

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

POPULATION STUDIES

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 POPULATION STUDIES 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 Population Studies

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Name of the programme: | Population Studies |
| International name of the programme: | Population Studies |
| CROHO number: | 60658 |
| Level of the programme: | master's |
| Orientation of the programme: | academic |
| Number of credits: | 60 EC |
| Specialisations or tracks: | - |
| Location(s): | Groningen |
| Mode(s) of study: | full time |
| Language of instruction: | English |
| Programme specific details: | Part of two double degree programmes: - Social Demography (with University of Pompeu Fabra, Department of Political and Social Sciences, Spain) - Demography & Social Inequality (with University of Cologne, Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, Germany) |
| 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.

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 Population studies 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);fs
- 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 Population Studies 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 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 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

In the Population Studies (PS) programme, events that take place during our lives are studied against the background of the socio-cultural and spatial context. Central to the research and teaching of the programme is the life course approach. The profile and positioning of the programme's identity are clear, with a strong emphasis on research methods. The panel appreciates the inclusion of food security and climate change in the programme. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) fit the profile of the programme and are in line with the Dublin Descriptors. The panel supports the programme's initiative to include the life course approach more explicitly in the ILOs in the upcoming academic year. The connection of the PS programme to the professional field is good. 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 practice. The panel appreciates the fact that the 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, for example by using the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference (DSFR). In conclusion, the PS programme has a clear profile, with its focus on a life course approach and strong emphasis on research methodology linked to content.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The PS programme has a well-structured, consistent, high-quality and internationally oriented curriculum. The curriculum is clear and consistent, with convincing thematic choices. The panel appreciates the connection between content and methodological courses. The research-driven approach of the programme and thematic courses are developed around research themes of the Demography department. The panel is of the opinion that the programme offers a good combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodology that complements each other. It stresses the importance of finding a solution for those students wishing to train themselves further in qualitative methods to deal with the advanced methodology course (elective) now being taught in Leeuwarden. The content of the courses is good, and the balance between breadth and depth is appreciated by the students. To enable students to develop a researcher's attitude, small-group interactive teaching methods are used, and lecturers include their research in their teaching. Students are also prepared for the profession of a demographer by including assignments that focus on real-life cases. According to the panel, the PS programme is clearly international, although the enrolment of students from the global south requires continued attention. 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.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the PS 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 diversify and become 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, as this enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In its view, one thesis assessment form with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. It found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has 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 recent graduates of the PS programme. It agreed with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor and is of the opinion that the quality of the theses is good. The programme strives for a balance in quantitative and qualitative methodologies, which the panel appreciates. The next step is to reflect this approach more explicitly in the theses. The attention to the labour market and employability of graduates is good. The focus of the PS programme on research and methodology fits well with the positions of alumni, which are often research related. Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that students realise 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 Population Studies

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| 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 Population Studies 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 master's programme Population Studies (PS) trains students to become critical and independent researchers and thinkers with regard to contemporary, societally relevant population issues, like ageing, migration and health. It studies the events that take place during our lives against the background of the socio-cultural and spatial context, and the consequences of those events for people's well-being. Central to the research and teaching is the life course approach, which analyses people's lives within structural, social and cultural contexts. Students learn the theories, concepts, methods and academic skills required to understand and analyse contemporary population issues. In the self-evaluation report, the importance of understanding and analysing these issues in a comprehensive way is emphasised, which requires a global and multidisciplinary perspective. During the site visit, the students informed the panel that a strength of the programme is the fact that they get different insights into demographics from different perspectives, like immigration, morbidity and contemporary population issues. They also appreciate the interrelation with other disciplines, like economics and food security. The panel is of the opinion that the PS programme has a clear profile and positioning of its identity, with a strong emphasis on research methods. It appreciates the current shift in the programme to include themes like food and climate change.

The PS programme combines individual- and population-level approaches from different disciplines that are not usually included in classical demography programmes. The PS programme is the only Dutch master's programme on demography. Other international programmes focus on social demography, on economics, or on research methods. The PS programme is embedded in a European network, which is shown by the double-degree programmes it offers. Students can opt for a one-year master's programme in Groningen or enrol in one of two double-degree programmes: Master Social Demography with the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, Spain, or the Master Demography and Social Inequality with the University of Cologne, Germany. The double-degree



programmes link population studies with sociology. Students who complete one of the double degrees have thus developed an international, interdisciplinary and dynamic perspective towards population issues.

Intended learning outcomes

The profile of the PS programme has been translated into 27 intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs follow the five components of the Dublin Descriptors and add a sixth component, "attitudes". In the first component, "knowledge and understanding", both general and more specific knowledge is addressed. This covers methods and techniques required in the demography discipline, but also contemporary population issues in their context. The component "application of knowledge and understanding" covers developing the required knowledge and academic skills in order to conduct independent scientific research. In the additional component "attitudes", the programme aims to further strengthen the ILOs under "forming judgements", "communication" and "learning skills" that aim to shape students to become critical and independent researchers. According to the self-evaluation report, the ILOs do not explicitly include the life course approach and consequences of events for well-being, despite these aspects being central to the research and education in the programme.

The panel is pleased to learn that the programme is in the process of remedying this omission and that the revised ILOs will be implemented from the academic year 2019-2020. With respect to the ILOs, it concludes that they fit the profile of the programme well and are formulated at the level of an academic master's programme.

Link to the domain

The panel reviewed eight out of nine educational programmes that are 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 nice interactions between the eight programmes, there is an added value for the programmes and the FSS as a whole in more strongly formalising some aspects for a further increase of interaction and synergy (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 content of the programme is international and research-driven, and graduates are prepared for the profession of researcher in the fields of population studies and demography. Alumni of the programme work, for example, in applied population research for policy and practice, in municipalities, local research institutes and non-governmental organisations. Guest lecturers are important in the connection to the professional field and understanding what is expected of graduates. 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.

Considerations

In the PS programme, events that take place during our lives are studied against the background of the socio-cultural and spatial context. Central to the research and teaching of the programme is the life course approach. The profile and positioning of the programme's identity are clear, with a strong emphasis on research methods. The panel appreciates the shift in the programme to include food security and climate change. The ILOs fit the profile of the programme and are in line with the Dublin Descriptors. The panel supports the programme's initiative to include the life course approach more explicitly in the ILOs in the upcoming academic year. The connection of the PS programme to the professional field is good. 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 practice. The panel appreciates the fact that the 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, for example by using the DSFR. In conclusion, the PS programme has a clear profile, with its focus on a life course approach and strong emphasis on research methodology linked to content.

Conclusion

Master's programme Population Studies: 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 structure and courses of the one-year PS programme (60 EC) were revised in 2017-2018. The courses are now developed around the main research themes of the department and position the programme better internationally. Theories, methods and skills are still addressed in the current curriculum but are now embedded in the course themes that are modelled in line with the main research themes. The curriculum encompasses six compulsory courses (each 5 EC), two optional courses (total 10 EC) and a master's thesis (20 EC). A matrix in the self-evaluation report shows that each course contributes to a number of ILOs. The panel established that all ILOs are addressed by the combination of mandatory courses and the thesis. The ILOs on *Knowledge and understanding* aspects are predominantly covered in the first semester, while *Application of knowledge and understanding*, *Making judgments*, *Communication* and *Attitudes* are predominantly covered during term 2A and in the thesis (see appendix 3 for an overview of the curriculum).

The first semester focuses on demographic theories, concepts and methods, while the second semester places more emphasis on the societal relevance and implications of demographic research and the development of career perspectives. The structure of the curriculum aims at a balance between thematic and methodology courses by combining them in every term. This allows students to acquire the general knowledge, understanding and skills that are required in the demography discipline, on the one hand, e.g. in the *Working with Data in Population Research* and *Life Tables and Population Projections* courses. On the other, they learn about specific contemporary population issues as addressed in the research themes and expertise in the department in the *Population, Health and Place* and *Migration, Families & Households* courses. During the site visit it became apparent that the students recognise and appreciate this common approach in the curriculum. They informed the panel that they get insights into demographic and population studies from different perspectives, including immigration, morbidity and contemporary population issues. They learn about the interrelation with other themes, like economy and food security. The teaching staff explained to the panel that these themes are used to increase the societal relevance of the programme and form part of the programme's changing focus from demographic methods to content. Finally, the students



mentioned that not only do they get a broad overview, they also get the opportunity to go into depth in every course. The content and level of the courses the panel looked at in more detail are very good. All courses have clear course descriptions, and learning goals, as well as an assessment plan.

The panel is of the opinion that the PS programme has redesigned its curriculum into a well-structured, consistent and high-quality programme. It appreciates the connection between content and methodological courses in the curriculum. This was also mentioned by the students as a positive feature of the programme. The focus on research is clearly embedded, and the students informed the panel that they notice and appreciate the current research of staff members being integrated into the programme. The panel is also very positive about the approach towards methodology in the curriculum, there is a well-balanced combination of qualitative and quantitative methods that complement rather than oppose each other. The students confirmed that the combination of methodologies has indeed improved over the past years and is now considered well balanced. The panel understands that the only advanced course in qualitative methodology, which can be taken as an elective, is given as part of the Cultural Geography programme that is located in Leeuwarden. Although students can still choose this course, it is unlikely that they will. Because of the travel distance, this creates a barrier for many students, holding them back in choosing this course as an elective. In the student chapter it is furthermore mentioned that the elective is scheduled at the same time as one of the compulsory courses. The panel recommends finding a solution to allow students to obtain the required advanced qualitative level.

Students are encouraged to combine their master's thesis research with an internship, although this is not obligatory. The programme started offering internship opportunities in combination with master's thesis research via an internship and thesis topics market. Students independently choose their own thesis topic and formulate their research question before they are assigned a supervisor. A substantive number of students (6 of 17 in 2017-2018) combined the thesis and an internship. Students can also opt to do an internship as an elective of 5 EC. In this case, they are required to create an end product that is useful to the host organisation. However, only a limited number of students who do an internship as an elective. 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, giving students who wish to do an internship more support and guidance.

Teaching learning environment

The vision of the FSS emphasises learning rather than teaching, and as a consequence, the programme aims for an active learning environment in which knowledge development, experimentation, fieldwork and shared learning experiences are key. The teaching in the PS programme is research-driven, as thematic courses are developed around the major, contemporary research themes in the Demography department. The self-evaluation report stated that the PS programme aims to support students in developing an academic research attitude and the ability to form judgments and communicate about research in a clear, convincing and scientific manner. To achieve this, lecturers include their research experience in their teaching, and use various active work forms for small-group interactive teaching. For example, peer-review assignments are used to activate the student, promote early engagement with the course content, to encourage the preparation for discussions and ensure the groundwork for peer-learning and shared learning experiences. In addition to classroom teaching, other teaching methods used are tutorials, peer review, instruction meetings, seminars and an excursion. Small classes allow for interactive teaching, including peer review and discussions. The teaching combines global, long-term perspectives with micro-level understanding of behaviour in context, and it addresses theories and perspectives from various academic fields. In addition, to help students develop a researcher's attitude, the programme aims to prepare students for the profession of a demographer. This means that teaching focuses on developing students' knowledge and understanding of population issues and 2) their knowledge and skills concerning the demographic and social-scientific methods employed in population research.

Internationalisation

All programmes in the FSS aim to establish an international classroom, where in which international students share intercultural competences, insights and examples with interactive discussions on the topics at hand. The PS programme uses an international classroom approach to encourage students to develop interdisciplinary perspectives. Ever since the start of the programme, international students with various cultural and educational characteristics and backgrounds have participated. Students informed the panel that according to them the programme is very international as it is not at all focussed on regional or local issues. The small groups of students and peer review support them learning from one another; the interdisciplinary and culturally diverse backgrounds of students and staff stimulate fruitful discussions and enable students to develop mutual understanding and a broad and global perspective on population issues with consideration for inequalities within and between societies. The international aspects in the programme are strengthened by the two double-degree programmes. All courses are taught in English, and the language centre of the university is involved in assuring that the teaching staff has an adequate level of English.

The composition of the group of international students has shifted over the past years. On the one hand, there is an increase in EU students, predominantly ones from Cologne taking a double degree. On the other hand, there is a decrease in the number of enrolling students from the Global South. For those students, it has become increasingly difficult to organise funding to enrol in the programme. According to the panel, the loss of students from the Global South is unfortunate, even though this aspect is outside the programme's control. It encourages the programme and the FSS to look for new funding opportunities to allow these students to enrol, as students from the Global South contribute significantly to the diversity of the programme.

Student numbers, contact hours, feasibility

The enrolment of students in the programme has been steadily increasing over the past years and is now 15-20 students per year. The increase is predominantly the result of an increasing number of Dutch students. In the past two years, approximately one-third of enrolling students has been international. The programme has clear admission requirements: applicants are required to have knowledge of the subject of population studies and statistics and have an interest in research. The level of English is also verified before admission. The programme offers a premaster programme for students who do not have direct access. The success rates after two years are good (60-100%) with an average study duration of 15 months. Students informed the panel that they consider the programme to be demanding but feasible; they thought the workload of one course was too high, but this has already been reported and will be remedied next year.

Although the vast majority of students begin the programme in September, the programme offers the option of February enrolment. Students who enrol in February were advised to make some changes to the structure of the programme, such as the moment of following optional courses and starting the master's thesis. This allows them to finish the programme within one year. 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 the 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, and the enrolment numbers in February are very low.

Including premaster's students, approximately 2/3 of the students are relatively new to the University of Groningen. The programme has developed a booklet with important information and the programme scheduling, which is distributed to the new students. This allows them to search for and enrol in electives and prepare for the introduction meeting in September. Additionally, throughout the year, the programme organises special sessions, e.g. about ethics in research and presentation skills. It also pays attention to social cohesion between the students and the



approachability of staff by organising an informal outing in the first week and drinks half-way through the year.

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. Via course evaluations and the student members of the Programme Committee (PC), students are able to provide input to the programme. They also play a more active role in the design of their own learning process and are stimulated to address issues informally during courses. Some teachers even organise oral mid-course evaluations.

Teaching staff

Of the twelve staff members involved in the programme, six are (associate) professors. The involvement of senior research staff in the courses and thesis supervision heightens their approachability and allows the students to benefit from the expertise within the department. The programme also makes use of expertise outside academia by involving professionals from research institutes, non-governmental organisations and governmental institutions working at the local, national and international level in the programme. Guest lecturers who work in the professional field enable students to understand how research, policy and practice connect. The student chapter of the self-evaluation report mentioned that the lecturers are approachable if the students have questions or want additional information. This was confirmed by the students the panel interviewed during the site visit. The panel concludes that the close connection between research and the educational programme enhances this staff involvement.

According to the self-evaluation report, the teaching team provides a mix of seniority, analytical skills, research interests and experience. All teaching staff have a PhD, and some members have had success in obtaining research grants. Staff members with an appointment larger than 0.2 fte have obtained a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or are in the process of doing so. The student-staff ratio fluctuated between 8 and 23 students per FTE during the evaluation period. With the increase in student numbers, the ratio also increased. According to the panel, recent hires with specific expertise have increased the interdisciplinarity, reduced vulnerability and enhanced the quality of the courses.

Considerations

The PS programme has a well-structured, consistent, high-quality and internationally oriented curriculum. The curriculum is clear and consistent, with convincing thematic choices. The panel appreciates the connection between content and methodological courses. The research-driven approach of the programme and thematic courses are developed around research themes of the Demography department. The panel is of the opinion that the programme offers a good combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodology that complements each other. It stresses the importance of finding a solution for those students wishing to train themselves further in qualitative methods to deal with the advanced methodology course (elective) now being taught in Leeuwarden. The content of the courses is good, and the balance between breadth and depth is appreciated by the students. To enable students to develop a researcher's attitude, small-group interactive teaching methods are used, and lecturers include their research in their teaching. Students are also prepared for the profession of a demographer by including assignments that focus on real-life cases. According to the panel, the PS programme is clearly international, although the enrolment of students from the global south requires continued attention. 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.

Conclusion

Master's programme Population Studies: 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.

In the self-evaluation report, the vision of assessment is described as following the educational vision, and consequently combines formative and summative assessment modes that enhance the students' learning while facilitating their development as critical, independent researchers. Formative assessment is applied to stimulate students in their learning process. For example, half-way through each course, students receive feedback on the draft version of an assignment. For methodology assessments, the students are expected to pass computer assignments to be well prepared for the final assessment. They are also made aware of the assessment instrument in use. For example, in the *Contemporary Population Issues* course, they are asked to assess policy briefs using the grading rubric that would be used to assess their own policy brief assignment. Assessment modes follow logically from the learning objectives formulated for each course, which are a translation and elaboration of the ILOs, and vary between open-question exams, essays, computer assignments, oral presentations, individual and group research projects, etc. The students informed the panel that they appreciate the variety in assessment methods. They furthermore are of the opinion that the learning outcomes of a course indeed determine the kind of assessment used and thus that the assessment methods fit with the course objectives. The programme-specific assessment plan forms the basis for achieving a direct fit between the ILOs and the course assessment. The master's coordinator monitors the balance between assessment methods throughout the curriculum to safeguard their validity for achieving the programme's ILOs. The variety of assessment modes allows



the programme to assess various skills and prevent overlapping of the assessment deadlines. According to the panel all exams are well-designed and have a proper answer key. However, this was not clear from the assessment plan in the self-evaluation report, in which no formative feedback moments or deadlines are included. The panel recommends that the programme look into this and develop the assessment plan in further detail.

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 an assessment form that includes criteria on designing the research, applying research methods, developing an argumentation, reporting and presenting. The supervisor (and first assessor) reads and grades the thesis according to the assessment form. The second assessor independently assesses the thesis and evaluates the assessment made by the supervisor. The two assessors then come to a decision on the final grades per aspect and the resulting overall grade. Comments by both assessors are combined in a final report that is communicated to the student. The panel reviewed a sample of theses and found that they were validly and reliably assessed. In many, but not all, assessment forms, the feedback from the first and second examiners were 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.

Students who are enrolled in a double-degree programme are assigned two supervisors: one from the University of Groningen and one from either Cologne or Barcelona. The theses of these students should adhere to the submission deadlines from both institutes and be assessed by at least three assessors (both supervisors and a second examiner from the University of Groningen).

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 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 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, 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 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 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, leading to different assessment cultures among the staff. 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 PS 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 diversify and become 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, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures in all



master's programmes, as this enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In its view, one thesis assessment form with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. It found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has 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 Population Studies: 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 10 recent master's theses. Without exception, they sufficiently demonstrated that graduates realise the ILOs. In fact, the panel is of the opinion that the majority of the theses it read were of good quality. Positive aspects observed in many theses were the originality of the research question and good use of the literature, methodology and data selection (including use and analysis of primary and secondary data). The theses with higher grades often also included a good discussion and reflection. The points of critique the panel formulated were very diverse, were often mentioned for one thesis only, and were reflected in the grading. They addressed the use of a conceptual framework and the quality of the conclusion.

During the site visit the panel discussed the use of methodology in the thesis with the students and lecturers. It learned that approximately 20% of all students chooses a qualitative methodological approach, while the vast majority opts for a quantitative approach. As mentioned under Standard 2, the panel is positive about the approach to methodology in the curriculum and encourages the programme to make sure that this is reflected better in the thesis. The lecturers informed the panel that they want to facilitate students in learning both approaches, for example by combining them in courses stimulating the use of both methods in the theses. The students also acknowledge this strive for balance, but in practice the use of quantitative methodology prevails, and it is considered too complex and time consuming to use mixed methods in the thesis. Although the panel understands that it is challenging to adopt a mixed-methods approach in a 20 EC thesis in a one-year master programme, it is of the opinion that rather than an option, mixed methods is a prerequisite for the intended multidisciplinary. It encourages the programme to be more ambitious in this respect.

Employability

The FSS developed policies to keep in contact with alumni and involve alumni in the teaching practice. In addition, the PS programme actively involves alumni and other professionals in the field of demography and population studies in the teaching, as guest lecturers and via student internships. This provides students with a perspective and understanding of how research, policy and practice connect in practice and helps them develop their own career perspectives. The programme explicitly pays attention to future employability in several courses. For example, in the *Contemporary Population Issues* course, students write a policy brief, which requires them to translate academic knowledge into a product that is interesting to a non-academic audience. The students confirmed this attention to employability in the curriculum, although they would also appreciate an increase in trips to companies and organisations to experience the atmosphere in practice. The programme stays in touch with the wider network of alumni via email and social media. In 2017-2018 the first PRC Alumni Day was organised in which staff and alumni gave presentations, and students could speed date with alumni/staff. Students could also follow a career workshop. The programme intends to organise an alumni day on a regular basis. The panel appreciates the initiatives by the PS programme to prepare students for their future career.

An alumni analysis showed that over 50% of graduates find a job within three months after graduation, in provinces and municipalities. Many alumni also find jobs at research institutes, e.g. Statistics Netherlands or the Environmental Assessment Agency. The PS programme is of the opinion that this is partly the result of a strong orientation to and training in research methods and analysis. This was confirmed by alumni the panel interviewed. At the same time the number of alumni pursuing a PhD is limited as most students who want to pursue a PhD instead in the two-year research master programme. The panel thinks that it is good that the one-year PS programme focuses on research and methodology with a different objective from the research master. Students in the PS programme are interested in research and methodology but aim at a career in the professional (research) rather than an academic career.

Considerations

The panel reviewed a random selection of theses produced by recent graduates of the PS programme. It agreed with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor and is of the opinion that the quality of the theses is good. The programme strives for a balance in quantitative and qualitative methodologies, which the panel appreciates. The next step is to reflect this approach more explicitly in the theses. The attention to the labour market and employability of graduates is good. The focus of the PS programme on research and methodology fits well with the positions of alumni, which are often research related. Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

Conclusion

Master's programme Population Studies: 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 Population Studies 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 Population Studies* 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 Population Studies

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates know of and understand

- a) important population issues that society is facing nowadays, like ageing, integration of migrants, health inequalities and population decline;
- b) how migration is related to changes in: family situation, household composition, labour markets and broader welfare regimes;
- c) the interactions between population, health and place at both the macro (=population) and the micro (=individual) level;
- d) how demographic behaviour is influenced by the societal, geographical, cultural, economic, and institutional context, and how it impacts society;
- e) important demographic theories, concepts and measures of population distribution, population growth, fertility, mortality, and migration;
- f) the ways of obtaining and appraising demographic data, either through existing demographic data sources or through own data collection;
- g) important qualitative research methods;
- h) the most important analytical demographic methods and techniques for analysing quantitative demographic data at the macro and micro level, including life table analysis, population projections and advanced survey/register data analysis;
- i) the research process in all its facets;
- j) how research is embedded in policy and can be used to design, monitor and evaluate (intervention) programmes.

2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Graduates are able to

- a) design a suitable and relevant research proposal or plan for a complex societal demographic issue, in an independent manner;
- b) perform independent research within the field, involving formulating the research proposal, formulating theoretical frameworks, obtaining data, applying relevant methods to the analysis of the data, interpreting the results, and formulating recommendations for further research and/or action, while being aware of ethical considerations.

3. Forming judgements

Graduates are able to

- a) judge the quality of research being undertaken in the field of demography and population studies;
- b) take into account the ethical aspects of the conduct of social science research
- c) judge quality issues when collecting and/or using demographic data;
- d) reflect on how (their) research results can be used for policy making and/or interventions.

4. Communication

Graduates are able to

- a) provide constructive feedback on research and analyses produced by their fellow students and others in the field;
- b) present and write papers and thesis on topics and research in Population Studies and Demography in a clear, convincing and scientific manner ;
- c) reflect and argue about their research in a scientific manner;
- d) discuss and debate ideas and developments within the field.

5. Learning Skills

Graduates are able to

- a) assess which literature, theory, research questions and research methodology to use for societal demographic issues;



- b) independently position their own work and work by others within the ongoing scientific debates and changing policy context;
- c) independently and critically evaluate new developments in the field of Population Studies.

6. Attitudes

Graduates

- a) develop a critical, independent, creative, pro-active and resourceful attitude;
- b) develop a scientific and methodological rigour of doing research;
- c) are able to work together in multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural settings;
- d) are able to work with deadlines and with feedback.

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Master's programme Population Studies

| Population studies | | | |
|---|---|--|------------------|
| <i>Term 1A</i> | <i>Term 1B</i> | <i>Term 2A</i> | <i>Term 2B</i> |
| Working with Data in Population Research (5 ects) | Migration, Families and Households (5 ects) | Contemporary Population Issues (5 ects) | Thesis (20 ects) |
| Population, Health & Place (5 ects) | Life Tables and Population Projections (5 ects) | Advanced Statistical Analyses (EG/PS) (5 ects) | |
| Optional Course (5 ects) | Optional Course (5 ects) | | |

| | | |
|------------|--------|-----------------|
| Compulsory | Thesis | Optional Course |
|------------|--------|-----------------|

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 Population studies. 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):

- Migration, Families and Households
- Life Tables and Population Projections

