

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

CULTURAL 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 CULTURAL 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 Cultural Geography

Name of the programme:	Culturele Geografie
International name of the programme:	Cultural Geography
CROHO number:	60656
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Tourism Geography & Planning
Location(s):	Leeuwarden
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 Cultural 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 dr. Meg van Bogaert, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The master's programme Cultural 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 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 in 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 agreed 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 2015-2018. 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 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 reports to the faculty in order to have these 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 Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

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

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

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

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

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

Negative

In the following situations:

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

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The panel encountered a Cultural Geography (CG) programme with a clear profile and focus on place identity. With the geography of place and identity as the core of the profile, the CG programme has a clear identity. The panel is also of the opinion that the addition of the Tourism Geography and Planning track fits well with the profile. The ILOs are in line with the profile and based on the Dublin Descriptors at the master's level. The CG programme is well connected to the professional field. Not only is there an advisory board at the faculty level, there are also many interactions with partners from the professional field that lead to a good connection between the programme and the professional field. Finally, the proposal of the programme to use only the English name is supported by the panel. The panel appreciates the fact that FSS offers many programmes that each have a distinctive profile. It would have appreciated seeing the positioning of each programme in relation to the other programmes and the broader discipline of Social Geography and Planning, by using the DSFR.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel considers that the curriculum of the CG programme is well thought out and very coherent. It appreciates the structure of the curriculum, which starts with concepts and continues via methods into implementation. The content of the courses is good, and the courses are well liked by the students. The attention paid to methodology is good, especially the advanced course in qualitative research methods. According to the panel, the positioning of the methodology courses in the curriculum requires some attention. Although it is difficult to schedule them in a one-year master's programme, the panel recommends providing both qualitative and quantitative advanced methods courses prior to the start of the thesis project. The option for students to do an internship is also valued, but the efforts to facilitate this should be taken up a notch. The small-group teaching activities and variety in teaching methods are also appreciated by the students and support the aim of student-centred learning, which is further stimulated by the diverse backgrounds of enrolling students.

The programme is located in Leeuwarden, which is both an asset and a challenge. The arguments to relocate the CG programme to Leeuwarden convinced the panel, although there are some issues that have to be dealt with to make it a success. This includes paying attention to community building and also convincing the students about the place-based advantages of Friesland. This place-based profile is combined successfully with the context of globalisation. The CG programme is becoming successful as an international programme. Increasing the number of students – specifically international students – will further strengthen the international approach. The quality and quantity of teaching staff are good, and the panel appreciates the close connection of thesis topics to the research done by current staff. The programme is in a very good position to develop further in this respect, with a strong and structured curriculum and a motivated group of staff members.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the CG 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 increasing the shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of the master's theses and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. Some of the assessment forms clearly showed remarks from both supervisors, which is appreciated by the panel. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures 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, one thesis assessment form 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

The panel reviewed a random selection of theses produced by graduates of the CG programme. It agreed with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor. Some of the assessment forms clearly showed remarks from both supervisors, which is appreciated by the panel. The attention to the labour market is increasing, and the employability of the graduates is good. Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concluded that the students achieve the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

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

Master's programme Cultural 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, dr. Meg van Bogaert, 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 Cultural 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 give advice to the management as to how to guard 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

According to the panel, the Cultural Geography programme has a long tradition at the University of Groningen and still has a distinct profile that builds on its historic strengths. The programme is the only master's programme exclusively dedicated to Cultural Geography in the Netherlands. Since 2017-2018 the Tourism Geography and Planning track is being offered alongside the standard curriculum. The track tackles the ambiguous role of tourism from the perspective of place making, place meanings and socio-economic, cultural development, taking an international, critical and research-oriented approach. The panel looked at the track's objectives in comparison to those of the main programme and is of the opinion that the track fits well within the profile of Cultural Geography, i.e. the geography of place and identity. In its opinion, the tourism track adds value to the programme, without overshadowing the main programme.

The Groningen master's programme Cultural Geography (CG) positions itself clearly at the midpoint between conceptual thinking and practical realities, while international programmes are usually either more theoretical in orientation or very practical (often vocational programmes). The CG programme is international, place-based, and the international classroom of the programme is of direct value for national and international students from different backgrounds. The programme aims to educate students to be critical and analytical scholars and professionals in the fields of cultural geography and, for that track, in tourism geography and planning. It intends them to make useful contributions to academic and societal questions on the liveability of places and the identity and attachment of people to the places in which they live and which they visit. It has two main characteristics. First, it is interdisciplinary and research-based within the broad field of spatial sciences. Second, it is framed in daily living environments, dealing with place meanings as they are part of the practices and interactions of people in everyday living situations. By combining these two main characteristics, it strives to translate theoretical and conceptual insights into practical and diverse socio-spatial contexts. It builds bridges between conceptual thinking, practical experiences and policy issues.



The panel is of the opinion that the profile covers a broad discipline, although students the panel talked to were positive about the focus and level of specialisation in the programme. Specifically, students who graduated from a broad and general bachelor's programme were pleased to focus and go in depth. The students also mentioned the variety of perspectives that is encouraged throughout the classes as a positive feature. This aspect is stimulated by the international classroom.

The interdisciplinary, research-driven profile is translated into a set of 28 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) which cover the full range of Dublin Descriptors. The master's level is reflected in the ILOs, for example the ILO describing that graduates have developed the capacity to interpret knowledge in context, but also in the fact that graduates have to show originality when critically reflecting on their personal academic conduct. An overview of the ILOs is provided in Appendix 2. The ILOs of the tourism track are specified within the existing ILOs, as the objective of the track is similar, but from the angle of tourism. According to the panel, this addition of ILOs for the tourism track makes sense.

The panel is of the opinion that the profile, objective and focus of the CG programme are clearly formulated, with ILOs that clearly fit the profile of both the main programme and the track. It established that the ILOs are formulated according to the Dublin descriptors for an academic master's programme.

The panel reviewed eight of nine educational programmes offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FSS) at the University of Groningen. All eight programmes have a large amount of freedom and space for defining their own profile and set-up of the curriculum. In the self-evaluation report most programmes in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FSS) emphasise their unique profile in relation to other national and international programmes. The panel is of the opinion that although it observed a number of valuable interactions between the eight programmes, more added value can be gained from formalising and increasing interaction and synergy would add value for the programmes and the FSS as a whole (see Standard 2).

The Domain-Specific Framework of Reference (DSFR) 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 (AESOP), 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.

Link to the professional field

The programme builds on several professional and research environments, such as the Wadden Academy (*Waddenzeeacademie*) and the knowledge network *Kennisnetwerk Krimp Noord-Nederland* in the northern Netherlands. These networks are used for company visits, guest lectures by professionals, fieldwork and the master's thesis. 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.

Proposed name change

At the time of the site visit, the programme had two CROHO names, one in Dutch (Culturele Geografie) and one in English (Cultural 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 Cultural Geography.

Considerations

The panel encountered a Cultural Geography programme with a clear profile and focus on place identity. With the geography of place and identity as the core of the profile, the CG programme has a clear identity. The panel is also of the opinion that the addition of the Tourism Geography and Planning track fits well with the profile. The ILOs are in line with the profile and based on the Dublin Descriptors at the master's level. The CG programme is well connected to the professional field. Not only is there an advisory board at the faculty level, there are also many interactions with partners from the professional field that lead to a good connection between the programme and the professional field. Finally, the proposal of the programme to use only the English name is supported by the panel. The panel appreciates the fact that FSS offers many programmes that each have a distinctive profile. It would have appreciated seeing the positioning of each programme in relation to the other programmes and the broader discipline of Social Geography and Planning, by using the DSFR.

Conclusion

Master's programme Cultural 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 of the Cultural Geography programme

The structure of the one-year, 60 EC Cultural Geography programme comes in two versions. The first version is the 'regular' programme in Cultural Geography, the second is the track in Tourism Geography and Planning. The two versions of the curriculum have 45 EC in common, including the 20 EC master's thesis. Students who follow the regular programme have two optional courses (5 EC each) and the compulsory *Revitalizing Neighbourhoods* course (5 EC). For students of the Tourism Geography and Planning track, these credits are substituted by three compulsory courses that are specifically designed for this track. In appendix 3 schematic overviews of the curricula are provided. The courses all contribute to the ILOs, which is reflected in a matrix in the self-evaluation report. This matrix shows that nearly all ILOs are covered in multiple courses. Some courses and the master's thesis cover a majority of the ILOs.

There are three types of courses (referred to as learning lines in the self-evaluation report) to build bridges between conceptual thinking and practical empirical realities. They consist of courses centred on a) conceptual knowledge, insights and reflections; b) methodologies and research skills; and c) thematic deepening and empirical insights. The three learning lines meet in the master's thesis. The positioning of the courses in the curriculum aims to maximise the complementarity in teaching methods as well as to provide a logical progression in content and topics covered.

The panel is of the opinion that the curriculum is well thought out and very coherent. It specifically appreciates the structure: students start with concepts, continue via methods to implementation. The students are enthusiastic about the content of the courses. The content and level of the courses the panel looked at in more detail are very good. All courses have clearly described course descriptions, learning goals as well as an assessment plan.

The panel considers the attention paid to methodology in the curriculum to be good. Specifically, the advanced *Qualitative Research Methods* course is seen as a strength of the CG programme. The panel does wonder if the positioning of the methodology courses throughout the curriculum is optimal. It understands that cohort formation, which is part of the *Fieldwork Cultural Geography* course, is important at the start of the programme. Also, the levelling of knowledge due to enrolling students with a variety of backgrounds is understandably part of the first term. However, the



preparation of the thesis already starts in the first semester, and the students have to decide on the methodological setup before their methodological knowledge and expertise is at the required level. The panel recognises that it is difficult to get students to the required methodological level early on in a one-year master's programme. It is also aware that the programmes at the University of Groningen are not unique in having to deal with this challenge. Nevertheless, the panel recommends reconsidering the positioning of the methodological courses.

Internships

Quite a few master's students feel the need to gain practical experience outside of the university. The panel learned that the FSS is still finding its way to meet this need. Two years ago (in 2017), all master's programmes introduced the possibility to do a 5 EC internship (either replacing an elective or as an extracurricular activity). This was also the case for the regular CG programme (in the tourism track there is no possibility of an internship). Well-defined learning goals were developed for this internship course, as well as a procedure to reach these goals. However, the course guide itself warns students that 'only proactive students will be able to finish this course, because there is little facilitation from the faculty'. Most students choosing an internship currently prefer a different route, by 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 they felt the lack of a paved path. 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. It does recommend taking these efforts one step further, in close consultation with the students, to integrate the internship as a realistic option into the curriculum.

Teaching-learning environment

The vision of the FSS emphasises learning rather than teaching, and as a consequence the programme aims at an active learning environment in which knowledge development, experimentation, fieldwork and shared learning experiences are key. The self-evaluation report stated that the CG programme focusses on small-group teaching activities, which is recognised and appreciated by the students. The students also informed the panel that most courses include a variety of teaching methods, including training of both hard and soft skills. The self-evaluation report stated that fieldwork and site visits form a central part of the educational vision. This includes both international fieldwork and local and regional fieldtrips. By providing diverse, interactive work formats that are specified according to the position of the course in the curriculum, the programme aims to safeguard the student-centred learning process by challenging students to tackle place-related identity and liveability issues from different perspectives. More conceptual courses include in-class discussions of the scientific literature through interactive lectures and seminars. Courses that build bridges between conceptual and applied thinking make extensive use of guest lecturers, field work and company visits to complement in-class teaching activities. Examples of the latter courses are *Nature, Landscape and Heritage* and *Tourism Planning and Practice*.

The FSS is actively seeking to increase the number of students enrolling to 30-40 per year. The recent addition of the Tourism Geography and Planning track is expected to attract more students. The programme is open to students from a range of undergraduate programmes. Roughly one-third of the enrolments are students from the bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. Students also come from other undergraduate programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. In addition to a standard premaster arrangement, a separate premaster module is offered as one of the minors of the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences bachelor's programme Tourism Management.

Relocation to Leeuwarden

In September 2017, the CG programme relocated to Leeuwarden, which coincided with the start of the Tourism Geography and Planning track. The programme is being redeveloped in cooperation with

the newly established Campus Fryslân branch of the University of Groningen. There were two main motives for the relocation. The first reason is that Friesland explicitly focuses on its tourism potential for economic and socio-cultural development – more so than the province of Groningen. This creates additional opportunities to increase collaboration, communication and real-life experiences. The relocation allows the programme to connect better the place-based, community-oriented education vision with practical experiences and policy issues. The second motive is the fact that the move to Leeuwarden established a knowledge hub on tourism geographies and tourism management through cooperation with NHL Stenden, which offers a number of tourism-related programmes. The two institutions cooperate in both education and research. As the Fryslân Campus has only existed since 2015, the facilities are still undergoing development. The building in which the courses of the CG programme will be taught is scheduled to open in September 2019. At the time of the site visit, the programme was making use of temporary facilities.

The panel extensively discussed the reasons, motivation and consequences of the relocation of the CG programme to Leeuwarden. It is of the opinion that the programme makes a compelling argument for the relocation. There are, however, a number of practical and organisational challenges that need to be solved in order to make the relocation a success. Firstly, the fact that the aforementioned building is not yet available poses challenges. The students informed the panel that the temporary location is adequate during contact hours, but the opening hours of this building are very limited outside office hours. They do not feel that this building is their home-base. The expectation is that this will be remedied in the upcoming academic year. Secondly, the panel is of the opinion that running a programme in a different city requires paying specific attention with respect to community building. Leeuwarden is not a typical student city where students – in particular international ones – easily find peers to connect to. Many Dutch students in this programme live in Groningen and commute to Leeuwarden for classes. The same is true for teaching staff, most of whom have their home base in Groningen and spend only a limited amount of time in Leeuwarden. The panel considers that in order to become a successful, international programme in Leeuwarden, specific attention to community building is important. Thirdly, the students to whom the panel talked seemed less convinced than the teaching staff that the relocation will be successful in the long run. They informed the panel that many field trips are indeed in the province of Friesland, but others were to companies or organisations in Groningen. Furthermore, many international examples are used throughout the courses.

Finally, a number of electives and the *Revitalizing Neighbourhoods* and *Social Impact Assessment* are taught in Groningen. The panel concludes that the international focus, intercultural and global perspective is rightfully present in the programme but competes with the place identity and localisation in Leeuwarden. The programme management and teaching staff convinced the panel that moving to Leeuwarden has an added value as the Friesland and Leeuwarden contexts provide more opportunities. However, the panel thinks that the students require more guidance on the reasoning behind the move. It recommends that the programme pay attention to this aspect.

Internationalisation

The profile of the programme is explicitly place-based, yet also framed in a context of globalisation. In order to critically discuss global-local relations of culture identity and development, examples and research papers with case studies from around the globe are included in the curriculum. It is important for the internationalisation aspect that it is place-based in an international, intercultural context to provide the students with the tools to analyse and apply conceptual insights to diverse socio-spatial contexts. The panel appreciates that all master's programmes at the FSS make use of their regional surroundings, without in any way becoming blinded to national and international developments. They cherish a fertile cooperation with local firms and government institutions for guest lecturing, field work, internships and relevant case studies, but manage 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.



All programmes in the FSS have the objective to establish an international classroom in which international students share intercultural competences, insights and examples with interactive discussion formats on the topics at hand. In addition to international students, the CG programme also includes international examples, an international field trip and international literature. To facilitate this, all courses are taught in English, and the programme would like to use only its English name. The language centre of the university is involved in ensuring that the teaching staff has an adequate level of English. In 2017 over 20% of students were international, which dropped to 15% in 2018. The CG programme states in the self-evaluation report that although the number of international students should ideally increase further to really speak of an international classroom, the programme already manages to host in-class intercultural, international insights and discussions. The panel agrees with this statement.

Student numbers, contact hours, feasibility

The enrolment figures have fluctuated between 8 and 20 students per year in the past five years. The FSS is actively seeking to increase this number to 30-40 per year. The interdisciplinary position of the programme in the social and spatial sciences leads to students enrolling from a variety of backgrounds. The success rates after two years are rather low (45-71%). The students the panel interviewed did not mention feasibility issues with the curriculum. In the self-evaluation report it is mentioned that the pass rates for individual courses are high, and that the bottleneck is the master's thesis. The programme acted on this by reorganising the structure of the *Master's thesis course*. The panel is pleased with the attention paid to the aspect of timely graduation. The number of contact hours is adequate for a master's programme.

The regular programme offers the option of February enrolment, while the track does not. According to the self-evaluation report the Tourism Geography and Planning track does not have the flexibility to reschedule electives, which is more easily arranged in the regular programme. The panel understands that allowing students to enrol in February is the result of university-wide policy. While the FSS facilitates February enrolment, it does not actively encourage it as the structure of the curriculum and order of courses is less ideal than for September enrolment. The programme is too small to organise a second cycle of the programme, starting in February. The panel is of the opinion that the structure of the curriculum for students enrolling in February is indeed sub-optimal. However, there are no major hurdles or problems identified either, moreover the enrolment numbers in February are very low.

Quality assurance

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 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.

Teaching staff

The majority of staff members have obtained a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or are in the process of obtaining one. One staff member also has an Advanced University Teaching Qualification. In many courses, students encounter guest lecturers from other universities and the wider professional field.

The research focus of the staff members is varied and centres around three thematic clusters, namely 'landscape and heritage', 'place-based development, wellbeing and liveability' and 'tourism and development'. With the start of the Tourism Geography and Planning track, additional staff members were hired to strengthen the departmental expertise on this topic. Students are very positive about the quality of the teaching staff, whom they consider to be competent as well as engaged. The panel met with a group of enthusiastic and motivated staff members who are working hard on providing a high-quality curriculum. It is very positive about the fact that the relatively small group of teaching staff allows many possibilities to link thesis projects to research that is done by current staff.

The student-staff ratio fluctuated during the period of evaluation but was kept below 1:20 at all times. The programme considers this important to allow for intensive interaction between staff and students, which is essential in the student-centred approach. From the interview held during the site visit, the panel concluded that staff members work as a team and have the joint goal of providing a high-quality programme. The programme aims to increase enrolment numbers. If successful, it will have to anticipate the effect of growth on the small-group teaching methods.

Considerations

The panel considers that the curriculum of the CG programme is well thought out and very coherent. It appreciates the structure of the curriculum, which starts with concepts and continues via methods into implementation. The content of the courses is good, and the courses are well liked by the students. The attention paid to methodology is good, especially the advanced course in qualitative research methods. According to the panel, the positioning of the methodology courses in the curriculum requires some attention. Although it is difficult to schedule them in a one-year master's programme, the panel recommends providing both qualitative and quantitative advanced methods courses prior to the start of the thesis project. The option for students to do an internship is also valued, but the efforts to facilitate this should be taken up a notch. The small-group teaching activities and variety in teaching methods are also appreciated by the students and support the aim of student-centred learning, which is further stimulated by the diverse backgrounds of enrolling students.

The programme is located in Leeuwarden, which is both an asset and a challenge. The arguments to relocate the CG programme to Leeuwarden convinced the panel, although there are some issues that have to be dealt with to make it a success. This includes paying attention to community building and also convincing the students about the place-based advantages of Friesland. This place-based profile is combined successfully with the context of globalisation. The CG programme is becoming successful as an international programme. Increasing the number of students – specifically international students – will further strengthen the international approach. The quality and quantity of teaching staff are good, and the panel appreciates the close connection of thesis topics to the research done by current staff. The programme is in a very good position to develop further in this respect, with a strong and structured curriculum and a motivated group of staff members.

Conclusion

Master's programme Cultural 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 FSS 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* (TER). 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 self-evaluation report described how a direct fit is sought throughout the CG curriculum between the type of course (conceptual, thematically deepening or methodology and research skills) and the assessment method. Courses with a mainly conceptual content are assessed by a written exam and/or essay to synthesise the relevant literature. In courses that provide an interface between theory and practice (e.g. *Tourism & Regional Development*), essay-based assessment is used, both in-group and individually, often combined with written exams. Research and methodology courses include at least one assessment that requires the application of insights into research methods. The panel looked at a sample of exams and found a broad spectrum of assessment types: multiple-choice exams, open exams, essays, oral presentations and group assignments. It also found that, in general, the 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 based on the information it received before and during the site visit, the assessment throughout the courses is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Thanks to extensive feedback it enables students to shape their own learning process. The panel recommends improving the assessment even further by sharing successful innovations between the departments, as for instance the negotiation game in Brussels from the master's programme of Economic Geography, the double peer-review in the bachelor's (where the mark is determined by fellow-students' rating of an individual's contribution to the group work), the experimentation with the two-step exam from Cultural Geography. This two-step exam starts with an individual exam (75% of the final grade) after which the students work in groups for the final 25% of the exam.

The programme-specific assessment plan forms the basis for achieving a direct fit between the ILOs and assessment methods. Although the master's coordinator keeps an overview of the balance between assessment methods throughout the curriculum [to safeguard the validity for achieving the ILOs of the overall degree programme], the assessment plan in the self-evaluation report for Cultural Geography showed that students have to give a total of 11 presentations throughout the year. The students confirmed that a lot of presentations have to be given, but they also consider this important for their future employment. They stated that there are sufficient other assessment methods, for example essays are frequently used in many of the electives. The panel nevertheless recommends that the programme pay attention to the balance of assessment methods.

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.

Thesis assessment

For the assessment of the master's thesis, the Faculty master's thesis protocol is used. The thesis is evaluated by the supervisor and an additional assessor using the standardised assessment form. The supervisor (and first assessor) reads and grades the thesis according to the assessment form. The second assessor reads the theses and evaluates the assessment made by the supervisor. The two assessors then discuss the final marks per aspect and decide on the resulting overall mark. Comments by both assessors are combined in a final report that is communicated to the student. The panel re-assessed a sample of the theses and found that the master's theses are validly and reliably assessed. In many, but not all assessment forms the feedback from the first and second examiner was visible.

The faculty management explained to the panel that each of the master programmes at the FSS 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 FSS has one Board of Examiners, responsible for the examination and assessment quality of all bachelor's and master's programmes, awarding degrees and handling of 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 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 of Examiners' 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. It is the latter that develops the course and assessment methods, whereas the Board of Examiners guards its 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 and ten master 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 into 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 will diversify and become more international which leads to different assessment cultures in the staff. Part of such an exercise could for instance be to initiate a biannual assessment day.

Considerations

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the CG 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 increasing the 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. Some of the assessment forms clearly showed remarks from both supervisors, which is appreciated by the panel. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures 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, one thesis assessment form 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 Cultural 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 recently finalised master's theses. Without exception, they sufficiently demonstrated, in its view, that graduates realise the ILOs. Many theses were on highly relevant topics. Good theses were well-written and connected the theoretical approach to the appropriate methodology. Many also showed a good knowledge of the relevant methodologies. A lesser aspect of a number of theses was the limited literature list. Moreover, attention for spatial patterns could be more recognisable, while the amount and quality of maps leaves room for improvement. The theses that got lower grades often lacked framing and critical investigation and/or were not written in proper academic Dutch or English. The panel only read one thesis in which mixed methods were used. It struck the panel that the master's theses were still overwhelmingly

monocultural. In the future, as the faculty's international ambitions blossom, one might expect more emphasis on the inclusion of trans-national or cross-cultural perspectives as part of the instructional approach to the master's theses. This may need to be addressed at an institutional level.

Employability

The FSS developed policies to keep in contact with alumni and involve alumni in the teaching practice. In addition, staff members from the Department of Cultural Geography coordinate a LinkedIn community for alumni of the CG programme. This group is also open to current students of the programme. 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 as mediators introducing a constant stream of young pupils to the faculty (if they become teachers). This is done very well.

The faculty regularly performs alumni analyses, charting where its alumni work and how long it took them to find a job. The survey shows that all students of the 2016-2017 cohort who could be traced had a job relevant to their study. Over 50% of the cohort found a relevant job within three months after graduation. The most common employers are national, provincial or local governments. Another group of alumni is employed in consultancy. Students the panel talked to felt well prepared for the professional field, while the student chapter provided a more critical view. The criticism in the self-evaluation report was predominantly related to difficulties students encounter when doing an internship. The programme management is aware of this issue, but it requires continued attention. The panel concluded that the connection to the labour market and attention to employability are improving.

Considerations

The panel reviewed a random selection of theses produced by graduates of the CG programme. It agreed with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor. Some of the assessment forms clearly showed remarks from both supervisors, which is appreciated by the panel. The attention to the labour market is increasing, and the employability of the graduates is good. Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concluded that the students achieve the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

Conclusion

Master's programme Cultural 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 Cultural 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 Cultural 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

Master's programme Cultural Geography

1. Knowledge and understanding

The degree program is designed to teach

- A. such that graduates acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding in the field of cultural geography so that they can make a substantial and original contribution to the development and/or implementation of ideas, particularly with regard to research.
- B. such that graduates have knowledge at the level of international academic publications of the theories, methodologies and techniques, and ethical foundations of the field of cultural geography, and that they develop the capacity to interpret this knowledge in context.
- C. such that graduates are able to form a critical assessment of the relationships between theoretical concepts, research methods and empirical findings in international academic publications in the field of cultural geography; and within the track related to tourism in particular.
- D. such that graduates are independently able to employ specific research and analysis methods within the field of cultural geography.
- E. such that graduates are able to make an independent contribution to increasing knowledge for the benefit of the field of cultural geography; and within the track the field of tourism related spatial challenges.
- F. such that graduates are able to recognize paradigms within the discipline as well as the conditions in which these are considered applicable.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

Graduates

- A. are able to apply the knowledge and understanding and problem-solving abilities they have gained in new or unknown situations within wider contexts related to the field of cultural geography; and tourism-related issues in particular.
- B. are able to integrate knowledge and understanding and apply them to complex problems.
- C. are able to integrate ethical, normative and expressive ways of thinking in cultural geography into their academic approach.
- D. have an understanding and a view of the application possibilities and limitations of the discipline in general and cultural geography in particular.
- E. are able independently to direct and perform research, whether or not in an interdisciplinary context.
- F. are able to initiate pioneering research.
- G. are able to apply theoretical insights within the field to the analysis of concrete issues in the field of cultural geography.
- H. are able to work across disciplines and thereby translate the contribution of their own discipline to other disciplines.
- I. are able to reason logically and independently formulate and analyse a problem and create a solution-driven synthesis; within the track with respect to tourism-related challenges.
- J. are able to reflect on the diversity and complexity of social structures and processes, as well as on interactions with environmental structures and processes.
- K. are able to debate the latest developments within the field and the consequences thereof for society.

3. Making judgements

Graduates

- A. are able to make judgements based on incomplete or limited information, bearing in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- B. demonstrate originality when critically reflecting on their personal academic conduct.
- C. are able to critically reflect on ways of reasoning, arguments and points of view.
- D. have learned to evaluate and critically assess the scope of spatial impacts from planning intervention.



E. have developed an open and critical attitude to new ideas and developments within the field of cultural geography.

4. Communication

Graduates

A. are able to clearly and straightforwardly present conclusions as well as the knowledge and motives behind them to specialist and non-specialist audiences, both in oral and written form.

5. Learning skills

Graduates

A. have developed the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

B. have learned to independently and critically continue to follow the relevant developments within their field after graduation.

6. Attitude

Graduates

A. have developed an investigative and critical attitude to content and to new ideas and developments within the field of cultural geography, i.e. graduates will be able to take a stand; and within the track with respect to tourism issues.

B. have developed an academic attitude in order to be able to work professionally in relevant social and academic positions.

C. have acquired an attitude that allows them to continue to develop in the field of cultural geography.

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Master's programme Cultural Geography

Course programme Cultural Geography 2018-2019

Cultural Geography			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Place, Regions & Identities (5 ects)	Nature, Landscape & Heritage (5 ects)	Qualitative Research Methods (5 ects)	Social Impact Assessment (5 ects)
Fieldwork Cultural Geography (5 ects)	Optional Course (5 ects)	Revitalizing Neighbourhoods (5 ects)	
Optional Course (5 ects)	Thesis (20 ects)		

Compulsory

Thesis

Optional Course

Course programme Cultural Geography: Tourism Geography and Planning 2018-2019

Cultural Geography : Tourism Geography and Planning			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Tourism and Culture (5 ects)	Tourism & Regional Development (5 ects)	Tourism Planning & Practice (5 ects)	Social Impact Assessment (5 ects)
Place, Regions & Identities (5 ects)	Nature, Landscape & Heritage (5 ects)	Qualitative Research Methods (5 ects)	
Fieldwork Cultural Geography (5 ects)	Thesis (20 ects)		

Compulsory

Track

Thesis



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 10 theses of the master's programme Cultural 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):

- Nature, Landscape & Heritage
- Tourism & Culture