

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

FACULTY OF SPATIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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This report was finalised on 4 October 2019.

REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Master's programme Economic Geography

Name of the programme:	Economische Geografie
International name of the programme:	Economic Geography
CROHO number:	60657
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Regional Competitiveness and Trade
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Human Geography and Urban Planning to the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 2019.

The programme's management proposes to change the CROHO programme name, see Standard 1.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

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

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 11 February 2019. The panel that assessed the master's programme Economic Geography consisted of:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society, Wageningen University;
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology [referee].

The panel was supported by drs. Mariette Huisjes, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The master's programme Economic Geography at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Human Geography and Urban Planning. In April and May 2019 the panel assessed nineteen programmes at four universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, Utrecht University and Radboud University.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Drs. J. (Judith) Borsboom-van Beurden, senior researcher Smart Sustainable Cities at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway);
- Dr. L.B.J. (Lianne) van Duinen, project manager at the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli);
- Dr. C.J. (Kees-Jan) van Klaveren, senior auditor and data protection officer at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society at Wageningen University & Research;
- Prof. dr. F.J.A. (Frank) Witlox, professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography at Ghent University (Belgium);
- J. (Jim) Klooster BSc, master's student Economic Geography at the University of Groningen [student member];
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- N.J.F. (Niek) Zijlstra, bachelor's student Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology [referee assessment University of Groningen].

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

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Irene Conradie. She also acted as secretary in the site visit of the University of Amsterdam. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at all site visits. All draft reports were checked by QANU. Dr. Meg van Bogaert and drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretaries for QANU, acted as secretaries to the site visit of the University of Groningen. Dr. Meg van Bogaert also acted as secretary in the site visits of Utrecht University and Radboud University. Dr. Marijn Hollestelle, employee of QANU, was present at the site visit of Utrecht University, specifically for the ECA assessment report of quality in internationalisation of the master's programme International Development Studies. The project manager and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 18 February 2019, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework.

A preparatory panel meeting was also organised on 18 February 2019. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed the domain specific framework.

A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 4 for the final schedule.

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

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms for the programmes. Because of the large number of programmes at the University of Groningen site visit, the selection consisted of ten theses per programme. This was in agreement with the additional conditions for an adjusted thesis selection (i.e. ascertainable overlap between the programmes and a shared Board of Examiners) set by the NVAO. The selection was based on a provided list of graduates between 2016-2018. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project manager and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 2019.

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

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 5. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners and the Programme Committee. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

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

Report

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

Definition of judgements standards

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

Generic quality

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



Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

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

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

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

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

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

Negative

In the following situations:

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

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The panel finds the master's programme Economic Geography (EG) to be well-positioned and well-defined, with a narrow, but solid frame. It considers the programme's focus to be justifiable and of great societal value, since its graduates are trained to address regional disparities in the capacity of researcher, policy maker or advisor. At a time when the region is of growing importance, such a programme is right on target. The panel finds the master track Regional Competitiveness and Trade, set up together with the Faculty of Economics, a good initiative. It does suggest that synergies could be found closer to home, with other programmes within the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. It recommends that the programme look into this.

It confirmed that the intended learning outcomes mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference (DSFR), even though they do not mention it explicitly. It found that the programme's level and orientation, as expressed in the intended learning outcomes, align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme, as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. It agrees with the programme that the main challenge for the coming years is to let the intended learning outcomes grow with the programme's nascent international profile. Finally, the proposal of the programme to use only the English name is supported by the panel.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel found that the Economic Geography curriculum has a consistent build-up of courses and well-designed learning trajectories. It likes the fact that the programme makes use of its surroundings, but at the same time manages to take local themes to a higher abstraction level and position them as examples of international developments. It recommends that the programme's lecturers and coordinators ensure that topical and important themes such as ecological, social, political and cultural tensions do not become overshadowed by topics such as growth and competitiveness. In this respect synergy with other programmes within the faculty (or university) could be sought, as suggested under standard 1. The panel would like to stimulate the synergy between programmes in a wider sense as well, in order to guarantee that opportunities for sharing best practices are fully explored.

Since 2014, less than 10% of all students has finished the Economic Geography programme in the nominal period of one academic year. The panel established that this is not because of a lack of feasibility, but the students' own choice. They prefer to spend more than the nominal time on their studies, filling it in with extra activities, such as an extracurricular internship combined with a master's thesis. The panel recognises the faculty's efforts to facilitate internships within the programme, but recommends taking these one step further, by giving students who wish to do an internship more support and guidance.

The panel established that the teaching staff is well qualified and that there are enough lecturers to enable students to realise the intended learning outcomes. The ideal of an international and diverse teaching staff that the faculty cherishes has not yet been fully realised. An overwhelming majority of the Economic Geography staff is male and Dutch. The panel encourages the programme to remain alert to this point. The panel also encourages the programme to step up its collaboration with other programmes and to learn from their best practices.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the Economic Geography programme is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by intensifying a shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of ten master's theses and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and within the



programmes. The panel recommends one thesis assessment procedure in all master's programmes. This enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In the panel's view, thesis assessment forms with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that the students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme. It found that in some theses, the focus is a little too narrow; attention to the wider context would have improved their academic quality. A 2016 survey shows that 80% of all graduates in the Economic Geography programme acquire a relevant job within six months after graduation. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Economic Geography programme to society.

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

Master's programme Economic Geography

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

The chair, prof. dr. Leo de Haan, and the secretary, drs. Mariette Huisjes, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 4 October 2019

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

Context

The master's programme Economic Geography is one of nine programmes offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen. Within the faculty, four departments are responsible for research and teaching in a specific discipline: Demography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Population Studies), Economic Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Economic Geography, master's programme Real Estate Studies), Cultural Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Cultural Geography) and Spatial Planning (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Socio-Spatial Planning, master's programme Environmental and Infrastructural Planning). The Faculty Board is responsible for all research and teaching at the faculty. It is chaired by the dean. The Economic Geography and Real Estate programmes share a Programme Committee, as well as the Socio-Spatial Planning and Environmental and Infrastructural Planning programmes. The other programmes all have their own Programme Committees. The Programme Committees advise the management as to how to safeguard the quality of each programme. The faculty has one Board of Examiners.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

Profile

The panel finds the master's programme Economic Geography to be well-positioned and well-defined. The programme focusses on socioeconomic disparities between regions, as the outcome of the interplay between spatial behaviour of people and firms, and local conditions, including institutional arrangements. The programme uses a clear quantitative perspective. This is a narrow, but solid frame in the panel's view. The panel considers this perspective to be justifiable and of great societal relevance. At a time when the region is a spatial phenomenon of growing importance, a programme such as this is right on target. Its graduates are ready to address regional disparities in the capacity of researcher, policy maker or advisor.

Together with the Faculty of Economics, the programme started a master's track in Regional Competitiveness and Trade, which harbours more elements of Economics and Business Administration, and a more deductive approach compared to the broader master's programme. The panel considers this a good initiative. It does suggest that the Economic Geography programme could also find synergies with other programmes in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, and recommends that the management look into this.

The Domain-Specific Framework of Reference for the human geography and urban and regional planning domain in the Netherlands was updated for this review by the four participating universities. The panel noticed, however, that although some programmes refer to the framework of the Association of European Schools of Planning, none makes explicit use of the Dutch framework to position itself. The panel is of the opinion that the Dutch framework could be a useful tool to position the eight programmes in relation to each other and the broader discipline.



Intended learning outcomes

Since 2012, the faculty has had an advisory board consisting of alumni from all master's programmes, which meets two to three times a year. Thus, the faculty management remains well informed on recent developments in the labour market and appropriate desirable changes in the intended learning outcomes. The panel finds this a good practice. In addition, the faculty has long-standing connections to partners from the professional field and numerous guest lecturers. This allows the programme to include the developments in, and wishes from, the professional field.

The panel studied the intended learning outcomes, which were fully revised for the 2017-2018 academic year in order to match the faculty's current research profile and topical debates in society. It confirmed that they mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference, even though they do not mention it explicitly. It also found that the programme's level and orientation align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. It agrees with the programme that the main challenge for the coming years is to let the intended learning outcomes grow with the nascent international profile. When the number of international students and staff members grows, the programme may wish to incorporate explicit elements of cross-country comparison into the intended learning outcomes, or add specific learning outcomes that build on diverse perspectives on regional development and disparities.

Proposed name change

At the time of the site visit, the programme had two CROHO names, one in Dutch (Economische Geografie) and one in English (Economic Geography). Taking the international profile and English as the medium of instruction into consideration, the programme prefers to use only the English name. The panel understands this motivation and agrees with it. It verified that no changes in the curriculum are made as a result of the proposed name. It considers the proposed name change to be adequate and should be approved for the master's programme Economic Geography.

Considerations

The panel finds the master's programme Economic Geography to be well-positioned and well-defined, with a narrow, but solid frame. It considers the programme's focus to be justifiable and of great societal value, since its graduates are trained to address regional disparities in the capacity of researcher, policy maker or advisor. At a time when the region is of growing importance, such a programme is right on target. The panel finds the master track Regional Competitiveness and Trade, set up together with the Faculty of Economics, a good initiative. It does suggest that synergies could be found closer to home, with other programmes within the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. It recommends that the programme look into this.

It confirmed that the intended learning outcomes mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference, even though they do not mention it explicitly. It found that the programme's level and orientation, as expressed in the intended learning outcomes, align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme, as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. It agrees with the programme that the main challenge for the coming years is to let the intended learning outcomes grow with the programme's nascent international profile. Finally, the proposal of the programme to use only the English name is supported by the panel.

Conclusion

Master's programme Economic Geography: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings*Curriculum content and structure*

The core curriculum for the master's programme Economic Geography consists of five compulsory courses. 'Economic Geography: Theory and Application' (5 EC) and 'Spatial Economics' (5 EC) introduce the current state of the field of economic geography. The former explicitly aims to link theory to the practice of policy making, while the latter assesses how individual spatial behaviour by people and firms shapes regional outcomes. The thematic focus of the programme is represented in the 'Regional Labour Market Dynamics' (5 EC) and 'Infrastructure, Economy & Space' (5 EC) courses. Finally, the core curriculum includes the 'Advanced Statistical Analysis' (5 EC) course, which reflects the emphasis on quantitative empirical methods in the programme. This course runs parallel to the master's thesis project (20 EC). Finally, two electives (5 EC each) allow students to develop their personal profile. In the Regional Competitiveness and Trade track, the compulsory core programme is the same as that of the broader master's programme. Instead of taking electives, students work on their regional science profile, with courses on 'Growth & Development Policies' (5 EC) and 'New Economic Geography' (5 EC). Furthermore, this track has its own methodological course: 'Spatial Econometrics' (5 EC). The panel looked into these curricula and found that the Economic Geography curriculum and the Regional Competitiveness and Trade track have a consistent build-up of courses and well-designed learning trajectories.

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences chooses to offer two bachelor's and six master's curricula that are substantively related as separate programmes, instead of tracks within one overarching bachelor's and one master's programme. The panel discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this decision with the faculty management. A positive consequence is that now each of the programmes is at liberty to establish its own profile and recruit students that match the profile in a goal-oriented way. A potential challenge resulting from the decision to offer separate programmes is that it may create a hurdle to communicate and collaborate across the boundaries of programmes and (particularly) departments. This is especially the case because many lecturers work within one programme. The fact that there are clear boundaries may impede the sharing of best practices and learning from one another, thus moving all programmes forward. The panel is of the opinion that the faculty does not fall in this trap, mainly because of the enthusiastic teaching staff, who intuitively and informally maintain a cycle of innovation and evaluation across programmes. The faculty manages to attract staff members who fit well into this approach, that supports the quality and improvement culture. The panel would like to stimulate the synergy between programmes even further, to guarantee that opportunities to share best practices are fully explored. It recommends a framework that ensures a minimal level of formal embedding. For example, the six programme committees could structurally meet, which they do not do now.

The panel appreciates that the programme makes use of its regional surroundings, without in any way adopting a too narrow scope. On the one hand, it cherishes a fertile cooperation with local firms and government institutions for guest lectures, field work, internships and relevant case studies. On the other, it manages to take local themes to a higher abstraction level and position them as examples of international developments. The panel considers this a wise and successful practice.

Like the other programmes at the faculty, Economic Geography embraces a research-driven approach. This means that the content of individual courses builds on the expertise and research of the staff members involved in teaching them. The panel studied the course literature for the Economic Geography programme and found it to be up to standard, with a good mix of books and articles. Even though the programme's focus is narrow, the students told the panel that they encounter a wide variety of subjects, which they thoroughly enjoy. The panel recommends that the programme's lecturers and coordinators ensure that topical and important themes such as ecological, social,



political and cultural tensions do not become overshadowed by topics such as growth and competitiveness. In this respect synergy can be found in other programmes within the faculty (or university), as suggested under Standard 1.

In order to become successful researchers, students need a solid basis in methodology. Depending on the objective of the different programmes at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, there is a different balance in quantitative and qualitative methodology courses. The Economic Geography programme predominantly focuses on quantitative methods. For instance, the 'Advanced Qualitative Methods' course has moved to the faculty's Leeuwarden annex. Because of the travel distance, this creates a barrier for many students, holding them back from choosing this course as an elective. The panel suggests reconsidering the decision to move the Advanced Qualitative Methods course, so as to enhance the opportunities to use mixed methods in research projects. In addition, it invites the programme to carefully reconsider the position of the 'Advanced Statistical Analyses' course in the curriculum. This course is now taught relatively late, in the third term (2A). Although students told the panel they do not have problems with taking the methodology course while already working on their master's thesis, the panel suspects that it would be better if students already know the different methodological options before deciding which of them they want to use in their theses.

Teaching methods and feasibility

The faculty's didactic vision emphasises learning rather than teaching. As a consequence, the programmes aim for an active learning environment in which knowledge development, experimentation, field work and shared learning experiences take up a central position. The research-driven approach that the Economic Geography programme advocates also entails that students are active participants in their learning processes. Four of the six courses in the core programme feature a project-based research assignment, in which students are asked to put theories into practice. For instance, they pick a city for which they work out how entrepreneurship can contribute to four different future scenarios. All students take a field trip to Brussels, since much of the regional policy they will be working with emanates from the EU offices. Twice a year the faculty organises a Graduate Research Day, at which recent graduates of all master's programmes present their research in different ways (the best theses in plenary presentations, others in parallel meetings or poster presentations). The panel found that the students look forward to this day. It is a good way to showcase their final projects and also bring the different programmes together.

In the interviews, the students mentioned the wide array of teaching methods (lectures, small groups, students giving their own presentation, field work) and the many examples taken from real life as positive features of the programme. One aspect that could be improved, in the students' view, is to replace some of the group work with individual assignments, since they find group work is a little overrepresented. The Brussels trip, on the other hand, is seen as a highlight, during which students take part in a budget negotiation game and get a feel for how policy making works. The panel finds that the Economic Geography programme does well in terms of the diversity of teaching methods used, and encourages it to continue its emphasis on active learning.

The panel is very positive about the fact that the faculty publishes the results of student evaluations of all courses on Nestor. This clearly reflects a quality culture within the faculty, and shows the students that their input is taken seriously, valued and used to improve the quality of education. The panel thinks that this attitude and method add significantly to the high response rates to course evaluations (85%). If a course evaluation suggests a course is not up to scratch, then the programme management forms a student panel to discuss this with the lecturer. He or she subsequently writes a reflection report, which is also published on Nestor. The panel finds this a good practice.

Since 2014, less than 10% of all students have finished the Economic Geography programme in the nominal period of one academic year. The programme management researched the reasons for this and concluded that the delay is mostly due to postponement of the master's thesis. This is done for a variety of reasons, most of which involve accepting a voluntary delay. The panel interviewed the students about this matter and reached the same conclusion. They don't see the need to rush and

prefer to spend more than the nominal time on their studies, filling it in with extra activities. They say the work load in this programme is doable, with the exception of the second semester, which is too intensive according to some students. The panel established that the programme management is already tackling this problem.

There is one thing the programme could do to increase its feasibility, however. Quite a few master's students felt the need to gain practical experience outside of the university. The panel found that the faculty is still finding its way in meeting this need. Two years ago, all master's programmes introduced the possibility to do a 5 EC internship (either replacing an elective or as an extracurricular activity). For this course, well-defined learning goals were developed, as well as a procedure to achieve these goals. But as the course guide itself warns students, 'only proactive students will be able to finish this course, because there is little facilitation from the faculty'. Most students choosing an internship now prefer a different route, namely combining research for an organisation with their master's thesis. For this route, there is no clearly outlined procedure. Some students told the panel that they had trouble fitting such an internship into their master's programme, because the curriculum leaves little space for it and because they feel the path has not yet been paved. Many of them decided to prolong their studies for this reason, and felt left to their own devices in bringing the internship to a successful conclusion. The panel acknowledges that the one-year master's programmes are already quite full, and appreciates the faculty's obvious intention to meet students' need in this respect, but recommends taking these efforts one step further, by giving students who wish to do an internship more support and guidance.

Like most master's programmes at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, the Economic Geography programme allows students to enrol in September (which an overwhelming majority does) and also in February (which very few students do). The panel understands that it is a university-wide policy to allow students to enrol in February. It is of the opinion, though, that the structure of the curriculum for students enrolling in February is sub-optimal. However, there are no major hurdles or problems identified either, and the enrolment numbers in February are very low.

International classroom

At the moment, the Economic Geography programme has only two international students among a total of 26, but this number is expected to grow in the future, so that students from different backgrounds will share intercultural competences, insights and examples from their own experience. Thus, the programme hopes to use cultural diversity as a means to improve its quality. It currently includes international case studies, an international field trip and international literature. To facilitate this, all courses are taught in English. The language centre of the university is involved in ensuring that the teaching staff has an adequate level of English. The students did not complain about the English level of their regular lecturers, though they say the proficiency in English of guest lecturers is sometimes inadequate. Since this occurs only occasionally (and is compensated by a high level of applicability of the guest lectures), the panel does not consider this a serious problem. Because of its international ambitions, the programme wishes to operate exclusively under its English name in future. Since this does not entail any substantive change, the panel endorses this intention. It approves of the possibility that is offered to write the master's thesis in Dutch (or another language as long as it is spoken by at least two members of staff), since many of the students will later work for Dutch employers, and many internship possibilities are only offered in Dutch as well.

Teaching staff

Students encounter both early-career and experienced teaching staff. Nearly all teaching staff have a PhD, and 90% has a university teaching qualification. The faculty aims to reflect the international and diverse character of its programmes not only in its classrooms, but also in its staff. Although this ideal has not been realised yet (the Economic Geography staff is mostly male and Dutch), chances are that this may change in the future, since the younger generation of researchers is already more heterogeneous. The panel encourages the programme to remain alert to this aspect, and do its utmost to recruit female and non-Dutch staff members whenever possible.



The faculty has a clear vision on the required expertise of its staff, and the major disciplines are well covered. If a specific expertise is lacking (temporarily), the Economic Geography programme makes good use of guest lecturers. Many guest lecturers come from a long-standing connection to practice. They work for instance in ministries, municipalities and other organisations. In addition to acquiring specific expertise, some bridge the gap between academic theory and everyday society, while others bring international experience into the classroom. The panel furthermore established that as soon as there is a structural staff deficiency, extra staff is hired.

The panel found that students are generally enthusiastic about their lecturers. The fact that all lecturers are experts within a particular field allows the students to go in-depth within the respective topics. They admire their lecturers' expertise and passion for their subject, and find them not only knowledgeable, but also accessible. The panel established that the teaching staff is well qualified and there are enough lecturers to enable students to realise the intended learning outcomes.

Considerations

The panel found that the Economic Geography curriculum has a consistent build-up of courses and well-designed learning trajectories. It likes the fact that the programme makes use of its surroundings, but at the same time manages to take local themes to a higher abstraction level and position them as examples of international developments. It recommends that the programme's lecturers and coordinators ensure that topical and important themes such as ecological, social, political and cultural tensions do not become overshadowed by topics such as growth and competitiveness. In this respect synergy with other programmes within the faculty (or university) could be sought, as suggested under standard 1. The panel would like to stimulate the synergy between programmes in a wider sense as well, in order to guarantee that opportunities for sharing best practices are fully explored.

Since 2014, less than 10% of all students has finished the Economic Geography programme in the nominal period of one academic year. The panel established that this is not because of a lack of feasibility, but the students' own choice. They prefer to spend more than the nominal time on their studies, filling it in with extra activities, such as an extracurricular internship combined with a master's thesis. The panel recognises the faculty's efforts to facilitate internships within the programme, but recommends taking these one step further, by giving students who wish to do an internship more support and guidance.

The panel established that the teaching staff is well qualified and that there are enough lecturers to enable students to realise the intended learning outcomes. The ideal of an international and diverse teaching staff that the faculty cherishes has not yet been fully realised. An overwhelming majority of the Economic Geography staff is male and Dutch. The panel encourages the programme to remain alert to this point. The panel also encourages the programme to step up its collaboration with other programmes and to learn from their best practices.

Conclusion

Master's programme Economic Geography: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment policy and practice

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen has a shared assessment policy, which is described in the *Faculty of Spatial Sciences Assessment Policy Memorandum*. This memorandum provides directives for the relation between assessment and learning goals, the demands that all assessment forms need to meet, the ways in which students have to be informed, etc. The

memorandum sets the boundaries within which each of the programmes can choose its own assessment forms and criteria, and thus shape its own identity. Every programme has *Teaching and Examination Regulations*. Based on these, the programme management is asked to draft an assessment plan, which constitutes the intended learning outcomes and the modes of assessment of all courses in the programme, and a matrix clarifying the relationship between the two.

The panel concludes that quality control of assessment is in order. Beforehand, lecturers have the quality of their exams assessed through peer review by another member of staff. Afterwards, the quality is measured again as part of the course and programme evaluation. In this evaluation, students can indicate the extent to which the assessment ties in with the learning objectives of a course. The course coordinator and the relevant programme committee reflect upon this evaluation, and it is also made publicly available to students and to the members of the Board of Examiners. From these evaluations, it turns out that in general, students are satisfied with their exams.

The panel looked into a sample of the exams given in the Economic Geography programme, and found that there is a broad spectrum of assessment types: multiple-choice exams, open exams, essays, oral presentations and group assignments. The underlying aim is that students learn to communicate clearly in different contexts and that they demonstrate that they meet all of the intended learning outcomes. During the site visit, the Economic Geography students proved to be quite happy with the great variety of assessment methods. The panel also found that in general course assignments are well described, with clear assessment criteria and extensive feedback. Exams are well-designed and properly archived, with the appropriate answer key. The panel confirmed that assessment throughout the courses is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. In many cases, extensive feedback is given, which enables students to shape their own learning process. The panel recommends improving the assessment even further by sharing successful innovations between the departments, such as the negotiation game in Brussels from the master's programme of Economic Geography, the double peer-review system in the Bachelor (where two-stage exam from the 'Cultural Geography' course (in which part of the mark is determined by fellow-students' rating of an individual's contribution to the group work), the experimentation with two-step exams in the master Cultural Geography (an individual exam followed by a group exam on the same topic to stimulate reflective thinking) or the practice that all thesis marks of a 9 or higher should be validated by a senior staff member.

Thesis assessment

The panel studied a sample of the theses and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency differs, however. In the master's programme Economic Geography, assessment forms for master's theses are usually filled in by the first examiner, while the second examiner only signs the form. The faculty management explained to the panel that each of the master's programmes at the faculty has its own procedure of assessing the master theses and its own standard assessment form, with slightly differing criteria or prioritisation of criteria. The panel finds this justifiable, as a way of underlining the specific identity of each of the programmes. This is particularly so in view of the fact that the forms play an important role not only in the assessment itself, but also in guiding the students through their writing process. 'Straightjacketing' would then be ill-advised. While endorsing some free rein on the assessment criteria for each individual programme, the panel does recommend harmonising the assessment processes (see below). This will enhance transparency, enforce validity, and make it easier for students to know what to expect.

In the panel's view, one thesis assessment procedure, which documents recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The role of the second examiner is to form his or her own judgement and add this to the first examiner's judgment on the assessment form, after which the first and second examiner compare notes and work towards a collective final mark. The assessment form should reflect the independent procedure. This procedure should be implemented consistently through all programmes, the panel recommends. Also, the assessment form should be consistently shared with the student, so that he or she can take advantage of the feedback that is given. The panel also suggests that while academic accuracy is



well covered on the assessment forms, creativity, scientific depth and societal relevance could be evaluated more strongly and explicitly.

The Board of Examiners

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences has one Board of Examiners, responsible for the examination and assessment quality of all bachelor's and master's programmes, awarding degrees and handling requests by students regarding deviations from the regular curriculum. The Board consists of six members, representing each of the departments. It also includes one external assessment expert. The Board itself meets six times a year, and besides that, it regularly meets with the university's central Board of Examiners, in order to deal with shared challenges and innovative solutions.

The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. At the time, the previous panel considered the Board of Examiners to be only slowly moving towards a more professional attitude. Now this faculty's board is seen as a good example throughout the university. Its particular merit is that its members aim to work pro-actively and quickly, communicating directly with students who are unhappy with the assessment methods. In this manner they have been able to prevent appeal procedures, while at the same time retaining broad support from the work floor. As the 2014 evaluation panel recommended, the Board's time allocation was increased. The present panel is very happy with these developments.

The panel noticed that the Board of Examiners has a clear definition of its own responsibilities, as demarcated from those educational aspects that are primarily the management's responsibility. The latter develops the course and assessment methods, while the Board of Examiners safeguards the quality and sees to it that the programmes live up to their intended academic level. As soon as the Board spots an irregularity (relatively low average grades, complaints by students, evaluations that are below the mark), the secretary of the Board of Examiners discusses this with the lecturers involved. Every six months, the Board picks five courses for a systematic evaluation of its assessment methods. These may be courses that stand out in the course evaluations, in the proceedings of the Programme Committees, or in the day-to-day communications between Board members and their colleagues. The Board also makes a random and anonymous selection of ten bachelor's and ten master's theses, which are then re-assessed by one of its members. If there is a significant difference between the original mark and that given by the Board member, this difference is discussed with the examiners involved. All parties find this an instructive process. In 2018, the Board started a pilot project screening the assessment practices of two complete programmes, with the intention of repeating this exercise with two new programmes each year. The panel applauds this initiative. As well as being instrumental to further reinforcing quality assurance, it also contributes to a broadly shared awareness of how student assessment should be embedded in the bigger picture.

The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work. The Board of Examiners, the Programme Committees and the programme management each take on their individual tasks well. In the panel's opinion, the faculty could gain even more by coordinating them toward a shared faculty-wide assessment culture, e.g. by discussing problems of mutual interest together and actively exchanging lessons learned and best practices. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversify and become more international. Part of such an exercise could be, for instance, to initiate a biannual assessment day.

Considerations

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the Economic Geography programme is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by intensifying a shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of ten master's theses and found that, in general, they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and

within the programmes. The panel recommends one thesis assessment procedure in all master's programmes. This enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In the panel's view, thesis assessment forms with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Conclusion

Master's programme Economic Geography: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Prior to its site visit, the panel studied a sample of ten recent master's theses. These sufficiently demonstrate, in its view, that students realise the intended learning outcomes. Many of the theses show good argumentation and clear conclusions, which contribute to topical discussions in the field. The panel found that in some theses, the focus is a little too narrow; attention to the wider context would have improved their academic quality. Moreover, attention for spatial patterns could be more recognisable, while the amount and quality of maps leaves room for improvement. It also struck the panel that the master's theses within the Economic Geography programme – like the other programmes at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences – are still overwhelmingly monocultural. In the future, as the faculty's international ambitions blossom, one might expect more emphasis on the inclusion of transnational or cross-cultural perspectives as part of the instructions for the master's theses. This may need to be addressed at an institutional level, with the Faculty Board encouraging and possibly facilitating such an approach.

That the intended learning outcomes are achieved can also be deduced from the alumni's position on the labour market. The faculty regularly performs alumni analyses, charting where its alumni work and how long it took them to find a job. The 2016 survey shows that 80% of all graduates in the Economic Geography programme acquired a relevant job within six months after graduation. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Economic Geography programme to society. The majority of the Economic Geography graduates find a position with Dutch municipalities or provinces, but also at consultancy firms. The panel values the many different ways in which alumni remain in touch with the faculty: on the advisory board, as guest lecturers, as internship supervisors, as data suppliers, or if they become teachers, as mediators introducing a constant stream of young pupils to the faculty. The faculty's active alumni association (the Professor Keuning Vereniging, which organises a big alumni event every two years) is in part responsible for this. Involving alumni in the programme is done very well, in the panel's view, and contributes to the programme's quality.

Considerations

Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that the students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme. It found that in some theses, the focus is a little too narrow; attention to the wider context would have improved their academic quality. A 2016 survey shows that 80% of all graduates in the Economic Geography programme acquire a relevant job within six months after graduation. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Economic Geography programme to society.

Conclusion

Master's programme Economic Geography: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.



GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel's judgement on standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the master's programme Economic Geography at the University of Groningen is 'meets the standard'. Therefore, according to the rules of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, the general and final judgement is positive.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *master's programme Economic Geography* as 'positive'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain in the Netherlands

The current domain-specific reference framework confines itself to a substantive description of the two core disciplines, in combination with the general expectations regarding the competencies of graduates. Therefore, it is a more concise document than the previous (2012) one. The exit qualifications for bachelor and master programmes are no longer included, partly because the Dublin descriptors already provide an adequate general description of the desired scientific level, but also to give the programmes taking part in the reaccreditation ample opportunity to demonstrate their own specific profile in their self-studies.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain is very broad and diverse, and the different academic programmes within the Netherlands highlight different elements. They vary, for example, in the balance between scientific and professional training, degree of research intensity, degree of integration between the two core disciplines, opportunities to specialize, and types of specialization offered. This domain-specific reference framework emphasizes the common features applying to all programmes.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain revolves around the complex relationship between people (society) and their environment (space). There are five qualities that determine the mind set of geographers and planners. First of all, the ability to think from a time-space perspective, these being the two dimensions within which human action unfolds. Secondly, the ability to study the relation between people and environment in the context of intertwined spatial scale levels (local, regional, national, global). Insight into socio-spatial transformations is gained by studying the interaction between these scale levels (the multi-scalar perspective), without making prior assumptions about the dominance of any one level (e.g. the global level) over another (e.g. the local level). Thirdly, the mind set of geographers and planners is based on the idea that space and society closely interact and shape each other. Human actions, and the behavioural patterns that develop in the course of time (institutions), crystallize in space, while conversely, spatial structures and place-related features trigger and shape human actions. A fourth quality relates to the strong multidisciplinary orientation in the work of geographers and planners; relationships between humans and their environment are studied from a range of mutually supplementary disciplinary perspectives. The precise combinations chosen depend on the nature of the socio-spatial problems being studied and will vary per programme within the domain. Finally, the fifth quality is closely linked with all the above: the integrative character of the geographical and planning approach. This crux is an ambition to understand the mutual cohesion between economic, social, cultural and political phenomena and processes within their specific spatial contexts.

Key terms in the domain are space, place, location, scale, networks, linkages, spatial behaviour, place attachment, spatial quality, spatial design and spatial interventions. Within the domain socio-spatial problems are taken as starting points of scientific inquiry. These issues include spatial inequality, globalization, migration, segregation, diversity and identity, environmental burden, sustainable area development, mobility and governance. The aim is not only to make critical analyses of the issues concerned, but also to design plans and interventions that may solve or reduce socio-spatial dilemmas.

The international and comparative character of studying the relation between people and environment is inherent to the Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning disciplines. Socio-spatial problems, and planned actions to deal with them, are marked by the specific national, regional and local context in which they arise. The significance of the embeddedness of socio-spatial phenomena is the key to Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. However, awareness of the importance of context does not imply that the disciplines are merely the sum of an endless series of case-studies. The ambition is to identify the international similarities and differences of socio-spatial processes and developments, in order to unravel both their unique and generic aspects. Both facets are typical of the quest of Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning to



formulate theories (explanation in context). To emphasize this international, comparative character, teaching does not focus solely on the Netherlands. And when studying Dutch cases, the international importance and international suitability of the theoretical perspectives and research angles developed will always be considered. Continuing on from this, the composition of staff and students in all the Dutch programmes in the domain is becoming increasingly diverse (in many ways). The 'international classroom' being introduced in more and more programmes, facilitates and reinforces the international-comparative orientation of both disciplines.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain has evolved in close cohesion with the other social sciences. While it shares important qualities with the latter - such as attention for formulating theory and the need for rigid methodology - it is also distinct by emphasizing particular qualities. The strong empirical orientation, apparent in the importance attached to primary data collection and fieldwork, is a typical feature of our domain. Furthermore, 'learning by doing' has become an important part of all programmes, partly because it enhances sensitivity to the time and place (context)-bound character of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena and developments. Geographers and planners are constantly challenged to step outside the comfort zone of their own field. Finally, research within the domain has increasingly opened up for a wide spectrum of methods and techniques. This methodological pluralism corresponds with the choice to study socio-spatial problems at various scale levels, which precludes a standard method of analysis.

Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning graduates are able to identify, analyse and explain socio-spatial problems, based on and contributing to the 'body of knowledge' adhering to the discipline. They are also fully conversant with general social-scientific methods and techniques, as well as more domain-specific research methods, such as GIS and spatial impact analysis. The Bachelor's programmes do this, in line with the basic level of the Dublin descriptors, by laying a broad scientific foundation in the two core disciplines, while the Master's programmes train students, again following the Dublin framework, at a theoretically and methodologically more advanced and specialist level.

The programmes under consideration prepare students for a variety of professions and sectors. Typical jobs include researcher, teacher/lecturer, consultant, policy official and project manager. A common characteristic of staff qualified in Human Geography and/or Urban and Regional Planning is their inclination for a comprehensive approach to problems, and their ability to create awareness on the spatial diversity of societal problems. Students with a specialist Master's degree often find themselves in professions directly connected with their specialism, such as spatial planning, area development, urban policy, construction and housing, regional policy, traffic and transport management or environmental policy. The self-studies of the individual degree programmes will inform more specifically on the professions and sectors in which graduates work.

The domain-specific framework of reference (DSFR) has been formulated by the national disciplinary meeting (Disciplineoverleg Geografie en Planologie). The former DSFR has been adjusted, i.e. updated and shortened by omitting the concrete exit qualifications for bachelor and master. The participating programmes have been able to comment on the draft. It has been laid down during the meeting on 6 September 2018.

APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes Master in Economic Geography	Learning outcomes Master in Economic Geography: 'Regional Competitiveness and Trade'
<p>1. Knowledge and Understanding Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context.</p> <p>A. Graduates can summarize and explain, at the level of academic handbooks, the historical development as well as current insights and societal challenges in the field of economic geography with a focus on labour market issues, entrepreneurship and globalization.</p> <p>B. Graduates can explain how individual decisions by people on the labour market, by firms and by governments influence regional level socio-economic development.</p> <p>C. Graduates know and they can explain the prime theoretical, methodological and ethical paradigms of economic geography in general and in particular where it concerns the link of micro-level behavior by firms, people and policy and regional level outcomes.</p> <p>D. Graduates can describe the institutional context in which regional socio-economic dynamics take shape. This includes knowledge of (regional) governance structures as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations that influence economic dynamics.</p> <p>E. Graduates understand their labour market prospects: They can describe the occupations and tasks they may fulfill and the organizations that typically employ graduates with the skills and knowledge associated with the programme of Economic Geography.</p>	<p>1. Knowledge and understanding Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context.</p> <p>A. Graduates can summarize and explain, at the level of academic handbooks, the historical development as well as current insights and societal challenges in the field of economic geography with a focus on labour market issues, entrepreneurship and globalization.</p> <p>B. Graduates can explain how individual decisions by people on the labour market, by firms and by governments influence regional level socio-economic development.</p> <p>C. Graduates know and they can explain the prime theoretical, methodological and ethical paradigms of economic geography in general and in particular where it concerns the link of micro-level behavior by firms, people and policy and regional level outcomes.</p> <p>D. Graduates can describe the institutional context in which regional socio-economic dynamics take shape. This includes knowledge of (regional) governance structures as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations that influence economic dynamics.</p> <p>E. Graduates understand their labour market prospects: They can describe the occupations and tasks they may fulfill and the organizations that typically employ graduates with the skills and knowledge associated with the programme of Economic Geography.</p> <p>F. Graduates can explain the role of international trade in the economic development of countries and regions within countries.</p>



2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study.

- A. Graduates can apply, adapt, analyze and complement their understanding of the actions of individual people, firms and governments and relate the outcome to regional socio-economic dynamics in multiple organizational, institutional and cultural contexts in order to address place-specific issues and challenges.
- B. Graduates can independently execute quantitative empirical techniques that allow them to address research questions in the field of economic geography. This includes multi-variate regression techniques suitable for regional level data as well as techniques to address research questions at the micro-level.
- C. Graduates can explain how the regional institutional and socio-economic context, including policies, influence regional economic dynamics and how this can lead to place-specific development paths.
- D. Graduates are able to position the discipline of economic geography and the research done in the field in relationship to other disciplines.
- E. Graduates are able to independently perform academic research, whether or not in an interdisciplinary context.

3. Making Judgements

Graduates have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.

- A. Graduates can independently formulate an academically and/or societally relevant problem definition making use of their understanding and knowledge of the

2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study.

- A. Graduates can apply, adapt, analyze and complement their understanding of the actions of individual people, firms and governments and relate the outcome to regional socio-economic dynamics in multiple organizational, institutional and cultural contexts in order to address place-specific issues and challenges.
- B. Graduates can independently execute spatial econometric techniques that allow them to address research questions in the field of economic geography. This includes the mastering of suitable statistical software.
- C. Graduates can explain how the regional institutional and socio-economic context, including policies, influence regional economic dynamics and how this can lead to place-specific development paths.
- D. Graduates are able to position the discipline of economic geography and the research done in the field in relationship to other disciplines.
- E. Graduates are able to independently perform academic research, whether or not in an interdisciplinary context.
- F. Graduates are able to interpret and use theoretical economic models, particularly within the approach of the New Economic Geography, to address issues regarding regional economic development, both between countries and within countries.

3. Making Judgements

Graduates have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.

- A. Graduates can independently formulate an academically and/or societally relevant problem definition making use of their understanding and knowledge of the

<p>academic field of economic geography and relevant societal developments.</p> <p>B. Graduates can make a substantive argument, using academic sources, for their theoretical and empirical approach to a research problem.</p> <p>C. Graduates are able to draw practical (policy) implications from their research.</p> <p>D. Graduates are able to critically reflect on reasoning, arguments and points of view of others as well as on their own work.</p> <p>E. Graduates have an understanding and a vision of the possibilities of application and of the limitations of science in general and Economic Geography in particular.</p>	<p>academic field of economic geography and relevant societal developments.</p> <p>B. Graduates can make a substantive argument, using academic sources, for their theoretical and empirical approach to a research problem.</p> <p>C. Graduates are able to draw practical (policy) implications from their research.</p> <p>D. Graduates are able to critically reflect on reasoning, arguments and points of view of others as well as on their own work.</p> <p>E. Graduates have an understanding and a vision of the possibilities of application and of the limitations of science in general and Economic Geography in particular.</p> <p>F. Graduates can interpret and reflect on the outcomes of spatial econometric analysis within the context of regional economic development issues.</p>
<p>4. Communication Skills</p> <p>Graduates can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously.</p> <p>A. Graduates are able to clearly present the motivation, approach and results of academic research in an academic context as well as in a professional context, for example in discussions regarding business strategies, and regional development policies.</p> <p>B. Graduates are aware of cultural differences in communication and co-operation and they can adapt accordingly to effectively work together or communicate research findings.</p> <p>C. Graduates are used to working in teams and they can effectively collaborate on research projects as well as in formulating and presenting regional development strategies.</p>	<p>4. Communication Skills</p> <p>Graduates can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously.</p> <p>A. Graduates are able to clearly present the motivation, approach and results of academic research in an academic context as well as in a professional context, for example in discussions regarding business strategies, and regional development policies.</p> <p>B. Graduates are aware of cultural differences in communication and co-operation and they can adapt accordingly to effectively work together or communicate research findings.</p> <p>C. Graduates are used to working in teams and they can effectively collaborate on research projects as well as in formulating and presenting regional development strategies.</p>
<p>5. Learning Skills</p> <p>Graduates have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</p> <p>A Graduates have the learning skills that enable them to continue their education largely self-directed and autonomously, for example in a professional or academic context.</p>	<p>5. Learning Skills</p> <p>Graduates have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</p> <p>A. Graduates have the learning skills that enable them to continue their education largely self-directed and autonomously, for example in a professional or academic context.</p>



B Graduates are able to independently follow relevant developments in the field of economic geography and they are able to reflect on those developments.	B Graduates are able to independently follow relevant developments in the field of economic geography and they are able to reflect on those developments.
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APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Course programme *Economic Geography 2018-2019*

Economic Geography			
<i>Term 1A</i>	<i>Term 1B</i>	<i>Term 2A</i>	<i>Term 2B</i>
Economic Geography: Theory and Application (5 ects)	Spatial Economics (5 ects)	Advanced Statistical Analyses (5 ects)	Infrastructure Economy & Space (5 ects)
Entrepreneurship & Regional Development (5 ects)	Optional Course (5 ects)	Regional Labour Market Analysis (5 ects)	
Optional Course (5 ects)	Thesis (20 ects)		

Compulsory	Thesis	Optional Course
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Course programme *Economic Geography: Regional Competitiveness and Trade 2018-2019*

Economic Geography: Regional Competitiveness and Trade			
<i>Term 1A</i>	<i>Term 1B</i>	<i>Term 2A</i>	<i>Term 2B</i>
Growth & Development Policies (5 ects)	Spatial Econometrics (5 ects)	New Economic Geography (5 ects)	Infrastructure Economy & Space (5 ects)
Entrepreneurship & Regional Development (5 ects)	Spatial Economics (5 ects)	Regional Labour Market Analysis (5 ects)	
Economic Geography: Theory and Application (5 ects)	Thesis (20 ects)		

Compulsory	Track	Thesis
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APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

DAY 0 Monday April 15th, 2019		
16.45	17.00	Arrival panel and reception at the hotel
17.00	21.00	Preparatory meeting panel
DAY 1 Tuesday April 16th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 1
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.45	12.15	Virtual Reality Lab Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Cultural Geography
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Cultural Geography
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 1 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies / MSc Cultural Geography
DAY 2 Wednesday April 17th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 2
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 2
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.45	12.15	Design Course Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Population Studies
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Population Studies
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 2 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning / MSc Population Studies
DAY 3 Thursday April 18th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 3
09.00	10.00	Meeting Board of Examiners
10.00	10.30	Internal consultation assessment panel, draw up provisional findings
10.30	11.30	Final meeting with programme management
11.30	14.00	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel / draw up provisional findings
14.00	14.30	Oral report provisional conclusion
14.30	14.45	Break
14.45	15.45	Development Dialogue
15.45	16.00	Closing site visit

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied ten theses of the master's programme Economic Geography. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

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

- Lecturer handbook
- Programme committee handbooks and regulations
- Task division model 2018-2019
- Faculty plans for quality agreements
- Vision on teaching and learning
- Strategic report for the Faculty of Spatial Sciences
- Alumni analyses 2010-2017
- FSS career newsletters
- Summary of all relevant courses
- Top 3 most valued courses of the 2018-2019 semester
- 'Richtlijnen interne evaluaties'
- Course guide format
- Minutes of all meetings by the Board of Examiners
- Annual reports of the Board of Examiners
- Assessment protocols
- Assessment plans

Of the following courses, the panel studied complete portfolios (course literature, assignments, tests and answer keys, fieldwork assignments, reports and assessment criteria if relevant, course evaluations):

- Economic Geography: Theory and Application
- Advanced Statistical Analysis
- Spatial Econometrics