



NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

# INITIAL ACCREDITATION

WO-MASTER

SOCIETAL TRANSITIONS

Erasmus University Rotterdam

SUMMARY REPORT

25 OCTOBER 2022

## 1 Peer review

The quality of a new programme is assessed by means of peer review. A panel of independent peers including a student reviews the plans during a site visit to the institution. A discussion amongst peer experts forms the basis for the panel's final judgement and the advisory report. The focus is on the curriculum, the teaching and learning environment, and student assessment.

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) takes a formal decision on the quality of the new programme based on the outcome of the peer review. This decision can be positive, conditionally positive or negative. Following a positive NVAO decision with or without conditions the institution can proceed to offer the new programme. Upon completion of the programme graduates are entitled to receive a legally accredited degree.

This summary report contains the main outcomes of the peer review. A full report with more details including the panel's findings and analysis is also available. NVAO bases an accreditation decision on the full report.

Both the full and summary reports of peer reviews are published on NVAO's website [www.nvao.net](http://www.nvao.net). There you can also find more information on NVAO and peer reviews of new programmes.

Because of COVID-19 temporary measures apply for this peer review.

## 2 Panel

### Peer experts

- Prof. dr. Frank Witlox (chair), head of department and senior full professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography at Ghent University;
- Prof. dr. John Grin, full professor of Public Policy and Governance, in particular system innovation, Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, and until 1 September 2022, interim scientific director of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR);
- Prof. dr. Paul Hekkert, full professor of Form Theory and head of research, faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Delft University of Technology;
- Alex Tess Rutten MA (student member), recently graduated in the Master Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam.

### Assisting staff

Ikrame Faris MSc (secretary)

Thomas de Bruijn (NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator)

### Site visit

Rotterdam, 30 September 2022

### 3 Outcome

The NVAO approved panel reaches a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the Master Societal Transitions offered by Erasmus University Rotterdam. The programme complies with all standards of the limited NVAO framework.

The master programme Societal Transitions has established a challenging and interesting profile that will enable graduates to become *transformative leaders* who are able to translate knowledge from a wide range of academic disciplines into actual actions and interventions to create fair and sustainable transitions. There is a high demand for professionals who can bridge the gap between theory and practice and who can fulfil leading roles in realizing societal transitions. The intended learning outcomes of the programme are up-to-date and well aligned with (international) professional needs, demands and standards. Various stakeholders, notably representatives of the professional field, were consulted in the process of developing the programme. The panel recommends to safeguard continued and sustainable involvement of the professional field, for example by installing an Advisory Board.

Strong elements of the teaching-learning environment include the quality of the teaching staff, the didactic concept of *transformative learning* and the design of the curriculum. The proposed system of study guidance is appropriate for a master's degree and the programme offers necessary facilities that students can make use of during their studies. The panel strongly advises the programme to invest in proper recruitment and marketing strategies to attract prospective students from various backgrounds. The presence of a diverse learning environment is considered to be a key prerequisite to realize the ambitions of the programme. Given the diversity in the composition of the teaching staff, the panel also recommends to organize frequent calibration sessions and to invest in team-building activities to strengthen coherence among teaching staff members.

The programme has proposed a sound and transparent system of student assessment, based on the educational vision of competence development. The Examination Board fulfills an important role in ensuring the quality of (final) examinations. The assessment policy of the programme describes various measures for enhancing the reliability and validity of examinations. The panel urges to create further alignment between the Examination Board and the management team with regard to the system of assessment. This point of attention can be taken into consideration as part of the process of revising the assessment policy, that is currently taking place.

### 4 Commendations

The programme is commended for the following features of good practice.

1. Societal and scientific need – The programme addresses an important societal and scientific need in the field of sustainability and transitions. The panel compliments the programme's innovative approach and considers it timely and much needed.
2. Expertise of teaching staff – The teaching staff is characterized by professionalism, enthusiasm and dedication. The staff members bring in a wide array of expertise from various disciplines. Their vast experience instils confidence in their ability to create a stimulating learning environment.
3. Didactic approach – The didactic concept of transformative learning is considered highly appropriate and suitable to achieve the ambitions of the programme.
4. Involvement of the professional field – Representatives of the professional field have contributed to the development of the new programme and helped to refine the ultimate graduate profile.
5. Mix of assessment methods – The adoption of both summative and formative assessments within the programme fits the educational vision regarding competence development.

## 5 Recommendations

For further improvement to the programme, the panel recommends a number of follow-up actions.

1. Involvement of the professional field – Safeguard continued and sustainable involvement of the professional field, for example by installing an Advisory Board.
2. Composition student population – Invest in proper recruitment and marketing strategies to attract students from different (academic) backgrounds.
3. Coherence teaching staff – Strengthen coherence within the diverse teaching staff by organizing frequent calibration sessions and investing in team-building activities.
4. Alignment Examination Board and management – Create further alignment between the Examination Board and the programme management with regard to the system of assessment of a student's accomplishment of the programme learning objectives.

## 6 What comes next?

NVAO grants initial accreditation to a new programme on the basis of a panel's full report. The decision is valid for a maximum of six years. For conditional accreditation other regulations apply. Upon accreditation the new programme will follow the NVAO review procedures for existing programmes. NVAO publishes the accreditation decision together with the full report and this summary report. <sup>1</sup>

Each institution has a system of quality assurance in place ensuring continuous follow-up actions and periodic peer-review activities. Peer reviews help the institution to improve the quality of its programmes. The progress made since the last review is therefore taken into consideration when preparing for the next review. The follow-up activities are also part of the following peer-review report. For more information, visit the institution's website. <sup>2</sup>

## 7 Summary in Dutch

Het panel oordeelt positief over de kwaliteit van de wo-master Societal Transitions van de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. Dit is de uitkomst van de kwaliteitstoets uitgevoerd door een panel van peers op verzoek van de Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (NVAO). Voor deze beoordeling heeft het panel gesprekken gevoerd met de opleiding op 30 september 2022.

De masteropleiding Societal Transitions heeft een uitdagend en interessant profiel uitgewerkt dat afgestudeerden in staat stelt om *transformatieve leiders* te worden die kennis uit diverse disciplines kunnen vertalen naar concrete acties en interventies om eerlijke en duurzame transitie te realiseren. Er is grote vraag vanuit de arbeidsmarkt naar professionals die een brug kunnen slaan tussen theorie en praktijk en die een leiderschapsrol kunnen vervullen in de verwezenlijking van maatschappelijke transitie. De beoogde leerresultaten zijn actueel en goed afgestemd op (internationale) eisen en behoeften van het beroepenveld. Bij de ontwikkeling van de opleiding waren diverse stakeholders betrokken, waaronder vertegenwoordigers uit het werkveld. Het panel adviseert de betrokkenheid van het werkveld te waarborgen in het programma, bijvoorbeeld door een Adviesraad in te stellen.

Sterke elementen van de onderwijsleeromgeving betreffen de kwaliteit van het onderwijspersoneel, het didactische concept van *transformatief leren* en de opzet van het curriculum. De studiebegeleiding is passend

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nvao.net/nl/besluiten>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.eur.nl/>

voor een masteropleiding en het programma beschikt over uitstekende faciliteiten waar studenten gebruik van kunnen maken. Het panel adviseert het programma om te investeren in goede marketing- en wervingsstrategieën teneinde studenten van verschillende achtergronden aan te trekken. De aanwezigheid van een diverse studentpopulatie wordt beschouwd als een absolute vereiste om de ambities van de opleiding te kunnen waarmaken. Gezien de diverse samenstelling van het docententeam adviseert het panel verder om regelmatig kalibratiesessies te organiseren en te investeren in teambuilding-activiteiten om verbinding onder docentstafleden te versterken.

De opleiding kent een gedegen en transparant systeem van studentbeoordeling, gebaseerd op de onderwijsvisie van competentie-ontwikkeling. De examencommissie speelt een belangrijke rol in het waarborgen van de kwaliteit van toetsing. Het toetsbeleid bevat diverse maatregelen om de betrouwbaarheid en validiteit van toetsing te garanderen. Het panel spoort de examencommissie en het opleidingsmanagement aan om met elkaar af te stemmen over het systeem van toetsing. Dit punt kan meegenomen worden als onderdeel van de herziening van het toetsbeleid.

Al met al beoordeelt het panel de kwaliteit van de beoordeling als positief.

Meer informatie over de NVAO-werkwijze en de toetsing van nieuwe opleidingen is te vinden op [www.nvao.net](http://www.nvao.net). Voor informatie over de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam verwijzen we naar de website van de instelling.<sup>3</sup>

Als gevolg van de beperkende omstandigheden door COVID-19 geldt voor deze kwaliteitstoets een tijdelijke procedure.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eur.nl/>

