

Assessment report  
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

**Master Development Studies**

International Institute of Social Studies, 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 Master Development Studies programme of the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The programme was 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 (Staatscourant nr. 69458). The programme was also assessed on the EADI/IAC criteria in the context of the EADI/IAC accreditation application.

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be very sound and relevant. The panel especially values the objectives to promote critical thinking among students. The panel advises to add specification to the objectives and encourages programme management to carry the debate about the objectives further, acknowledging differences in perspectives in development studies as evolving field. The objectives are solidly positioned within the domain-specific framework of reference, drafted by the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), and therefore match the international requirements for the development studies domain. The panel appreciates the programme objectives to prepare students both for positions in the development studies professional field and for PhD positions in this field.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the programme objectives and are well-phrased and well-structured. The panel welcomes the intended learning outcomes specifying, among others, to train students to deepen their disciplinary knowledge and understanding and to pursue a coherent specialisation focus, to investigate societal problems and to deal with the complexities of development processes from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, to select and apply adequate research methods and techniques and communicate the results of their research. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives comply with the International Institute of Social Studies vision of development studies as a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary field of studies. The teaching within the programme matches this vision, as students are trained in bringing the underlying disciplines of development studies together in the courses. The intended learning outcomes conform to the master level.

The panel considers the programme to be managed conscientiously.

The curriculum of the programme complies with the intended learning outcomes and is coherent. The panel appreciates students coming from disciplinary backgrounds both being introduced to this multidisciplinary field and deepening their disciplinary knowledge and understanding in the Majors. The panel considers the education in the programme to be research-led and assesses the scientific research components of the curriculum to be substantial. The panel noted, however, the programme to be somewhat detached from current research in the Institute and recommends to be attentive to align course contents to this research. Although students are introduced to societal and policy issues, the panel suggests to pay more explicit attention to these issues in the curriculum.

The understanding of their respective fields of expertise, the research track records and the educational skills of the lecturers are very much up to standard. The lecturers engage in international research. The panel noted that the staff composition mirrors the inter- and multidisciplinary dimensions of the programme. Lecturers come from a wide range of countries and continents. Institute recruitment policies promote this diversity. The lecturers are very committed to the programme and to the students. Having noted the lecturers to maintain relations with staff of other Erasmus University institutes and Faculties, the panel encourages lecturers to continue building and maintaining these relations.

The admission requirements and procedures of the programme are regarded by the panel to be up to standard. As the student body composition is changing from predominantly mid-career professionals to the mix of early-career and mid-career students, the panel suggests adapting the programme to this more heterogeneous group of students. The panel considers the geographical, gender and age diversity in the student population to be balanced. The panel feels the Bachelor entry requirements are justified for this post-initial master programme, as the admission procedures are very strict and the research parts of the programme are challenging. The entry requirements include experience and/or motivation for the development studies field. Students are offered opportunities to apply for scholarships, these scholarships having effects on the student intake. The programme exemptions policy and regulations are adequate.

The study methods meet the contents of the programme and promote students participating actively in class. The programme is quite challenging, especially the first weeks. The panel proposes to balance the study load in these weeks. The panel regards the number of hours of face-to-face education to be satisfactory, the students-to-staff ratio being quite generous. Study guidance is intensive and very well-organised. The panel is very positive about the student success rates.

The panel considers the examination and assessment policies for the programme to be appropriate, these being in line with the Erasmus University Rotterdam rules and regulations. The position and authority of the Board of Examiners for this programme are appropriate as well, the Board being in control of the examination and assessment processes in the programme. The regular meetings with other Boards of Examiners within the University are regarded by the panel as positive. Having noted programme management to value the Board of Examiners activities, the panel encourages programme management to continue this policy.

The panel approves of the examination methods adopted in the programme and supports the gradual change throughout the programme from written examinations to essays and assignments.

The measures taken by programme management to ensure the validity of examinations and the reliability of assessments are adequate. This is exemplified by the appointment procedures for examiners, the peer-review procedures for examinations and external assessors being involved in the assessments. The fraud and plagiarism formalities are up to standard. The procedures to grant extensions are appropriate as well. The panel suggests to add more detailed comments to the boxes provided on the scoring forms of the assignments.

The supervision, feedback and assessment processes of the Research Project are adequate. The processes of supervision and feedback are adequately organised. The assessment processes are up to standard, being quite elaborate and involving two examiners.

The panel assesses the course examinations and assignments to be up to standard.

None of the Research Projects undertaken by students and reviewed by the panel were assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. The grades of these projects were generally found to be consistent with the grades the panel would have given. Some of the projects may have been graded somewhat lower. The Research Projects were found to be theoretically satisfactory to well developed, but not always very clear about research methods. The panel advises to include more critical reflection on research methods in the projects, as this is somewhat lacking. In addition, the panel suggests to emphasise the importance of research ethics.

In the panel's opinion, the programme succeeds in preparing the programme's graduates for appropriate positions in the professional field or for PhD positions.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Master Development Studies programme of the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to accredit this programme. In addition, the panel assesses the programme to meet the EADI/IAC criteria and, therefore, advises EADI/IAC to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 23 April 2018

Prof. dr. D.A.N.M. Kruijt  
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren  
(panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam to support the limited framework programme assessment process for the Master Development Studies programme of this University. The 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). In addition, the objective of the programme assessment was to assess whether the programme would meet the EADI/IAC criteria. The joint assessment of NVAO standards and EADI/IAC criteria was conducted following the agreement signed by the NVAO Board and the EADI/IAC Board to that effect.

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

The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof. dr. D.A.N.M. Kruijt, emeritus professor Development Studies, Utrecht University, Netherlands (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. M.J. Spiereburg, professor Development Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands (panel member);
- Prof. dr. D.C. Mitlin, professor Global Urbanism, Manchester University, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Prof. dr. B. Kebede, professor Behavioural Development Economics, University of East Anglia, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Dr. J.G. Mönks, executive director NORRAG, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Switzerland (panel member; representing EADI/IAC);
- C.J. Stam MSc, student Master Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, Netherlands (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercoouteren 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.

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 two most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected 15 final projects. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management. The majors students graduated in have been taken into account.

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. 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 panel met to speak about the preliminary findings on the quality of the programme. During this meeting, the preliminary findings of 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 11 January 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the International Institute of Social Studies campus in The Hague. 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 the Institute Board representatives, programme management, Board of Examiners representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, students and alumni and external stakeholders.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered in detail 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 were 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: M Development Studies  
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master (post-initial)  
Grade: MA  
Number of credits: 88 EC  
Specialisations: Agrarian, Food and Environmental Studies  
Economics of Development  
Governance and Development Policy  
Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies: Social Justice Perspectives  
Social Policy for Development  
Location: The Hague  
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction: English)  
Registration in CROHO: 75012  
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 objectives of the International Institute of Social Studies Master Development Studies programme are to introduce students to development studies as the multidisciplinary field of social science and practice and to educate them to describe and analyse long-term processes of societal transformation. The objectives of the programme include offering students instrumental knowledge for intentional development interventions, knowledge about development efforts to be undertaken by societies and knowledge and skills to critically assess hegemonic and alternative visions of development. In the programme, the view on development is not only critical, teaching students to assess positions and views critically, but also practical, introducing students to solutions to developmental problems. The programme is meant to acquaint students with both the academic and the practical perspectives of development studies.

Students are given the opportunity to specialise in one of the Majors, which are offered in the programme. These Majors are Agrarian, Food and Environmental Studies, Economics of Development, Governance and Development Policy, Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies: Social Justice Perspectives, and Social Policy for Development.

Programme management showed the programme objectives to meet the domain-specific framework of reference, being the international Revised Definition of the field of Development Studies of October 2015 of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI). In line with this international framework of reference, programme management defines Development Studies as an academic multi- and interdisciplinary field of study, addressing inclusive and sustainable development normative and policy issues, and analysing complex problems context-specific and from multilevel and multi-stakeholders perspectives.

Programme management translated the objectives into a series of intended learning outcomes. These specify, among others, students being able to identify, define and describe theories and practice in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of development studies, to select and apply general and Major-specific theories and analytical tools, to identify strategic solutions, interventions or recommendations in this field, to identify appropriate research methods, to work collaboratively and to communicate in multidisciplinary and multicultural contexts and to continue their further learning processes largely self-directed.

Programme management presented a table to show the intended learning outcomes to correspond to the Dublin descriptors for master level programmes.

The programme is meant to train students to become professionals being able to work effectively on development studies related problems or prepare them for PhD positions in this field.



The programme has been compared to other well-known development studies programmes at master level, both in the Netherlands and abroad. This programme may be regarded to be largely comparable to these other programmes.

Students who study at one of the Universities, with which the International Institute of Social Studies has drafted an agreement, are granted waivers for some of the courses in the programme. These arrangements allow students to obtain double degrees without having to complete each of the two programmes entirely. Programme management checks courses in the other programmes before the own course requirements are waived.

### *Considerations*

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be very sound and relevant. The panel especially values the objectives to promote critical thinking among students. The panel advises to elaborate and specify the programme objectives further, on the basis of what has already been accomplished. In addition, the panel encourages programme management to carry the debate about the objectives of the programme further, acknowledging differences in perspectives in development studies as evolving field.

The programme objectives are solidly positioned within the domain-specific framework of reference, drafted by the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), and therefore match the international requirements for the development studies domain.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the programme objectives and are well-phrased and well-structured. The intended learning outcomes address the various components of knowledge, skills and attitude, students are educated in, comprehensively and clearly. The panel welcomes the intended learning outcomes specifying to train students to deepen their disciplinary knowledge and understanding and to pursue a coherent specialisation focus in the Majors, to investigate societal problems and to deal with the complexities of development processes from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, to select and apply adequate research methods and techniques and communicate the results of their research. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives comply with the International Institute of Social Studies vision of development studies as a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary field of studies. The teaching within the programme matches this vision, as students are trained in bringing the underlying disciplines of development studies together in the courses.

The intended learning outcomes conform to the master level, as exemplified by the Dublin descriptors.

The panel appreciates the programme objectives to prepare students both for positions in the development studies professional field and for PhD positions in this field. The panel is positive about the double degree options for students.

### *Assessment of this standard*

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

## 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 Master Development Studies programme is a programme of the International Institute of Social Studies, which became part of Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2009. Within the Institute, three master programme and a PhD programme are offered and development studies research is being done. The Institutes Board is composed of the Rector, the Deputy Rector for Research Affairs and the Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs. The Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs is responsible for the quality of the programme quality. The Teaching and Learning Committee, consisting of three staff members and three students, reviews student survey results and advises Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs about the quality of the programme. The Board of Examiners of the Institute has been given the authority to monitor the examination processes and the quality of the examinations and assessments of this programme.

Programme management presented a table to demonstrate the curriculum meeting the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The curriculum has a total study load of 88 EC and takes 15.5 months to complete. In the first term covering the September – January period, three foundation courses are scheduled, introducing students economics, sociology/anthropology and political science as the underlying disciplines of the development studies domain (9 EC). In addition, the general course *The Making of Development: Histories, Theories and Practices* (8 EC) is scheduled. This course offers the introduction to theories and strategies of international development. Within the first term, students take the first compulsory Major course (8 EC). In the second and third term being the January – April and April – July periods, students take the other compulsory Major course (8 EC), select two specialisation courses (16 EC), take research techniques courses (8 EC) and start their *Research Paper* preparation. Students are free to choose the specialisation courses within or outside of their Major. At the end of this term, students are meant to have drafted their research proposal and they are allocated their supervisor. Students may select courses from a number of research methods and techniques courses, allowing them to choose the methods and techniques, to be applied in their Research Project. In the fourth term, covering the July – December period, students take the *Working towards the Research Paper* course (4 EC). Finally in the fourth term, students complete their *Research Project* (27 EC). Thus, the Research Project starts in the second term with the research proposal and ends with the final product at the end of the fourth term, spanning the period of about one year and the total study load being 39 EC.

About 46 lecturers are involved in the programme. They have backgrounds in economics, anthropology, political science, sociology, law, geography or international relations. All lecturers in the programme are researchers, participating in the Institute's Global Development and Social Justice research programme and publishing regularly in peer-reviewed journals. Their research output compares favourably to the output of research groups in the Netherlands and abroad. The proportion of lecturers in the programme with a PhD is 98 %. The proportion of lecturers being UTQ-certified is 13 % (UTQ means Dutch University Teaching Qualification), whereas 6 % of the lecturers have more advanced teaching qualification. About 8 % of the lecturers are pursuing the UTQ-certificate and 72 % have officially been granted waivers. Lecturers come from around the globe, about half of them being from European countries and half of them being from other continents. About half of the lecturers are male and half of them are female, 60 % of the full professors being male. Lecturers collaborate in courses and meet to discuss the intended learning outcomes and the curriculum relations.

The convenors of the majors meet regularly to discuss the majors' contents and structure, and the coherence of the curriculum. Students with whom the panel met, expressed experiencing lecturers and mentors to be very supportive.

The number of incoming students in the programme remained rather stable over the past years, being 150 to 160 students per year for the cohorts 2012 – 2017. Incoming students are both early-career and mid-career professionals. Mid-career professionals used to be the dominant group. In recent years, younger students apply also, enrolling in the programme to qualify for positions as PhD's or for positions on the labour market. The student population is very diverse, about 50 nationalities being represented without any nationality dominating. The gender diversity and age variation in the student group is balanced. The entry requirements are strict, to promote incoming students being able to complete the programme. To be admitted to the programme, applicants should report a Bachelor degree in one of the social sciences or equivalent prior education with above average GPA, should show proficiency in English and should demonstrate professional experience and motivation for the Major selected. Students with insufficient financial means, may apply for one of the Institute scholarships. These scholarships allow for 30 % or 40 % discount on the tuition fees. For substantial numbers of students, scholarships are an important condition to enter the programme. Being admitted, students have to pass a number of diagnostic tests on, among others, academic writing, English, numerical skills and computer skills in their first weeks. Students failing tests, are offered remedial courses.

Students may apply for exemptions. Requests for exemptions are handled by the Board of Examiners. Requests are only granted in exceptional cases.

The programme educational concept is the expedition model, which implies monitoring and encouraging committed students to succeed in the programme. The study methods adopted in the programme include lectures, tutorials, workshops, individual assignments, group work and presentations. In the classroom, students are encouraged to participate actively in interactions and discussions. Lecturers are developing MOOC's, to complement face-to-face education. The number of hours of face-to-face education is 293 hours in total or 4.5 hours per week on average. The student-to-staff ratio is 8.4 : 1. Programme management intends to create a student community and to accomplish students feeling at home in the programme. Students being admitted, are informed regularly about the programme. They are welcomed at the Amsterdam airport upon arrival and are introduced to the programme in the first weeks. The first six weeks are experienced by students to be very demanding. All students are assisted by their individual mentor, who guides them through the curriculum and who advises on their study paths. Major convenors monitor students' study pace. Students are informed about timetables and their study progress through the electronic Osiris system and may use the electronic Canvas system to study additional course material or for interaction with fellow students. The student success rates are about 88 % for students completing the programme after sixteen months, that is to say in stipulated time. About 93 % of all students complete the programme, after having been granted an extended period of time, being one year at most (average figures for cohorts 2005 to 2016).

### *Considerations*

The panel considers the programme to be managed conscientiously.

The curriculum of the programme complies with the intended learning outcomes and is regarded by the panel to be multidisciplinary and coherent. The panel appreciates students coming from disciplinary backgrounds both being introduced to this multidisciplinary field and deepening their disciplinary knowledge and understanding in the Majors. The panel considers the education in the programme to be research-led and assesses the scientific research components of the curriculum to be substantial. The panel noted, however, the programme to be somewhat detached from current research in the Institute and recommends to be attentive to align course contents to this research. In addition, although students are introduced to societal and policy issues, the panel suggests to pay more explicit attention to these issues in the curriculum.

The panel regards the understanding of their respective fields of expertise, the research track records and the educational skills of the lecturers to be very much up to standard. The lecturers engage in international research. The panel noted the staff composition to mirror the inter- and multidisciplinary dimensions of the programme. The lecturers come from a wide range of countries and continents. Institute recruitment policies promote this diversity. The lecturers are, so the panel noticed, very committed to the programme and to the students, noting the students to be very satisfied about them. Having noted the lecturers to maintain relations with staff of other Erasmus University institutes and Faculties, the panel encourages lecturers to continue building and maintaining these relations.

The admission requirements and procedures of the programme are regarded by the panel to be up to standard. As the student body composition is changing from predominantly mid-career professionals to the mix of early-career and mid-career students, the panel suggests adapting the programme to this more heterogeneous group of students. The panel considers the geographical, gender and age diversity in the student population to be balanced. The panel feels the Bachelor entry requirements are justified for this post-initial master programme, as the admission procedures are very strict and the research parts of the programme are challenging. The panel notes the entry requirements to include experience and/or motivation for the development studies field. Students are offered opportunities to apply for scholarships, these scholarships having effects on the student intake. The programme exemptions policy and regulations are adequate.

The panel regards the study methods to meet the contents of the programme and to promote students participating actively in class. The programme is quite challenging, especially the first weeks. The panel proposes to balance the study load in these weeks. The panel regards the number of hours of face-to-face education to be satisfactory, the students-to-staff ratio being quite generous. Study guidance is intensive and very well-organised. The panel is very positive about the student success rates.

### *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.
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#### *Findings*

The examinations and assessments in the programme are in line with the International Institute of Social Studies policies in this respect, which in turn comply with Erasmus University Rotterdam policies. For this and the Master programmes of the Institute School, one Board of Examiners has been installed, having the authority to ensure and monitor the quality of examinations and assessments and the corresponding processes of these programmes. The Board of Examiners meets with the Boards of other Faculties and institutes of Erasmus University to align procedures.

Examination methods in the programme include closed-book and open-book written examinations, take-home essays, assignments, book reviews, project reports, poster presentations, videos and peer assessments. Examination methods are selected to conform to the course goals. In the course of the programme, essays and assignments become more numerous and replace closed-book examinations in the earlier courses. Group work in courses is limited to 15 % of the final course grade. Multiple-choice examinations are limited to 50 % of the final course grade.

Programme management adopted a number of measures to ensure validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The Board of Examiners appoints examiners, informing them in writing about their tasks and the course details. Examinations, drafted by examiners are peer-reviewed by the other examiners, such as the Major convenor. They check whether examinations meet the course goals. Course examinations with marks higher than 88 or below 64 are graded by second examiners. External assessors, being senior academics from Dutch, but mostly foreign Universities review the course examinations and most of the Research Projects. Assignments and essays are checked for plagiarism. The Board of Examiners handles cases of plagiarism or fraud. Students are informed about examinations by means of, among others, previous years' examinations. Students are granted the extension of deadlines for examinations, but only in cases of *force majeure*. The Board of Examiners handles these requests.

As has been indicated, the Research Project stretches over the period of a year. In the Research Paper Preparation course, students draft the research proposal. From that point in time onwards, they are guided by their supervisor. Students elaborate the proposal into the research design. The design is presented at a seminar, at which students will get feedback from designated fellow students, their supervisor and the second reader. In the subsequent stage, most students do fieldwork, mostly in their country of origin, to collect data for their research. Having done the fieldwork and having analysed and processed the data, students are required to present their draft Research Project in a seminar. They will receive comments from one or two designated fellow students, the supervisor and the second reader. In the whole process, the research proposal, research design, draft research paper and final Research Project are assessed by the supervisor and the second reader.

### *Considerations*

The panel considers the examination and assessment policies for the programme to be appropriate, these being in line with the Erasmus University Rotterdam rules and regulations. The position and authority of the Board of Examiners for this programme are appropriate as well, the Board being in control of the examination and assessment processes in the programme. The regular meetings with other Boards of Examiners within the University are regarded by the panel as positive. Having noted programme management to value the Board of Examiners activities, the panel encourages programme management to continue this policy.

The panel approves of the examination methods adopted in the programme and supports the gradual change throughout the programme from written examinations to essays and assignments.

The measures taken by programme management to ensure the validity of examinations and the reliability of assessments are adequate. This is exemplified by the appointment procedures for examiners, the peer-review procedures for examinations and external assessors being involved in the assessments. The fraud and plagiarism formalities are up to standard. The procedures to grant extensions are appropriate as well. The panel suggests to add more detailed comments to the boxes provided on the scoring forms of the assignments.

The supervision, feedback and assessment processes of the Research Project are adequate. The processes of supervision and feedback are adequately organised. The assessment processes are up to standard, being quite elaborate and involving two examiners.

### *Assessment of this standard*

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

#### 4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

##### *Findings*

The panel studied the examinations of a number of courses of the programme.

The panel reviewed a total number of fifteen Research Projects of graduates of the programme, these projects exhibiting a variety of grades, ranging from satisfactory to very good. The average grade of the Research Projects over the last four years was about 7.2 (Dutch scale, going from 1.0 to 10.0).

Programme management assists students in preparing for the labour market by offering them a number of career services. These services include training students in presentations and the writing of letters and of curricula vitae for recruitment processes and guiding students to find internships in the Netherlands.

Most of the graduates work in government positions or at NGO's. Most of the students are mid-career professionals, returning to their previous employment. Over 50 % of them were promoted within their organisation. A growing number of graduates continue their studies as PhD students.

##### *Considerations*

Having studied the examinations, these being primarily assignments, of a number of courses of the programme, the panel assesses these examinations to be up to standard.

None of the Research Projects reviewed were assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. The grades of these projects were generally found to be consistent with the grades the panel would have given. In the panel's opinion, some of the projects may have been graded somewhat lower. The Research Projects were found to be theoretically satisfactory to well developed, but not always very clear about research methods. The panel advises to include more critical reflection on research methods in the projects, as this is somewhat lacking. In addition, the panel suggests to emphasise the importance of research ethics

In the panel's opinion, the programme succeeds in preparing the programme's graduates for appropriate positions in the professional field or for PhD positions.

##### *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	Good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory