in the master's programme in International Law and European Law and in the master's programme in Law and Technology, Tilburg University (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 of 19 December 2014 (Staatscourant nr. 36791). As the programme is a research master's programme, the panel, also, has taken into account the Guidelines for the assessment of research master's programmes, to go into effect on 1 September 2015, published by NVAO on 23 April 2015.

The following procedure was adopted. The panel members of the panel studied the documents presented beforehand by programme management, including a number of theses (please refer to Annex 2 and 3: Documents reviewed and Theses reviewed). From the list of 32 graduates of the last years, 15 theses have been selected for review by the panel, this having been done in accordance with the Guidelines for the Assessment of Final Projects during External Assessments, published by NVAO on 18 February 2015.

Prior to the site visit, the panel chair and the process coordinator/panel secretary met to discuss the assessment procedures. On 22 May 2016, the entire panel had a meeting to discuss their preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. Beforehand, the panel members had sent a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives during the site visit to the secretary. During the meeting on 22 May 2016, the findings of the panel members, including those concerning the theses were discussed, and some questions were added. On the basis of this input, the secretary drew up a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

On 23 May 2016, the panel conducted a site visit on the Leiden University campus. The site visit took place in accordance with the schedule drawn up beforehand (please refer to Annex 1: Site visit schedule). Programme management communicated the open office hours to the students in the programme and the staff. For these open office hours, no one presented himself.

The panel chair presented a broad outline of the findings to the Dean of the Faculty, programme management, lecturers and students.

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 studied the draft report and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary drew up the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for errors. After having been corrected for errors, the report was sent to the institution's Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation.

3. Overview of the programme

3.1 Basic information about the programme

Administrative information about the programme:

Name programme in CROHO: M African Studies (research)
 Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
 Grade: MA
 Number of credits: 120 EC
 Specializations: n.a.
 Location: Leiden
 Mode of study: Full time
 Registration in CROHO: 60838

Administrative information about the institution:

Name of institution: Leiden University
 Status of institution: Government-funded university
 Institution's quality assurance: Approved

Quantitative data about the programme

Percentage of students who completed the programme in three years (n+1)

Cohort	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of students	82 %	71 %	92 %

Percentage of lecturers with the following qualifications

Qualification	Master	PhD	BTQ*
Percentage of lecturers	100 %	100 %	n.a.

*BTQ means Basic Teaching Qualification

The students-to-teacher ratio is 6 to 1.

The number of contact hours is 8.4 hours per week in the first semester of the first year and 2.0 hours per week in the second semester. In the first semester of the second year this number is 0.8 hours per week and in the second semester the number is 1.5 hours per week. Students then have contact with their supervisors (0.8 hours per week) and every two to three weeks, depending on the number of students, they have an entire afternoon for the thesis writing seminar and de Seminar academic publication. This is a total number of 24 hours spread over four months, which is 1.5 hours per week.

3.2 Main facts about the institution

The degree programme Research Master African Studies is a programme of the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University. Leiden University is an international, comprehensive and research-oriented University, working closely together with Delft University of Technology and Erasmus University Rotterdam and, at a European level, with its partners in the League of European Universities.

In its own words, Leiden University is a research-driven University, aiming to achieve excellence in research and teaching. Leiden University trains students and PhD-candidates for academic positions in academia and beyond and wants its research and teaching to have an impact, academically, culturally, societal and economic. Leiden University's education is governed by a number of principles, which are having an academic signature and being nourished by scientific research, aiming at high levels of study success, having inspiring teachers as pivotal points in the learning processes, offering a wide range of study programmes and providing an international oriented learning environment to the students.

Leiden University has seven Faculties, which are located in Leiden and The Hague. These Faculties are the Faculties of Archaeology, Governance and Global Affairs, Humanities, Law, Medicine, Science and Social and Behavioural Sciences. Leiden University employs about 5,500 staff and nearly 26,000 students study at this University.

3.3 Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are as follows (the study subject referred to is the interdisciplinary study of Africa in the fields of social sciences and humanities).

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the study subject and core concepts, the instruments, research methods and techniques and the development of the study subject;
- Thorough knowledge of and insight into the interdisciplinary position of the study subject;
- Understanding of the societal relevance of the study subject;
- Ability to select and compile discipline-related literature and sources independently, with the aid of traditional and modern techniques (heuristic skills);
- Ability to independently study discipline-related literature and sources and to assess these as to their quality and reliability;
- Present research findings clearly and in a well-reasoned manner in an oral or written report that meets the applicable criteria for the field of research;
- Participate actively in a specialist discussion;
- Formulate a clear and well-argued problem under expert supervision; ability to break these problems down into clear and manageable sub-problems;
- Set up and carry out a research project under expert supervision;
- Take into account ideas, instructions and constructive criticism of supervisors and fellow students and in turn offer feedback to the work of others;
- Set up a realistic work schedule and keep to the agreed time guidelines.

3.4 Outline of the curriculum

In the table below, the programme curriculum is presented.

Curriculum components	Credits
The Field of African Studies and Interdisciplinarity, part 1: Aims and Results of Africanist Research	10.0 EC
The Field of African Studies and Interdisciplinarity, part 2: Process of Africanist Research	15.0 EC
Methodological Specialization (elective)	5.0 EC
Year 1, Semester 1	30.0 EC
Theories and the Empirical in African Studies	15.0 EC
Proposal Writing Seminar	5.0 EC
Regional Specialization (elective)	10.0 EC
Year 1, Semester 2	30.0 EC
Research Project: Field Work	25.0 EC
Seminar Academic Publication	5.0 EC
Year 2, Semester 1	30.0 EC
Research Project; Thesis	25.0 EC
Thesis Writing Seminar	5.0 EC
Year 2, Semester 2	30.0 EC
Total credits of the programme	120.0 EC

4. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Good
Standard 3: Assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory

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 research master's programme African Studies is organized by the African Studies Centre Leiden. Up till the beginning of 2016, this research institute was a national institute, independent of the University and with an advisory council in which all Dutch Universities were represented. On 1 January 2016, the institute became an interfaculty institute of Leiden University, this being one of the ingredients of the newly adopted Leiden University Africa strategy. This strategy aims to bring together research and teaching on Africa in the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences within the University, thereby tapping the synergy of the research and teaching capabilities of over 100 scholars on Africa. The Africa Studies Centre Leiden has been asked by Leiden University to take the lead in carrying out its Africa strategy. The institute will maintain relationships with researchers from other universities.

The objectives of the programme are to broaden and deepen the students' knowledge, understanding and skills, and train them in the use of scientific methods in the interdisciplinary study of Africa in the fields of social sciences and humanities, to enable students to solve academic problems independently, critically and creatively, the ability to analyse complex problems and the ability to clearly report academic results, both in writing and orally, to prepare students for an academic career at a university for postgraduate programmes and to prepare students for a non-academic career in the public or private sector for which advanced research skills and practical research experience are a prerequisite.

From these objectives, it is evident that the focus of the programme is on the interdisciplinary study of Africa, notably in the fields of social sciences and humanities. In addition, the programme puts great emphasis on the acquisition by the students of academic and research skills. Furthermore, the programme objective is to teach students not only to pursue PhD-trajectories but also to obtain positions in the professional field.

Compared to similar two-year master's programmes in Development Studies in Wageningen and Amsterdam, Social Sciences in Nijmegen and Anthropology in Utrecht, this research master's programme may be characterized to be much more interdisciplinary.

Programme management also conducted a comparative study of other research master's programmes in this domain in Europe, the United States and South Africa in order to determine the academic merits of the programme. The comparison was made with the master's programmes in African Studies of the Universities of Copenhagen, Oxford, Cologne, Bayreuth, Ghent, Bordeaux, Cape Town and Michigan and Rutgers University. These programmes are to a large extent comparable to this research master's programme, but in two respects this programme may be said to distinguish itself: its broad focus on area studies and interdisciplinarity and its strong research profile, especially regarding the comparatively extensive field work component. The other programmes may be more focused on specific aspects of African Studies, like history, politics, languages or development and may offer less room for empirical research.

Programme management formulated the intended learning outcomes of the programme, specifying the goals in greater detail (please refer to section 3.3 of this report for a complete list). The panel was shown the intended learning outcomes of the programme from the year 2016/2017 onwards, which have been formulated in even more detail than the ones which are in force now.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been formulated in terms of the Dublin-descriptors. From the list of the learning outcomes may, therefore, be deduced the Dublin-descriptors for the master's level have been met.

Considerations

The panel noted the changing organizational set-up of the programme and feels this change may benefit the programme, because of the intensified focus within Leiden University on research and teaching on Africa.

The panel is of the opinion the programme's name matches its contents and corresponds to the names of similar programmes.

The panel is positive about the objectives of the programme and considers these to definitely meet the requirements for the scientific practice and the international scientific requirements for this domain. In fact, the panel considers the objectives of the programme to surpass in this respect similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. The panel sees this in the strong emphasis on the interdisciplinary study of this field as well as the extensive requirements with regard to academic skills of which research skills are an important component.

In the panel's view, the programme's objectives definitely prepare the graduates for PhD-trajectories. In the opinion of the panel, the graduates of this programme are much more appropriately prepared for PhD-trajectories than graduates of non-research master programmes. The panel welcomes the programme's intention not only to train students for academic careers but also for professional careers, as this extends the students' chances on the labour market.

In the panel's view, the comparison of this research master's programme with other programmes has been conducted appropriately by programme management and adds to the clarification of the programme's profile as an interdisciplinary and research-oriented programme.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the objectives and, in addition, correspond to the master's requirements. The panel welcomes the update of the intended learning outcomes for 2016/2017 and onwards, as aspects like ethical considerations and communication to non-specialist audiences may be more explicitly be formulated.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, *Intended learning outcomes* to be good.

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

The number of students enrolling in the programme is limited, ranging from 5 to 13 students per year in the years from 2007 to 2014. A substantial number of students come from abroad. At the moment, the percentage of students coming from countries outside of the Netherlands is little over 30 %. For students coming from outside of the European Union, like African countries, entering the programme is quite a challenge on account of the high tuition fees, to be paid by them. The number of scholarships available is limited. Programme management pursues a range of policies to increase the number of applicants, both by increasing the number of scholarships and by engaging in an internationalization strategy. In cooperation with Universities of Bayreuth, Porto and Bordeaux, programme management aims to organize a programme for African students on a European scale. Also, as part of the Leiden University Africa strategy, the relationships with a number of African Universities are being intensified, allowing students from Africa to enrol in a joint-degree programme. In addition, programme management intends to obtain funds from Dutch ministries to be able to offer more scholarships.

The regular programme starts in September, but in some cases students are allowed to enrol in February (second semester) due to the difference of semesters in the Southern hemisphere universities. Students who want to enrol, are only admitted after having passed through a selection process. The admission criteria set for the programme are a University bachelor's degree, a grade point average of at least 7.5 with a grade of at least 8.0 for their bachelor's thesis, proficiency in the English language (IELTS 100 or TOEFL 7.0). Applicants are to have completed a bachelor's programme in, among others, African Languages and Cultures, Linguistics, History, Cultural Anthropology, Literature, Political Science or other studies related to the Social Sciences. In addition, students are to present a motivation letter and two letters of reference, indicating their ambition and capabilities to complete the programme. In the first phase, the information dossier of the applicants is checked at the University or Faculty level. When applicants pass this check, the programme selection committee, consisting of representatives of the African Studies Centre Leiden and of the Faculty of Humanities and an expert, outside of Leiden University checks their applications more scrupulously. In case the selection committee would be in doubt about the applicant, additional tasks and assignments by the applicant may be required. In the past, applications have been rejected.

For the programme, an exemption policy is in place. The Board of Examiners has the authority to grant exemptions. The most significant relates to the 60 EC master's programme on African Studies, taught at the same University. Students of both programmes share the first course in the curriculum, The Field of African Studies and Interdisciplinarity, part 1: Aims and Results of Africanist Research. Students of the master's programme may switch to the research master's programme having completed this course, provided they meet the research master's programme admission requirements.

Concerning the curriculum of the research master programme, programme management drafted a table in which the relations between the intended learning outcomes and the curriculum components have been specified.

The curriculum is divided between the first year, where a number of courses are offered, and the second year, which is mainly spent by the students conducting fieldwork and writing their thesis. During the first year students are exposed to different theories and methodologies regarding African Studies. It was noticed that the Regional Specialization course, enabling students to specialize in East, West or South Africa, will over time be replaced by more specific courses based on major research developments on African Studies. In the second year, students work on their individual project, conducting fieldwork in the first semester and writing their thesis in the second semester. In the Academic Publication and Thesis Writing Seminars, the students are meant to discuss their fieldwork results, to write a scientific paper and to report on their fieldwork. This course is aimed at promoting the thesis writing process in the second semester of the second year. Students are trained to develop a critical attitude and their theses should exhibit innovative, original and critical thinking.

At the moment, the number of electives in the curriculum is limited. Programme management intends to raise the number of electives in the curriculum in the coming years and encourages students to take elective courses at LeidenGlobal, a network organization of Faculties, research institutes and museums of Leiden University.

Most courses, if not all, are geared towards addressing subjects and themes from an interdisciplinary perspective. A variety of disciplinary approaches to these subjects is offered to the students, with the purpose of teaching students to think in an interdisciplinary way. Disciplines addressed in these courses are history, anthropology, identity/language, economics, social sciences and political sciences. Lecturers in the courses expose students to these different disciplinary perspectives. Students come from different disciplinary backgrounds and are encouraged to bring in their discipline perspective, to actively engage with students from other disciplinary backgrounds and to bridge the differences. In the second year, students can choose between an interdisciplinary or disciplinary approach while they focus on their own research topic.

Programme management has given methodology and research techniques teaching a fairly prominent place in the curriculum, following the recommendations of the panel in the previous accreditation procedure. In the course The Field of African Studies and Interdisciplinarity, part 2: Processes of Africanist Research, a variety of methodological and research techniques approaches is offered to the students, like historical analysis, visual methods, qualitative and quantitative methods. In the Methodological Specialization course students may choose to deepen the methodology of their preference, as offered by other departments both within Leiden University or in other universities in the Netherlands.

Concerning teaching and lecturing resources, it was noticed that the African Studies Centre Leiden aims at bridging the gap between academia and government and civil society representatives, by regularly organizing conferences and seminars with government officials, business representatives and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Students are invited to participate in these events, offering them a window on non-academic positions in the labour market. The students said to the panel to appreciate in this respect these seminars and conferences.

Teaching staff in the programme is recruited from the Faculties of Humanities and of Social Sciences of Leiden University and from Wageningen University, University of Groningen, University of Amsterdam and Vrije University in Amsterdam. The lecturers are either full professors or associate professors, all of them having obtained a PhD.

The teaching staff is composed of core lecturers, participating regularly in the programme, and other lecturers, who teach less frequently. A number of core lecturers act as course coordinators, ensuring both cooperation between lecturers participating in their courses and the coherence of the classes given. Course coordinators are meant to attend all of the classes of their course. The programme director is responsible for the coordination of the courses, taking care of the coherence of the curriculum and preventing situations of overlap or gaps between the courses. The core lecturers meet once or twice a year; no regular meetings between other lecturers are scheduled.

Core lecturers in the programme are distinguished scholars in their field of study, as is evident, among other, both from the lists of their principal publications and from the substantial number of externally funded research projects by them. Most lecturers are researchers from the African Studies Centre Leiden, joined by lecturers from the institutes of Leiden University Centre for Area Studies, Leiden University Centre for Linguistics and Leiden University Institute for History. The SEP-scores of these institutes in recent external research evaluations ranged from 4 (very good) to 5 (excellent).

The number of lecturers having obtained a university teaching certificate (BKO in Dutch) is quite limited. A substantial number of the lecturers in the programme are researchers of the African Studies Centre Leiden. Up till the beginning of 2016, they were not employed by Leiden University and therefore were not obliged to obtain that teaching certificate. Programme management policy is now to encourage lecturers to enrol in the BKO-programme and to obtain the certificate. Lecturers are evaluated in the student evaluations at the end of each course. Lecturers of the African Studies Centre Leiden have an annual assessment, conducted by the institute's director. Lecturers from other Universities have these regular assessments as well.

In the programme, classes tend to be of 5 to 15 students. The maximum size of 20 students is, in practice, never attained. The student-to-staff ratio is calculated at 6 : 1. The small group sizes allow for content- and theory-driven teaching, active participation by the students, frequent and intense discussions between lecturers and students and exchange of opinions among the students. Students have to study the main bibliography of the course ahead of classes and critically reflect thereupon during classes under the lecturers guidance. Attendance of classes is obligatory. These elements constitute the educational policy of the programme

Students are informed about the curriculum, the course contents and the schedule through the course and examination regulations, the e-Prospectus and the Blackboard site of the programme. During the selection process of the programme, students are informed about the obligation to conduct fieldwork in the second year and the costs that might be involved. Workload differs between semesters as well as between both years of the programme, and students with whom the panel met considered the first semester of the first year to be more demanding than the second; however, workload involved seemed to be manageable. Students are guided by programme management to find suitable place for their fieldwork in the second year. Study guidance in the programme was considered appropriate by the students.

The students with whom the panel met informed that a sufficient number of studying and working places is available. Notably, the African Studies Centre Leiden library offers ample facilities for the students to study and is greatly appreciated by the students as a place to discuss specific subjects and topics among them and to meet informally.

Considerations

The panel considers the entry requirements as well as the intake procedure of the programme to be adequate. Programme management has designed a strict selection procedure which is enforced well by the selection committee. This conforms to the research master's requirements. The panel noticed that the number of rejections in the first phase of the selection process is not known by programme management and therefore suggests to monitor these figures more closely. The panel is positive about the opportunity for students in the master's programme to switch to the research master's programme, after completing the first course of the curricula.

The panel studied the table drafted by programme management of the relations between the intended learning outcomes and the curriculum components and concludes all of the intended learning outcomes to be covered in the curriculum. Panel members considered that the curriculum has been adequately designed, giving the students ample opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The panel is of the opinion the interdisciplinary nature of the programme has been well represented in the curriculum. On the one hand, themes and subjects in the courses are addressed from various disciplinary perspectives and students are stimulated to think interdisciplinary. On the other hand, students may proceed to attain disciplinary depth in their own research work. As the interdisciplinary character of the programme is quite important and will in the future probably gain even more weight, the panel suggests to think this interdisciplinarity through up to the level of students' own research and encourages programme management to clarify the value added of interdisciplinarity for the follow-up PhD-level research, as compared to disciplinary research programmes.

The panel welcomes the different methodologies being addressed in the curriculum and feels students are acquainted with a wide variety of research techniques, reflecting the methodologies used in the disciplines the programme encompasses. Methodology and research techniques are strongly represented in the curriculum, and students are exposed to methodological issues while studying literature and case studies and, particularly, by conducting research. The panel would suggest to go one step further and offer a deeper epistemological reflection on methodological perspectives. On the other hand, the panel noticed that research questions and the methodological choices of some of the theses analysed are not always clear. A deeper methodological reflection would allow students both to formulate specific and sharper research questions and to determine in practice the appropriate methods and research techniques to answer these questions.

The research-component of the programme was considered to be well-designed and strongly represented in the curriculum. The fieldwork students conduct in preparation of their thesis is definitely an asset of this programme. Students tend to select their thesis projects balancing between their own preference and on-going research programme, linking their own projects to available expertise in their field of study. The panel feels that programme management could encourage students to choose their projects more in line with on-going research programmes at the African Studies Centre Leiden.

In the panel's opinion, lecturers in the programme are renowned researchers with strong international reputations as scholars in their fields. The research institutes, most lecturers belong to in their capacities as researchers, have received scores of very good (4) to excellent (5) in recent research evaluations. Although the panel recognizes the excellent educational expertise of the lecturers, programme management is advised to increase the number of lecturers with BKO-certificates in the coming years.

The panel considers the educational policy of programme management and the teaching methods adopted in the programme to foster the learning processes and to booster reflection skills of the students

Both the information provided by programme management to the students, as well as the study guidance, were considered appropriate by the panel. Students with whom the panel met confirmed this opinion. The students informed the panel the second semester of the first year to be more demanding than the first semester; therefore, the panel suggests to scrutinize the relation between the course contents and the credits in terms of EC. The facilities available to the students in the programme are appropriate.

Assessment of this standard

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

5.3 Standard 3: Assessment

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

Findings

Programme management put in place a series of guidelines with regard to the policy of testing and assessments. As one of the main components, programme management stated explicitly not to have included written examinations, as the objective of the programme is not for students to be able to reproduce knowledge but to be able to apply knowledge and understanding to problems. In addition, programme management feels presenting, debating and writing reflect the academic skills students are to acquire.

In the courses, students engage in hand-written assignments, present their work in class and participate in the debates about their own work and the work of others. Students receive feedback on these intermediate (formative) assignments and presentations regarding the progress they have made. Not all of these are graded. These assignments may be individual or group projects.

With the exception of the Proposal Writing Seminar and the Regional Specialization course, students are required to make multiple examinations to complete the courses of the first year. These examinations are both written assignments and oral presentations. In the second year, students report on their fieldwork, write an article and complete their thesis. Students are meant to demonstrate being able to work independently or within a group, in a meaningful way relating research questions, theory, methodology and research techniques, as well as presenting a written or oral report of their results. Both written assignments and presentations are graded by the course coordinators, after having consulted the lecturer responsible for that specific part of the course.

The thesis process has been split up in a number of phases. During the Proposal Writing Seminar, at the end of the first year, students work on their thesis proposal. Students may only start their fieldwork after having their proposal approved by their thesis supervisor and the lecturers of the seminar. In the second year students are guided by two supervisors during the process of conducting fieldwork and thesis writing. One of these supervisors must be from their own discipline and the other from outside the disciplinary field but with an expertise on the subject or the region focused on in the thesis. Fieldwork evaluation is done both during the process and the end of it, when students present their results, and is graded by a pass or fail mark. Students are also expected to write a journal article related to the thesis subject, that might or might not be published. The article is assessed by two lecturers. The thesis itself is separately assessed by both supervisors and an external examiner. Examiners use the assessment form of the Faculty of Humanities to grade the thesis; if examination marks differ substantially, a fourth examiner is called in.

For the programme, a Board of Examiners has been installed. This Board is independent from the management of this programme and reports directly to the Board of the Faculty of Humanities. It is responsible for the quality of the examinations and the theses of the bachelor's programme African Languages and Cultures, the master's programme African Studies and this research master's programme. The Board monitors the examinations and theses and, in addition, appoints examiners, takes care of cases of fraud and plagiarism and handles students' complaints. Members of the Board informed the panel they evaluate the examinations and theses in the programme on a regular basis.

Considerations

The panel considers the examination policy, as formulated and implemented by programme management, to be appropriate. In particular, the panel approves the choice made by programme management to use assignments and presentations instead of written examinations in order to evaluate the students. This allows an evaluation focused on the students' academic skills, their capacity to understand and apply knowledge, instead of the simple reproduction of knowledge assessed by written examinations. The panel believes this in line with the level of ambition of this research master's programme.

The panel considers the processes to arrive at valid examinations and reliable assessments to be designed and executed appropriately. In most courses, students have to do more than one examination, therefore, being tested in different ways. Nearly all the students' examinations are assessed by two examiners, which contributes to the quality of the evaluation.

The panel is of the opinion that the thesis examination and assessment process, including fieldwork and writing a journal article, are adequate. The process has been well-designed, having a number of milestones to assess the progress and the results of the students. More than one examiner assesses the students' products. In the case of the thesis itself, three examiners are involved, ensuring the reliability of the assessment.

The panel also considered the Board of Examiners to have a solid and independent position and to monitor appropriately the examinations and the theses. In addition, this Board is involved in a number of regulations with regard to examinations and assessments.

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

The courses of this research master's programme are all rated between the level 500-600 or 600. These level indicators are used by the Leiden University, level 500 indicating a master's rank and the level 600 surpassing the master's level. Only the first course in the first year and the Methodological Specialization course are rated at the level 500. On the second year, seminars and research project are at the level 600.

Programme management, lecturers and examiners, agree the final theses ought to give proof of critical thinking and research skills, and to be an innovative and original piece of work within the domain of the programme.

Of the students who graduated in the years 2013 – 2015, about 37 % have been able to obtain a PhD-position at Universities in the Netherlands and abroad, about 13 % are in the process of applying for a PhD-position or have their application being reviewed. Most of the other graduates have now a position in a business environment.

Considerations

The panel considers the courses in the curriculum to be of an above master's level, allowing the students to attain a high level of achievement in the programme, and to completely fulfil the learning outcomes expected within the European Higher Education Area.

The panel studied a number of theses. None of these were considered to be unsatisfactory and a number of theses proved to be very rich, being based on extensive and well-executed fieldwork. These theses were graded above satisfactory or good by the panel. The panel would like to emphasize the good to excellent fieldwork of a number of students. The panel also found, in limited cases, that the research questions were ambiguous and not testable. Some of these questions were circular or equivocal and, in some cases, no clear distinction had been made between a statement, a basic knowledge of the field and a research question conducting to data collection.

The panel considers the percentage of students having been able to acquire a PhD position, between 40 % and 50 %, to be quite substantial, definitely testifying to the high level students have achieved at completion of the programme.

Assessment of this standard

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

6. Recommendations

A number of recommendations have been listed in this report. These recommendations are the following.

- To monitor the number of rejections in the first phase of the selection process more closely.
- Although methodological issues are strongly represented in the curriculum of the programme, to offer a deeper reflection on methodological epistemology and perspectives, and to differentiate it from research techniques.
- To think interdisciplinarity through up to the level of students' own research and to clarify the value added of interdisciplinarity for the follow-up PhD-level research, as compared to disciplinary research programmes.
- To pay special attention to the formulation of specific research questions, helping the students to determine the methods and research techniques they have to employ.
- To allow for a common structure for theses, including a clear presentation of research questions, methodological options, and a state of the art of the academic literature related to their subject.
- To encourage students to relate their own research projects to on-going research programmes, thereby making more effectively use of expertise available.
- To increase the number of lecturers with BKO-certificates in the coming years.
- To scrutinize the relation between the course contents and the credits in terms of EC in order to improve the study workload balance.

Annex 1: Site visit schedule

The site visit took place in Leiden on 23 May 2016. The site visit schedule was as follows.

08.30 h. – 09.30 h.	Arrival and deliberations panel (closed session)
09.30 h. – 10.00 h.	Dean and programme management E. Fortuin PhD (vice-dean Faculty of Humanities), A. van 't Slot (student member Faculty Board), prof. H. van Dijk PhD (Programme Board chair)
10.00 h. – 11.20 h.	Programme management and core lecturers Prof. H. van Dijk PhD (Programme Board chair), prof. T. Dietz PhD (Programme Board member), A. Amha PhD (coordinator of studies), M. Siun (Programme Board student member)
11.30 h. – 12.15 h.	Board of Examiners F. Ameka PhD (chair Board of Examiners), J. Tanilon PhD (external member Board of Examiners), A. Amha PhD (coordinator of studies), drs. S. Bos (secretary Board of Examiners)
12.15 h. – 13.30 h.	Lunch panel (closed session), open office hours 12.15 h. – 12.45 h.
13.30 h. – 14.30 h.	Lecturers and theses' examiners H. Wels PhD (chair Educational Committee, ASCL, VU; via Skype), prof. R. van Dijk PhD (ASCL), prof. P. Pels PhD (Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences), K. van Walraven PhD (ASCL), I. Peša PhD (ASCL)
14.30 h. – 15.30 h.	Students, including Educational Committee members, and alumni V. Bakker (2 nd year student, Educational Committee member), R. Hogenboom (1 st year student, Educational Committee member), I. Vannucchi (1 st year student), M. Ocadiz (1 st year student), C. Wilson (alumna, 2011/2012 graduate), R. Verbuyst (alumnus, 2014/2015 graduate), M. Potatadino (alumnus, 2014/2015 graduate)
15.30 h. – 17.15 h.	Deliberations panel (closed session)
17.15 h. – 17.30 h. management	Presentation of main findings by panel chair to dean and programme Prof. W. van den Doel PhD (dean Faculty of Humanities), E. Fortuin PhD (vice-dean Faculty of Humanities), A. van 't Slot (student member Faculty Board), prof. H. van Dijk PhD (Programme Board chair), S. Arens MA (policy advisor)
17.30 h. – 17.45 h.	Presentation of main findings by panel chair to programme management and others

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

The panel studied the following documents, presented prior to the site visit:

- Research Master African Studies, critical reflection report
- Domain-specific frame of reference
- Schematic programme overview
- Course descriptions
- Course and Examination Regulations (OER)
- Overview staff
- Overview of current students and recent theses
- Quantitative information
- Opleidingskaart
- Staff student ratio
- Contact hours
- Level courses

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

- Annual report Examination Board
- Minutes Educational Committee
- Course and Examination Regulations, as of 1 September 2016
- Selection of course material
- Selection of examinations

Annex 3: Theses reviewed

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

- 1100890
- 0851280
- 0949930
- 1053418
- 1080733
- 1164341
- 1126660
- 1051709
- 1186280
- 1086014
- 1290916
- 1427261
- 1423827
- 1462830
- 1497332

Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel

The assessment panel had the following composition:

- Prof. T. De Herdt PhD, professor in Development Studies, University of Antwerp and chair of Institute of Development Policy and Management (panel chair);
- Prof. C. Carvalho PhD, associate professor of Anthropology and Development Studies, and director of International Studies Centre of Lisbon University Institute (2007-2016), Lisbon, Portugal (panel member);
- E. Macamo PhD, associate professor of African Studies at University of Basel, Switzerland (panel member);
- D. van Wanrooij LLB, student in the master's programme in International Law and European Law and in the master's programme in Law and Technology, Tilburg University (student member).

Prof. T. De Herdt PhD, panel chair

Mr De Herdt is a professor in Development Studies at University of Antwerp and the chair of the Institute of Development Policy and Management (IOB) of this University. Among other, he worked as a researcher at Universidad Centroamericana in Nicaragua and was, for many years, an associate professor at Université Catholique du Congo. Also, he held academic positions at Université de Mons-Hainaut and at University of Antwerp. Over the years, he was the promotor of a number of research projects in his field of expertise. Mr De Herdt published widely in this domain.

Prof. C. Carvalho PhD, panel member

Mrs Carvalho is an associate professor of Anthropology and Development Studies and the director of International Studies Centre of Lisbon University Institute (ISCTE), Lisbon, Portugal, from 2007 to 2016. She took her PhD in Social Anthropology at ISCTE. She was an invited professor at Brown University, United States and at the Institute de Sociologie of Université de Lille, France. She holds the position of the chair of AEGIS, association of African Studies in Europe. Mrs Carvalho published books and articles in her field of expertise.

E. Macamo PhD, panel member

Mr Macamo is an associate professor of African Studies at University of Basel. Previously, he taught Development Sociology at University of Bayreuth, Germany. Having been born and raised in Mozambique, Mr. Macamo studied at Maputo, Mozambique, Salford and London, England and Bayreuth. He took his doctorate in General Sociology from University of Bayreuth. His main research interests are the sociology of religion, technology, knowledge, politics and risk. Mr Macamo published widely in his field of expertise.

D. van Wanrooij LLB, student member

Ms van Wanrooij is a student in both the master's programme in International Law and European Law and the master's programme in Law and Technology of Tilburg University. Previously, she completed the bachelor's programme in Law. Ms Van Wanrooij is a student representative in the Programme Committee of Tilburg Law School and serves as a student member in NVAO-accreditation panels.