

Assessment report  
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

**Bachelor Sociology**

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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## 1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Bachelor Sociology programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016.

The panel regards the programme objectives to be sound and relevant. The programme is clearly focused on the study of societal change, and the practical and policy implications thereof. The panel appreciates students being educated in theoretical and methodological knowledge, in general and academic skills, including research skills, and in practical and policy implications. The panel approves of students to be primarily educated to proceed to master programmes in this domain. The intended learning outcomes are comprehensive and meet the bachelor level. The intended learning outcomes have not yet been updated to include policy implications' subjects. The panel advises to make the necessary adjustments, as the programme is planning to do.

The panel appreciates the Domain-specific Framework for Sociology, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands in this field of study. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Sociology domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master Sociology programmes. The programme objectives are clearly aligned with the reference framework.

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are up to standard.

Although the intended learning outcomes need to be updated, the curriculum contents are aligned to the programme objectives and meet the essential contents of the intended learning outcomes. The panel regards the courses to be strong and to address sociological theory, methodology and policy implications in-depth. The panel welcomes students being trained throughout the curriculum in research skills, general and academic skills. The panel recommends to examine the learning lines in the curriculum from the perspective of curriculum coherence, and to include the alignment of the public administration courses in this examination. As the size of the Minor in the curriculum (15 EC) is at odds with most Minors (30 EC), limiting the choice options for students, the panel suggests to investigate options to enlarge the Minor study load to 30 EC. As individual choices by students may hamper curriculum coherence, the panel suggests to ensure curriculum coherence in these situations.

The lecturers are good teachers, very motivated and exhibit strong team-spirit. The expertise and research track records of the lecturers are beyond doubt. The postdoctoral researchers, PhD candidates, and tutors are prepared well for their teaching tasks. The workload of staff members seems high, especially during the Summer period and during peak moments. The panel, therefore, suggests to monitor the average and the peak workload of the lecturers, and to take action, if this workload is too demanding.

The educational concept and study methods of the programme are well-aligned to the student population and the first-generation university students among them. The increasing degree of self-reliance on the part of students in the course of the programme is welcomed by the panel. The number of hours of face-to-face education is adequate. The students-to-staff ratio is generous, allowing for small-scale education. The panel notes the strict protocols and scheduling of courses to benefit study progress and drop-out rates. After the first year, drop-out rates are very limited. Strict scheduling may have a downside in terms of study delay, if schedules are not met by students. The panel, therefore, suggests to try and introduce more flexibility in courses' and internships' schedules. The student success rates are favourable.

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are aligned with the School guidelines and policies. The panel notes, however, these rules and regulations not to have been all appropriately implemented. To remedy this shortcoming, the panel specifies to implement the rules and regulations for examinations and assessments for the programme. The panel specifies also to align the Examination Board's, programme management's and examiners' perceptions of the rules and regulations that apply.

Although the position and the responsibilities of the Examination Board are adequate in a formal sense, the panel observes the Board is not satisfactorily in control of the examination and assessment processes in the programme. To remedy this shortcoming, the panel specifies the Examination Board to ensure examination rules and regulations to be adhered to by the examiners, to oversee the examination and assessment processes of the programme, and to inspect or have inspected regularly the examinations as well as the Bachelor Thesis projects of the programme.

The examination methods for the courses are adequate, as these meet the course goals and contents. The panel advises to state the course goals in more strict and directive terms to facilitate the alignment of course goals and examinations. In addition, the panel recommends to reconsider that unsatisfactory examinations in the first year of the programme may be compensated for.

The supervision processes of the Bachelor Thesis projects are appropriate. The assessment procedures for the Bachelor Thesis projects are regarded by the panel not to be up to standard. The procedures regarding the assessment of the projects are not clear. To remedy this shortcoming, the panel specifies to draft clear and unambiguous rules for the Bachelor Thesis project assessment and to ensure these rules being implemented.

The Bachelor theses match the intended learning outcomes and are of adequate quality. The panel generally agrees to the grades given by the programme examiners, but regards some theses to be graded somewhat too high. One thesis that was graded satisfactorily is assessed by the panel as unsatisfactory. The panel suggests to ensure ethical and judicial (legal privacy rules) screening of the Bachelor Thesis projects, in case of primary data collection. The panel considers students completing the programme to have reached the intended learning outcomes and regards the programme to offer suitable preparation for programmes at master level. The range of master programmes graduates are admitted to gives evidence of graduates' knowledge and skills. The panel proposes to install a professional field advisory board and to reinforce alumni relations to keep the programme aligned to trends in the professional field.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the Bachelor Sociology programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam assesses this programme to be satisfactory in the terms of the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands. Standard 3 is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. The panel considers the improvement of the shortcomings identified under this standard to be realistic and feasible within the period of two years. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to grant the programme an improvement period of two years and to extend the current accreditation term of the programme for that period.

Rotterdam, 12 April 2019

Prof. dr. A. Need  
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren  
(panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Erasmus University Rotterdam to coordinate the limited framework programme assessment process for the Bachelor Sociology programme of this University. This objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster Sociology convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of candidates.

Having conferred with management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof. dr. A. Need, professor Sociology and Public Policy, School of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, University of Twente (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. S. Waslander, professor Sociology, TIAS School for Business and Society, Tilburg University (panel member);
- Prof. dr. I. Glorieux, professor, Department Sociology, Research Group TOR, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (panel member);
- A.G. Duursma, student Bachelor Sociology, VU Amsterdam (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercouteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit were discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected fifteen final projects. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates, these final projects being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

A number of weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this preliminary meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the final projects were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 18 January 2019, the panel conducted a site visit on the Erasmus University Rotterdam campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, panel members were given the opportunity to meet with Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences Board representatives, programme management, Examination Board representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, the assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management was given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the University Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

### 3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: B Sociology  
Orientation, level programme: Academic Bachelor  
Grade: BSc  
Number of credits: 180 EC  
Specialisations: None  
Location: Rotterdam  
Mode of study: Full-time and Part-time (instruction language Dutch/English)  
Registration in CROHO: 56601

Name of institution: Erasmus University Rotterdam  
Status of institution: Government-funded University  
Institution's quality assurance: Approved



## 4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

### 4.1 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*

The Bachelor Sociology programme is one of the programmes of Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The School offers bachelor and master programmes in the social sciences and organises research programmes in the social sciences. The Dean of the School is responsible for the quality of all these programmes. The Department of Public Administration and Sociology is responsible for this and the other programmes in this domain within the School. The Director of Education of the Department has the responsibility for the organisation and delivery of these programmes. The programme coordinator manages the Bachelor Sociology programme on a day-to-day basis. The Programme Committee, being composed of equal numbers of lecturers and students, advises programme management on the quality of the programme. The School Examination Board has the authority to ensure the quality of examinations and assessments of this and the other programmes of the School. In 2015, the Departments of Public Administration and of Sociology within the School merged. This led, among others, to the revised curriculum of the Bachelor programme, to include courses in the Sociology programme being shared with the Public Administration programme.

The objectives of the programme are to educate students to understand, explain and critically reflect upon societal change, the consequences of societal change and the policy implications thereof. Students are taught the sociological theoretical perspectives and methodology broadly to study these subjects. The main questions of sociology, being modernisation, inequality, cohesion and identification, are the organising principles to study theory. Students are introduced to critical perspectives on classic and current theory. Students are also trained in general and academic skills. In addition, students are educated in the practical and policy implications of societal change.

The programme objectives are aligned to the requirements of the Domain-specific Framework for Sociology which was completed in 2018. This domain-specific framework has been drafted by the joint Sociology programmes in the Netherlands. In this framework, the general objectives and final attainment levels for Bachelor and Master Sociology programmes have been outlined.

Students are primarily prepared to continue their studies in master programmes in sociology or in related social sciences. They may, however, also enter the labour market.

In the focus on critical sociology, the programme distinguishes itself among the Sociology programmes in the Netherlands, especially bridging the Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam programmes' perspectives.

The objectives of the programme have been translated into the programme intended learning outcomes. These intended learning outcomes specify, as the main points, knowledge and understanding of the main questions, theoretical traditions and key concepts of sociology, knowledge and understanding of methods and techniques of social science research, knowledge and skills to relate societal problems to sociological theories, to translate these problems to research designs and to carry out small research projects, critical assessment of sociological theory, insights and research, oral and written communication skills, skills to collect and assess information, and collaboration skills.

The intended learning outcomes have not yet been updated to include the policy implications' subjects in the curriculum, being one of the main contributions by the Public Administration Department to the programme. The curriculum adaptations have preceded the update of the intended learning outcomes.

Programme management compared the intended learning outcomes quite extensively to the Dublin descriptors for bachelor programmes, to demonstrate these to meet bachelor level requirements.

#### *Considerations*

The panel regards the programme objectives to be sound and relevant. The programme is clearly focused on the study of societal change, and the practical and policy implications thereof. The panel appreciates students being educated in theoretical and methodological knowledge, in general and academic skills, including research skills, and in practical and policy implications, allowing them to broadly study the subject of societal change.

The panel appreciates the Domain-specific Framework for Sociology, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands in this field of study. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Sociology domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master Sociology programmes. The panel regards the objectives of this programme to be clearly aligned with the reference framework.

The panel approves of the students being primarily educated to proceed to master programmes in this domain.

The panel considers the intended learning outcomes to be comprehensive. The intended learning outcomes have not yet been updated to include policy implications' subjects. The panel advises to make the necessary adjustments, as the programme is planning to do. The panel regards the intended learning outcomes to meet the bachelor level.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, Intended learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

## 4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

### *Findings*

The student influx between 2012 and 2018 decreased from about 60 incoming students in 2012 to about 40 students in 2017 and in 2018. Students often are first-generation university students. The admission criteria for the programme are either a Dutch pre-university diploma (vwo) or equivalent prior education from abroad or the completed first year of higher professional education (hbo). Applicants are required to fill out an online questionnaire before enrolling. They are invited to the study choice check day, which is meant to inform them about the programme.

The programme takes three years to complete for the full-time variant and carries 180 EC of study load. For the programme, the intended learning outcomes have been mapped to the curriculum components to show the curriculum meeting the programme intended learning outcomes. All courses in the curriculum are mandatory. The Minor in the third year (15 EC) gives students the chance to take electives. The curriculum has been organised along four distinct learning lines. Courses offered are part of one of the learning lines. These are the four sociological main questions, meta questions and critical approaches, research methods and techniques, and academic and practical skills. The four sociological main questions learning line extends over all three years of the curriculum and covers classic and contemporary sociological theory. This learning line also introduces students to societal problems, to the relevance of sociological knowledge to address these problems and policy implications of societal problems. The meta questions and critical approaches learning line offers students the critical perspective on classic sociological theory. The research methods and techniques learning line included courses in all three years of the curriculum and acquaints students with research designs and qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. Practical research skills, among which writing research proposals and qualitative data-analysis, are addressed in practical classes (1.5 EC), offered in parallel to the theoretical courses. In the academic and practical skills learning line, students are trained in a wide range of skills, including information processing skills, academic writing skills, presentation skills, and interviewing skills. These are mostly scheduled in practical classes. In addition to the learning lines courses, supporting courses are offered, which introduce students to the policy implications of societal change. The Internship in the second year (15 EC), the Research Project in the second year (15 EC) and the Bachelor Thesis project in the third year (15 EC) allow students to integrate knowledge and skills acquired. In the Internship, students practice the skills they have been trained in. In the Research project, students in small groups conduct both qualitative and quantitative research projects, be it of modest scope. At the end of the third year, students complete the individual Bachelor Thesis project (15 EC). In the third year Minor, students may select courses broadly within Erasmus University Rotterdam or from other universities. Students may also go abroad. The subjects addressed in the courses of the curriculum are aligned to the expertise and research interests of the lecturers, adding to the research-orientation of the curriculum. The public administration courses are not explicitly part of the learning lines.

A total number of 24 staff members are involved in the programme. They are experts in the fields they lecture in, are actively engaged in research in their fields. All lecturers have PhD degrees. About 25 % of the staff is BKO-certified, whereas 10 % of the lecturers is in the process of obtaining this certificate. About 50 % of the staff members are exempted from the BKO-obligation. In addition to these staff members, postdoctoral researchers, PhD candidates, coordinators and tutors participate in education. They are trained to guide students in problem-based learning classes, working groups or practical classes. Coordinators guide tutors and arrange practical classes. Practical classes on research skills, statistics or qualitative data analysis are lectured by staff members. Staff members and tutors working together within courses meet regularly to discuss the education. Lecturers in the programme meet frequently to discuss the programme and curriculum coherence. The lecturers' workload is quite demanding.

The educational concept of the programme is directed towards interactive and small-scale teaching. The students-to-staff ratio for the programme is 12/1. The number of hours of face-to-face education is slightly more than 11 hours per week in the first two years, excluding the Internship and Research project in the second year. In the third year the number of hours of face-to-face education is about 9 hours per week, excluding the Bachelor Thesis project. The study methods adopted in the courses include lectures, practical-based learning classes or working groups and practical classes. In lectures, staff members lecture, transferring knowledge of the course subjects. Especially in the first year, courses are scheduled sequentially, one course (6 EC) with practicum (1.5 EC) per period, eight periods per year. This schedule has been designed to allow students to focus on one course at the time, smoothening their transition from secondary education. In the first year, teaching is organised in terms of problem-based learning education principles. In problem-based learning classes, small groups of about 12 students acquire knowledge and skills by studying actual social problems. The protocol of these classes is very strict, students being required to attend classes. In the second and third years, working groups of 20 students maximum are scheduled with less strict protocols and requiring students to display more pro-active and autonomous learning attitudes. In practical classes scheduled in the first and second years, students are trained general and academic skills. At the beginning of the programme as well as in the course of the programme, students are informed about study choices to make. They are also informed about their study progress. Students may contact study advisors, when they experience study problems. The programme drop-out rates are fairly stable and amount to about 28 % in the first year. In the years thereafter, about 7 % to 8 % of the students drop out. The student success rates of the programme are on average 65 % after three years and on average 81 % after four years (proportions of students re-entering in the second year; figures for last three to four cohorts).

### *Considerations*

The panel considers the admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme to be up to standard. Prospective students are well-informed about the programme.

Although the intended learning outcomes need to be updated, the curriculum contents are aligned to the programme objectives and meet the essential contents of the intended learning outcomes. The panel regards the courses to be strong and to address sociological theory, methodology and policy implications in-depth. The panel welcomes students being trained throughout the curriculum in research skills, general and academic skills. The panel acknowledges these skills to be beneficial for the labour market preparation of students, be it after having completed the master programme. The panel recommends to

examine the learning lines in the curriculum from the perspective of curriculum coherence, and to include the alignment of the public administration courses in this examination. As the size of the Minor in the curriculum (15 EC) is at odds with most Minors (30 EC), limiting the choice options for students, the panel suggests to investigate options to enlarge the Minor study load to 30 EC. As individual choices by students may hamper curriculum coherence, the panel suggests to ensure curriculum coherence in these situations.

The panel considers the lecturers to be good teachers, to be very motivated and to exhibit strong team-spirit. The expertise and research track records of the lecturers are beyond doubt. The postdoctoral researchers, PhD candidates, and tutors are prepared well for their teaching tasks by both the staff members and the coordinators in the programme. Workload of staff members seems high, especially during the Summer period and during peak moments. The panel, therefore, suggests to monitor the average and the peak workload of the lecturers, and to take action, if this workload is too demanding.

The panel regards the educational concept and the study methods of the programme to be well-aligned to the student population and the first-generation university students among them. The increasing degree of self-reliance on the part of students in the course of the programme is welcomed by the panel. The number of hours of face-to-face education is adequate. The students-to-staff ratio is generous, allowing for small-scale education. The panel notes the strict protocols and scheduling of courses to benefit study progress and drop-out rates. After the first year, drop-out rates are very limited. Strict scheduling may have a downside in terms of study delay, if schedules are not met by students. The panel, therefore, suggests to try and introduce more flexibility in courses' and internships' schedules. The student success rates are favourable.

*Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be satisfactory.

### 4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

#### *Findings*

The programme examination and assessment regulations are in line with the University Students' Charter and the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences Education and Examination Regulations and the Rules and Regulations of the School Examination Board. As has been indicated, the School-wide Examination Board has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of all the School's programmes, including this programme. Within the Board, one member is the academic member for the Sociology programmes. In addition, on the Board sit a test expert and an external member. On behalf of the Examination Board, the School-wide Test Committee has the tasks to review examinations and theses.

Programme management and the Examination Board have taken some measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. Examiners are appointed by the Examination Board. Test matrices, specifying the relations between the course goals and the examinations, have been introduced, but have not yet been adopted in all courses. The Test Committee has not yet reviewed these projects nor has the Committee reviewed examinations in the programme. Written assignments and theses are screened for fraud and plagiarism by examiners. The Examination Board monitors these processes and handles cases. The panel notes the Examination Board, programme management and examiners to have different perceptions about the applicable rules and regulations.

In all of the courses, multiple examination methods are adopted. Examination methods include written examinations, with either multiple-choice questions or open-ended questions, written assignments, practical assignments, papers or presentations. The panel notes unsatisfactory examinations in the first year of the programme may be compensated for.

The rules and regulations for the Bachelor Thesis project are extensively described in the Thesis manual. Bachelor Thesis projects are qualitative or quantitative individual research projects on theoretical or policy-related subjects, covering the empirical cycle and being based upon primary or secondary data. The topics of the Bachelor Thesis projects may be selected by students, but should be aligned to the research themes in the programme. All students are entitled to supervision by their supervisor. Throughout the thesis drafting and writing process, students meet six times in small groups of students. These groups are guided by the thesis supervisor. At the end of the process in the thesis symposium, students present their thesis to lecturers and fellow-students. Bachelor Theses projects are assessed by the supervisor and the second reader. They conduct their assessment on the basis of the Bachelor Thesis project assessment scoring form. The form includes assessment criteria regarding problem statement, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, conclusion, and style and editing. The process by which both examiners arrive at their assessments, whether they meet to discuss their assessments and whether they use one or separate assessment forms to fill out, is not clear to the panel. In the discussions with examiners and the Examination Board, different procedures were mentioned. The procedures about the grading of the Bachelor Thesis projects remained unclear to the panel as well. In particular, it was not

clear whether and if so, under which conditions unsatisfactory scores for assessment criteria might be compensated for to arrive at satisfactory scores for the project as a whole.

#### *Considerations*

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are aligned with the School guidelines and policies. The panel notes, however, these rules and regulations not to have been all appropriately implemented. To remedy this shortcoming, the panel specifies to implement the rules and regulations for examinations and assessments for the programme. In addition, the panel specifies to align the Examination Board's, programme management's and examiners' perceptions of the rules and regulations that apply.

Although the position and the responsibilities of the Examination Board are adequate in a formal sense, the panel observes that the Board is not satisfactorily in control of the examination and assessment processes in the programme. To remedy this shortcoming, the panel specifies the Examination Board to ensure examination rules and regulations to be adhered to by the examiners, to oversee the examination and assessment processes of the programme, and to inspect or have inspected regularly the examinations, including test matrices, as well as the Bachelor Thesis projects of the programme.

The examination methods adopted for the courses are adequate, as these meet the course goals and course contents. The panel welcomes the diversity of examination methods in the courses. The panel advises to state the course goals in more strict and directive terms to facilitate the alignment of course goals and examinations. In addition, the panel recommends to reconsider that unsatisfactory examinations in the first year of the programme may be compensated for.

The panel considers the supervision processes of the Bachelor Thesis projects to be adequate. The panel welcomes students being well-guided in this process. The assessment procedures for the Bachelor Thesis projects are regarded by the panel not to be up to standard. The procedures regarding the assessment of the projects, including the completing the assessment scoring forms, the interaction between examiners and the rules for compensation of unsatisfactory scores for assessment criteria are not clear. To remedy these shortcomings, the panel specifies to draft clear and unambiguous rules for the Bachelor Thesis project assessment and to ensure these rules being implemented.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3, Student assessment, to be unsatisfactory.

#### 4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

##### *Findings*

Bachelor Thesis projects are individual research projects on the basis of either qualitative or quantitative data analyses. Most projects are based upon qualitative analyses. In case of primary data collection by students, research to be done will undergo ethical review.

The panel studied fifteen Bachelor theses of programme graduates of the most recent years. The average grades for the Bachelor Thesis projects was 7.3 for graduates of the years 2015, 2016 or 2017.

The programme surveyed the graduates' master studies or careers. The vast majority of the programme graduates continue their studies at master level. They are admitted to master programmes both of Erasmus University Rotterdam or other universities in the Netherlands. Most students proceed to master programmes of Erasmus University. About 23 % of the programme graduates continue in master programmes of other universities. Graduates go to a wide range of social sciences disciplinary or multidisciplinary programmes. Some of them enrol in research master programmes. About 10 % of the graduates enter the labour market.

##### *Considerations*

The Bachelor theses the panel studied, match the intended learning outcomes. The theses are of adequate quality. The panel generally agrees to the grades given by the programme examiners, but regards some theses to be graded somewhat too high. One of the theses, which was graded as satisfactorily, is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. Theses could improve in terms of language and style and in terms of referencing. The panel suggests to ensure ethical and judicial (legal privacy rules) screening of the Bachelor Thesis projects, in case of primary data collection.

The panel considers students completing the programme to have reached the intended learning outcomes and regards the programme to offer suitable preparation for programmes at master level. The range of master programmes graduates are admitted to gives evidence of graduates' knowledge and skills.

The panel proposes to install a professional field advisory board and to reinforce alumni relations to keep the programme aligned to trends in the professional field.

##### *Assessment of this standard*

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.



## 5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Unsatisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory

## 6. Recommendations and shortcomings

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below. These panel recommendations are the following.

- To update the intended learning outcomes to include the policy implications' subjects, presented in the curriculum, as the programme is planning to do.
- To examine the learning lines in the curriculum from the perspective of curriculum coherence, and to include the alignment of the public administration courses in this examination.
- To investigate options to enlarge the study load of the Minor in the curriculum to 30 EC.
- To ensure curriculum coherence in situations of some of the individual choices by students.
- To monitor the average and the peak workload of the lecturers, and to take action, if this workload is too demanding.
- To try and introduce more flexibility in courses' and internships' schedules.
- To state the course goals in more strict and directive terms to facilitate the alignment of course goals and examinations.
- To reconsider that unsatisfactory examinations in the first year of the programme may be compensated for.
- To ensure ethical and judicial (legal privacy rules) screening of the Bachelor Thesis projects, in case of primary data collection.
- To install a professional field advisory board and to reinforce alumni relations to keep the programme aligned to trends in the professional field.

As standard 3, Student Assessment, is assessed to be unsatisfactory, the panel summarises the shortcomings to be remedied. These are the following.

- To implement the rules and regulations for examinations and assessments for the programme.
- To align Examination Board's, programme management's and examiners' perceptions of the rules and regulations about examinations and assessments that apply.
- For the Examination Board to ensure examination rules and regulations to be adhered to by the examiners, to oversee the examination and assessment processes of the programme, and to inspect or have inspected regularly the examinations and Bachelor Thesis projects of the programme.
- To draft clear and unambiguous rules for the Bachelor Thesis project assessment and to ensure these rules being implemented.