Additional assessment

Criminal Law and Criminology

Faculty of Law University of Groningen

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This report was finalised on 7 August 2015.

Report on the additional assessment of the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology of the University of Groningen

This report considers the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point.

Administrative data regarding the programme

Master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology

Name of the programme: CROHO number: Level of the programme: Orientation of the programme: Number of credits:	Criminal Law and Criminology 60669 master's academic 60 EC
Number of credits: Specialisations or tracks:	60 EC N/A
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Expiration of accreditation:	28-08-2016

The visit of the assessment panel Criminal Law and Criminology to the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen took place on June 16th, 2015.

Administrative data regarding the institution

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

Composition of the assessment panel

The panel that assessed the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology consisted of:

- Prof. L.M. Moerings, LLM (chair), professor of Penology at the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology of Leiden University;
- Prof. H.G. van der Wilt, LLM, professor of International Criminal Law at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. A. de Nauw, LLM, emeritus professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure at the University of Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel);
- L.M. Noordam, LLM (student member), former master's student in law at the VU University Amsterdam (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) (now graduated).

The assessment panel was supported by J.J. Krooneman MSc, who acted as secretary and project manager.

Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the members of the assessment panel.

Brief description of the procedures

Previous assessment

On October 2nd, 2013, the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology was evaluated by an assessment panel. On December 12th, 2013, the assessment report based on the NVAO Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments was finalised. The panel assessed Standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) as 'satisfactory'. Standard 2 (Teachinglearning environment) and Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes), however, were assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. Consequently, in line with the framework's decision rules, the programme as a whole was assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. The assessment panel formulated recommendations for improvement.

Starting from these recommendations, the programme management prepared an improvement plan, which was then sent to the assessment panel for advice. The assessment panel approved it. Based on this improvement plan and the advice of the assessment panel, NVAO decided to extend the programme's accreditation and to grant the programme an improvement period during which it had to implement adjustments in order to fulfil the criteria for accreditation. The same assessment panel which assessed the programme in 2013 was requested to perform an additional evaluation in 2015.

In this additional assessment, the assessment panel concentrated on Standard 2 (Teachinglearning environment) and Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes).

Preparations

In preparation for the additional evaluation, the programme management provided an implementation report. After the project manager checked the report for completeness, it was forwarded to the members of the assessment panel.

The programme management also provided nine theses (Appendix 5), which were completed during the improvement period. They were distributed among the panel members. According to the NVAO guidelines, the panel should study fifteen theses. However, in consultation with NVAO and the chair of the panel, it was agreed that the nine available theses provided sufficient insight into the outcome of the imposed improvement measures.

The project manager designed a site visit programme, which she discussed with the chair of the assessment panel and the policy officer of educational affairs.

Site visit

During the preparatory meeting, held at the start of the site visit, the assessment panel received brief instructions regarding the NVAO's assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system and its points of departure for the assessment of programmes granted an improvement period. It also discussed its working method, the findings from the implementation report and the thesis evaluations. Its members requested additional information regarding the marketing strategy on the 'Global Criminal Law' track.

Immediately after the preparatory meeting, interviews were held with representatives of the programme management, students, teachers and the Boards of Examiners.

The site visit concluded with an oral presentation of the preliminary findings by the chair of the assessment panel, consisting of a general assessment and several specific observations and impressions of the improvement period.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary prepared a draft report based on the findings of the assessment panel. This draft was circulated to the assessment panel members for feedback. After processing their feedback, the draft report was forwarded to the programme management to check for factual irregularities. The draft report was then sent to all panel members, who had the opportunity to review the content of the report again, and submit their final agreement. The report was finalised a day later.

Decision rules

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments (as of 22 November 2011), the committee used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

Generic quality

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.

Unsatisfactory

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

Satisfactory

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

Good

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum.

Excellent

The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum and is regarded as an (inter)national example.

Summary judgement

On October 2nd, 2013, the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology was evaluated by an assessment panel. The panel assessed Standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) as 'satisfactory'. Standard 2 (Teaching-learning environment) and Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes), however, were assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. Consequently, in line with the framework's decision rules, the programme as a whole was assessed as 'unsatisfactory'.

On June 16th, 2015, the assessment panel again visited the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology in order to find out whether the suggested improvement measures had been implemented successfully. Since Standard 1 had already been assessed as 'satisfactory', the panel focussed on Standards 2 and 3.

The panel found that the intended learning outcomes were adequately redefined. In addition, a new compulsory course had been introduced, *Introduction to Criminology*, and a renowned criminology expert appointed. To target the low intake rates of the programme, an Associate Dean and marketing advisor were appointed to help implement the strategy.

The Boards of Examiners now analyse the intended learning outcomes for each course, verify whether all intended learning outcomes are embedded in the course material, and randomly check exams. The panel confirmed an improvement in the assessment cycle. The new thesis assessment form has an explicit request asking the examiner(s) to elaborate on the marking criteria and to assess and grade them individually. The panel read nine theses that had been produced since the previous assessment. Although the panel argues that the overall grading is somewhat on the high side, the level of the theses is of a satisfactory academic quality. The panel confirms that the theses and assessments have improved and that the intended learning outcomes are realised upon graduation.

The panel assesses the standards from the Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments in the following way:

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes	satisfactory

General conclusion

satisfactory

The chair and the secretary of the assessment panel hereby declare that all members of the panel have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in it. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 7 August 2015

ooneway

Prof. L.M. Moerings, LLM

J.J. Krooneman, MSc

Additional description of standards 2 and 3 from the Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Explanation:

The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

Relevant issues of the 2013 assessment

In 2013, the assessment panel studied the teaching-learning environment of the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology. It stated that the curriculum was organised in a clear and coherent manner. The courses showed an obvious development in terms of level and difficulty. However, the panel was rather concerned about the position of criminology in the curriculum. It found that some criminal law courses showed ambitious and commendable attempts to integrate notions from criminology, while other courses were primarily oriented towards criminal law. For example, the International and Comparative Criminology course offered students an introduction to some of the main methods and themes from international and comparative criminology. Unfortunately, the students had not been familiarised with the basic methods and perspectives from criminology. Since most incoming students did not have a background in criminology, the panel argued that the course was too advanced. It therefore recommended that the programme management should adjust the learning outcomes for criminology; amend the programme and assessment to match these newly developed learning outcomes; if possible, increase the attention paid to criminology in individual courses; and introduce an extra course in basic criminology. It felt that the input of a criminology expert with a solid academic background had to be part of the adjustment process.

During its site visit in 2013, the assessment panel also studied the facilities, staff, intake, feasibility, didactical principle and tutoring system of the master's programme. It concluded that the programme was feasible, the study load evenly distributed, the facilities and the tutoring system well organised, and the teaching staff consisted of accessible, enthusiastic and professional experts offering students a safe and challenging environment. The teacher-student ratio was acceptable, and adequate attention was paid to course and programme evaluations. The panel noted that the Programme Committee had to be more involved in the programme-oriented quality assurance. At the time of the site visit, the Programme Committee met only once a year to discuss general topics of concern applicable to more than one educational programme. Its involvement in the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology turned out to be rather limited. In addition, the panel found that the low intake was a point of concern. Only five students enrolled in the programme in 2009 and only seven students in 2012.

Findings in 2015

From the report describing the implementation of the improvement plan, the assessment panel learned that the final attainment levels in the intended learning outcomes have been amended and re-written (Appendix 2). According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes are adequately redefined, as it also stated in its agreement with the improvement plan.

The panel is also pleased to find that a new compulsory course has been introduced called *Introduction to Criminology*. This course is embedded in the first semester and teaches students a range of criminological theories and the characteristics of empirical criminal research. It familiarises students with the basic knowledge and methodology in criminology, providing them with adequate skills to follow the *International and Comparative Criminology* course, which is now taught in the second semester. To avoid making the second semester too burdensome, the *International Criminal Tribunals* course has been moved to the first semester (Appendix 3). The content and methods of the new *Introduction to Criminology* course appeal to the panel. During the site visit, students confirmed that the course contributes to a stimulating learning environment. During the lectures, the students participate in discussions on a range of topics, and at the end of the course, they are confronted with a written exam. The panel stresses the importance of continuing this course and its structural embeddedness in the curriculum.

The panel welcomes the appointment of Professor Alette Smeulders, a renowned criminology expert with an international reputation and an extremely strong track record of publications. She delivers the *Introduction to Criminology* course as well as the *International and Comparative Criminology* course.

Regarding the action plan targeted at the low intake rates, several steps have been realised. Professor Oscar Couwenberg has been appointed Associate Dean of the English programmes in order to strategically reposition the English-taught programmes. Dr. Chris Bennan has been appointed marketing advisor to help implement this strategy.

In addition, a new LLM track 'Global Criminal Law' has been created, with a focus on criminal law, integrating criminological aspects in its courses. The co-existence of two tracks, one offering separate courses in criminology and one incorporating aspects of criminology in criminal law courses, is an explicit strategic experiment to assess which track is most attractive to students and thus most suited to enlarge the student intake. The panel is rather amazed by the marketing strategy to offer the 'Global Criminal Law' track in the near future. The available information about this new track was limited and the panel stresses that it is not its formal task to judge future plans. It worries that in this new track the criminology aspect might be pushed further into the background. The current strategy suggests that the *Introduction to Criminology* course is only recommended, rather than compulsory, for participation in the 'Global Criminal Law' track. During the site visit, the programme management explained that in the future students should be able to receive a Criminal Law and Criminology diploma, with a specialisation in Global Criminal Law. The panel is of the opinion that the programme's name is adequate for its current situation, but doubts whether this would still be the case when the new track were to be introduced.

Nevertheless, the panel is enthusiastic about the appointment of Professor Couwenberg and Dr. Chris Bennan, and it appreciates their efforts to increase the student intake. During the site visit, the students argued that they can play a role in increasing applications: they could

function as ambassadors of the programme, probably through an alumni relations office. The panel is supportive of this student perspective.

There have been no changes regarding the position and functioning of the Programme Committee since the site visit in 2013. However, the panel notes that the current quality assurance cycle is adequately organised. During the site visit, the students confirmed that they receive an evaluation form after each course. In some cases there is an oral evaluation as well. Students are also updated about the implementation of the feedback they provide, and in the interview with the panel, they gave examples of adjustments in the course as a result of their feedback.

Conclusion

Master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology : the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Explanation:

The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students.

Relevant issues of the 2013 assessment

During the site visit in 2013, the assessment panel studied the assessment system and achieved learning outcomes. It concluded that an adequate assessment policy had been put into place by the Faculty of Law, covering the role of assessment, assessment forms and assessment moments. In addition, clear procedures for assessment, supervision and revision had been established. On a programme level, the forms of examination varied, and the assessment was consistent with the educational goals of the courses. Two Boards of Examiners were responsible for the assessment system: a central board for the Faculty of Law, and a board for the five international master's programmes of the Faculty of Law. The panel found that the board for the five international master's programmes dealt with requests for dispensation, special exam regulations and fraud. The central board focused on general assessment procedures within the Faculty of Law and was responsible for guaranteeing the realisation of the final attainment levels. The assessment panel valued the centralisation of research on the quality of the exams and theses in the Faculty of Law. The distance between the central board and the programme ensured independent and critical evaluation. However, the panel recommended that the central board should consult experts when assessing theses in fields not represented on the board. Furthermore, it strongly recommended the implementation of an assessment cycle, ensuring that all exams of the programme are tested on a regular basis. Finally, it advised the central board to look into exams with exceptionally high success rates.

The panel looked closely into the procedures and assessment of the master's thesis. It concluded that the thesis guidance and procedures were well organised. However, it was rather critical about the thesis assessment form. It found the form very limited since it only included a short justification of the mark and the signature of the supervisor and second assessor. There were no explicit criteria for the assessment.

Regarding the content of the theses, the panel determined that the majority were of a proper academic level and that overall the theses were graded adequately. Nevertheless, it concluded that the students hardly integrated criminology in their thesis, and therefore it stated that the students were not sufficiently equipped to independently write an academic thesis extensively integrating criminology. Strictly speaking, the theses did not test the students' knowledge and skills in criminology, and therefore the panel stated that it could not be claimed that the ambitious intended learning outcomes for criminology were met.

Findings in 2015

During the site visit in 2015, members of the Boards of Examiners explained that they analyse the intended learning outcomes for each course, verify whether all intended learning

outcomes are embedded in the course material, and randomly check exams. They added that all exams are also checked by a teacher who has at least ten years of teaching experience or holds the UTQ (University Teaching Qualification). Exams with exceptionally high success rates are only analysed when the course is attended by 50 or more students. In the case of Criminal Law and Criminology, the number of students is low, and therefore the high success rates are not always subject to further investigation. Instead, the boards randomly check the exam results of the master's programme. The panel confirms an improvement in the assessment cycle, but it stresses the importance of safeguarding the criminology aspect in the content of the courses.

As explained in the implementation report, the master's programme now has explicit marking criteria for the assessment and grading of the theses. The new thesis assessment form explicitly requests the examiner(s) to elaborate on the marking criteria and to assess and grade them individually. This enhances the comparability of the thesis grades and supports a discussion about the minimum level of a master's thesis. The panel appreciates the new thesis assessment form and considers the new marking criteria an improvement. Unfortunately, the new assessment forms had not been used for the theses the panel studied. However, in general the grade was higher and more extensively justified than in 2013.

The panel read nine theses that had been produced since the previous assessment. Although it argues that the overall grading is somewhat on the high side, the level of the theses is of satisfactory academic quality. A variety of topics and styles was encountered: some students were able to keep the reader's attention, while others struggled with the use of English. The issue of a lack of criminology in the theses has been solved as it is now no longer a requirement. The intended learning outcomes have been redefined, and the criminology aspect is only embedded in course work. From the current thesis selection, only one thesis included notes on criminology. Two new theses will include a criminology aspect, however, one of the teachers explained. The panel would like the programme management to encourage students to embed criminology in their final work, but it also confirms that the theses and assessments have improved and that the intended learning outcomes are realised upon graduation.

Conclusion

Master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology : the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

General conclusion

While the assessment panel in 2013 had doubts regarding the embeddedness of criminology in the curriculum, this is no longer the case in 2015. The intended learning outcomes have been re-written, and a new compulsory general course provided by a criminology expert has been introduced. In addition, its low intake rates are being targeted, and the students receive regular course evaluations.

Although the panel initially questioned the assessment cycle, it confirms that several improvements have been made. The Boards of Examiners analyse the intended learning outcomes for each course, verify whether all intended learning outcomes are embedded in the course material, and randomly check exams. The master's programme now has explicit marking criteria for the assessment and grading of the theses. The panel read nine theses that had been produced since the previous assessment. It confirmed that the theses and assessments have improved and that the intended learning outcomes are realised upon graduation.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the master's programme Criminal Law and Criminology as 'satisfactory'.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Curricula vitae of the members of the assessment panel

Prof. L.M. Moerings, LLM (chair), is professor of Penology at the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology of Leiden University. He studied sociology and law and wrote his thesis about the social consequences of imprisonment. He was a part-time judge at the criminal court of Arnhem (until November 1, 2013) and is currently chair of the prison section of the Council for the application of criminal law and youth protection, an advisory board for the Minister of Security and Justice.

Prof. H.G. van der Wilt, LLM, is professor of International Criminal Law at the University of Amsterdam. He studied criminal law at the VU University Amsterdam and defended his PhD on the labour unions' freedom in Latin America in light of the standards of the ILO at Maastricht University. He has been involved in legal training programmes in Nizjni Novgorod (Russia) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). He has published on extradition, terrorism, concepts of criminal responsibility in international criminal law, and the national prosecution of international crimes. Currently, he is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of International Criminal Justice* and of the *Netherlands Yearbook of International Law*. Moreover, he is a part-time judge in the Chamber of International Co-operation in Criminal Matters of the District Court of Amsterdam.

Prof. A. de Nauw, LLM, is emeritus professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure at the University of Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). He obtained his doctorate in criminal procedure in 1976. He also holds a degree in Criminology. He was a public prosecutor (1976-1982) and later a member of the bar in Brussels (1988-2004). Since 2001 he has been a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Art of Belgium.

L.M. Noordam, LLM, obtained her master's degree in Law (with distinction) in 2013, with a specialisation in Criminal Law at the VU University Amsterdam. During her studies she worked as a student-assistant at the Department of Criminal Law of VU University. Currently, she is employed as a legal counsellor at USG Legal Professionals.

	 A. Know insigh B. Skills attituc C. Study orrient careei 	Compul	ECTS	6	6	6	6	6	18	6
levels	Knowledge and insight Skills and attitude Study orientation and careers guidance	Compulsory modules	Module name	Comparative Criminal Law	Introduction to Criminology	International and Comparative Criminology	Proof, Evidence and Law	International Criminal Tribunals	Master's thesis LLM CLC	Seminar Int. Cooperation in Criminal
	and understanding of substantive criminal law, , international criminal law and basic knowledge and ology in an international context through a deepening and understanding acquired during the Bachelor's phase tion at master level in criminology;	procedural criminal law understanding of crimin of the legal knowledge a	A1	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х		Х
	and understanding to solve problems in a new or within broader or multidisciplinary context related to ology		A2	Х		Х	Х	Х		X
	hension and understanding of the wider international al law and criminology function and the role they have		A3	Х		Х	Х	Х		X
	ently collect, evaluate and apply relevant legislation, uture related to a complex problem of criminal law, ogical aspects		B1		Х	Х	Χ	Х	Х	X
	independent academic legal research in the field of e a societally relevant contribution to the development		B2		Х	Х	Χ	Х	Х	X
	dently engage in academic discourse with colleagues	The ability to indepen regarding criminal law	B3		Х	Х			Х	X
	a complex argument concerning criminal law up of colleagues and the public in written and spoken		B 4			Х			Х	X
	n the career perspective	Knowledge and insight	C 1	Х						
C	ents that are needed, as a result of the permanent and ositive law, for self-study and personal decision-making		C2			Х			X	Χ

Period	ry Courses Type	Code	Name	Language	ECTS	Hours
semester I	compulsory	RGASR50106	Comparative Criminal Law	English	6	2
	compulsory	RGMSR01206	International Criminal Tribunals	English	6	2
	compulsory	RGMSR50106	Proof, evidence and law	English	6	2
semester I a	compulsory	RGMCR50206	Introduction to Criminology	English	6	
semester II	compulsory	RGMCR50106	Internat. and Comparative Criminology	English	6	2
	compulsory		Master's thesis LL.M.: CLC	English	18	variable
	compulsory	RGMSR50206	Seminar Int Co- operation in Crim Matters	English	6	2
whole year	compulsory		Optional Courses CLC	English	6	variable
Remarks	 Five comp A minimu Thesis (1 This program admitted by 	im of one option 8 EC). nme is only acce the Admissions	50 EC: and a compulsory semi al courses (minimum o essible to those studen Board. More information be found on www.ru	f 6 EC); ts that have t on about the	been fu program	lly mmes and

Programme overview 2014-2015 Criminal Law and Criminology

Appendix 4: Programme of the site visit

Programme of the site visit for	r the additional assessment Criminal Law and C	Criminology (60669)
	Room: Facu	Date: June 16 th , 2015 University of Groningen Iteitskamer Geneeskunde uilding: Academiegebouw
13.00-15.00Note: the preparatory meeting took place in a different location: Curatorenkamer, Academiegebouw.15.00-15.30	Preparatory meeting, studying documents, lunch. Interview with the programme management - Prof. Jan Berend Wezeman (dean) - Prof. Caroline I. Fournet - Prof. Hein D. Wolswijk - Prof. Oscar Couwenberg	Panel members Prof. Martin Moerings (chair) Prof. Harmen van der Wilt Prof. Alain de Nauw Lisette Noordam, LLM (student member)
15.30-16.00	Interview with students - Jean Claude Rwibasira - Ulrike Wenzel - Suzanne Schot	
16.00-16.30	Break and internal panel meeting	-
16.30-17.00	Interview with teachers - Prof. Caroline I. Fournet - Prof. Alette L. Smeulers - Prof. Hein D. Wolswijk - Mr. Kai K. Lindenberg	
17.00-17.30	Interview with the Boards of Examiners - Prof. Frank M.J. Verstijlen - Eva W. Kappelhof, LLM - Jacolien Wubs - Dr. André J.J. de Hoogh	
17.30-18.15	Internal panel meeting	
18.20-18.40	 Presentation of preliminary findings Prof. Jan Berend Wezeman (dean) Prof. Caroline I. Fournet Prof. Hein D. Wolswijk Prof. Oscar Couwenberg 	

Appendix 5: Theses and documents studied by the assessment panel

Prior to the site visit, the assessment panel studied the theses of the students with the following student numbers:

2166798	2264137	2008904
2374048	2546078	2318261
2281503	2061309	2005840

During the site visit, the assessment panel studied the following additional documents:

- Academic year 2015-2016: Track Global Criminal Law. Set up of the track Global Criminal Law as discussed in the management team;
- Academic year 2015-2016: Track Global Criminal Law: Set up of the track Global Criminal Law from the digital database 2015-2016;
- Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, the University of Groningen. Assessment report from December 2013;
- International Marketing & Recruitment Activity. Briefing January 1st to May 31st 2015.
 Presented to the Board of the Faculty of Law. Created by Chris Brennan & Oscar Couwenberg.