

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

Research Master Media Studies

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Contents of the report

1. Executive summary	2
2. Programme administrative information.....	5
3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard	6
3.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	6
3.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	9
3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment.....	12
3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	14
4. Overview of assessments	15
5. Recommendation.....	16
Appendix: Assessment process	17

1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Research Master Media Studies programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The programme was assessed according to the standards of the NVAO limited programme assessment framework.

The panel regards the organisation of the programme to be appropriate. The commitment and engagement of the programme staff are praised by the panel.

Programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel.

The panel values the clear and high ambitions of the programme. The panel recognises the social sciences signature of the programme, but especially praises the programme for combining and integrating the social sciences and the humanities in approaching the subjects taught. One of the other strengths of the programme lies in aiming to offer both qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the intended learning outcomes, which meet the level to be expected of research master programmes.

The programme is well-embedded in relevant research, as is exemplified by the close relation of the programme to the Departments of Arts and Culture Studies, Media and Communication, and Sociology. Programme management keeps track of national and international trends and adapts the programme accordingly. The panel welcomes the roles of the external academic and professional advisory boards to inform programme management about relevant trends.

The panel welcomes the programme offering students the options to pursue PhD trajectories and to be employed in academia, and to work in research positions in the non-academic professional field.

The reasons given by programme management for the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction, being to prepare students for the international labour market and to offer them an international outlook, are regarded by the panel to be valid.

Although the programme is presently sustainable, the panel encourages programme management to raise the number of incoming students to the target figure of 12 to 15 students. The admission requirements and admission procedures are appropriate. Although the entry requirements, admission procedures and exemptions granted for the abridged programme have been stipulated in the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the programme, the panel suggests to have the exemptions granted be more elaborately substantiated, for instance by using equivalence tables.

The programme intended learning outcomes are adequately covered in the programme curriculum. The panel is pleased to see students being offered advanced theoretical and methodological courses. The courses are strongly research-based and up-to-date. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme is reflected in the curriculum. Students have ample opportunities to tailor the curriculum to their preferences. The panel appreciates students participating in international conferences. The coherence of the curriculum across the years is appropriate. The advanced

theoretical and methodological courses in the first year lay the foundations for the students' individual theoretical and methodological specialisation in the second year.

The lecturers in the programme are very good researchers and experts in the subjects taught. Their educational capabilities are up to standard. Lecturers introduce their research in the courses. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for the lecturers.

The panel welcomes the small-scale and intensive education in the programme. The programme staff and the student advisor assist students appropriately in information provision and offer effective study guidance. The study load of the programme is appropriate for a research master programme. The student success rates are up to standard.

The examination and assessment rules and regulations of the programme are in line with University guidelines. The position and responsibilities of the Examination Board are up to standard. The programme assessment plan offers structured information about examinations and assessments and relevant quality assurance procedures.

The examination methods correspond to the course objectives and course contents. The panel appreciates the intermediate assignments in the courses and the feedback students is given on their achievements.

The panel is positive about the supervision and assessment procedures for both the Research Traineeships and the Master Thesis Projects. The panel appreciates the relevant and extensive comments given by the examiners to substantiate the thesis assessments. The panel also welcomes the Second Reader Panel calibrating the thesis assessments.

The measures taken by programme management and the Examination Board to ensure the quality of examinations and assessments are adequate. The panel appreciates the role of the Examination Board in assuring the quality of examinations and assessments.

The panel is impressed by the quality and level of the Master Thesis Projects. A substantial proportion of Research Traineeships or Master Thesis Projects have been made into publications.

The panel notes the programme succeeded in preparing students both for academia and for non-academic positions. Staff members are very active in assisting students to find suitable positions. The panel is pleased to see programme management keeping track of the programme alumni.

The panel regards nearly 50 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to PhD trajectories to be very favourable as outcome. As these PhD positions are predominantly (56 %) at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the panel encourages programme graduates to apply for positions at other institutions as well. The panel feels the programme graduates may do very well in these positions.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the Research Master Media Studies programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam assesses this programme to meet the standards of the NVAO

limited programme assessment framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be positive. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to accredit this programme.

Rotterdam, 31 March 2020

Prof dr. A.M.A. van den Oever
(panel chair)

Drs. W. Vercouteren
(panel secretary)

2. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: M Media Studies (research)
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
Grade: MA
Number of credits: 120 EC
Specialisation: Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts
Location: Rotterdam
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction: English)
Registration in CROHO: 21PE-60832

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

3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

3.1 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 Research Master Media Studies programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam is a two-year (120 EC) research master programme in the field of culture, media and art. The name of the programme is Research Master Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts.

The programme is one of the programmes of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The School offers three bachelor programmes and eight master programmes. The Director of Education of the School is responsible for the quality of these programmes. The programme director, who is the head of the Department of Media and Communication within the School, has the responsibility for this programme. The programme director is assisted by the academic coordinator and the programme coordinator. The lecturers in the programme are staff members of the Departments of Arts and Culture Studies, Media and Communication, and Sociology. The first two departments are part of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, whereas the third department is part of the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The Programme Committee, being composed of both lecturers and students, advises the programme director on the quality of this and the other media and communication programmes of the School. The Examination Board for this and the other programmes of the School has the authority to assure the quality of examinations and assessments of the programmes.

The panel was informed about the recommendations made by the previous external assessment panel six year ago as well as about the steps programme management has taken to follow up on these recommendations.

The programme aims to study culture, media and the arts. The programme is interdisciplinary as the disciplines of media studies and arts and culture studies are approached interrelated. These subjects are addressed mainly from the perspective of the social sciences or sociology. At the same time, the programme aims to bridge the social sciences and the humanities to study these subjects, humanities to be understood as being closely related to social sciences. The programme emphasises empirical research in this domain. Within empirical research both quantitative and qualitative research methods are offered in the programme. The programme distinguishes itself from other research master programmes in social sciences or sociology through the focus on culture, media and the arts.

Students are educated for research positions as PhD students in academia or for positions as non-academic, social-scientific researchers in the fields of culture, media and the arts, as well as in related fields. The programme is geared towards both options. Students are trained to do research at advanced levels.

The programme is embedded in research done within the Departments of Arts and Culture Studies and Media and Communication of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication and within the Department of Sociology of the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The first two departments also work together in the Erasmus Research Centre for Media and Communication and Culture. As has been indicated, lecturers teaching in the programme are members of these departments and are affiliated with this research centre.

Members of the programme staff participate in academic networks and work together in academic associations with researchers from other institutions in the Netherlands and Flanders. Programme management and programme staff maintain intensive relations with institutions and scholars from around the globe. Programme management stays attuned to international developments in research and in curriculum development in the programme domain. Programme management consults the programme International Scientific Advisory Board regularly for academic feedback. In addition, the programme benefits from insights of the Professional Advisory Committee regarding trends in the international professional field.

The programme objectives have been translated into the programme intended learning outcomes. According to these intended learning outcomes, the programme graduates are educated to have in-depth knowledge and comprehensive understanding of theoretical insights in the programme domain and of research methods and techniques in this domain, to have knowledge and skills to apply theoretical insights and research methods in innovative ways and in new settings, to know how to evaluate current research in the programme domain, to know how to deal with complex issues in this domain, to have skills to collaborate with others from different backgrounds, to have the skills to communicate to various audiences and to know how to acquire new knowledge and skills in a largely self-directed manner. The programme intended learning outcomes meet the Dublin descriptors for master programmes.

The programme name is in English and the programme language of instruction is English as well. The main reasons to offer the programme in the English language is to prepare students for the international labour market in this domain and to allow students to cross national boundaries and work in international settings. The international dimension is one of the key features of the programme.

Considerations

The panel regards the organisation of the programme to be appropriate. The commitment and engagement of the programme staff are praised by the panel.

The panel notes programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel. The recommendations were followed up on by programme management.

The programme objectives are valid and sound. The panel recognises the social sciences signature of the programme, but especially praises the programme for combining and integrating the social sciences and the humanities in approaching the subjects taught. The programme has not only set this as one of the objectives, but also achieves this objective. One of the other strengths of the programme lies in aiming to offer both qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. Within the subjects studied, the subject of culture is dominant. The panel sees this as one of the well-considered choices on the part of the programme. The panel values the clear and high ambitions of the programme.

In the panel's view, the programme is well-embedded in relevant research, as is exemplified by the close relation of the programme to the Departments of Arts and Culture Studies, Media and Communication, and Sociology. The contributions of these departments also mirror the social sciences and humanities perspectives and the combination of them in the programme. Programme management keeps track of national and international trends in the programme domain and adapts the programme accordingly. The panel welcomes the roles of academic and professional advisory boards to inform programme management about relevant trends.

The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel regards the intended learning outcomes to be comprehensive, stating all knowledge and skills relevant for the programme. The intended learning outcomes correspond to the master level as well as to the level to be expected of research master programmes.

The panel welcomes the programme offering students the options to pursue PhD trajectories and to be employed in academia, and to work in research positions in the non-academic professional field.

The panel approves of both the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction of the programme. The panel regards the reasons given by programme management to prepare students for the international labour market and to offer them an international outlook to be valid.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.2 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 number of students entering the programme remained rather stable over the last six years, on average about 8 students enrolling. Despite these limited numbers, the programme is sustainable. The target figure for the intake is about 12 to 15 students. Programme management expects the intake to rise in the coming years, as the bachelor programme of the School in this domain sees growing numbers of students. The programme is targeting talented students in this bachelor programme. The admission requirements for the programme are academic bachelor degrees in the social sciences or the humanities, high academic achievements (7.5/10 GPA score in the bachelor programme), basic knowledge of social sciences research methods, solid analytical skills and academic writing skills, and clear motivation for this research programme. Applicants have different disciplinary backgrounds and various nationalities. Students' backgrounds are evenly split between social sciences and humanities. The last few years, the proportion of international students was about 50 % of the total intake. The admission officer and the academic coordinator review the applications. In case of doubt, the programme director is consulted. Students who have succeeded in obtaining Master Sociology, Master Arts and Culture Studies or Master Media Studies degrees of Erasmus University Rotterdam with the GPA score of 8/10 and the Master thesis grade of 8/10, may be admitted to the abridged programme of at least 62 EC. These students are given exemptions for, among others, some elective courses and the curriculum components Research Traineeship and International Exchange. Admission of these students is to be approved by programme management and the Examination Board. The entry requirements, admission procedures and exemptions granted for the abridged programme have been stipulated in the programme Teaching and Examination Regulations.

The curriculum of the programme comprises 120 EC and takes two years or eight terms (four terms per year) to complete. Programme management demonstrated the relations between the curriculum components and the intended learning outcomes in table form, showing the curriculum to meet the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Most courses in the curriculum have been designed especially for this programme. The first three terms of the first year are composed of mandatory theoretical and methodological core courses (35 EC or seven courses of 5 EC per course).

Theoretical courses address, among others, cultural sociology, sociology of media and the arts, and globalisation, digitalisation and culture. The methodological courses comprise advanced qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition, students take the Research workshop in specialised topics (5 EC) and an elective course at the national Research School for Media Studies or another research school (5 EC). In the fourth term of the first year, students do the Research Traineeship (15 EC), allowing them to engage in designing, conducting and reporting on academic research. Research Traineeships may be done at Erasmus University departments or externally. In the first two terms of the second year, students go on international exchange, taking specialisation courses at one of the foreign partner institutions of the programme. International exchange is compulsory. In this second year, students take additionally the Advanced methods course (5 EC), present their work at

an international academic conference (5 EC), and complete the Research Master Seminar, which started in the first year and addresses topics, such as research ethics, publishing and labour market. In the third and fourth terms of the second year, students design and write the individual Master Thesis Project (25 EC). Students may take part in extra-curricular honours courses and honours projects. Students being admitted to the abridged programme, mentioned above, are to take the theoretical and methodological core courses of the programme, and either the Research workshop or Advanced methods course. In addition, students are obliged to participate in the Research Master Seminar and have to complete the Master Thesis Project.

The lecturing team teaching in the programme consists of 23 lecturers. All lecturers have PhDs. They are researchers in the Erasmus University Rotterdam Departments of Arts and Culture Studies, Media and Communication, and Sociology. They are experts in the subjects, taught in the programme, and cover both social sciences and humanities. They are reputed scholars with solid publication track records. Their research groups have been assessed as very good to excellent in recent external research assessments. All lecturers are BKO-certified (BKO is University Teaching Qualification). About 30 % of them are SKO-certified (SKO is Senior Teaching Qualification) and more than 60 % of them have other advanced lecturing qualifications. Lecturers find teaching in this programme to be rewarding. In addition, many guest lecturers lecture in the programme. Students expressed to appreciate the lecturers both for their expertise and their accessibility.

The educational concept of the programme entails small-scale, intensive, research-based learning, promoting self-directed learning by students. The student-to-staff ratio is 17.8 over the last four year, illustrating the small scale of the programme. In the first year, the teaching methods are predominantly seminars in small groups. The teaching methods adopted in the seminars are, among others, reading key texts and journal articles, group discussions, presentations and writing assignments. In all courses, two or more lecturers are involved. In the second year, the emphasis is on individual learning under supervision. The number of hours of face-to-face education is on average 8 hours per week in the first year and about 5 hours per week in the second year. Students can call upon the programme coordinator for information about the programme. The student advisor counsels students on their study programme and assists them in preventing or solving study delay. The community of students and lecturers is strong, being beneficial for students. The number of drop-outs in the programme is limited to one or two students per cohort. The programme student success rates are about 75 % after two years and about 82 % after three years.

Considerations

The panel is pleased to hear the programme is sustainable. At the same time, the panel encourages programme management to raise the number of incoming students to the target figure of 12 to 15 students. The admission requirements are adequate for this programme. The admission procedures are appropriate, several staff members being involved in the admission processes. Although the entry requirements, admission procedures and exemptions granted for the abridged programme have been stipulated in the Teaching and Examination Regulations of the programme, the panel suggests to have the exemptions granted be more elaborately substantiated, for instance by using equivalence tables.

The programme intended learning outcomes are adequately covered in the programme curriculum. The panel is pleased to see students being offered advanced theoretical and methodological

courses. The courses are strongly research-based and the course contents are up-to-date. The interdisciplinary nature of the programme is reflected in the curriculum. Although the number of electives in the curriculum is quite limited, students have ample opportunities to tailor the curriculum to their preferences in the Research Traineeship, International Exchange, and the Master Thesis Project. The panel appreciates students participating in international conferences. The coherence of the curriculum across the years is appropriate. The advanced theoretical and methodological courses in the first year lay the foundations for the students' individual theoretical and methodological specialisation in the second year.

The lecturers in the programme are very good researchers and definitely experts in the subjects taught in the programme. Their educational capabilities are up to standard, proven by the very high proportions of BKO-certified lecturers and lecturers with more advanced teaching qualifications. Lecturers introduce their research in the courses. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for the lecturers.

The panel welcomes the small-scale and intensive education in the programme. The teaching methods adopted are effective for the learning processes of the students. The programme staff and the student advisor assist students appropriately in information provision and offer effective study guidance. The study load of the programme is appropriate for a research master programme. The student success rates are up to standard.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are in line with the Erasmus University Rotterdam Framework of Reference for Assessments and Examination Boards. For the programme, the assessment plan has been drafted. The programme assessment plan explains the assessment policy for the programme, shows the curriculum to be aligned with the programme intended learning outcomes, lists the examination methods, and outlines the examinations' and assessments' quality assurance procedures.

As has been indicated above, the Examination Board for this and the other programmes of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of this programme.

The examination methods in the courses are primarily written assignments at the end of the courses and intermediate assignments during the courses. Written examinations are very rare. Intermediate assignments may be oral presentations, written assignments, papers or active participation in class. The final grade for courses is the weighted average of the assignments. Intermediate assignments allow students to spread the study load and avoid peak load. Students are given feedback on both the intermediate and the final assignments. No group assignments are scheduled in the programme. Students may take part in group presentations, but these have limited weight in the final grade for the courses. Research Traineeships should be of academic level and research-related. Students are individually guided by their supervisor. Traineeships are graded on the basis of research outcomes and the reflection report, to be submitted by the student. Assessment and grading of traineeships are in the hands of the supervisor and the second reader. In the International Conference Participation, students are to submit the portfolio of their activities at the conference, including their own presentation.

Prior to starting the Master Thesis Project, students are provided with the Thesis Academic Writing Guide, which offers them guidelines to design, conduct and report on academic research. Students indicate their preferred subject area on the basis of the list presented to them. Having chosen the subject area, students list their preferred supervisor. Thereupon, students and supervisors are matched. The thesis proposal is to be approved by the supervisor and one member of the Second Reader Panel, this panel being composed of experienced examiners. In the course of the thesis drafting process, meetings of student and supervisor are scheduled. These are assessed and graded by the supervisor and the second reader. The oral presentation may influence the grade to a limited extent. Supervisor and second reader fill out the thesis assessment form, add comments, and meet to determine the grade and to draft the joint assessment form. The joint form will be presented to the student. The Second Reader Panel compares the two assessments and may, in cases of large differences or very high or very low marks, decide to invite an arbitrator to determine the grade.

Programme management and the Examination Board have taken measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The Examination Board described in detail the requirements for drafting, assessing and documenting assessments. Examiners are

appointed by the Board. For the course examinations, assessment matrices are drafted, specifying the alignment of the course examinations and the course contents. The academic coordinator monitors the level of the examinations. The Examination Board on a regular basis checks course guides and inspects samples of course examinations. The Board is planning to inspect the Master Thesis Project assessment procedures, but has not yet done so. All written assignments are checked for fraud and plagiarism.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examination and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with University guidelines. The position and responsibilities of the Examination Board are up to standard. The panel welcomes the assessment plan for the programme, as this plan includes structured information about examinations and assessments as well as relevant quality assurance procedures.

The panel considers the examination methods to correspond to the course objectives and the course contents. The panel appreciates the intermediate assignments in the courses as well as the feedback given to students on their achievements. This scheduling allows students to balance the course study load and to organise their learning processes effectively.

The panel is positive about the supervision and assessment procedures for both the Research Traineeships and the Master Thesis Projects. For both, two examiners are involved in the assessments. The panel appreciates the relevant and extensive comments given by the examiners to substantiate the thesis assessments. The panel also welcomes the Second Reader Panel calibrating the thesis assessments.

The measures taken by programme management and the Examination Board to ensure the quality of examinations and assessments are adequate. These measures promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The panel appreciates the role of the Examination Board in assuring the quality of examinations and assessments.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 3, Student assessment.

3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.
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Findings

The panel reviewed fifteen Master Thesis Projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. In the thesis, students are to demonstrate being able to conduct either qualitative or quantitative empirical research on the basis of solid theoretical frameworks. Methods applied may be interviews, document study or surveys. The theses are to be written in the format of academic journal articles and are, therefore, rather concise with no more than 30 pages.

In the programme, students are offered training in analytical, conceptual and critical skills to prepare them for research positions in academia or in the non-academic professional field. In addition, students are offered more general career skills, such as writing and presentation skills, problem-solving skills, and professional attitude. Students are informed by programme management about labour market related activities, such as open guest lectures, seminars or workshops. Staff also inform students about suitable positions and comment on PhD proposals.

Programme management and programme staff maintain contacts with the programme alumni. Every year, the information on positions and careers of alumni is updated. Every three years, programme management conducts the alumni survey. Programme staff inform programme alumni about conferences, seminars, network events and guest lectures.

The information gathered about the programme graduates shows 48 % of the graduates working in academic research, 12 % in market research and marketing, 10 % in policy or policy research positions, and 9 % in higher education. Almost 50 % of the programme graduates managed to secure PhD positions.

Considerations

The Master Thesis Projects the panel studied, match the intended learning outcomes. The panel is impressed by the quality and the level of the theses. None of the theses is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. A substantial proportion of Research Traineeships or Master Thesis Projects have been made into publications.

The panel notes the programme succeeded in preparing students both for academia and for non-academic positions. Staff members are very active in assisting students to find suitable positions. The panel is pleased to see programme management keeping track of the programme alumni.

The panel regards nearly 50 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to PhD trajectories to be very favourable as outcome. As these PhD positions are predominantly (56 %) at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the panel encourages programme graduates to apply for positions at other institutions as well. The panel feels the programme graduates may do very well in these positions.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes.

4. Overview of assessments

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

5. Recommendation

In this report, one recommendation by the panel has been listed. This is reproduced below.

- To have the exemptions granted for the abridged programme be more elaborately substantiated, for instance by using equivalence tables.

Appendix: Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Erasmus University Rotterdam to support the limited framework programme assessment process for the Research Master Media Studies programme of this University. The objective of the assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in both the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands of September 2018 (officially published in Stcrt. 2019 no. 3198, on 29 January 2019), and the NVAO Specification of additional criteria for research master's programmes of 30 May 2016.

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster WO OZM Media Studies convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of panel candidates.

Having conferred with management of the Research Master Media Studies programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam, 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.M.A. van den Oever, Associate Professor of Film, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, the Netherlands; Director of Studies Research Master in Arts Media and Literary Studies and Research Master Cultural Leadership, University of Groningen; Extraordinary Professor of Film and Visual Media, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. S. Baumann, Professor of Sociology, University of Toronto, Canada (panel member);
- Prof. dr. N.N. Kristensen, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen, Denmark (panel member);
- Dr. S.I. Aasman PhD, Associate Professor Media Studies, Head Department Media and Journalism Studies; Director Centre for Digital Humanities, University of Groningen, the Netherlands (panel member);
- E. Bulten MSc, Graduate Master Communication, Health and Life Sciences, Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands (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 to be impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed as well as to observe 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 has 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 of preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit were 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 from this list. The grade distribution in the selection was assured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were provided with the self-evaluation report of the programme. This report addressed the standards of the NVAO Assessment framework. In this report, the student chapter was included. The appendices to this report comprised, among others, programme key figures, curriculum overview, course descriptions, teaching staff qualifications, research assessment scores, graduates' careers, assessment plan, and Teaching and Examination Regulations. 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. The panel members were also sent the Trained Eye Research Masters document of Certiked evaluation agency, this document being the elaboration of the NVAO Assessment framework.

Several weeks prior to the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the self evaluation 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. 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 evaluation report and the final projects studied, and submitted 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 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 16 January 2020, the panel conducted the site visit on the Erasmus University campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the planned schedule. The schedule was as follows.

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival panel
09.00 – 09.30	Dean, director of education and programme director
09.30 – 10.30	Programme management and core lecturers
10.45 – 11.30	Chair and members Examination Board
11.30 – 12.30	Panel lunch (closed session), including open office hours
12.30 – 13.30	Lecturers, Programme Committee member, and final project examiners
13.30 – 14.15	Students, Programme Committee student member, and programme alumni
14.15 – 15.45	Deliberations panel (closed session)
15.45 – 16.00	Presentation by panel chair of main findings to programme management
16.00 – 16.30	Development dialogue between panel and programme management
16.30	Presentation by panel chair of main findings to staff and students

Open office hours were communicated timely by programme management to staff members and students. No persons presented themselves during these open office hours. On the day of the site visit, the panel members were given the opportunity to study Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Faculty Regulations, Programme Committee minutes, Examination Board annual reports, course material and examinations of courses.

In a closed session in the second part of the site visit, the panel considered and weighed the findings, formulated the considerations and arrived at conclusions about the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the findings, considerations, assessments and recommendations 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 the factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the University Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.