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MA Philosophy
MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities
University of Groningen

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Summary

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The one-year MA Philosophy offers a broad and flexible programme in philosophy, with an emphasis on theoretical depth or a more applied societal focus. The panel is positive about the broad philosophical profile and particularly values the focus on the students' self-reflection on their own learning and career aspirations as a distinctive aspect. It finds that the intended learning outcomes of the MA in Philosophy are consistent with the requirements of the discipline and with the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. The qualifications therefore meet national and international requirements in terms of content, orientation and level.

The MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities is a combined two-year programme with an interdisciplinary profile. The panel considers that the current profile and ILOs are appropriate for a specialized master's programme in philosophy. The focus on the (history of) philosophy of science in relation to the specific discipline allows PSH students to develop their skills as critical thinkers in relation to their other discipline, which is highly valued by students. The emphasis on the philosophy of science and the philosophy of the discipline is not so strongly reflected in the chosen title, and the humanities part is not obvious in all tracks. As the focus is more specialized than 'Philosophy, Science and Humanities' might suggest, the panel recommends that the title of the programme be reconsidered.

The panel encourages both programmes to involve the faculty advisory board and alumni more actively in determining programme objectives and content.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel concludes that the basic quality of the curriculum and teaching-learning environment of the Philosophy and Philosophy, Science and Humanities master's programmes is assured. It considers the route to graduation to be appropriately designed in both programmes.

The MA Philosophy has undergone a gradual curriculum review, fully implemented by 2023-2024. The panel found the curriculum to be logically structured and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, with due attention to the development of philosophical skills and their application within and beyond academia. In both the theoretical and practical profiles, the academic orientation is visible at master's level, complemented in the practical profile by a more explicit socially applied orientation. The panel appreciates how students are given the freedom to choose a personalized learning route based on their own motivation and ambitions, and are given sufficient guidance to make coherent choices. Teaching takes place mainly in small-scale seminars and lectures. This encourages active learning, alternating between a more research-based approach and a more applied one. In the case of the internship, the panel feels that much is now left to the student, which can lead to unnecessary stress and delay in a one-year master's programme. Although the panel believes that a degree of self-responsibility is appropriate at master's level, it recommends that more guidance be provided before and during the internship, for example in the form of a short internship course.

The panel noted that the curriculum of the 120 EC MA PSH consists half of components from a master's programme in a specific discipline and half of components in the field of philosophy of science and philosophy of the specific discipline. The seven tracks provide a clear focus on the student's area of specialization. The panel notes that some master's programmes are less easily accommodated within the PSH curriculum and urges the programme to be sensitive to this. The programme's decision not to require

prior philosophical knowledge means that students are expected to acquire a considerable amount of scientific-philosophical knowledge and skills in a short period of time. This is facilitated by the specialized focus, the courses designed specifically for the programme, and the phased structure in which many of the intended learning outcomes are covered in successive modules. The panel is of the opinion that students can acquire the knowledge and skills required to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, more could be achieved if the programme required students to have at least some philosophical knowledge prior to entering the programme. The programme is asked to consider options to make this possible (summer course, pre-master programme, minor, required reading, or other arrangements). The panel notes that the small-scale, multidisciplinary learning environment and the personalized guidance further support the learning process. Given the limited number of students, the panel believes that making attendance compulsory could be a way of improving the student experience.

On the basis of the documentation and interviews, the panel considers the choice of English as the language of instruction and programme name for both programmes to be justified in terms of content. For the MA Philosophy, the use of Dutch in practice is also valuable. The panel recommends putting the programmes' position on language on record. According to the panel, student support and feasibility enable students to complete both programmes within an achievable time frame. Students in both programmes receive the necessary support with an introduction, a career event, study advice and a defined thesis course. Labour market orientation is present in various applied forms in the MA Philosophy, which in the MA PSH is limited to the faculty's annual career event. The panel advises the MA PSH to help students understand how and where a (second) degree in philosophy from a specific discipline can be an asset. The student-centred approach of both programmes is reflected in the way in which student feedback is actively sought, the involved role of the programme committee and the opportunities given to students to make choices about their own study path. The panel considers the quality of teaching to be very good. It appreciated the breadth of expertise and the integration of teaching and research. The enthusiasm, professional competence and accessibility of the staff in the context of a small faculty are important assets for students. This is also valued by the panel.

Standard 3. Student assessment
On the basis of the documentation and interviews, the panel concludes that the assessment system in both programmes is adequate. The panel identifies a few points for improvement, but considers that these are sufficiently outweighed by positive points and that the basic quality of assessment is assured. The panel found the types of assessment appropriate and sufficiently varied in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the increased variety of assessment in the revised MA Philosophy curriculum and observed that the assessment of the internship in the MA Philosophy is appropriately constructed. The assessment of tutorials in the MA PSH uses the standard essay rubric, which promotes consistency. The assessment programmes should provide insight into how the specific learning objectives of course units relate to the intended learning outcomes at programme level. Rubrics have been developed for the main types of assessment, peer review is used and assessment criteria are generally clear.

Positive points in the assessment of theses include the master's thesis protocol, the four-eye principle where the second assessor is from another department, the plagiarism check and guidelines for generative AI, and the comprehensive faculty assessment form with a clear rubric. The panel concludes that the assessment of master's theses is satisfactory, but would benefit from explicit detail in the underpinnings of the assessment of (sub)criteria. It therefore strongly recommends further elaborating the process for assessing master's theses and ensuring that the assessments make clear how the evaluation of different components has led to the final grade. On the basis of the interviews, the panel considers that the common understanding of the assessment procedure provides sufficient basis for this to be developed further.

The examination board fulfils its statutory safeguarding role adequately, but operates largely in a reactive mode due to limited support. This is concern that needs to be addressed. At the same time, the board has recently received support and is actively identifying relevant issues. The panel anticipates that, with improved support, the board will become more proactive in its role. The panel considers it important that the examination board is able to carry out its duties well and recommends that the faculty does all it can to support the board.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

In order to assess whether students had achieved the intended learning outcomes, the panel examined a sample of 15 master's theses from each master's programme. It found all theses to meet the intended master's level. However, the panel observed that some master's theses at PSH show only a limited degree of philosophical reflection on the specific discipline. Consequently, the panel recommends that the programme monitor this aspect when students begin selecting their thesis topics, but also in the evaluation criteria. On the whole, the programmes provide sufficient evidence that students achieve the learning outcomes. The panel also found that graduates of the programmes are prepared either for further education or a diverse range of careers.

Score table

The panel assesses the programmes as follows:

M Philosophy

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

M Philosophy, Science and Humanities

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

Prof. Gerd Van Riel   Dr. Irene Conradie
Chair   Secretary

Date: 28 March 2024

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 14 and 15 November 2023, the Philosophy master's programmes of the University of Groningen were assessed by an independent peer review as part of the Philosophy cluster assessment. The assessment cluster consisted of 29 programmes, offered by Leiden University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Radboud University, University of Groningen, Tilburg University, University of Twente, Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Philosophy. Fiona Schouten acted as both coordinator and secretary, and Irene Conradie, Mariette Huisjes, Marieke Schoots, and Anne-Lise Kamphuis acted as secretaries in the cluster assessment. They have been certified and registered by the NVAO.

Preparation

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members as well as consistency within the cluster. On 24 July 2023, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. On 20 July 2023, the coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

The Faculty of Philosophy composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The Faculty selected representative partners for the various interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would take place as part of the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programmes provided the coordinator with a list of graduates over the period May 2021-July 2023. In consultation with the coordinator, the panel chair selected 15 theses per programme. They took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various tracks. Prior to the site visit, the programmes provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. They also provided the panel with the self-evaluation reports and additional materials (see Appendix 4).

The panel members studied the information and sent their findings to the secretary. The secretary collected the panel's questions and remarks in a document and shared this with the panel members. In a preliminary meeting, the panel discussed the initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. Prior to this, the panel was also informed on the assessment frameworks, the working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

Site visit

During the site visit, the panel interviewed various programme representatives (see Appendix 3). The panel also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No consultation was requested. 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 preliminary findings.

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Report

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the coordinator for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the programmes in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalised the report, and the coordinator sent it to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Groningen.

Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Prof. dr. Martin van Hees, professor of Moral and Political Philosophy (VU Amsterdam) and Dean of Amsterdam University College (AUC) – chair;
- Prof. dr. Gerd Van Riel, professor of Ancient Philosophy, KU Leuven – chair and panel member;
- Prof. dr. Mariëtte van den Hoven, professor of Medical Ethics, Amsterdam UMC;
- Prof. dr. Thomas Reydon, professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, Leibniz University Hannover;
- Em. prof. dr. Jos de Mul, professor of Philosophical Anthropology, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Prof. dr. Sonja Smets, professor in Logic and Epistemology, University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. Bart Raymaekers, professor of Moral Philosophy and Philosophy of Law, KU Leuven;
- Prof. dr. Geert Van Eekert, professor of European Philosophy, University of Antwerp;
- Prof. dr. Martine Prange, professor of Philosophy of Humanity, Culture, and Society, Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. Wybo Houkes, professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. Federica Russo, professor in Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Amsterdam;
- Dr. Victor Gijsbers, assistant professor Philosophy, Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. Vincent Blok, professor of Philosophy of Technology and Responsible Innovation, Wageningen University;
- Prof. dr. Rein Raud, professor of Asian and Cultural Studies, Tallinn University;
- Prof. dr. Corien Bary, professor in Logical Semantics, Radboud University;
- Dr. Elsbeth Brouwer, assistant professor in Philosophy of Language and Cognition, University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. Erik Weber, professor of Philosophy, Ghent University;
- Dr. Constanze Binder, associate professor Philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam – referee;
- Dr. Bruno Verbeek, assistant professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy, Leiden University – referee;
- Sarah Boer, MA student Philosophy, Politics, and Society, Radboud University – student member;
- Tim van Alten, MSc student Philosophy of Science, Technology and Society, University of Twente – student member;
- Christa Laurens, MA student Modern European Philosophy, Leiden University – student member.

The panel assessing the Philosophy master's programmes at the University of Groningen consisted of the following members:

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- Prof. dr. Gerd Van Riel, professor of Ancient Philosophy, KU Leuven – chair;
- Prof. dr. Mariëtte van den Hoven, professor of Medical Ethics, Amsterdam UMC;
- Prof. dr. Sonja Smets, professor in Logic and Epistemology, University of Amsterdam;
- Dr. Constanze Binder, associate professor Philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam – referee;
- Dr. Bruno Verbeek, assistant professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy, Leiden University – referee;
- Sarah Boer, MA student Philosophy, Politics, and Society, Radboud University – student member.

Information on the programmes

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive

Programme name:	Philosophy
CROHO number:	60822
Level:	Master
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime, parttime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO:	1 May 2024

Programme name:	Philosophy (title: Philosophy, Science and Humanities)
CROHO number:	60823
Level:	Master
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Philosophy of the Life Sciences
	Philosophy of the Natural Sciences
	Philosophy of the Cognitive Sciences
	Philosophy of the Economic and Social Sciences
	Philosophy of the Political Sciences
	Philosophy of Art and Cultural Studies
	Philosophy of History
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime, parttime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO:	1 May 2024

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Description of the assessment

Organization

Both master's programmes in Philosophy are organized by the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Groningen, together with two bachelor's programmes, a master's programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) and a research master's programme in Philosophy. The academic staff is part of the faculty's research institute, the Groningen Research Institute for Philosophy (GRIPh). The faculty has three departments: Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy; History of Philosophy; and Theoretical Philosophy. The faculty board directs the programmes and there is a dedicated programme coordinator for each master's programme. The teaching portfolio is in the hands of the vice-dean and education director. A student adviser, a thesis course coordinator, and education coordinator provide support. At faculty level, there is a faculty council, a programme committee, an examination committee and an advisory board.

Reflection on the previous assessment

MA Philosophy

In the 2018 NVAO assessment, the MA Philosophy (60 EC) was advised by the panel to strengthen the motivation for one of its tracks, the regular Philosophy track, and to clarify its target audience. The current panel notes that this recommendation has led to a gradual revision of the programme. As of September 2023, the programme has been converted into a practical and theoretical profile (see Standards 1 and 2). The previous recommendations for Standard 2 have been incorporated into the redesign: 1) the creation of a 25 EC graduation project for each track responded to the recommendation to offer a specific programme for the regular Philosophy track; 2) a build-up to Philosophical Interventions has been accomplished through the addition of the Philosophy Beyond Academia course; and 3) a master's thesis course has been introduced to expedite the graduation process. The assessment programme was implemented. The next step, is to show how the specific learning objectives of the course modules relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Overall, the panel concludes that the programme has taken the recommendations seriously, taking due measures to follow them up. These adjustments seem promising, although it is too early to completely assess their success.

MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities

Following the last NVAO reaccreditation, the programme management decided to redesign the previous version of the programme, Philosophy of a Specific Discipline. With the new format, the programme responded to the previous panel's two main recommendations for the curriculum: 1) to provide students in all these specializations with sufficient structure to link their subject to science and philosophy, possibly by reducing the number of specializations; 2) to ensure that the polyvalent electives in which students from different master's programmes participated were sufficiently aligned (in their assessment) with the learning objectives of their own programme. In the current panel's view, the new design is in line with these points: PSH students take 35 EC PSH-specific courses together in a multidisciplinary context, adding structure and reducing polyvalence. The new programme, entitled Philosophy, Science and Humanities, started in September 2020.

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

MA Philosophy

The MA Philosophy trains students to become broadly educated philosophers who can think independently and critically about fundamental philosophical questions and how these questions relate to societal problems or developments. It is distinctive in that students explore different ways in which philosophy can be applied outside of an academic context. By combining theoretical and practical approaches to philosophy, the MA Philosophy aims to form well-trained philosophers with an understanding of how they want to make their mark in society. Students choose between a theoretical and a practical profile for their graduation project, but they still have a high degree of freedom in their choice of subjects. The breadth of the programme, combined with its flexibility, led the panel to ask what the common thread is within the programme and how it links the two profiles. The programme management has indicated that it wants students to reflect on their own future role as philosophers by offering a wide range of philosophical topics and different ways of using philosophy in social and professional contexts. The programme aims to guide students to make choices within the programme rather than to choose a particular direction in advance. The core courses help create a community and give students an idea of the direction they want to take. The panel finds the profile quite broad, but sees the added value of this approach for students who want to do more with philosophy but do not yet have a clear idea of what exactly. There is also room in the faculty's portfolio for a broader master's programme, alongside the more specialized master's programmes PSH, PPE and the Research Master in Philosophy.

Following the last re-accreditation, the programme not only revised its profile but also its intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the MA Philosophy are formulated using the Dublin descriptors at master's level (see Appendix 1). Compared to the previous final qualifications, the ILOs are now more explicitly linked to the Dublin descriptors, their wording has been adapted to the profile adjustments, and the academic master's level has been further secured. The panel considers the link between philosophy and society (e.g., ILOs 3, 6 and 8) and the academic orientation (e.g., ILOs 1, 5, 7, 9, 10) to be clearly visible. The panel appreciates the fact that students' self-reflection on their skills and future careers is part of the motivation for the restructuring of the ILOs. In particular, ILOs 12 and 13 pay clear attention to the individual context of one's own learning and professional future. The distinction between the theoretical and practical profiles in terms of knowledge and understanding and their application is sufficiently clear in ILOs 2 and 4. The panel is of the opinion that the intended learning outcomes adequately reflect the objectives of the master's programme. It also confirms that the formulated ILOs are in line with the domain-specific frame of reference (Domeinspecifiek referentiekader Wijsbegeerte 2016, DSFR). As such, the qualifications meet national and international requirements in terms of content, orientation and level.

MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities

The MA PSH is a philosophy of a specific discipline programme designed for students who are interested in philosophical and conceptual issues related to their discipline, but who have little or no previous training in philosophy. It provides students with a general overview of the history and philosophy of science, as well as knowledge, insight and skills in the philosophy of their specific scientific or scholarly discipline at master's level. The MA PSH has evolved from the MA Philosophy of a Specific Discipline. The panel notes that, like its predecessor, it is a combined programme with an interdisciplinary profile. The programme has seven tracks

that focus on the philosophy of the natural sciences, life sciences, cognitive sciences, economic and social sciences, political sciences, arts and cultural studies, and history. The MA PSH integrates 60 EC in study components from a non-philosophical master's programme into the two-year PSH programme. It attracts students who are starting, pursuing or have completed an academic master's degree and who wish to critically analyse and evaluate the philosophical and conceptual aspects of their discipline. The panel concludes that the MA PSH fits into the DSFR as a specialized master's programme with a focus on philosophy of science and intensive collaboration with a specific discipline. The panel appreciates that the focus is on philosophy of the discipline rather than on philosophy in the context of the discipline's domain or subject matter.

The chosen title does not clearly indicate to the panel that philosophy of science and philosophy of the discipline are the main areas of focus of the programme. 'Philosophy, Science and Humanities' might suggest that these are the three fundamental pillars for all students on the programme, whereas 'Humanities' is one of seven specific disciplines and is a largely optional topic in the other tracks. During the site visit, the panel was reassured that students did not seem surprised or disappointed by the content of the programme. Still, the panel recommends to reconsider the programme title as the focus is more specialized than 'Philosophy, Science and Humanities' might imply.

The PSH profile is translated into a set of intended learning outcomes (ILOs) common to all seven tracks. The panel reviewed the learning outcomes in line with the Dublin descriptors and the DSFR (particularly the 3b learning outcomes of the specialized master's programmes in philosophy (60–120 EC)) and considers them generally appropriate for a specialized master's programme in philosophy. Advanced knowledge is acquired within the subfields of philosophy of science and philosophy of the specific discipline, and the ILOs cover the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, their application (in a wider context), judgement, communication and learning skills development. Attention is paid to critical analysis, research skills and the communication of research findings, which is consistent with the academic orientation. The decision to delete the previous learning outcome 'being able to formulate and conduct philosophical research' is consistent with the re-profiling as a programme that does not require prior philosophical knowledge. In the restructured programme, this is not a feasible learning outcome. The panel considers this acceptable because of the specialist niche within the discipline and because a sufficient final level of knowledge and skills remains at master's level. It concludes that the ILO's meet the requirements of the discipline and correspond with the Dublin descriptors at master's level.

Professional field
The faculty keeps in touch with its alumni through an annual alumni afternoon and career morning (where alumni meet current students) combined with the Night of Philosophy. This annual festival is a collaboration between the faculty, Studium Generale Groningen and Forum Groningen. In addition, the faculty seeks to link up with university initiatives in the field of alumni policy. The panel appreciates that the programmes have established an advisory board at faculty level, made up of alumni working in a variety of positions and sectors. However, the interviews revealed that links with the advisory board have been diluted during the COVID period. The panel encourages the faculty board to continue with the discussed intention to involve the advisory board and alumni more actively in determining the goals and content of the programmes.

A bridge between academic research and society is provided by the faculty's knowledge centre, the Kenniscentrum Filosofie (KCF). Through its connection with the KCF, the MA Philosophy has a strong regional network. This network is used, for example, in the search for internships, course projects or guest speakers for the core courses. According to the panel, the KCF's goal of making philosophical research available to

society fits well with the ambition of philosophy education at the University of Groningen, where the connection to society is a recurring theme.

Considerations

The one-year MA Philosophy offers a broad and flexible programme in philosophy, with an emphasis on theoretical depth or a more applied societal focus. The panel is positive about the broad philosophical profile and particularly values the focus on the students' self-reflection on their own learning and career aspirations as a distinctive aspect. It finds that the intended learning outcomes of the MA in Philosophy are consistent with the requirements of the discipline and with the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. The qualifications therefore meet national and international requirements in terms of content, orientation and level.

The MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities is a combined two-year programme with an interdisciplinary profile. The panel considers that the current profile and ILOs are appropriate for a specialized master's programme in philosophy. The focus on the (history of) philosophy of science in relation to the specific discipline allows PSH students to develop their skills as critical thinkers in relation to their other discipline, which is highly valued by students. The emphasis on the philosophy of science and the philosophy of the discipline is not so strongly reflected in the chosen title, and the humanities part is not obvious in all tracks. As the focus is more specialized than 'Philosophy, Science and Humanities' might suggest, the panel recommends that the title of the programme be reconsidered.

The panel encourages both programmes to involve the faculty advisory board and alumni more actively in determining programme objectives and content.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet Standard 1.

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

The Philosophy programmes at the University of Groningen are organized by a separate Faculty of Philosophy. The panel observed that the relative size of the faculty, its central focus on philosophy, and the shared commitment to the common cause of creating an academic philosophical community provide substantial added value for students and staff. Additionally, the panel noted that this organizational structure leads to short decision-making processes.

The Philosophy and PSH master's programmes are offered on a full-time and part-time basis; part-time students take the same subjects at a slower pace. The findings and considerations in this report apply to both part-time and full-time students, unless otherwise stated. The MA Philosophy starts in September and February, the MA PSH in September only. The two programmes are designed and taught differently; the only possible overlap is in the course PSH History of Science II, which is also part of a common range of electives open to the MA Philosophy, MA Philosophy and Education, and the Research Master Philosophy. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the courses and a list of the elective courses.

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Curriculum: MA Philosophy

The one-year MA in Philosophy (60 EC) has an average intake of around twenty students per year. It is open to students with a background in philosophy. About two-thirds are transfer students from one of the faculty's bachelor's programmes. After the previous re-accreditation, a reorientation took place, with a step-by-step curriculum review. The new design with shared core modules followed by electives and a theoretical and practical profile started in September 2023. The tracks Philosophy and Philosophy and Society are no longer offered and transitional arrangements have been made for students from the previous programme.
The programme as of 2023-2024 consists of three main components:

1. Core modules (10 EC): The mandatory skills-based core modules consist of Philosophy Beyond Academia and a choice of either the Dutch-language course Publieksgericht Schrijven or Philosophical Interventions in Current Issues. In the introductory Philosophy Beyond Academia (PBA) course, students work on the design of their individual programme of study. They reflect on their motivation and ambition in this design in a start document and receive feedback on it from the programme coordinator. In addition, PBA introduces students to different philosophical perspectives and areas of application through readings and guest speakers. Examples include journalism, teaching, government, consultancy or coaching. The other core modules cover academic and professional skills related to clearly expressing a philosophical point of view, dealing with different audiences, and using different philosophical styles and tools.

2. Electives (25 EC): There is a common offer of 24 elective courses. These 5 EC electives are spread over the academic year and are divided equally between the three departments of History of Philosophy, Theoretical Philosophy, and Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy. Philosophy students take at least one course from each department. They may also take the third core module as an elective.

3. Graduation project (25 EC): Students can choose between a theoretical and a practical profile for their graduation project. This involves either a combination of two specialization electives (5 EC each) and a substantial master's thesis (15 EC), or a combination of a smaller master's thesis (10 EC) and an internship (15 EC). In both profiles, students also write a position paper at the beginning of the graduation process. The start document is the point of departure and this is developed into a final reflection. In it, they reflect on what they have learnt in their chosen pathway, whether they have adjusted their ambitions and how this has led to the (intended) thesis topic. In the theoretical profile, students also explain how the specialization electives relate to the thesis; in the practical profile, they discuss how the internship relates to the thesis.

The panel notes that the new curricular structure responds to the wishes expressed by students in the student chapter for increased coherence between different units. It also considers that it is a good elaboration of the profile and is in line with the ILOs. The flexibility of the programme is clear and it is sufficiently structured: the common core modules provide coherence at the start and build a learning community within the programme, after which students follow their own chosen path with electives and the graduation project in their own profile. Philosophy Beyond Academia, introduced in 2022, gives students insight into how philosophy can be put into practice in a variety of fields and ways. This, combined with guidance on how to design their own programme of study, ensures that students can make informed choices. The panel sees the position paper, which was implemented in 2023-2024, as a thread running through the programme. Programme representatives said they had seen a difference in student development with the revised version within nine weeks. The first impression of the panel is that this is a well-chosen instrument. The two built-in evaluation moments, after the writing of the start document and after the final reflection, offer added value.

Teaching usually takes the form of seminars. Students appreciate the small group size and the open atmosphere where they feel safe to have discussions. According to the panel, this small format fits well with the hands-on and research-driven education that the programme provides. On the one hand, students are challenged to apply their philosophical knowledge to society through practical project work. For example, in Philosophical Interventions, students choose their own philosophical topic and social area and work on their own philosophical intervention, which could be an opinion piece for a newspaper, a policy report or a video. On the other hand, electives connect students to the research community through courses taught by lecturers in areas related to their research expertise. The programme also pays sufficient attention to skills. In the core courses, followed in the practical profile by the internship, the emphasis is more on professional skills. Academic skills are mainly developed in the (specialization) electives and in writing the master's thesis. The panel notes that both a practical and an academic orientation are represented. The chosen profile offers students the opportunity to specialize in either a more theoretical or applied societal direction.

Curriculum: MA PSH
The PSH curriculum consists of a combination of 60 EC courses in the master's programme of the student's specific discipline and 60 EC philosophical components. On application, students choose a track that corresponds to their own discipline. The philosophy part consists of core modules (35 EC), two individual tutorials (10 EC) and a master's thesis (15 EC). The first core module, Philosophy of your Discipline: Introduction, deals with fundamental questions and concepts in the philosophy of science, philosophical methodology and the use of philosophical texts. In the Specialization course, students learn how to apply philosophical analysis to specific concepts and topics within their own discipline. Academic Philosophical Writing aims to teach students the main principles of academic philosophical writing; students are guided in writing their own philosophical papers and in reviewing those of their peers. PSH History of Science I provides an overview of the history and philosophy of science and teaches students to think critically about it. PSH History of Science II covers a number of case studies from the history of science as well as problems from the philosophy of science. See Appendix 2 for an overview of the curriculum.

Students follow the same core programme, with individual guidance for the Specialization course essay, tutorials and master's thesis, allowing them to specialize in their track discipline. Depending on individual choice and planning, it is possible to complete the programme in one year or in two years, in parallel with the other master's degree. The panel notes that the curriculum has an appropriate structure in both the one-year and two-year formats. In both cases, it gradually moves from an initial emphasis on knowledge and understanding of philosophy of science to application and critical reflection of philosophy of science in the student's own discipline. This culminates in the master's thesis.

The entry requirements were changed as part of the re-profiling (see Standard 1). This was partly done in response to the recommendations of the previous panel and partly due to low enrolment numbers. Since the programme review, student numbers have increased gradually to around 10 per year. This approach targets now a different audience. In the panel's view, the current arrangement is working well: the master's theses demonstrate that the programme succeeds in achieving the philosophical level specified in its ILOs even without imposing entry requirements (see Standard 4). However, the panel believes that students and lecturers could benefit greatly from requiring some prior knowledge of philosophy, in order to achieve more philosophical depth both in the courses and the final theses. Options to consider include a mandatory minor or pre-master's course, a summer course, or a reading list for students entering the programme with no philosophical background. This might also enhance the integration of philosophy and the other discipline (see Standard 4).

The MA PSH does not aim to be a broad philosophy programme. The clear focus on the philosophy of science and the philosophy of a specific discipline is necessary for students with a non-philosophical background to achieve a master's level in a short period of time. The different courses build logically on each other, with the same learning outcomes being covered in successive modules, allowing students to progress from basic to more in-depth study within the duration of the programme. From the documentation and the interviews, the panel concludes that students are adequately prepared in philosophical reading and writing, and in the history and philosophy of science. The panel considers this to be sufficient, given that this is a specialized master's programme focusing on the philosophy of science and the philosophy of a specific discipline. The degree will also indicate the student's specialization, e.g. 'Philosophy of Life Sciences'.

The self-evaluation report notes that the majority of applications of candidates come from disciplines that are in line with the main areas of expertise of the staff, such as psychology, medical sciences, biology and social sciences. The students interviewed confirmed that the natural and life sciences in particular, but also the humanities, are the disciplines most strongly represented in the programme. As a result, students with backgrounds in, for example, marketing, business or communication sciences find it more difficult to combine these topics with philosophy. Students also mentioned that staff within their specific discipline were not always familiar with the PSH programme. Representatives from the programme indicated that students are given some room to adapt their track, supported by advice from staff and meetings with the study adviser. This approach provides an informal solution. Although students appreciate the support, it may not be easy for them to anticipate what issues they may encounter in combining two disciplines. The panel believes that it is up to the programme management to take a critical look at which disciplines are a good fit for PSH and to make choices where necessary.

The panel appreciates that teaching is mainly done in small seminars in a multidisciplinary context. The two individual tutorials are directly supervised by a member of staff who provides personal guidance on a specific topic, similar to a small research project for a thesis. The focus on active learning and research-driven teaching is made possible by the small group format and close interaction with research-active lecturers who are skilled in applying philosophy to specific disciplines. A good example of this are the PSH lectures, which expose students to current research in the philosophy of a particular scientific discipline. A minimum of four PSH lectures is organized annually. This also helps to build a learning community within the programme. The student chapter suggested that compulsory attendance at PSH courses could contribute to a better study experience. The panel agrees, also taking into account the limited number of students on the programme.

Final project
Master's students in both programmes complete their studies with a master's thesis. For the PSH thesis, students have to formulate and answer a research question related to their own field of study, including a full-fledged philosophical argument; this is therefore a PSH-specific thesis and not part of the other master's programme. Students develop their own ideas for a thesis topic, usually based on what has been covered in electives or after discussions with lecturers. For the MA PSH and the theoretical track of the MA Philosophy, the thesis is 15 EC. In the practical profile, the thesis is worth 10 EC, and it is combined with a 15 EC internship project.

In response to a comment in the student chapter about limited guidance during and towards the internship, the panel discussed the internship with the lecturers involved in the MA Philosophy programme. Each year between 10 and 15 students choose to do an internship. In the old curriculum, only students on the Philosophy and Society track could do an internship, and students had to choose a track when they enrolled. The programme received signals that some students from the Philosophy track might also have wanted to

do an internship. As the choice of tracks happens at a later moment in time within the new structure, the programme anticipates that the number of students opting for an internship may increase slightly in the coming years. At the beginning of the programme, students are given a roadmap on how to find an organization and a list of previous internship organizations and projects. They can also ask the programme coordinator for suggestions on an individual basis. Students starting the programme in September begin their internship in February. The programme encourages the students themselves to approach a workplace for an internship. It considers it important that the students take this step themselves, finding a supervisor in the organization as well as an internship/thesis supervisor at the programme, and signing a contract. The student chapter and interviews revealed that students sometimes find it difficult to find a suitable internship within a few months. Programme representatives indicated that most internships are not specific to philosophy. The panel understands that it is not possible for this type of internship to be ready-made by the programme. At the same time, in a one-year master's programme, it is important that students are given sufficient and timely support to avoid potential drop-outs and delays. In order to better monitor students' progress, the panel recommends that more structured guidance be offered in the process of securing an internship, for example in the form of an internship course, similar to a thesis course.

In preparation, Philosophy students (from both profiles) and PSH students participate in the thesis course. The thesis course is offered every semester. Students meet in supervised groups of around 15 to work on their own research question, research design and draft of the master's thesis. The peer review process helps to improve the thesis. In addition, an individual supervisor is involved to provide professional guidance and assessment of the master's thesis. In a supervision plan, the supervisor and the student record agreements on the structure of the thesis and a schedule for completing the thesis. The student and supervisor have at least five supervision meetings. In MA Philosophy, students discuss the final version of the position paper with their supervisor. This gives the supervisor a good idea of the student's progress and ambitions. The panel considers the route to graduation to be appropriately designed in both programmes.

Language of instruction
The MA Philosophy described its choice of an English programme name and English as the language of instruction in the self-evaluation and discussed it further with the panel during the visit. The only exception is Publieksgericht Schrijven, which is offered in Dutch. The societal focus of the programme, especially in the practical track with the internship, takes place mostly in a Dutch-speaking context. The proportion of international students is also lower than in other faculty master's programmes, averaging 10-15%. The panel noted that international students can do internships and that the programme is supportive of this, but it usually takes more effort to find a placement for an international student within the local environment. The main arguments for offering this programme in English, according to the panel, are the international research environment with international staff, international guest speakers and English-language research literature, to which the research-oriented education is linked, and the added value of the joint offer of electives with the other English-language master's programmes within the faculty. The electives can be more varied in content and offer a richer educational experience through the participation of (more international) students from different Philosophy master's programmes. In this way, the programme manages to strike a balance between components that are more Dutch-speaking and components that are more internationally oriented. In conclusion, the panel acknowledges both reasons for the choice of English and Dutch in this programme. It finds the choice of English acceptable, but advises the programme to clearly formulate its vision at the programme level, and to monitor whether this choice remains the best one in the new structure given the stronger emphasis on practical aspects.

On the basis of the self-evaluation and the interviews conducted, the panel concludes that the motivation behind the English language of instruction and the name of the course is consistent with the primary

objective of the PSH programme: to promote interdisciplinary engagement with the philosophy of science among students from different disciplines. The University of Groningen has many English-language master's programmes in specific disciplines. English is the language through which this substantive exchange is maintained, and the students confirmed that they valued the multi-disciplinary classroom environment with its mixed discussions. The percentage of international students varies between 25-33%, contributing to a wider exchange of ideas. A further factor is that much of the specialist literature is published in English and that English enables students to attend lectures by international visiting scholars and to be taught by international staff. The panel concludes that the choice of English supports the profile of the programme and offers students added value in terms of content, with richer philosophical discussions and a connection to the international research field. However, the panel's recommendation is that this view should be made explicit and on record.

Student guidance and feasibility
Both master's programmes are small-scale and students appreciate the accessibility, the individual feedback and the support on offer. The programmes have built in a number of fixed components for student support, including a general introduction, a career morning and a compulsory thesis course. In each master's programme, students receive an explanation of the programme design and its various components from the programme coordinator in an information session at the beginning of the academic year. The programme coordinator is also a permanent point of contact for questions about the content of the programme. In addition, the faculty's master's programmes have a student adviser who assists students with the organization and planning of the programme, and with personal circumstances that may affect their studies. The International Service Desk is also available to support international students.

All students are invited to the faculty's annual careers morning, which is combined with an alumni day. This is an opportunity to learn about careers through a CV check and to meet alumni working in different sectors. This is the main provision for PSH students, alongside informal contact with lecturers and their network. It tends to be more limited than the rich opportunities offered by the MA Philosophy. The panel acknowledges that PSH students have an advantage in that they have two master's degrees and may receive some form of labour market orientation in their other master's degree. However, it considers that PSH could do more to offer guidance to students on how and where to make use of their expertise. The panel recommends exploring ways to do this. This could be done through a PSH lecture or a philosophy of a specific discipline workshop at the annual career event; the latter would also be of interest to BA FveW students.

The panel notes that in its revision, the MA Philosophy has put a lot of effort into getting students to actively reflect on their own future plans and connect them with possible professional contexts for philosophers. The MA Philosophy includes many practical components, such as Philosophy Beyond Academia, Publieksgericht Schrijven, Philosophical Interventions and the internship. Students have indicated that they find these valuable in giving them a concrete idea of how to apply their philosophical skills in future careers. The panel considers it an advantage of the new format that most of the components are available to all students and that the choice of profile is made at a later stage. Faculty members' links with civil society organizations, institutions and networks, as well as the Faculty Knowledge Centre (KCF), are also helpful in providing guidance on different career options.

In both programmes, study delays and drop-outs are on the high side. This often seems to be more related to external circumstances, such as students prioritizing their first degree. The panel did not find any evidence that the content or learning environment was a stumbling block. It also noted that there was clear attention to the feasibility of both programmes. For instance, the MA Philosophy resolved a potential problem for February entrants at the design stage of the curriculum review by moving Philosophical Interventions, the

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first course for February entrants, to block 3 and linking the start document to it. One example from PSH is that the Academic Philosophical Writing course has been moved from the second to the first block. This gives students more time to learn and develop these skills throughout the programme. The MA PSH also makes it easier to combine classes with another master's programme by offering PSH courses in the evening (after 5pm). Students appreciate this scheduling. According to the panel, student support and feasibility enable students to complete both programmes within achievable timeframes. The student-centered approach in both programmes is evident in the way in which student feedback is actively sought, in the involvement of the programme committee and in the opportunities given to students to make choices about their own study path.

Staff

The programmes are delivered by a diverse group of about 30 permanent staff and 10 temporary staff attached to the Groningen Research Institute for Philosophy (GRIPh). In the most recent research assessment, GRiPh scored excellent in all areas. All staff are active in research, and the institute conducts leading research projects. These include interdisciplinary projects such as the NWO Gravitation grant awarded to the SCOOP consortium, which involves sociologists, historians, psychologists and philosophers. Faculty staff includes 9 professors, 7 associate professors (Dutch: UHD) and 12 associate professors (Dutch: UD), reasonably distributed among the 3 departments. Permanent staff hold a Ph.D., almost all have a Basic Teaching Qualification (Dutch: BKO) and two lecturers have a Senior Teaching Qualification (Dutch: SKO). The composition of the staff is international to a high degree. On the basis of the material studied and the interviews, the panel's assessment of the quality of teaching is good and the integration of teaching and research is appreciated.

The panel notes that the members of staff publish predominantly in English and have sufficient knowledge of English to teach well. The faculty's language policy ensures a sufficient command of both Dutch and English, although learning Dutch takes time for international staff. The range of expertise is broad, including at the intersections of disciplines relevant to PSH, such as philosophy and computer science, philosophy of biology, and philosophy of psychology. The staff also conduct philosophical research with societal impact and have a wide network and links with civil society organizations to reflect the social orientation of the practical track. However, the panel notes that staff diversity is falling behind. Although the faculty has limited recruitment opportunities and encourages women to apply, the panel recommends that further action be taken to improve diversity, including gender balance, in the teaching team. In interviews and within the student chapter, students express gratitude towards staff for their expertise, enthusiasm, and approachability. The small size and relative autonomy of the faculty enhances the informal atmosphere in which collaborative learning takes place. The panel concludes that the teaching staff are competent in both subject matter and teaching skills.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the basic quality of the curriculum and teaching-learning environment of the Philosophy and Philosophy, Science and Humanities master's programmes is assured. It considers the route to graduation to be appropriately designed in both programmes.

The MA Philosophy has undergone a gradual curriculum review, fully implemented by 2023-2024. The panel found the curriculum to be logically structured and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, with due attention to the development of philosophical skills and their application within and beyond academia. In both the theoretical and practical profiles, the academic orientation is visible at master's level, complemented in the practical profile by a more explicit socially applied orientation. The panel appreciates how students are given the freedom to choose a personalized learning route based on their own motivation

and ambitions, and are given sufficient guidance to make coherent choices. Teaching takes place mainly in small-scale seminars and lectures. This encourages active learning, alternating between a more research-based approach and a more applied one. In the case of the internship, the panel feels that much is now left to the student, which can lead to unnecessary stress and delay in a one-year master's programme. Although the panel believes that a degree of self-responsibility is appropriate at master's level, it recommends that more guidance be provided before and during the internship, for example in the form of a short internship course.

The panel noted that the curriculum of the 120 EC MA PSH consists half of components from a master's programme in a specific discipline and half of components in the field of philosophy of science and philosophy of the specific discipline. The seven tracks provide a clear focus on the student's area of specialization. The panel notes that some master's programmes are less easily accommodated within the PSH curriculum and urges the programme to be sensitive to this. The programme's decision not to require prior philosophical knowledge means that students are expected to acquire a considerable amount of scientific-philosophical knowledge and skills in a short period of time. This is facilitated by the specialized focus, the courses designed specifically for the programme, and the phased structure in which many of the intended learning outcomes are covered in successive modules. The panel is of the opinion that students can acquire the knowledge and skills required to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, more could be achieved if the programme required students to have at least some philosophical knowledge prior to entering the programme. The programme is asked to consider options to make this possible (summer course, pre-master programme, minor, required reading, or other arrangements). The panel notes that the small-scale, multidisciplinary learning environment and the personalized guidance further support the learning process. Given the limited number of students, the panel believes that making attendance compulsory could be a way of improving the student experience.

On the basis of the documentation and interviews, the panel considers the choice of English as the language of instruction and programme name for both programmes to be justified in terms of content. For the MA Philosophy, the use of Dutch in practice is also valuable. The panel recommends putting the programmes' position on language on record. According to the panel, student support and feasibility enable students to complete both programmes within an achievable time frame. Students in both programmes receive the necessary support with an introduction, a career event, study advice and a defined thesis course. Labour market orientation is present in various applied forms in the MA Philosophy, which in the MA PSH is limited to the faculty's annual career event. The panel advises the MA PSH to help students understand how and where a (second) degree in philosophy from a specific discipline can be an asset. The student-centred approach of both programmes is reflected in the way in which student feedback is actively sought, the involved role of the programme committee and the opportunities given to students to make choices about their own study path. The panel considers the quality of teaching to be very good. It appreciated the breadth of expertise and the integration of teaching and research. The enthusiasm, professional competence and accessibility of the staff in the context of a small faculty are important assets for students. This is also valued by the panel.

Conclusion
The panel concludes that the programmes meet Standard 2.

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Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment policy and practice
In line with the university's assessment policy, the faculty's assessment policy aims to guide and support students in achieving the intended learning outcomes through transparent, reliable and valid assessment. The principles of assessment in the MA Philosophy and MA PSH programmes are set out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) and a faculty assessment plan. The appendices provide additional documentation relating to examinations, such as examination board rules and guidelines, thesis protocols and standard assessment forms for theses, internships, short essays and oral presentations. The faculty assessment plan indicates for each programme which intended learning outcomes are addressed in which programme components. The panel notes that the previous recommendation on learning objectives has thus been followed up in a general fashion. Since the core of this recommendation was to clarify the relationship between the learning objectives specific to each course and the intended learning outcomes at the level of the programme, the panel recommends specifying how teaching and learning activities and forms of assessment within each course are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme in a more detailed manner.

The panel is positive about the fact that each course unit contains at least two assessment components and interim feedback supports students' learning. The faculty also uses a peer review system in the design of examinations. At the time of the previous evaluation, the panel noted that the peer review of each other's examinations by lecturers was not yet carried out consistently. Following the introduction of an online form and the monitoring of this procedure by the examination board, the current panel notes that the forms viewed are in order, although feedback is usually brief. From the assessment plan and available materials, the panel concludes that the assessment forms are sufficiently appropriate and varied in relation to the intended learning outcomes, that rubrics have been developed for the main assessment forms, and that the assessment criteria are generally clear.

In keeping with the small size of the courses, both master's programmes use a variety of assessment types. All courses have more than one type of assessment. Typically, courses combine a final essay with other assessments such as a presentation, a research proposal, an essay, a book review, etc. Class participation may also be part of the assessment. The panel appreciates the increased variety of assessment in the revised MA Philosophy curriculum. The panel also discussed the impact of AI developments, such as the use of ChatGPT, on the teaching and assessment of writing skills. Recent cases of suspected cheating have resulted in learning opportunities. The examination board has issued guidelines for students and lecturers on the use of ChatGPT or similar software from 2023-2024. The programmes value good writing as a fundamental philosophical skill. They wish to retain the essay as a form of assessment and are exploring ways of guiding the writing process and encouraging self-reflection. There is also the option of writing the essay in a testing room without internet access. Since the introduction of the AI policy, students are never assessed solely on an essay or take-home assignment. The panel's view is that this is a good principle, and that it also increases the variation in assessment.

The panel met with PSH representatives to review the tutorials. At first glance, the tutorials appear to be free-form, but the panel found them to be well structured. The tutorial follows a six-session format and

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consists of the supervisor from their own discipline providing feedback on the student's work on several occasions. The supervisor uses the standard essay rubric from the assessment plan. The panel is positive about this type of assessment. The individual feedback is a valuable part of preparing for the master's thesis.

The panel discussed the link between the internship and the thesis and the assessment of the internship with MA Philosophy stakeholders. Staff members pointed out that although there is a common theme for the internship and the thesis, there are two different products that are assessed separately. For example, if a student undertakes an internship with a health insurance company on corporate social responsibility, the product required by the company is the final product of the internship. Then the master's thesis could be on the ethics of corporate social responsibility, assessed against philosophical criteria. The programme ensures that students bring a clear philosophical perspective and input to the final product of the internship. The panel appreciates that the philosophical content is safeguarded, especially given the number of credits (15 EC) of the internship. In the assessment, the final interview takes place on the basis of the internship report, with the programme supervisor giving the grade after input from the internship supervisor. The panel concludes that there is an adequate assessment procedure for the internship.

Thesis assessment
The supervision and assessment process for the master's thesis is the same for both programmes and is set out in the protocol for the master's thesis. If the supervisor considers the thesis to be satisfactory, a plagiarism check is carried out and the final version of the thesis is read by the second examiner. This will provide the supervisor with an indication of the intended mark. In the case of a fail or a deviation of more than one point, the supervisor and the student will discuss possible adjustments to the criticism of the additional examiner. These should be processed within two weeks. In exceptional circumstances, the examination board will be asked to appoint a third assessor. Following the approval of the second assessor, a final discussion will take place between the student, supervisor and second assessor, after which the latter two will jointly determine the grade on the basis of the assessment form. The panel considers the assessment procedure to be generally adequate: the protocol describes the process and assessment criteria, the principle of two sets of eyes is applied, with the additional assessor coming from a different department, plagiarism is checked, and a comprehensive faculty assessment form with a clear rubric has been produced. Grades are also explained to students in oral feedback, but on paper the motivation for the grade given is difficult to follow in a third of the theses examined. The panel generally agreed with the assessment of the selected theses. In a few cases the panel felt that a more modest mark would have been justified, although all were of a passable standard.

The panel notes that the assessment criteria cover a wide range of different grades, from one to one and a half points, and that the rationale given on the assessment forms in the thesis selection varied from very brief to extensive qualitative feedback in support of the overall assessment. According to the panel, the different handling of the assessment form is related to the fact that certain elements of the assessment procedure were not defined in detail. Examples include the implicit assumption that the thesis defence at the final assessment normally has a maximum impact of half a point on the final grade; the way in which the assessment form is used at bachelor's or master's level; the way in which assessors weigh sub-criteria against each other and whether (certain) sub-criteria should be at least sufficient. From the interviews, the panel concludes that while there is a common understanding of how assessment is usually done and what grade is appropriate, it is difficult to transfer an implicitly shared framework to new lecturers. The panel therefore recommends that both programmes specify the assessment procedure for master's theses and ensure that the assessments make clear how the assessment of different components leads to the final grade. This can be done either by improving the way in which underpinnings are written down, so that it is clear what criteria were used, or by making the assessment form and rubric more detailed. The way this is

handled is up to the programmes, but more accountability is needed to make the final grade more transparent.

Examination board
The quality of assessment and examination in the master's programmes in Philosophy and PSH is monitored by the faculty examination board. The board consists of four senior members of staff - with representation from the three departments - and one external member. The examination board meets monthly to deal with enquiries and complaints and consults throughout the year on assessment issues and policy. The panel met with the board to discuss how it fulfils its statutory duties within the MA programmes, including ensuring the quality of assessment. The board oversees the peer review system for assessments, conducts course file and thesis reviews, advises on assessment policy, and develops guidelines and protocols. The guidelines for the use of ChatGPT are a recent example. The annual report and the interview revealed that the examination board experiences high work pressure and has received some official support only since the beginning of 2023. Thanks to this support, it has been possible to catch up on its sample checks of courses and theses. The panel considers that the support provided is limited in relation to the tasks of the examination board and that the number of requests is increasing. The panel appreciates what the board has achieved with limited resources, but it should not be predominantly reactive. Examples given by the board of points of attention for ensuring assessment quality suggest to the panel that the board is aware of relevant issues and wishes to address them more promptly. The panel advises the faculty board to provide more support to the examination board so that the board can carry out its duties in a more proactive way. From the final interview, the panel concludes that the faculty board is committed to guarantee more support to the examination board.

Considerations
On the basis of the documentation and interviews, the panel concludes that the assessment system in both programmes is adequate. The panel identifies a few points for improvement, but considers that these are sufficiently outweighed by positive points and that the basic quality of assessment is assured. The panel found the types of assessment appropriate and sufficiently varied in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the increased variety of assessment in the revised MA Philosophy curriculum and observed that the assessment of the internship in the MA Philosophy is appropriately constructed. The assessment of tutorials in the MA PSH uses the standard essay rubric, which promotes consistency. The assessment programmes should provide insight into how the specific learning objectives of course units relate to the intended learning outcomes at programme level. Rubrics have been developed for the main types of assessment, peer review is used and assessment criteria are generally clear.

Positive points in the assessment of theses include the master's thesis protocol, the four-eye principle where the second assessor is from another department, the plagiarism check and guidelines for generative AI, and the comprehensive faculty assessment form with a clear rubric. The panel concludes that the assessment of master's theses is satisfactory, but would benefit from explicit detail in the underpinnings of the assessment of (sub)criteria. It therefore strongly recommends further elaborating the process for assessing master's theses and ensuring that the assessments make clear how the evaluation of different components has led to the final grade. On the basis of the interviews, the panel considers that the common understanding of the assessment procedure provides sufficient basis for this to be developed further.

The examination board fulfils its statutory safeguarding role adequately, but operates largely in a reactive mode due to limited support. This is concern that needs to be addressed. At the same time, the board has recently received support and is actively identifying relevant issues. The panel anticipates that, with improved support, the board will become more proactive in its role. The panel considers it important that

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the examination board is able to carry out its duties well and recommends that the faculty does all it can to support the board.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet Standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

> The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Prior to the visit, the panel examined a sample of 15 recently completed final works for each programme. The selection included work by full-time and part-time students. For the MA Philosophy, theses from the two tracks of the previous curriculum, Philosophy and Philosophy and Society, were included in the selection. In terms of content, this corresponds to the current theoretical and practical profile. The panel found the overall quality of the theses in the MA Philosophy to be of a decent to good standard. Especially in applied philosophy, there were a number of very good theses, and in the internship and thesis pairings, there were original combinations with a clear practical application of philosophy. The MA PSH theses examined by the panel were generally well-written theses with a clearly defined problem statement, a sound argument, and a (fairly) careful treatment of the relevant literature. However, the panel noted that not all theses showed the same degree of integration as would be expected in the philosophy of a particular discipline. As a result, the philosophical angle in a number of works remained rather superficial for a master's thesis. The panel recommends that the programme pay attention to this. Overall, the panel concludes that the final works from both programmes are of a sufficiently high master's level.

The MA Philosophy and MA PSH programmes maintain formal contact with alumni through the annual alumni day and increasingly through course units and lectures involving alumni. From the interviews and the examples given, the panel concludes that master's graduates from both programmes end up in academic-level jobs in a wide range of fields. PSH graduates can also take their next career step in a field related to the discipline of their other master's degree. The panel concludes that students on both programmes are sufficiently successful in achieving the intended learning outcomes at the end of their studies.

Considerations

In order to assess whether students had achieved the intended learning outcomes, the panel examined a sample of 15 master's theses from each master's programme. It found all theses to meet the intended master's level. However, the panel observed that some master's theses at PSH show only a limited degree of philosophical reflection on the specific discipline. Consequently, the panel recommends that the programme monitor this aspect when students begin selecting their thesis topics, but also in the evaluation criteria. On the whole, the programmes provide sufficient evidence that students achieve the learning outcomes. The panel also found that graduates of the programmes are prepared either for further education or a diverse range of careers.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet Standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel's assessment of both programmes is positive.

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Development points

MA Philosophy and MA PSH:
1. Involve the faculty advisory board and alumni more actively in defining programme objectives and content.
2. Formulate the teaching language vision for each programme and ensure substantive justification when using a different language and programme name.
3. Improve the diversity of the teaching team, including gender balance.
4. Make the link between the specific learning objectives of course units and the intended learning outcomes at course level clear in the assessment programme.
5. Describe the assessment procedure for the master's thesis in detail and ensure that the assessments make clear how the assessment of different components leads to the final grade.
6. Provide more generous support to the examination board so that it can be more proactive.

MA Philosophy:
1. Introduce more structured guidance during and towards the internship to better monitor students' progress, for example in the form of an internship course, similar to the thesis course.

MA PSH:
1. Reconsider the title of the programme as the focus is more specialized than Philosophy, Science and Humanities implies.
2. Consider including an entry requirement or some form of preparation so that students already have some basic philosophical knowledge at the start of (the philosophical part of) the programme.
3. Monitor which specific disciplines are a good fit for PSH and make choices where necessary.
4. Ensure that philosophical reflection on the specific discipline is evident in all master's theses.

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Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Appendix 1a. Programme learning outcomes MA Philosophy

Dublin Descriptors		
		Graduates of the programme have:
Knowledge & Understanding	1.	advanced knowledge of important historical and systematic questions in philosophy.
	2.	thorough knowledge of one particular philosophical topic from either a theoretical or an applied perspective;
	3.	knowledge of how philosophy is utilised outside of academia, including its application to societal issues.
		Graduates of the programme are able to:
Applying Knowledge & Understanding	4.	formulate an innovative philosophical question, either applying philosophical knowledge, methods and techniques to the analysis of public debates, policy or professional activity (practical profile), or within a philosophical specialization (theoretical profile);
	5.	execute a substantial piece of philosophical research.
		Graduates of the programme are able to:
Making Judgments	6.	critically reflect on the ethical questions and implications of philosophical approaches to societal issues;
	7.	develop and critically evaluate philosophical viewpoints and theories;
	8.	critically reflect on philosophical theories and perspectives in their application to complex societal issues.
		Graduates of the programme are able to:
Communication Skills	9.	report through structured writing the results of philosophical research for specialists;
	10.	communicate orally and/or in writing different aspects of philosophical research for a broad, non-philosophical audience or professionals.
		Graduates of the programme have:
Learning skills	11.	ability to master in a largely self-directed manner philosophical tools and methods in their application to specific issues;
	12.	ability to plan and reflect on one's own learning process in relation to one's personal and professional future;
	13.	ability to master in a largely self-directed manner skills relevant to the job-market or a subsequent academic study requiring a high degree of autonomy.

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MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities

Dublin Descriptors		Programme learning outcomes
Knowledge & Understanding		*Graduates of the programme have:*
	1.	acquired knowledge and understanding on the level of a master degree of their specific scientific or scholarly discipline;
	2.	acquired knowledge and understanding on the level of a master degree of main ideas of the history and philosophy of science, with a focus on the concepts, theories and problems in the philosophy of their specific scientific or scholarly discipline;
	3.	acquired knowledge and understanding of the social and cultural impact of philosophy in general and of the philosophy of the specific discipline in particular.
Applying Knowledge & Understanding		*Graduates of the programme are able to:*
	4.	apply philosophical logical-analytical skills and conceptual analysis, to problems, theories and debates that are related to their specific scientific or scholarly discipline, and to enrich their academic writing with a philosophical writing approach.
	5.	integrate knowledge from philosophy and their specific scientific or scholarly discipline to formulate research questions and to develop solutions to conceptual problems.
Making Judgments		*Graduates of the programme are able to:*
	6.	situate research in a specific discipline in the broader context of philosophy of the specific discipline;
	7.	reflect critically and philosophically on issues related to their specific scientific or scholarly discipline.
Communication Skills		*Graduates of the programme are able to:*
	8.	report on philosophical research in an academically sound way, to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
	9.	(and) do so both orally and in written form.
Learning skills		*Graduates of the programme have:*
	10.	developed the learning skills to allow them to continue their study in a research context in a manner that may be largely self-directed, or to function successfully within the appropriate academic or non-academic working environment.

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Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

MA Philosophy

Core modules (10 ECTS)	Philosophy Beyond Academia **66** (5 ECTS, Sem I a)	Publieksgericht schrijven **90** (5 ECTS, Sem Ib) *or* Philosophical Interventions **64** (5 ECTS, Sem II a)
Electives (25 ECTS)	5 electives, at least 1 from each Philosophy department (whole year); the other of the 2 skills courses may also count as an elective.	
Graduation Project (25 ECTS)	**Theoretical profile** 2 Specialization electives **52** (10 ECTS, whole year)	*Theoretical/disciplinary specialisation* (Sem II) Position Paper Master's thesis course and thesis **54, 55** (15 ECTS)
	Practical profile Internship, Internship report **51** (15 ECTS, whole year)	*Practical specialisation* (Sem II) Position Paper Master's thesis course and thesis **54, 55** (10 ECTS)

Appendix 3a. MA Philosophy electives 2023-2024 per philosophy department

Department of History of Philosophy

- Zhuangzi's Daoism
- Kant's Revolution in Philosophy
- What is Thinking?
- History of Science II: Intervention, Control and Scientific Error
- Philosophy of Death
- The Crisis of European Sciences
- Indian Philosophy: Consciousness
- Latin American Philosophy: Philosophy of Liberation

Department of Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy

- Arguing about Taste
- Hegel's Philosophy of Right
- Marx and Contemporary Philosophy
- Advanced Metaethics
- Consequentialism
- Social Contract Theory
- Autonomy, Authenticity, and the Brain
- Human Rights and Minority Righs

Department of Theoretical Philosophy

- Loopy Minds and 4E
- Epistemic Logic
- Philosophy of Neuroscience
- Philosophy of Climate Change
- Logical Aspects of Multi-agent Systems (F. Science & Engineering, AI)
- Feminist Epistemology
- Philosophy of Argument
- Social Epistemology of Science

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MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities

Year one

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Philosophy of your Discipline: Introduction (10 ECTS)		Philosophy of your Discipline: Specialisation (10 ECTS)	
Academic Philosophical Writing (5 ECTS)		Tutorial 1 (5 ECTS)	
Module 1 (30 ECTS of the disciplinary Master's programme)			

Year two

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
History of science I (5 ECTS)	History of science II (5 ECTS)	Master's thesis course and thesis (15 ECTS)	
	Tutorial 2 (5 ECTS)		
Module 2 (30 ECTS of the disciplinary Master programme)			

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Wednesday 8 November 2023

15.00	17.00	Preliminary panel discussion and consultation hour (online session)

Tuesday 14 November 2023

08.45	09.00	Welcome
09.00	10.30	Panel preparation session and consultation hour
10.30	11.15	Interview programme management
11.15	11.50	Panel meeting
11.50	12.40	Interview students BA Philosophy and BA FveW
12.40	13.30	Lunch and panel meeting
13.30	14.15	Interview teaching staff BA Philosophy and BA FveW
14.15	14.45	Panel meeting
14.45	15.35	Interview students MA Philosophy and MA PSH
15.35	15.45	Panel meeting
15.45	16.30	Interview teaching staff MA Philosophy and MA PSH
16.30	17.45	Panel meeting

Wednesday 15 November 2023

08.45	09.00	Arrival panel
09.00	09.45	Interview students Research Master Philosophy
09.45	09.50	Panel meeting
09.50	10.35	Interview teaching staff Research Master Philosophy
10.30	11.00	Panel meeting
11.00	11.45	Interview examination board and study advisers
11.45	12.30	Panel meeting
12.30	13.15	Lunch
13.15	14.00	Concluding session programme management
14.00	16.00	Panel prepares preliminary findings
16.00	16.45	Development dialogue
16.45	17.00	Oral feedback panel

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Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses per programme. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request. The panel also studied other materials, which included:

- Self-evaluations MA Philosophy and MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities
- NVAO report and NVAO decision RUG Philosophy (2018)
- NVAO institutional quality assurance assessment (ITK) decision University of Groningen (2019)
- Research assessment report Philosophy 2012-2017
- Strategic Plan RUG 2021-2026
- Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) MA Philosophy 2023-2024 and TER MA Philosophy, Science and Humanities 2023-2024
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: Philosophy (2019)
- Domain-specific frame of reference Philosophy (2016)
- Code of practice for Language of Instruction at the University of Groningen (Dutch/English)
- Faculty of Philosophy language policy
- Promotion policy Faculty of Philosophy, revised May 2023
- Study guide Philosophy 2023-2024
- Course materials made available in Brightspace, including a selection of student work:
  MA Philosophy:
  - Philosophy Beyond Academia
  - Philosophical Interventions on Current Issues
  - Position paper
  - Autonomy, Authenticity and the Brain (MA elective, ESPF)
  - Violence (MA elective, ESPF)
  - Death (MA elective, GF)
  - Zhuangzi's Daoism (MA elective, GF)
  - Fallacies (MA elective, TF)
  - Loopy Minds: Core Ideas of 4E Cognition (MA elective, TF)
  MA PSH:
  - PSH Introduction (podcasts)
  - PSH Academic Philosophical Writing
  - PSH Tutorials
  - PSH History of Science I
- Assessment Plan Faculty of Philosophy 2023-2024 (Dutch/English)
- University of Groningen Assessment Policy 2021-2026 (Dutch/English)
- Short teacher's guide to philosophy exams
- Syllabus example Master PSH Introduction
- Thesis assessment form
- Documentation programme committee: annual reports 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24
- Documentation Examination Board: annual reports 2020-21, 2021-22 with annex Plan working method; Faculty Guidelines ChatGPT use - Teachers (Dutch/English), Faculty Guidelines ChatGPT use - Students (Dutch/English)
- Peer reviews in electives
- Development discussion: explanation of the themes

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