

Development Studies

**International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

QANU, Utrecht, October 2011

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Table of contents

Report on the master’s programme Development Studies of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.....	5
Administrative data regarding the programme	5
Administrative data regarding the institution.....	5
Quantitative data regarding the programme	5
Composition of the assessment committee	6
Working method of the assessment committee	6
Summary judgement regarding the quality of the master’s programme Development Studies .	9
Description of the standards from the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments	12
Addendum: distinctive quality feature for internationalization.....	31
Appendices	33
Appendix A: Curricula vitae of the members of the assessment committee	33
Appendix B: Programme of the site visit	35
Appendix C: Theses and documents studied by the committee.....	37
Appendix D: Declarations of independence.....	38
Appendix E: Domain-specific framework of reference	50
Appendix F: Intended learning outcomes.....	58
Appendix G: Overview of the curriculum	59
Appendix H: Quantitative data regarding the programme	62

Report on the master's programme Development Studies of the Erasmus University Rotterdam

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point.

Administrative data regarding the programme

Master's programme Development Studies

Name of the programme:	Development Studies
CROHO number:	75012
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	88 EC
Specializations or tracks:	The programme offers the following specializations: Conflict, Reconstruction and Human Security (CRS); Children and Youth Studies (CYS); Development Research (DRES); Economics of Development (ECD); Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD); Governance and Democracy (G&D); Human Rights, Development and Social Justice (HDS); International Political Economy and Development (IPED); Local Development Strategies (LDS); Poverty Studies and Policy Analysis (POV); Public Policy and Management (PPM); Population, Poverty and Social Development (PPSD); Rural Livelihoods and Global Change (RLGC) (Agriculture and Rural Development, in 2011-12); Work, Employment and Globalization (WEG); Women, Gender, Development (WGD)
Location(s):	International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Expiration of accreditation:	13 November 2012

The visit of the assessment committee Development Studies to the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of the Erasmus University Rotterdam took place on 15 and 16 September 2011.

Administrative data regarding the institution

Name of the institution:	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	pending

Quantitative data regarding the programme

The required quantitative data regarding the programme are included in Appendix H.

Composition of the assessment committee

The committee that assessed the master's programme Development Studies consisted of:

- prof. dr. R. (Ruerd) Ruben, professor of Development Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen, and Director Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague;
- prof. dr. ir. G.E. (Georg) Freerks, professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management, Utrecht University, and professor of Disaster Studies, Wageningen University;
- dr. F. (Frank) de Zwart, assistant professor and director of international programmes, Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University;
- dr. J. (Joy) Clancy, associate professor of Technology Transfer, University of Twente;
- N. (Nadine) van Dijk, BSc student Development Sociology, Radboud University Nijmegen.

The committee was supported by Sietze Looijenga, QANU staff member, who acted as secretary.

Appendix A contains the curricula vitae of the members of the committee.

Working method of the assessment committee

Preparations for the assessment

QANU received the self-evaluation report of the master's programme Development Studies on 18 July 2011. QANU checked the self-evaluation report to ensure that it could serve as the starting point for the assessment and established that the report fulfilled the relevant criteria of relevance and completeness. QANU's secretariat distributed the self-evaluation reports and the additional information among the members of the assessment committee. The committee members were asked to phrase their remarks, comments and questions regarding the self-evaluation report and the additional documents prior to the site visit.

In addition to the self-evaluation reports, the members of the committee also received a number of recent theses (or Research Papers, as the Institute of Social Sciences calls them) produced by students of the programme. One of QANU's staff members made a pre-selection of 20 theses from the list provided in the self-evaluation report. Professor Ruerd Ruben, chairman of the committee, adapted the pre-selection slightly and approved the list of theses to be distributed. The theses studied by the committee covered the full range of marks: every committee member received at least one thesis with a low mark (between 60 and 65), at least one thesis with an intermediate mark (between 66 and 79) and at least one thesis with a high mark (80 or above). Together with the theses, the committee members received QANU's checklist for the assessment of theses to ensure that their assessments were comparable and that they took the relevant aspects into account.

Before the site visit, Nikki Verseput, one of QANU's staff members, had a meeting with representatives of the programme to be assessed to discuss and agree on the programme for the site visit and various practical arrangements. The programme included an office hour. Both staff members and students were informed about the opportunity to speak to the committee confidentially before the site visit.

The site visit

The site visit, which took place on 15 and 16 September 2011, started with a preparatory committee meeting, in which the committee members discussed the self-evaluation report, the additional documentation and the theses they had received prior to the site visit. The committee also discussed and agreed on the questions and issues to be raised in the interviews with representatives of the programme and other stakeholders. The committee conducted interviews with the management of the institute (the Rector, the Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs and the Academic Registrar), students, lecturers, graduates, members of the Teaching and Learning Committee (the ISS's equivalent of the Education Committee) and the Board of Examiners. In addition, the members of the committee studied written materials made available by the programme, including learning materials, written exams, assignments and other assessments, minutes of meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Board of Examiners, and it explored the electronic learning environment provided by the programmes. Committee members were also given a guided visit of the institute's education facilities, including the library and computer facilities.

After the last interview with the management of the institute, the committee held another internal meeting, in which it discussed its findings, phrased its considerations and conclusions and gave its assessment of the standards making up the assessment framework. Finally, the chairman of the committee presented the committee's preliminary findings to the institute.

After the site visit

After the site visit, the secretary of the committee produced a draft version of the report about the programme that had been assessed and presented it to the members of the committee who had participated in the site visit. The secretary processed all the corrections, remarks and suggestions for improvement provided by the committee members and thus produced the first final draft report. He sent this draft report to the Board of the Erasmus University Rotterdam and the International Institute of Social Studies, inviting them to check the report for factual errors, inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

The secretary forwarded the comments and suggestions made by the institute to the chairman of the committee, who decided whether the comments and suggestions were to be incorporated in the report or ignored. On the basis of the chairman's decisions, the secretary of the committee compiled the final version of the programme report.

Explanation of the definitions used for the assessment

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments, the committee used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

Generic quality

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.

Unsatisfactory

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

Satisfactory

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

Good

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum.

Excellent

The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum and is regarded as an (inter)national example.

Summary judgement regarding the quality of the master's programme Development Studies

This report presents the findings, considerations and conclusions of the committee that assessed the master's programme Development Studies of the International Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The committee concludes that the programme fulfils the criteria for generic quality that are a condition for accreditation.

Intended learning outcomes

The committee has established that the institute is well aware of the position of the programme within the field of development studies and that it has made well-considered choices with respect to the profile of the programme. The programme's intended learning outcomes define development studies as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field of social science research and practice and identify processes of social transformation as the main object of study. They also refer to more general academic knowledge, skills and attitudes, including knowledge of relevant research methods. Finally, they reveal that the programme prepares students for a career in a diverse and multicultural practice.

The programme has recently revised its intended learning outcomes. The committee considers the new learning outcomes an improvement: they are phrased and structured more clearly, they provide a better distinction between knowledge and understanding, different categories of skills, and attitudes. The intended learning outcomes show convincingly that the programme has a master's level and an academic orientation. In addition, they are clearly related to the requirements of the professional field.

The committee has phrased some critical remarks (for instance, relating to the fact that the intended learning outcomes do not refer explicitly to the epistemological nature of the different forms of knowledge dealt with in the curriculum), but it nevertheless assesses the intended learning outcomes as 'good'.

Teaching-learning environment

The committee has established that the contents and structure of the curriculum enable students to achieve the programme's intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is cumulative, coherent, well-structured and well-balanced. It has a clear academic orientation. The research technique courses and the Research Paper workshop prepare students for conducting the research that culminates in their Research Paper. At the same time, the curriculum has an applied perspective that fits in well with the needs of both students and the professional practice. The committee finds the distribution of the study load over the curriculum somewhat uneven and unbalanced. It has learnt that the differences between the terms can be rather significant.

The programme's student body is highly diverse and international. The programme explicitly aims at using this diversity as a resource. The staff contributing to the programme is diverse and international as well. The committee has noted that the number of staff members who have obtained a basic educational qualification is still quite low and that the institute does not yet seem to consider the acquisition of this qualification as a priority. It has established that the staff-student ratio is rather favourable, especially when compared to master's programmes in the same area at other Dutch universities.

The committee has learnt that the institute has a rather complex decision structure and that it is not always clear in practice who is responsible for taking action. The staff groups are relatively independent. The committee feels that the programme needs a minimum amount of central coordination and it encourages the management of the institute to continue its policy to provide that coordination and to increase the efficiency of the programme.

The committee highly appreciates the support and guidance the institute offers to its students. It is impressed by the size of the support staff and by the range of the activities organized at the institute. These activities clearly support and strengthen the creation of a community of students. The fact that ISS has a building of its own that offers all necessary facilities contributes significantly to the institute's explicit aim of creating a community of students.

The committee concludes that ISS manages to create a coherent learning environment for its diverse student body. The curriculum, with its problem-based character, its well-considered structure and its attention for the prior education of the students, the extracurricular activities organized for and by students, the academic staff, that is diverse as well and familiar with the situation in the countries of origin of the students, the support staff and the facilities, located in one single building, all contribute to the establishment of this coherent learning environment. In the committee's view, the institute succeeds in organizing the curriculum in such a way that the diversity of the student body serves a resource. It assesses the teaching and learning environment as 'good'.

Assessment and achieved learning outcomes

The committee has established that the programme's overall assessment system is well-considered. The assessment methods are varied and enable the institute to establish whether students have acquired the intended learning outcomes. The assessments are valid, reliable and transparent. The committee appreciates, among other things, the system of double marking and the involvement of External Assessors. It is critical about the rule that marks for re-sits are capped at 60 and the lack of a minimal mark for courses that can be compensated. The committee has noticed that the feedback provided by staff members is generally good, useful and extensive. At the same time, it observes that it is apparently impossible to convince staff members of the importance to always provide marks and feedback on time.

The committee has noted that the number of Research Papers that are graded above average is increasing and that a significant majority of the students apparently performs above average. Most of the Research Papers have an applied character, just as the curriculum itself. The vast majority of the Research Papers studied by the committee are not multi- or interdisciplinary. Most papers rely either on quantitative or on qualitative methods, a combination of both types is rare. All students receive feedback on their Research Papers, but the feedback is not based on a uniform or standardized form that clearly reflects the assessment criteria used. As a result, it is difficult to compare the marks for Research Papers.

In the committee's view, the Research Papers show that students have acquired the programme's intended learning outcomes. The committee has identified one Research Paper that did not meet the standards of quality and should not have received a pass mark. It has noted that the institute has taken measures to ensure that a Research Paper of insufficient quality will not receive a pass mark. The committee therefore considers the pass mark for the Research Paper an accident that is unlikely to happen again. It recommends the institute to continue to monitor the level of the Research Papers with a near pass mark closely and carefully.

Taking everything into account, the committee assesses the system of assessment and the achieved learning outcomes as 'satisfactory'.

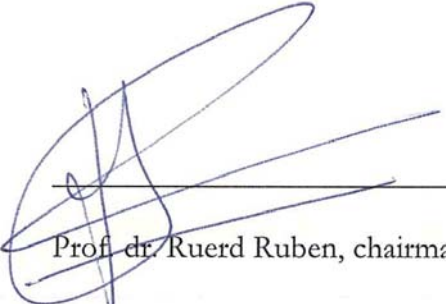
Overview of the committee's assessment

The committee assesses the standards from the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments in the following way:

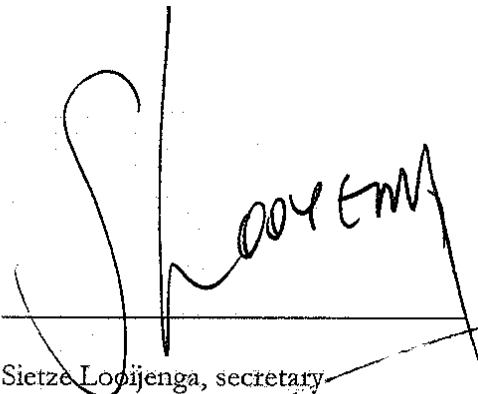
Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	good
Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes	satisfactory
General conclusion	satisfactory

The chair and the secretary of the committee hereby declare that all members of the committee have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 25 October 2011



Prof. dr. Ruerd Ruben, chairman



Sietze Looijenga, secretary

Description of the standards from the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Explanation:

As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme.

Findings

Mission of the programme

According to the self-evaluation report, the mission of the programme is to educate early- and mid-career students in Development Studies in order to make them more competent professionals, citizens and change agents who are able to work effectively on issues that relate to development, equity and social justice, or to prepare them for further academic studies (notably a PhD) in the broad field of development studies. The programme is meant for students with a bachelor's degree in one of the social sciences, in general with relevant work experience.

The domain of development studies

Development studies is a field that produces different forms of knowledge: it generates descriptive and explanatory insights into long-term processes of societal transformation; it provides relevant knowledge that can feed into intentional development interventions, and it is concerned with debates about what is development, both in a constructive way and in a deconstructive way. The self-evaluation report provides a description of the domain of development studies and the concept of development (included in Appendix E).

Within the broad field of development studies, ISS's master's programme has a number of specific features. The first is that it focuses primarily on social processes and draws largely on the social sciences, in accordance with ISS's mission. The second is that it has a strong history of teaching and research focused on the political economy and sociological dimensions of development, and somewhat less so on the cultural dimensions. The third is that it focuses on the production of all three forms of knowledge mentioned above, but the production of instrumental knowledge is located within the broader context of understanding development as a process of modern structural transformation.

During the site visit, the committee learnt that the profile and the position of the institute are slowly broadening and incorporating other disciplines in the area of development studies. Relevant issues in this area are increasingly approached in relation to issues such as globalization, social justice, and human rights.

The educational objectives of the programme

The overall educational objectives of the programme follow from the mission and the domain definition. The master's programme aims to develop student's capacity to:

- a. recognise the characteristics and outcomes, and engage in critical studies, of structural processes of societal transformation (knowledge and understanding);

- b. engage in critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of complex and persistent societal problems and corresponding solutions (application of knowledge and understanding – analysis);
- c. contribute to the development of theoretical or practical efforts to eliminate or mitigate complex and persistent societal problems (application of analysis; making judgements);
- d. communicate effectively and thoughtfully with peers, the scholarly community, other professionals and lay-society on topics of development (communication);
- e. promote, within academic and professional contexts, theoretical and/or practical advancements in knowledge and understanding of development; and identify, understand and appreciate attitudes and values in order to be more thoughtful about and sensitive to differences in perspective, context, experience, purposes and information (attitudes).

Intended learning outcomes and level of the programme

The self-evaluation report lists two sets of intended learning outcomes: the old intended learning outcomes (that were used until 2010-2011) and the new ones (that are valid as of 2011-2012). According to the self-evaluation report, the new intended learning outcomes (included in Appendix F) have not changed in a fundamental way, but the preparations for the assessment of the programme led to some modifications in the formulation.

The self-evaluation report contains a condensed version of the intended learning outcomes, phrased along the lines of the Dublin descriptors, which aims to show that the level of the programme's learning outcomes conforms to the demands for a programme at master's level.

The committee has noted that the intended learning outcomes do not refer explicitly to reflection on the various epistemological approaches underlying the different forms of knowledge discussed in the self-evaluation report. During its site visit, it has raised the question how the programme distinguishes between these forms of knowledge and whether students become sufficiently aware of the differences. The management of the programme explained that the reflection on the epistemological differences takes place in the specializations and in the research methodology workshop. The lecturers confirmed this and explained that they are very much aware of the differences, but that they do not aim at a uniform approach. In their opinion, the differentiation is typical for a programme with an academic orientation. The committee also learnt that the intended learning outcomes do not refer explicitly to policy analysis any longer.

Considerations

The committee has studied the programme's intended learning outcomes (cf. Appendix F) and the domain-specific framework of reference that provides a description of the domain of development studies and the concept of development (cf. Appendix E). The committee has established that the domain-specific framework reveals that the institute is well aware of current developments and relevant questions in the field of development studies and of the position of the programme within the field and that it has made well-considered choices with respect to the profile of the programme. The domain-specific framework clearly shows that the discipline is intrinsically international. It provides a thorough description of the international requirements that hold for programmes in development studies.

The committee has established that the intended learning outcomes are clearly related to and derived from the domain-specific framework. They refer to the relevant discipline-specific knowledge, understanding and skills that are described in the domain-specific framework. They define development studies as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary field of social science research and practice and identify processes of social transformation as the main

object of study. In addition, they also refer to more general academic knowledge, skills and attitudes, including knowledge of relevant research methods, communication and collaboration skills and an attitude of life-long learning. The intended learning outcomes reveal that the programme prepares students for a career in a diverse and multicultural practice. The committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes have been concretised with respect to content.

The committee considers the new intended learning outcomes an improvement compared to the old ones. The new intended learning outcomes are phrased and structured more clearly, they provide a better distinction between knowledge and understanding, different categories of skills, and attitudes. The intended learning outcomes show convincingly that the programme has a master's level and an academic orientation. They refer, for instance, to the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character of the programme, specialization-specific tools and research methods for specific queries and/or fields. They also refer to the ability to conduct research and to more general academic skills. Finally, they are clearly related to the requirements of the professional field: they refer to different categories of skills that are relevant for professional practice, for instance the ability to identify solutions, interventions or recommendations to improve or mitigate development practices or social, political or economic phenomena.

The committee noted that the intended learning outcomes do not refer to the epistemological nature of the different forms of knowledge mentioned in the self-evaluation report. It has, however, also observed that this epistemological issue is dealt with adequately in the curriculum (cf. Standard 2).

In the committee's view, the frequent reference to 'critical analysis' in the educational objectives can be considered as a historical benchmark for the institute, but it requires further actualization. The potential for enhancing broad interdisciplinarity, mixed methods analyses and comparative approaches could provide the programme with a more distinguished profile. The committee registered that this potential is still not fully realized and that a higher ambition level could be pursued to (re-)confirm the uniqueness of the institute.

Finally, the committee considers the lower attention for policy analysis as a risk for the future employment options of graduates. Many of them will find work in organizations that search for policy solutions to societal problems or in settings close to public agencies, and will therefore benefit from advanced policy analysis.

The committee therefore assesses the first standard as 'good'.

Conclusion

Master's programme Development Studies: the committee assesses Standard 1 as **good**.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Explanation:

The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

Findings

The curriculum of the programme

The curriculum of the programme has a workload of 88 EC. Students take courses amounting to 60 EC and spend 28 EC on preparing for and producing the final Research Paper. The programme can be completed in 15.5 months. The main components of the curriculum are a) the foundation courses (10.5 EC), b) the general courses (10.5 EC), c) the core courses (7 EC), d) the specialization courses (17.5 EC), e) the optional courses (7 EC), f) the research techniques courses (7 EC) and g) the Research paper Process (28 EC: 3.5 EC for the Research Paper workshop and 24.5 EC for the Research Paper itself).

The self-evaluation report contains a table (included in Appendix G) that summarizes the contribution each component makes to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The table shows that many components contribute to several intended learning outcomes, reflecting the fact that the intended learning outcomes refer to different dimensions of academic work, and are not cumulative themselves.

The self-evaluation report also contains a table (again included in Appendix G) that provides information about the teaching and assessment methods employed. The table gives the average number of contact hours per EC of the components. It shows, for instance, that the average number for the foundation courses is 7.7 per EC, while the average number for the specialization courses is 5.0 per EC. According to the self-evaluation report, the actual number of contact hours is even higher than the number presented in this table, since the table only includes plenary classroom sessions, and not additional contact hours such as tutorials or group work preparation sessions. The previous assessment committee already made the same observation. Since the previous assessment, ISS has reduced its norm (from 40 scheduled contact hours per 7.5 EC to 32 hours per 7 EC).

The curriculum is cumulative: it starts with courses dealing with the main disciplinary building blocks of Development Studies and a course on development theories and history, and ends with an individual piece of research. Students' analytical engagement increases gradually as the programme progresses, as is clear, for instance, from the shift in assessment methods (cf. Standard 3). According to the self-evaluation report, the curriculum is well balanced: it has a general part that is similar for all students, and a specialization part that allows students to acquire specific knowledge and expertise regarding a major theme or subject area of their own choice. The self-evaluation report claims that the curriculum is coherent in its structure, in the sense that students participate in similar programme components that have generally similar learning objectives, irrespective of their specialization. The staff members the committee spoke to confirmed this: they reported that the structure of the curriculum supports the coherence. The curriculum is also feasible. The success rates (cf. Appendix H) reveal that about 90 per cent of the students complete their degree within the nominal time of 15.5 months. According to the institute, the success rate is the result of the fact that students are carefully selected and highly motivated to complete the programme on time. The Board of Examiners pointed out that this success rate may be high compared to other programmes offered by Dutch universities, but that it is comparable to those of programmes taught at universities abroad (for instance, in the United Kingdom). Finally, the curriculum is organized in such a way that the diversity of the student body serves as a resource in the learning process (cf. the section on the didactical concept below).

The components of the curriculum

The principal aim of the **foundation courses** is to provide students with sufficient theoretical knowledge and understanding of the core disciplines that make up Development Studies. A

second aim of these courses is to create a common foundation for all students (with their dissimilar backgrounds). They form the start of the programme and address the following areas of knowledge:

- key concepts applied in economics/sociology/politics in relation to development;
- some of the main theoretical approaches in economics/sociology/politics of development;
- the most important criticisms of leading approaches in economics/sociology/politics of development.

Each student takes three foundation courses, one in each of the main disciplines. Since most students have prior degrees in one of the core disciplines, the curriculum offers courses at two levels: intermediate and advanced. All foundation courses have a study load of 3.5 EC. In consultation with a student counsellor, students select their foundation courses at the beginning of the year, usually one at an advanced level and two at an intermediate level. Appendix G contains a list of the foundation courses that were offered in 2010-2011.

General courses are either optional remedial courses that are open to all students or courses that are compulsory for all students. Appendix G contains an overview of the general courses taught in 2010-2011. All students are required to take three general courses: Development Histories, Theories and Practices; Academic Skills; and Information Management.

The first obligatory course provides knowledge about the histories, theories and practices associated with the field of Development Studies, its major theoretical and conceptual approaches, and the way in which current social, political and economic problems have influenced theories and practices of development and, inversely, how ideologies have also influenced policy responses to these problems. It also helps students to improve their skills of critical analysis, their ability to locate approaches and concepts, and their ability to converse across specialization and background. The self-evaluation report explains that this course is difficult to teach, given the diversity of ISS's student body. The course currently consists of a combination of plenary and theory-focused lectures, regular question and answer sessions and weekly tutorial group sessions (led by a student of the previous batch in 2010 and by a PhD student in 2011). The evaluation of this course in 2010-2011 showed a positive appreciation of this broad look at development theory and practice. The committee learnt that the programme's Teaching and Learning Committee has been actively involved in the development of measures to improve the course's design.

The latter two compulsory general courses, Academic Skills and Information Management, aim at strengthening and refining students' tangible academic skills. These skills are taught at various levels. Based on the results of a diagnostic test at the beginning of the year, students get an individual advice regarding the type of academic skills training that they should follow. These two courses contribute to the process of supporting a diverse student body with varying degrees of academic skills and training.

The **core courses** deal with sub-domains of Development Studies and form a bridge between the foundation and general courses on the one hand and the specialization areas on the other. Based on their prospective area of specialization, students have to take a particular core course. The learning outcomes of these courses lead students to acquire knowledge about a specific thematic area in the field of Development Studies and the main concepts and theoretical approaches used in this area, to improve their skills to critically assess the main contending theories used in the thematic area, to engage in critical discussion on contentious issues and to enhance their ability to communicate their ideas to specialist and wider attentive

audiences. They were offered for the first time in 2009-2010 and are now appreciated by the students and well evaluated. Appendix G contains a list of the core courses that were offered in 2010-2011.

During the site visit, the staff members confirmed the committee's impression that the core courses have a rather strong political economy orientation. These courses provide a general picture of relevant sub-domains, an important part of which is related to globalization issues.

At the time of writing of the self-evaluation report, the curriculum offered fifteen areas of **specialization**, each consisting of specialization courses (amounting to 17.5 EC) and a Research Paper. Students take at least one compulsory course (of 3.5 EC) in term 1B and two courses in term 2 and/or 3 in the area of their specialization. These courses support a deeper understanding of a sub-field of Development Studies and the training of specific skills.

The self-evaluation report explains that ISS has decided that the current number of specializations cannot be maintained, even though students appreciate the possibility to specialize in so many different areas. It is, for instance, in practice impossible to initiate new specializations, while it is difficult to abolish existing ones, as was confirmed by the management of the institute during the site visit. The system is also difficult to manage. For these reasons, ISS has decided, in line with recommendations of the previous assessment committee, to restructure the specialization part of the curriculum and to establish five majors that allow students to specialize further. The new structure will come into effect in 2012-2013. The five majors to be established are:

- Agrarian and Environmental Studies;
- Economics of Development;
- Governance, Policy and Political Economy;
- Social Policy for Development;
- Human Rights, Gender and Conflict Studies: Social Justice Perspectives.

At the time of the site visit, the institute offered a total of 92 courses. The committee learnt that the overall number of courses on offer may remain more or less the same, but that the number of courses actually delivered may become less (because students will get more freedom to choose, and certain courses may become undersubscribed as a result). The courses of the specialization Development Research will become accessible to students of all new majors to strengthen the relation between education and research. This does mean that the curriculum will become more research-driven, although the institute continues to aim at attracting professionals for whom the programme has an added value in their career development.

Students have to select one **optional course** of 7.0 EC. This course can be located within or outside their field of specialization. It can also be a research technique course.

Strengthening students' research understanding and skills is an important part of the preparation for the Research Paper. All students take **research techniques courses** amounting to at least 7 EC. Appendix G gives an overview of all research techniques courses offered in 2010-2011. After completion of the research techniques component, students will have knowledge about the technical background of research techniques, and the requirements to apply these techniques in social-scientific research in the area of Development Studies. They will also be able to apply their knowledge about research techniques to their own independent research project, to make independent judgements as to the suitability of the

techniques for their own research project; and to acquire autonomously more knowledge and skills on research techniques for doing independent research.

The compulsory **Research Methodology Workshop** (which runs for two terms) aims at preparing students for the work on their Research Paper. It is made up of a series of plenary lectures and small-group discussions and activities. The Research Methodology Workshop groups are created by specialization, enabling students to discuss research questions, methods and frameworks with others who are working on similar themes and/or within the same sub-field. The current design of the workshop was introduced in 2008-2009.

The **Research Paper** is the culmination of the programme. The process leading to the Research Paper starts with the formulation of a research question, a research proposal and a research design. Once the design is approved, students start the process of data collection. About 50 per cent of the students engage in primary fieldwork, regularly in their home country, usually in July-August. Other students draw on their prior work experience and networks. By the end of September, students have a first full draft of their paper, which is revised and improved during the last phase and handed in by mid November. Throughout this process, students are supervised by academic staff members. Students present their research design and findings orally to their peers and to staff members at a number of stages, including in two formal seminars (although these presentations are not part of the formal evaluation).

During the site visit, the management of the programme explained that the coherence of the curriculum had significantly increased in the last few years, partly because the programme has adopted and improved a uniform set of intended learning outcomes and partly because the structure of the curriculum is the same for all students, irrespective of the specialization they choose, and because learning goals are defined at the levels of the curriculum components. The general part of the curriculum has become more important, while the proliferation of courses in the curriculum has been reduced considerably. In addition, the coherence has been improved at the level of the specializations: students write a Research Paper that builds on the specialization courses they have taken. The management explained that the specializations have been selected and elaborated on the basis of demands from professional practice. The relatively new specialization Children and Youth Studies, for instance, has been introduced because the institute had established a need for graduates who specialize in this area.

In the institute's view, the restructuring of the curriculum should not be too radical, not have any negative effects on ISS's name and reputation. The restructuring aims to deal with a number of problems with respect to the efficiency of the programme organization and to increase the flexibility of the programme and the choices for students. Therefore, the restructuring does not aim at reducing the number of courses, but at relating courses to broader themes. The management feels that the new structure will make it easier to introduce new courses or to abolish courses which do not attract substantial numbers of students.

Study load

Altogether, the curriculum has a study load of 88 EC which students have to complete within a period of 15.5 months. The study load of the curriculum is approximately 40 hours per week. The results of course and programme evaluations suggest that the majority of students invests a considerable number of hours per week in their study. According to a table in the self-evaluation report (included in Appendix G), term 1B and term 2 have the heaviest workload. In practice, most students experience term 2 and term 3 as the most demanding terms, because they have to combine courses with the start of the research paper process.

According to the students, the workload of the programme is high and the curriculum is demanding and leaves little room for reflection. This observation was confirmed by the graduates of the programme. At the same time, the students are not in favour of reducing the size of the curriculum or the number of courses. The lecturers confirmed that the workload is high and added that students are able to live up to the demands because they are highly motivated and strongly interested in the issues dealt with in the programme. The members of the Teaching and Learning Committee reported that the workload of the curriculum has been on the agenda of their meetings as well.

The didactical concept

The central didactical concept, i.e. the use of student diversity and experience as a resource, becomes apparent in several aspects of the programme. Among others, the self-evaluation report refers to:

- a comparative orientation within almost all courses;
- multi- and inter-disciplinarity;
- a focus on ‘real world’ issues;
- a policy/practice orientation;
- diversity in teaching methods;
- the importance of group work.

One persistent challenge which the ISS faces, relates to the normative and/or ideological positioning of Development Studies and, related to that, the question as to what exactly ‘critical academic thinking’ entails. Different students, trained in different academic traditions, have different expectations. Some of them are not used to critical or independent thinking. This observation was confirmed in the interview the committee conducted with graduates of the programme. In recent years, some students have commented that in their view some courses were too critical and negative about mainstream economic policies and thinking. Some students are more interested in acquiring instrumental knowledge and soft skills training, while others are more interested in academic theories and debates.

Tutoring and guidance

When students apply for admission, they indicate already which specialization they intend to take. In addition to a specialization, students also have to choose: a) their set of foundation courses, b) research technique courses, c) an optional course, sometimes d) courses within their specialization, and e) their research topic. The ISS offers various forms of counselling to support this process. In the introduction week, all students are counselled by the Convenor of their specialization. In late October, the institute organizes a public presentation of all research technique courses. In November, students are invited to attend a kind of fair during which they can get information about the specialization and optional courses.

The Convenor of a specialization is an important anchor for the students during their whole stay at the ISS. Convenors are appointed for a batch. Some Convenors take their counselling job more seriously than others. A disadvantage of the current structure is that 15 Convenors are doing similar work for relatively small groups of students. The new structure of the curriculum is meant to address this issue. The management of the institute assured the committee that the restructuring of the curriculum (and the reduction of the number of Convenors) will not have a negative effect on the tutoring and guidance of students, because their tasks are primarily at the level of the specialization (or major) as a whole.

Academic staff

One of the annexes to the self-evaluation report contains a list of all academic staff members within ISS. A table in the self-evaluation report (included in Appendix H) shows that ISS has 54.9 fte academic staff per 1 July 2011. This figure does not include several ‘affiliated’ professors, who have a zero appointment at ISS. Another table (cf. Appendix H as well) reveals that the staff-student ratio is approximately 1:13. During the site visit, the committee learnt that staff members spend on average approximately 40% of their time on teaching, assessing and supervising students. The lecturers explained that the relatively low staff-student ratio is an important part of the profile and the attraction of the programme: students who come to the ISS expect to receive personal attention from their teachers. The academic staff members come from over 20 countries and represent a diverse range of areas of knowledge and expertise. All but a few have a PhD degree and are active researchers. A substantial number of staff members also contribute to external research and capacity-building, mostly relating to developing or transitional countries. During the site visit, the management of the institute stressed the fact that ISS is research-driven and that the research conducted by staff members will increasingly be integrated in the curriculum of the master’s programme. Only those staff members who qualify for membership of the research school CERES can get a tenured position at ISS. The ISS has four staff groups:

- Economics of Sustainable Development;
- States, Societies and World Development;
- Human resources and Local development;
- Rural Development, Environment and Population.

All staff groups except the first one are interdisciplinary in nature. The management of the institute does not consider this to be a problem, because the main research themes of the group fit well within the profile of the institute and the programme and because economics is clearly recognizable as a discipline in the curriculum.

According to the self-evaluation report, many lecturers have a considerable teaching experience. Some of them have obtained a basic educational qualification (BKO, or *Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs*). Since 2009, new academic staff members are obliged to obtain this qualification. The current Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs has participated in a training programme on Educational Leadership. Teaching evaluations by students constitute an important input into staff performance assessments and reviews.

Support staff

ISS is a more or less self-contained academic institute within Erasmus University Rotterdam. It has a large support staff (approximately 68 fte) that provides a wide range of services for ISS’s students, including support staff for IT and library, educational, research and project support, student support and welfare, finances, student housing, cleaning and other facilities.

The student community

Each year, the programme attracts 180-200 students. The self-evaluation report lists a number of important features of the student body:

- Each batch has students from over 50 countries. About 35-40 per cent of the students come from Africa, another 35-40 per cent from Asia. Central and South American students constitute approximately 10 per cent of the student body. A small number come from OECD countries and the number has risen gradually over the last few years.

- Almost all students have a prior degree in one of the social sciences. Students have acquired their prior degree in universities with diverse academic traditions.
- A large majority of the students has relevant professional work experience, often between 3 and 7 years. About one third of the students are government officials, working at ministries or in local governments or as community development officers. A second group is employed as researchers in research institutes, as journalists, consultants or university lecturers. A third group works in civil society, including international and national NGO's, community based organizations and trade unions. Finally, there is a group of young graduates with relatively little work experience. The share of this latter group has been increasing, from 8 per cent in 2005-2006 to 10 per cent in 2010-2011. The average age of the students is just below 30 years.

During its site visit, the committee learnt that quite a lot of students come to ISS because the institute is well-known and has a good reputation in their country of origin. Dedicated scholarships have also played a role in students choosing ISS.

The creation of a community of students requires specific efforts. The activities and institutional features that contribute to the establishment of a community include:

- an introductory programme in the beginning of the year, that gives a lot of attention to intercultural communication and gender differences;
- a welfare office, which coordinates and organises activities for international students, and a housing office that manages several student hostels;
- explicit efforts to help students to feel at home in the Netherlands. In 2009, ISS won the first Dutch Oranje Loper (orange carpet) awarded by Nuffic for ISS's special programme aimed at helping students feel at home in the Netherlands;
- an active student organisation (Scholas) that organises events that are aimed at enhancing the learning experience of ISS students.

The students confirmed that the institute invests significantly in the creation of a student community and that this community has an added value for them. At the same time, the cultural diversity of the student body also constitutes a challenge. The differences in the background of the students may create occasional tensions. One of the programme's graduates suggested that the programme might be able to reduce any deficiencies students may have by offering students the opportunity to prepare for the courses of the first term or to write a paper or a summary before they travel to The Hague.

According to the self-evaluation report, the end-of-programme student evaluations show that the ISS succeeds in creating a community: students mention the interactions with their fellow students from different parts of the world as the most valuable aspect of the programme. The community does not cease to exist once students have completed the programme: ISS has an active alumni office that facilitates exchanges, provides information and organizes meetings.

As a rule, students who have not completed their programme after 15.5 months return to their country of origin and try to fulfil their last obligations (in most cases, the completion of the Research Paper) there. The institute aims at extending the stays of students who still have to complete their Research Paper, among other things by providing or arranging additional funding. It is difficult for staff members to maintain the level of personal guidance and supervision for students who have returned to their home country. In some cases, staff members feel pressurized to pass a Research Paper that can or should be further improved.

Facilities

The ISS is housed in a spacious building near the centre of The Hague. Apart from staff offices, it has about 13 well-equipped lecture rooms, two of which can accommodate large groups. The library offers a substantial collection of books and journals and access to relevant e-books, e-journals and a large number of data bases. There are more than 100 working places, 40 of them are equipped with a computer. The electronic learning environment Moodle offers information about the programme, the specializations and individual courses.

Quality assessment

Students evaluate both individual courses and the programme as a whole. The results of these evaluations are discussed in the meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC). If necessary, the chair of the TLC advises the Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs to take action. On the whole, students are satisfied with the courses: the average scores are 3.5 or higher (on a scale of 5). During its site visit, the committee learnt that the institute takes immediate action when the average score of a particular course is below 3.5 and that it is content when the score is 4 or higher. The members of the Teaching and Learning Committee described various examples of measures that had been taken to improve the quality of individual courses (for instance, measures relating to the tutorials of the general course Development Histories, Theories and Practices and to the foundation course in Political Science).

Considerations

The committee has studied the various aspects of the programme's teaching and learning environment: the curriculum, the staff and the facilities. It has established that the curriculum is a good realization of the programme's intended learning outcomes: the table in the self-evaluation report (cf. Appendix G) provides an adequate and convincing representation of the relation between the intended learning outcomes and the components of the curriculum. The committee is convinced that the contents and structure of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum is cumulative, well-structured and well-balanced and it prepares students well for the Research Paper. It has a clear academic orientation: the literature used for the courses is well-chosen, relevant and up to date, the results of the research activities and other projects of staff members are integrated in the courses when possible, and the research technique courses and the Research Paper workshop prepare students for conducting the research that culminates in their Research Paper. At the same time, the curriculum also has an applied perspective as a result of its focus on concrete problems. This starting point fits in well with the needs of both the students and their professional practice. The committee shares the institute's view that the structure and design of the curriculum (the division into components) ensure that the curriculum as a whole is coherent. At the same time, the committee feels that the design of the curriculum and the coherence within some of the specializations can be further improved. It is not entirely clear to the committee why certain courses are, for instance, core courses and others specialization courses, and whether the coherence of the curriculum can be taken for granted in every conceivable case. At the time of the site visit, the committee was not able to establish whether the restructuring of the curriculum will have any effects on the coherence.

The committee applauds the proposed streamlining of the curriculum into five majors and invites the institute to reflect on its specific comparative advantage in each of the major areas. In some major areas, a task division with other Dutch universities might be considered. Moreover, including the possibility for taking optional courses outside the institute would enable students to widen their learning experience.

The committee finds the distribution of the study load over the curriculum somewhat uneven and unbalanced. It does not really understand why the institute has designed the curriculum in such a way that the study load differs per term. It has learnt that the differences between the terms can be rather significant and that students also experience the workload as high, in some parts of the curriculum perhaps even as too high. The committee advises the institute to reconsider the division of the workload over the curriculum once again and to see to it that students have the opportunity to reflect on the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

The committee has noted that the specialization Economics of Development (ECD) is the only specialization that is more or less monodisciplinary and that the staff group Economics and Sustainable Development is the only one that is less interdisciplinary in nature. It appreciates the special position of economics in the field of development studies, but it also feels that the interdisciplinary character of both the institute and the programme should cover the whole staff and the whole curriculum. After all, this interdisciplinarity is at the core of institute and programme. The committee is positive about the fact that the foundation courses are taught at two levels. This is a good way to accommodate the diversity of the student body and to ensure that all students are able to reach the level specified in the intended learning outcomes. It feels that the research technique courses are rather technical and that they pay limited attention to inter- or transdisciplinary research and (the sequence or combination in) mixed methods approaches.. The committee has noted that the curriculum does not pay systematic attention to aspects of culture.

The committee has discussed the somewhat unusual current length of the curriculum, also in relation to the diversity of the student body. The committee has established that the curriculum is designed and organized in such a way that all students who have been admitted to the programme are able to acquire the intended learning outcomes. It can envisage a situation in which the institute may not be able to continue to offer a curriculum of 88 EC. In such a case, it may become difficult to guarantee that all students acquire all the intended learning outcomes at the appropriate level, given their rather diverse background, and the institute may have to consider alternatives to ensure that students reach the intended learning outcomes, such as the introduction of a pre-master's programme (possibly making use of long-distance learning). The committee has noted as well that the student population is becoming slightly 'normalized' compared other programmes offered by Dutch universities that also have a considerable intake of foreign students. Moreover, the average age of students seems to be slightly lower.

The committee has noted that the number of staff members who have obtained a basic educational qualification is still quite low and that the institute does not seem to consider the acquisition of this qualification as a priority. It has learnt that this situation will probably change soon, because ISS is supposed to conform to the rules of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. It has established that the staff-student ratio is rather favourable, especially when compared to master's programmes in the same area at other Dutch universities.

The committee has discussed the organization of the institute with the management of the institute. It learnt that the institute has a rather complex decision structure and that it is not always clear in practice who is responsible for taking action. The management of the institute explained that it has become much clearer in the course of time that the leadership of the programme rests with the management and not with the staff groups or with individual staff members. The committee noticed that the staff groups are still relatively independent, that they decide to a rather large extent what they contribute to the curriculum. It understands the history and the mechanisms that have led to the current situation, but it also feels that the

programme needs a minimum amount of central coordination and it encourages the management of the institute to continue its policy to provide that coordination and to increase the efficiency of the programme. It has noted that the current staff groups are rather heterogeneous and that there are no clear relations between staff groups on the one hand and majors or research programmes on the other hand. It supports the institute's efforts to create a structure in which staff groups and majors are more clearly connected in order to bring teaching and research more in line.

The committee highly appreciates the support and guidance the institute offers to its students. It is impressed by the size of the support staff and by the range of the activities organized at the institute. These activities clearly support and strengthen the creation of a community of students. The committee is convinced that the reduction of the number of convenors will not have a negative effect on the guidance and supervision of students. During its site visit, the committee has established that the facilities available to students are good. The fact that ISS has a building of its own that offers all necessary facilities contributes significantly to the institute's explicit aim of creating a community of students.

The committee concludes that ISS manages to create a coherent learning environment for its diverse student body. The curriculum, with its problem-based character, its well-considered structure and its attention for the prior education of the students, the extracurricular activities organized for and by students, the academic staff, that is diverse as well and familiar with the situation in the countries of origin of the students, the support staff and the facilities, located in one single building, all contribute to the establishment of this coherent learning environment. In the committee's view, the institute succeeds in organizing the curriculum in such a way that the diversity of the student body serves a resource.

The committee therefore concludes that the programme offers a good teaching and learning environment to its students.

Conclusion

Master's programme Development Studies: the committee assesses Standard 2 as **good**.

Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Explanation:

The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students.

Findings

The self-evaluation report explains that all components of the curriculum are assessed, with the exception of the introductory programme, the Academic Skills course, the Information Management course and the study visit. According to the self-evaluation report, assessments build up in a cumulative way, ending with the assessment of the Research Paper. The institute assumes that the aggregate of the results of the individual assessments provides a reliable indication as to whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

The self-evaluation report lists a number of principles on which assessment is based (formalized in the Students' Charter, which is a part of the Academic Calendar):

- assessment aims to establish whether the learning objectives of the component concerned have been achieved; the assessment methods are selected in accordance with the learning objectives;
- in the course of the programme, assessments become more demanding;
- the programme uses various assessment methods, including closed book exams, open book exams, take home exams, book reviews, project reports, essays, and peer assessments (cf. Appendix G);
- students get time to prepare for their assessments: assessments are not due within the term itself, but after a teaching-free period;
- students cannot postpone assessments, except in cases of force majeure, for which they have to get permission from the Board of Examiners;
- assessments are not just summative, but also formative;
- students receive timely feedback on their assessment in the form of individual comments, a collective commentary or a general model answer;
- assessment is primarily based on identifiable individual input and written evidence that can be verified by External Assessors or others;
- a maximum of 15% of the total mark for any course can be derived from marks for group work (unless the Board of Examiners formally approves a different percentage);
- assessments are done on a numerical scale ranging from 0 to 100: the pass mark is 60, the mark that is expected of an average student who has done all the required work is 75. The Academic Calendar lists the criteria for grading and marking of essays, exams and the research paper in more detail;
- students who fail a course have one possibility to re-sit, but the mark for a re-sit is capped at 60. If students fail their Research Paper, they can submit a revised version, for which they will also receive a mark of 60. The management of the institute considers this to be a necessary provision to discourage students who want to increase their marks in a re-sit. Students consider the rule as unfair and illogical. The Board of Examiners was not sure whether the rule is entirely legal;
- fail marks for specific courses can be compensated by higher marks for other courses. A student is required to obtain a final average mark for all courses of at least 60, including a final overall mark for the three specialization courses of at least 60 and a final mark for the research paper of at least 60. During its site visit, the committee learnt that the programme has not defined a minimal mark for courses that can be compensated;
- students receive a distinction when their final overall mark is 90 or above, or if they have a final overall mark for course work of 85-89 plus a mark of 90-100 for their research paper. Students graduate 'with merit' in case they have an overall mark of 85-89 but do not qualify for distinction. The Board of Examiners informed the committee that the number of distinctions assigned is small: 1.6% over the last five years.
- all components are assessed by staff who are directly involved, except when a third reader is required.

In various interviews, representatives of the institute stressed the fact that the grading system differs from the system that is standard at Dutch universities, in which the minimal mark required for a pass is 5.5 and the criteria for receiving a distinction are different as well.

On the whole, the staff complies well with these principles. One of the principles that has been more difficult to enforce is the one that refers to timely feedback. In the past, staff members were allowed to take a long time for marking assessments. Currently, marking has to be done within 20 working days. Feedback also has to be provided within 20 working days.

The self-evaluation report describes several ways in which the programme ensures that assessments are valid, reliable and transparent, including the following:

- students know at the start of each course which modes of assessments are employed;
- the Students' Charter explains the criteria for grading and marking;
- the teaching portfolio holders of the staff groups check the appropriateness and clarity of the assessment in advance;
- the programme uses a system of double marking. All fail marks and all distinction marks require a second reader. The marks of first and second reader are averaged, unless the difference is more than 10 points (in which case a third reader is required);
- all research papers are double marked. Research papers are only awarded a distinction (90 or higher), a fail mark (0-59) or a narrow-pass (60-62) when the grade is endorsed by the External Assessor;
- the Board of Examiners monitors
 - the level of the grades. Given the 75 benchmark for normal achievement, lecturers may be asked for further clarification if the average is not between 72 and 78;
 - the spread of the grades;
 - whether feedback is prepared and can be provided to students together with the grades;
- External Assessors who advise the Board of Examiners, among other things, on the methods of assessment, the standards of grading, the extent to which course objectives are aligned with modes of assessment, and the level of student performance.
- checks for plagiarism: all essays and research papers are scanned with plagiarism detection software (Ephorus).

During the committee's site visit, students confirmed that the assessments are built up in a cumulative way and that the requirements they have to fulfil change in the course of the programme. In the students' opinion, the assessment methods are generally balanced and well-chosen, even though they depend to some extent on the selections that students make. Students find the requirements and criteria for assessment in general clear and transparent. They learn about the requirements in the first week of a course. They reported that they do not always receive a mark or feedback within the prescribed period of 20 working days. The committee learnt that students receive their marks too late once or twice every term. In some cases, lecturers need much longer. The lecturers explained that their inability to provide timely marks and feedback is related to their participation in projects abroad. Students are positive about the feedback they receive, but they also informed the committee that the quality of the feedback varies and that the institute has not developed a policy or a guideline for the provision of feedback.

During the site visit, the members of the committee studied written exams and assignments. They established that the exams were good and at the appropriate level and that they related well to the learning objectives of the courses they assessed. The committee members were impressed by the extensive feedback describing appropriate answers to the questions raised in the exams.

The lecturers informed the committee that they have to explain significant deviations from the 'average' mark of 75 to the Board of Examiners, which decides whether the marks are adapted. If necessary, the Board of Examiners seeks the opinion of an external assessor. The Board of Examiners confirmed this procedure and stressed the fact that adapting marks is not a mechanical process, but a well-considered decision aimed at assuring the reliability of the assessments and at preventing grade inflation and promoting uniform assessment standards within ISS. In three cases, the Board of Examiners has actually revised the marks.

A recurrent concern by students pertains to the subjectivity of marking, in particular the marking of the Research Paper. The first supervisor is strongly involved throughout the whole research paper process, the second also comes in at an early stage. This procedure may impair the objectivity of the assessment. The institute has countered this risk by clearly specifying the grading criteria to be used in the internal examiners' reports and by the regular check of a sample of research papers by External Assessors.

A major part of the final grade for the degree (40 per cent) is derived from the Research Paper. The criteria for assessing the Research Paper specify the minimal requirements for a pass mark and the requirements for a good or higher mark. Grading takes into account the elaboration of the research question, the theoretical concepts that have been employed, the methodology that has been selected, the literature and other data, the analysis of the data, the underpinning of the conclusions, and the structure and transparency of the presentation. These criteria reflect the educational objectives and the intended learning outcomes of the programme as a whole.

About 95 per cent of the students who were admitted have graduated. According to the self-evaluation report, this percentage is high because ISS has a strict admission procedure, effective counselling and monitoring mechanisms, and good facilities and staff availability. About 90 per cent of the students is able to complete the programme within the nominal time (15.5 months). Most students graduate with an average mark of 70 or higher.

The committee noted that the marks assigned to the Research Papers have been increasing over the last few years. A table in the self-evaluation report shows that the percentage of students who received an average mark between 60 and 69 decreased from 15% for the batch 2005-2006 to less than 8% for the batches 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, while the percentage of Research Papers which were marked 80 or higher increased from 35% for the batch 2005-2006 to 40% for the batches 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 and to 50% for the batch 2009-2010. However, the number with a mark higher than 90 is acceptable. According to the Board of Examiners, the higher marks reflect the general increase in the quality of the students entering the programme (the percentage of students who receive a fellowship has decreased significantly, while more and more students pay for themselves), the fact that students are generally younger (the percentage of mid-career professionals has decreased), the attention for didactical issues and the intensive guidance and supervision.

The end-of-programme evaluation in 2009-2010 revealed that students are satisfied with the programme and that they think they achieved the intended learning objectives.

Prior to the site visit, the committee members have received 20 recent Research Papers, selected from a list in the self-evaluation report of all Research Papers that were completed in 2009-2010. The committee agreed that the quality of the vast majority of the Research Papers is at least adequate and acceptable and that they show convincingly that students acquire the programme's intended learning outcomes. However, they also felt that the marks given were too high in several cases, especially when compared to the standards used in similar degree programmes at other Dutch universities. In the committee's opinion, the quality of one Research Paper was clearly insufficient, although it had received a pass mark. The committee has discussed this Research Paper extensively with the management of the institute and the Board of Examiners. It learnt that both the management and the Board of Examiners shared the committee's opinion that the paper did not meet the standards. The reason that it had received a pass mark was a formal one. The institute had adapted the Teaching and Exam Regulation for 2010-2011 and abolished the rule that near pass marks have to be endorsed by

an External Assessor. The Research Paper had received a near pass mark (with one reader assessing the paper as sufficient and the other assessing it as insufficient), the External Assessor found the paper insufficient, but this assessment had no effect on the mark as a result of the abolishment of the rule just mentioned. The institute considered this to be an undesired effect of the revision of the Teaching and Exam Regulation and re-introduced the rule that near pass marks have to be endorsed by an External Assessor in the Teaching and Exam Regulation for 2011-2012. As a result, the paper would not have received a pass if it had been written at the time of the committee's site visit. The committee had doubts about the quality of one other Research Paper out of the 20 it had received prior to the site visit. During the site visit, the committee has studied the other Research Papers on the list in the self-evaluation report that had received a near pass mark in order to establish whether these Research Papers had received a pass mark correctly and appropriately. The total number of Research Papers with a near-pass mark was eight, out of a total of 175 Research Papers. In one additional case, the committee had doubts about the quality of a Research Paper with a near-pass mark. There was also some concern about how to ensure parity between disciplines. Two of the assessed theses (from different specializations) were awarded very similar marks while in the opinion of the committee the quality was significantly different.

The committee has noted that the assessment of the Research Papers and the feedback provided are not based on standardized set of criteria or a standard assessment form. The Board of Examiners explained that the supervisors and readers use four or five different forms. It has not been able to introduce a form that is approved and adopted by all readers. The committee understands that some members of the staff are hesitant to accept a uniform system of assessment for the Research Papers from all specializations. However, it advises the institute to reconsider the present situation and to convince readers of the advantages of a single assessment form.

The committee has established that most Research Papers are monodisciplinary rather than inter- or multidisciplinary and that the research questions are primarily problem-based and not theory-driven. The institute's management confirmed these observations, but explained that it does not consider the monodisciplinarity of most Research Papers to be a problem: the Research Papers constitute a part of the curriculum, which is interdisciplinary as a whole and which contains several courses in which students are confronted with the relation and interaction between the relevant disciplines. The management nevertheless agreed with the committee that it might be worthwhile to include interdisciplinarity as one of the assessment criteria for Research Papers.

ISS conducted two alumni surveys, in 2010 and in 2011. Both surveys showed that ISS alumni regard their degree as a very useful contribution to their career. The satisfaction of the more recent graduates is more intense regarding the way their degree helps them to enter the labour market and to further their career. Just over half of the students who were employed before coming to the ISS returned to their previous employer where three-quarters of them made promotion which they attributed to their ISS degree. Of those who were looking for a job upon graduation, three-quarters found one within half a year (with 60 per cent even within four months). Ten per cent pursued further studies (including PhD studies) and of these, all but one agreed that the programme had prepared them well for their current situation.

During the site visit, the committee spoke with three graduates of the programme. All three of them were positive about the programme they had followed and reported that it had been important for their careers. They explained that they profit both from the content-related knowledge and skills and from the more general, academic skills they had acquired.

Considerations

The committee has established that the overall assessment system adopted by the institute is well-considered. The assessment methods used are varied and well-selected and they enable the institute to establish whether students have acquired the intended learning outcomes. The programme has introduced good and appropriate measures to ensure that the assessments are valid, reliable and transparent, although there is room for improvement. The committee appreciates the system of double marking, the involvement of External Assessors and the principle that marks for a course should not deviate too strongly from an 'average' mark. It has noticed that the feedback provided by staff members is generally good, useful and extensive. In the committee's opinion, the institute should reconsider two elements of its assessment system: the rule that marks for re-sits are capped at 60 and the lack of a minimal mark for courses that can be compensated. The committee understands the arguments for introducing the rule for re-sits, but it is not convinced that these arguments outweigh the disadvantages in terms of fairness and consistency of the assessments. The committee also noted that students find the present rule unfair and illogical. It advises the institute to look for alternative measures to discourage students from trying to raise their marks. It also advises the institute to consider the introduction of minimal marks. It is difficult for the programme to guarantee that students acquire all intended learning outcomes as long as it does not require a minimum mark for every component of the curriculum.

The committee has noted that the programme is unable to fully guarantee that students receive their marks and the feedback on their assessments on time. It appreciates the measures the institute has taken to improve the provision of feedback. At the same time, it notes that it is apparently impossible to convince staff members of the importance to provide marks and feedback on time. The committee wants to point out that timely feedback is a very important element of the learning process. It urges the institute to ensure that the staff comply with the rules it has introduced and to look for alternative measures when necessary.

The committee has extensively discussed the programme's grading system, which slightly differs from the system used elsewhere at Dutch universities. It understands the reasons for the deviations, but it also finds that ISS is becoming increasingly integrated in the Dutch system of higher education. In addition, some of the graduates (including the three graduates the committee interviewed during the site visit) start a career in the Netherlands. It therefore advises the institute to investigate whether it is really necessary to maintain its grading system. The committee appreciates the fact that the programme has introduced a procedure to prevent grade inflation. It has nevertheless noted that the number of Research Papers that are graded above average is increasing (although the *cum laudae* are within acceptable limits) and that a significant majority of the students apparently performs above average. The committee observes a contradiction and advises the institute to reconsider the issue once again.

The committee has established that Research Paper is the final and cumulative assignment of the programme, in which students show that they have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes laid down in the intended learning outcomes. The committee has noted that most of the Research Papers have an applied character, just as the curriculum itself. The vast majority of the Research Papers studied by the committee are not multi- or interdisciplinary. A limited number of them take a comparative perspective. Most papers rely either on quantitative or on qualitative methods, a combination of both types of methods is rare. The committee has noted that the intended learning outcomes refer explicitly to Development Studies as an interdisciplinary field and advises the institute to look for ways to include the element of interdisciplinarity in the assessment of the Research Paper.

The committee has established that all students receive feedback on their Research Papers, but that the quality of the feedback depends somewhat on the reader and that it is not based on a uniform or standardized form which clearly reflects the assessment criteria used. As a result, it is difficult to compare the marks for Research Papers. The committee advises the institute and the Board of Examiners to develop a standard assessment form that is used by all staff members who supervise or read Research Papers to further increase the transparency of the assessments. This also includes an explicit weighing of the different components used in the assessments in order to further improve the transparency in the marking process.

The committee has identified one Research Paper that did not meet the standards of quality and should not have received a pass mark. It has noted that the institute shares its opinion about the quality of this particular Research Paper and that it has taken measures to ensure that a Research Paper of insufficient quality will not receive a pass mark. The committee endorses these measures and considers the pass mark for the Research Paper an accident that is unlikely to happen again. In addition, the committee has identified two Research Papers with a near pass mark that were not entirely convincing. The committee did not discuss these Research Papers with the supervisors or examiners. The committee's overall conclusion is that the Research Papers show that students have acquired the programme's intended learning outcomes, but that the institute has to continue to monitor the level of the Research Papers with a near pass mark closely and carefully. The committee has the impression that students with near pass marks finalize their Research Papers after they have returned to their home country. It understands that it is difficult for the programme to guide and supervise students at a distance and that staff members may feel pressurized to give pass marks to students who have tried very hard to complete their final assignment, but it nevertheless advises the programme to maintain its quality standards in every conceivable situation.

On the basis of the above considerations, the committee concludes that the programme fulfils the criteria related to assessment and the achieved learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Master's programme Development Studies: the committee assesses Standard 3 as **satisfactory**.

General conclusion

The committee has assessed the first two standards as 'good' and the third as 'satisfactory'. In accordance with the decision rules laid down in the NVAO's assessment framework, it has to assess the programme as a whole as 'satisfactory'. The committee finds that this overall assessment does not do justice to its general appreciation of the programme. It is quite positive about the profile of the programme, its position in the field of development studies (as described in the domain-specific framework of reference), the intended learning outcomes, the structure and contents of the curriculum, the institute's efforts to create a community out of a diverse student body and various aspects of the assessment system. The committee has established that the ISS sees the revision of the curriculum as an opportunity to further improve its programme and to address any weaknesses. It is also fully convinced of the overall quality of the programme's graduates. It finds that certain aspects of the assessment system can be improved and that the programme has to pay special attention to the students who find it difficult to complete their Research Paper successfully.

Conclusion

The committee assesses the *master's programme Development Studies* as **satisfactory**.

Addendum: distinctive quality feature for internationalization

In December 2010, the NVAO assigned the so-called distinctive quality feature internationalization to the master's programme Development Studies. The Institute of Social Studies has asked the committee to confirm that the programme fulfils the criteria for this quality feature, that is assigned on the basis of a specific assessment framework, developed by the NVAO, that focuses on various aspects of internationalization. The institute did not include additional information relating to the criteria for the distinctive quality feature in the self-evaluation report, but it has made the relevant information (including the report on the basis of which the distinctive quality feature was assigned) available to the committee during its site visit.

The committee has noted that the assessment of the programme that led to the distinctive quality feature took place in October 2010 and that the decision by the NVAO was taken in December 2010. One of the members of the committee (dr. Frank de Zwart) was also a member of the committee that conducted the assessment in October 2010. Since it had not received any information relating specifically to the distinctive quality feature before the site visit and since the previous assessment took place very recently, the committee decided that it would not assess the programme extensively from the perspective of the assessment framework for the distinctive quality feature, but that it would rather look at the programme more broadly, verifying whether the current situation with respect to internationalization had undergone any significant changes since the assessment in October 2010. The committee addressed the issues related to internationalization in the various interviews it conducted and it studied the materials made available by the institute.

First of all, the committee wants to point out that internationalization constitutes the core of the programme: the programme aims specifically at attracting an international student body, it prepares students for positions in an international professional practice and it has a staff with a highly international profile and composition. Looked at from this perspective, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that the programme prefers to have the core of the programme assessed separately, as if internationalization is an aspect of the programme that can be assessed apart from the other aspects.

On the basis of the information it has gathered in the interviews and from the materials made available, the committee has established:

- that the institute's **vision and policy** with respect to internationalization have not changed in a fundamental way since October 2010. The institute continues to focus on 'real world' problems, to be policy-oriented and multidisciplinary and to take a comparative perspective. The committee therefore confirms the assessment of the previous committee;
- that the programme's **learning outcomes** have been updated recently. The committee has expressed its general appreciation of the revised intended learning outcomes under Standard 1. The committee is convinced that the revision will enable the institute to maintain its strong international position in an increasingly competitive market. It has noticed that the intended learning outcomes are clearly related to and derived from the domain-specific framework, that has a strong international orientation. The committee has also established that the programme's intended learning outcomes are achieved by its graduates (cf. Standard 3). The committee therefore confirms the assessment of the previous committee;
- that the programme's **teaching and learning** environment is inherently international. The contents of the curriculum, the working methods used and the assessments and

examinations enable students to acquire the programme's intended learning outcomes. The programme's didactical concept takes the diversity of the student body as its starting point. Under Standard 2, the committee has expressed its appreciation of the fact that the programme succeeds in creating a coherent teaching and learning environment for its students. The committee therefore confirms the assessment of the previous committee of the programme's teaching and learning environment.

- that the programme's **staff** is truly international and diverse (cf. Standard 2) and that it relates well to the programme's vision and policy. The members of the staff have a lot of international expertise and experience. Their intercultural competences are a prerequisite for their role as teacher in an international teaching and learning environment. The committee appreciates the fact that the staff can serve as role models for the diverse student body. It confirms the previous committee's assessment of the international dimension of the staff;
- that the **services** provided to students and staff are in line with the institute's vision and policy and enable students to acquire the programme's intended learning outcomes. The committee is especially positive about the support and guidance offered to students (cf. Standard 2). It has noticed that the institute succeeds in creating a community of students. Once again, the committee confirms the assessment of the previous committee.
- that the **students** are engaged and committed and that the institute explicitly aims at using the diversity of the student body and students' experiences as a resource in the curriculum. The committee notices that the outbound mobility of students is non-existent. This is a direct consequence of the institute's policy to offer a programme primarily aiming at students abroad. The committee therefore also confirms the previous committee's final assessment regarding the nature of the student body.

The committee concludes that the programme continues to fulfil the requirements for a distinctive quality feature internationalization.

Appendices

Appendix A: Curricula vitae of the members of the assessment committee

Prof. dr. **Ruerd Ruben** (chairman) is developmental economist. He studied at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and wrote his PhD on development processes in Latin America (Honduras). Presently he is professor in Development Studies at the Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN) of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Radboud University Nijmegen. He is also Director Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) at the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the past, Ruerd Ruben worked for several international organisations and NGOs and as a researcher/associate professor at Wageningen University. His specialisations are: Latin America, East- and West Africa, China; Development economics; small entrepreneurship; peasant organizations; labour markets; rural credits; trade networks and Fair Trade. His experience in research projects includes recent appointments as project leader of a Nijmegen-based study on the “Analysis of micro-economic performance of horticultural households and firms”, in Senegal, West Africa and project leader of a study on “Migration, labour intensity and nutrient management” in Northern and Southern Burkina Faso. His research expertise was shaped by his extensive studies on family businesses and small-scale agriculture in developing countries. He is a research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington D.C. and member of the OECD-DAC Evaluation Network. His numerous scientific publications in development economics include peer-reviewed journal articles in *World Development*, *Journal of Development Studies*, *Supply Chain Management*, *Food Policy* and *Agrarian Systems*, as well as (co-)edited book on *Rural development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Impact of Fair Trade*, *Tropical Food Chains and Value Chain Analysis*.

Prof. dr. **Georg Frerks** holds a chair in Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management at Utrecht University and also a chair in Disaster Studies at Wageningen University. As a sociologist and policy analyst he focuses on disaster and conflict-induced vulnerabilities and local responses as well as on policies and interventions implemented at international and national levels. He did his PhD research on popular participation in local level development in the Matara District, Sri Lanka, in the early 1980s and has been working on the Sri Lankan conflict since then. He worked for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was head of the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations. Frerks acts as an advisor to several governmental and non-governmental organisations and has a wide experience in conflicts, especially in the developing world.

Dr. **Joy Clancy** joined the University of Twente in 1989. She is currently engaged in a five year academic research programme with the theme: Energy, Poverty, and Sustainable Livelihoods. She teaches a number of courses at the bachelor's and master's level related to energy technology (technology transfer and appropriate technology are particular themes), energy management, energy policy and sustainable development as well as general development topics in our minor (sustainable development in a North-South perspective). Until recently, she served as theme coordinator in the international master's programme on environmental and energy management. She was involved in guiding this programme through its accreditation procedure. Dr. Clancy is currently a senior consultant to AFREA Gender and Energy Program Gender mainstreaming, ESMAP, The World Bank; member knowledge panel of Minister for Development Cooperation, Netherlands Government on sustainability, climate and energy; technical advisor for DGIS Impact Evaluation of Energy for Development Programmes supported by the Netherlands Government. She is a member of

CERES and the co-convenor of the Gender and Development Working Group of the European Association of Development and Training Institutes (EADI).

Dr. **Frank de Zwart** has a PhD in political anthropology from the University of Amsterdam. Presently he is attached to the Department of Public Administration at Leiden University. He teaches comparative social science and organizational theory. His research focuses on state formation, patronage and bureaucracy, and caste and ethnic diversity in comparative perspective. He teaches and coordinates the MA specialization-track International and Development Administration in the department of Public Administration and he chairs the Admission Committee for the master's programme in Public Administration. Some selected recent publications are: 'The Dilemma of Recognition: Administrative Categories and Cultural Diversity' *Theory and Society* 2005, 34, pp. 137-169; Corruption and Anti-corruption in Prismatic Societies. In *The Good Cause, Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption*. Gjalte de Graaf, Patrick von Maravic, and Pieter Wagenaar, eds. Stuttgart: Barbara Budrich, 2010, pp. 36-47; Het Systeem van Etnische Categorieën in Nederland: Onbedoelde Gevolgen van Institutionaliseren. *Migrantenstudies*, 2011, 1, pp. 2-21.

Nadine van Dijk has recently obtained her Bsc in Development Sociology at Radboud University. She is expecting to obtain her Msc in Wellbeing and Human Development from the University of Bath October 2012. Her interest lies mainly in the relation between poverty and wellbeing. Before and during her study she travelled to Latin America, the U.S, and Asia. In 2009-2010 she acted as student-assessor, which is a student representative advising their faculty board on all student-related (mostly educational) matters.

Appendix B: Programme of the site visit

Day 1 (15 September 2011)

- 9:30 – 13:00: Preparatory meeting of the assessment committee: general discussion, discussion of the self-evaluation report and the theses which have been distributed in advance, review of documents provided by the programme.
- 13:00 – 14:00: Interview with key staff members who are responsible for the contents of the programme: prof. dr. Leo de Haan (Rector), dr. Jos Mooij (Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs), drs. Nynke-Jo Smit (Academic Registrar).
- 14:00 – 14:15: Break
- 14:15 – 15:00: Interview with students of the master's programme: Nicole Ann Hosein (2010-2011), Fabio Andres Diaz Pabon (2010-2011), Gustavo Voeroes Denes (2010-2011), Timothe Nothias (2011-2012), Joan Njagi (2011-2012).
- 15:00 – 15:45: Interview with staff members who contribute to the programme: prof. dr. Wil Hout, dr. Howard Nicholas, dr. Karim Knio, dr. Georgina Gomez, dr. Murat Arsel, prof. dr. Irene van Staveren.
- 15:45 – 16:00: Break
- 16:00 – 16:30: Guided tour
- 16:30 – 17:15: Interview with members of the Board of Examiners and external examiners: dr. Freek Schiphorst (Acting Chair of the Board of Examiners), prof. dr. Jeffrey Henderson (External Examiner, Bristol University, UK), dr. Guus van Westen (External Examiner, Utrecht University), ir. Wieke Blaauw (Deputy Academic Registrar).
- 17:15 – 18:00: Interview with graduates of the master's programme: Vishnu Prabir (2004-2005), Bernice Roldan (2008-2009), Zelalem Yilma (2008-2009).
- 19:00 – 21:00: Dinner

Day 2 (16 September 2011)

- 09:00 – 09:30: Interview with student members of the Teaching and Learning Committee and other representative bodies: Jessica Clendenning (2010-2011, TLC Student Representative), Matilda Flemming (2010-2011, Scholas Student Committee Executive), Vineet Kumar (2010-2011, Student Representative, Institute Council).
- 09:30 – 10:00: Interview with staff members of the Teaching and Learning Committee: dr. Erhard Berner (Chair), prof. dr. Michael Grimm.
- 10:00 – 10:30: Internal committee meeting in preparation of the interview with the management of the institute

- 10:30 – 11:30: Interview with the management of the institute: prof. dr. Leo de Haan (Rector), dr. Jos Mooij (Deputy Rector for Educational Affairs), drs. Nynke-Jo Smit (Academic Registrar).
- 11:30 – 14:00: Internal committee meeting: discussion leading to general conclusions and the assessment of the programme.
- 14:00 – 14:30: Oral report of the committee's conclusions by the chairman of the committee.

Appendix C: Theses and documents studied by the committee

Prior to the site visit, the committee studied the theses (Research Papers) of the students with the following student numbers:

- SA2064
- SB0570
- SB0598
- SB0603
- SB0611
- SB0643
- SB0646
- SB0651
- SB0658
- SB0668
- SB0675
- SB0684
- SB0703
- SB0717
- SB0722
- SB0760
- SB0762
- SB0774
- SB0777
- SB0778

During the site visit, the committee studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

- recent Research Papers (including supervisors' comments) listed in the self-assessment report that had not been distributed among committee members prior to the site visit;
- materials and publications used for information and marketing purposes;
- course outlines;
- learning materials: handbooks, readers, collections of articles, etc.;
- rules and regulations for writing theses, reports, research papers;
- rules and regulations applying to internships;
- exam regulations;
- exam question papers, model answers, ISS grading criteria;
- recent minutes and reports of meetings of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Board of Examiners, the annual report of the Board of Examiners;
- course evaluations and end of programme evaluations;
- results of surveys among graduates;
- relevant policy reports and documents relating to the programme.

Appendix D: Declarations of independence



ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM:

Prof. dr. R. Ruben

PRIVÉ ADRES:

*Waalvorderweg 51
2097 HP Den Haag*

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / SECRETARIS GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

ISS

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE Zouden KUNNEN BEÏNVLOEDEN;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS: *Dordrecht*

DATUM: *06-07-2011*

HANDTEKENING:

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Q329



ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM: Georg E. Treeks

PRIVÉ ADRES: Anna Paulownastraal 117-b
2518 BD Den Haag

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / SECRETARIS GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

ISS

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

ISS

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE ZOULDEN KUNNEN BEÏNVLOEDEN;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS:

Den Haag

DATUM:

27/7/11

HANDTEKENING:

ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM:

Frank de Zwart

PRIVÉ ADRES:

Myr. Nolenslaan 21
1181 VL Amstelveen

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / SECRETARIS GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

JSS the Hague

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

VSNU (NVAO)

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE ZOULDEN KUNNEN BEÏNVLOEDEN;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS: *Amstelveen* DATUM: *27/7/2011*

HANDTEKENING:



ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM: JOY CLANCY

PRIVÉ ADRES:

WIM SONNEVELDSTR 50

7558 LW HENGEW

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / ~~SECRETARIS~~ GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

QANU

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE ZOUDEN KUNNEN BEÏNVLOEDEN;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS:

Enschede

DATUM:

07/07/11

HANDTEKENING:

Joy S Clancy



ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM:

N B van Ogh

PRIVÉ ADRES:

St Annastraat 90
6524 GJ Nijmegen

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / SECRETARIS GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

Development studies

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

ISS

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE Zouden kunnen beïnvloeden;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS:

Nijmegen

DATUM:

09/07/11

HANDTEKENING:

M. Dyk



ONAFHANKELIJKHEIDS- EN GEHEIMHOUDINGSVERKLARING

INDIENEN VOORAFGAAND AAN DE OPLEIDINGSBEOORDELING

ONDERGETEKENDE

NAAM:

SJETZE LOOIJENGA

PRIVÉ ADRES:

CATHARINESINGEL 56
3511 GE UTRECHT

IS ALS DESKUNDIGE / SECRETARIS GEVRAAGD VOOR HET BEOORDELEN VAN DE OPLEIDING:

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

AANGEVRAAGD DOOR DE INSTELLING:

ISS/EUR

VERKLAART HIERBIJ GEEN (FAMILIE)RELATIES OF BANDEN MET BOVENGENOEMDE INSTELLING TE ONDERHOUDEN, ALS PRIVÉPERSOON, ONDERZOEKER / DOCENT, BEROEPSBEOEFENAAR OF ALS ADVISEUR, DIE EEN VOLSTREKT ONAFHANKELIJKE OORDEELSVORMING OVER DE KWALITEIT VAN DE OPLEIDING TEN POSITIEVE OF TEN NEGATIEVE ZOULDEN KUNNEN BEÏNVLOEDEN;



VERKLAART HIERBIJ ZODANIGE RELATIES OF BANDEN MET DE INSTELLING DE
AFGELOPEN VIJF JAAR NIET GEHAD TE HEBBEN;

VERKLAART STRIKTE GEHEIMHOUDING TE BETRACHTEN VAN AL HETGEEN IN
VERBAND MET DE BEOORDELING AAN HEM/HAAR BEKEND IS GEWORDEN EN
WORDT, VOOR ZOVER DE OPLEIDING, DE INSTELLING OF DE NVAO HIER
REDELIJKERWIJS AANSPRAAK OP KUNNEN MAKEN.

VERKLAART HIERBIJ OP DE HOOGTE TE ZIJN VAN DE NVAO GEDRAGSCODE.

PLAATS: UTRECHT

DATUM: 14-07-2011

HANDTEKENING:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shayema', is written over a long horizontal line that extends across the page.

Appendix E: Domain-specific framework of reference

Development Studies (also called International Development, or International Development Studies) is concerned with development, a phenomenon that can be interpreted in different ways and that is widely debated. This annex provides a framework for assessing the ISS MA programme in Development Studies. More in particular, it discusses the following issues:

- The concept of development
- The academic field of Development Studies
- The particular nature or profile of Development Studies as practiced within ISS
- A comparison between the ISS MA degree programme and other master-level degree programmes in Development Studies, International Development or International Development Studies offered elsewhere in the Netherlands or Europe.

At the onset, it is important to note that there is an elaborate literature on ‘development’ and ‘development studies’.¹ This short note cannot do justice to the richness of this debate. Nevertheless, we hope it provides the necessary elements of a framework that is required to describe the domain and the specificities of the ISS profile within this domain.

1. The concept of development

Development as a concept has a relatively short history. Some would date it to the era of European Enlightenment; others claim that it was an offspring of ‘the Great Transformation’ and that it emerged in the first decades of European industrialization (Cowen and Shenton, 1996; Rist, 2008). At any rate, the idea of development is firmly connected to notions of progress and modernity, although it is certainly not synonymous to these concepts: several scholars have also emphasized the contradictory or awkward dimensions of development (‘the violence of development’), its fundamentally uneven nature or the fact that what happens ‘in the name of development’ can be highly problematic.²

As a concept, development is hard to define. At the most general level, it refers to processes of change or social transformation in the modern era. Looking, however, more closely, it is possible to distinguish, at least, three different meanings (Sumner and Tribe, 2008; Thomas, 2000). First, development can be seen as a long-term process of societal transformation that modern societies experience. This understanding foregrounds historical processes of change, from rural and agricultural to urban and industrial, or conceptualized in terms of ‘the highly uneven process of capitalist development’ (Hart, 2009). Second, development can be seen as the outcome of a short to medium-term process that is deliberately planned and managed. Development in this sense is intentional and supposed to be positive. It is a process meant to address particular social problems (poverty, illiteracy, bad governance, etc.). While the first meaning of development implies that development is an immanent process within capitalism, the second understanding assumes that particular development interventions can be designed and implemented, even to address or ameliorate some of the disorders produced by capitalist development itself (Thomas, 2000: 780). Agency is important in this second meaning of

¹ To mention just a few contributions to this literature, for introductions to Development Studies, see, for instance, Potter, Binns, Elliott and Smith (2008), Sumner and Tribe (2009); for discussions about development, see Cowen and Shenton (1996) and Rist (2008); for contributions about the debate about development studies, see Corbridge (2007) and Schuurman (1993), and for recent collections of core texts, see Desai and Potter (2008) and Chari and Corbridge (2008).

² Kothari and Harcourt (2004) and Kapadia (2003) are examples of collections discussing the ‘violence of development. See, for instance, Frank (1966) or Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989) about uneven development, and Ferguson (1990) about the problematic nature of development interventions

development, be it of international organisations, national or sub-national governments or social movements: they are all involved in deliberate efforts to achieve a better world.

Third, the term development can refer to an idea, a vision of what constitutes a desirable society. Unlike the first and second understanding, this one does not perceive development primarily as a process, but rather as an outcome: development is a desirable state of affairs at the societal level. We talk about ‘developed countries’, for instance, i.e. countries that have achieved development – something that can be established with the help of particular indicators (such as, for instance, GDP per capita or the Human Development Index).

The vision can also be criticised as a dominant discourse or hegemonic project that prescribes particular ideological or Western-biased notions of ‘the good life’ and forecloses alternative visions of how societies can be organised.

Apart from these three possible definitions, what further adds to the complexity of the notion of development is the fact that development has multiple dimensions: economic, political, institutional, technological, cultural, to name just a few.

2. The academic field of Development Studies

Development Studies is shaped by all three meanings of development: it includes the study of long-term processes of societal transformation in the modern era; it is meant to feed into intentional development interventions; and it is concerned with debates about what is development – both in a constructive way (addressing the question of what societies should aim for in their developmental efforts) as well as in a deconstructive way (i.e. criticizing the hegemonic vision of development). Development Studies, therefore, produces different forms of knowledge: knowledge about long-term processes of structural change in the modern era, instrumental knowledge (that solves puzzles and problems, and defines desirable states of being) and reflexive knowledge (that interrogates values). It speaks to both an academic audience and an extra-academic audience of professionals, policy makers and activists.³

Development Studies is a relatively young field of scholarly activity. It emerged only after the second World War, and particularly in the years following de-colonization. The prime subject of Development Studies was the process of development in so-called ‘developing countries’: often countries that had experienced a history of being colonized, that belonged to the so-called Third World (i.e. not the Western industrialized world and not the communist block) and that are relatively poor – however defined (Sumner and Tribe, 2009: 16-7). It acknowledged that these countries were different – an acknowledgement that justified a separate field of studies. Simultaneously, however, it adhered to the principle of similarity, and believed that development policy could be a means to make these countries more like the developed ones (Corbridge, 2007: 179).

Over time, however, the scope of Development Studies changed. This was partly the result of the fact that globalization has led to increasing interdependencies and inter-linkages world-wide. Although transnational processes are not new phenomena (colonialism led to interrelationships between different regions of the world and the emergence of a ‘world system’), it is also evident that current processes of financialization, climate change, supra-governmental forms of governance, etc. lead to new forms of integration that are qualitatively

³ See Burawoy (2005) about different forms of sociological knowledge.

different from those in the past, and that an international, rather than 'poor countries' perspective, is called for. Moreover, several traditional developing countries have experienced rapid economic growth. Poverty and other forms of deprivation often have not ceased to exist, but these countries also host pockets of wealth and excellence that are absolutely comparable to what is achieved in the so-called developed parts of the world.

At the same time, it has also been realized that within the latter parts of the world, major forms of social deprivation or other developmental problems continue to exist. In other words, classic dichotomies between the developed and the developing world, or the North (or West) and the South, are under increasing critical scrutiny.

In its efforts to describe Development Studies as an object of accreditation, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes has described Development Studies and its goals as follows:

- a multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary field of study (i.e. not a discipline) that seeks to understand social, economic, political, technological and cultural aspects of societal change, particularly in developing countries;
- aiming to contribute to possible solutions to societal problems that development or its absence may produce. And, as such, it is normative and intervention-oriented;
- a context-sensitive academic pursuit, examining societal change within a historical, comparative and global perspective, taking into account the specificity of different societies in terms of history, ecology, culture, technology etc. and how these differences both can and often should translate into varied 'local' responses to regional or global processes, and varied strategies of development and methods;
- a changing and evolving field of study, at present covering topics and concerns such as poverty, environmental and sociopolitical sustainability; women's empowerment and gender equity, globalisation, cultural, sustainable and human development, and development issues and poverty in industrialised countries (Mönks and Opschoor, 2006: 9).

Development Studies, according to EADI, is case-oriented, issue-oriented and policy-oriented. When taught,

- it needs to deepen and broaden the understanding of development issues and hence draw on various disciplines. In most cases, programmes and courses are interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary. In other cases, deepening the grasp of a single discipline is prioritized but accompanied by steps to enhance the ability to use and integrate concepts from other disciplines.
- Which disciplines receive priority attention will depend on the particular societal and policy issues considered. Anthropology, cultural studies, natural sciences and engineering, agriculture, ecology, economics, history, geography, management/planning/administration, politics, sociology are each important.
- Methodological enrichment, including from cultural studies, ethics, gender studies, history and the humanities, participatory and action research is emerging, with increasing attention to general skills and tools such as in problem analysis, concept mapping, participatory methods and evaluation, and broad-based assessment methodologies.
- A gradual shift from ad hoc case study work towards more comparative and integrative approaches is occurring.
- Education in Development Studies in the North is based on partnership with sister organisations in the South. Enhanced complementarity, building on the respective

comparative advantages, and increasing North-South multilocal delivery of teaching programmes pave the way towards a more demand-driven cooperation in education between North and South. (ibid: 9).

EADI formulates the following learning objectives or outcomes of degree programmes in Development Studies.

- Education in Development Studies needs to (a) deepen, contextualise and broaden disciplinary understanding, and (b) investigate societal problems in a way that both provides students with relevant analytical tools and theories and provides them with a wide range of examples, cases and histories. It needs to (c) give students a coherent specialization focus and yet (d) flexibly accommodate their particular needs and interests given their academic and work background and career path. And it needs (e) to build in ways for students to reflect their own experience and to learn from each other's diverse experiences and backgrounds.
- Graduates are able to deal with the complexities of development processes and issues and to carry out analyses in a broad perspective, using conceptual frameworks sensitive to socio-economic and politico-ethical aspects. They must recognize the need to bring in features, concepts and tools from relevant ranges of disciplines and relate these elements with scientific rigour.
- Graduates must be able to select and apply relevant tools for collecting, interpreting and assessing (quantitative and qualitative) information on development processes and their impacts, including knowledge and know-how from a variety of relevant sources.
- They must be able to communicate the results of their analysis to a variety of audiences, ranging from professional (research-oriented as well as policy-oriented) to non-professional (stakeholders, other users). (ibid: 9-10).

3. Development Studies at ISS

Development Studies as taught in ISS fulfils these EADI criteria. This was established in 2010 when the ISS MA programme was accredited by EADI. The accreditation report concluded that

“The peer reviewers consider that the Masters in Development Studies fully fulfils the EADI criteria. ISS certainly offers one of the richest Development Studies curricula in Europe.” (EADI, 2010: 16)

More information about how the ISS fits within the domain of Development Studies can be found in Chapter 2 of the current critical reflection.

Within the broad field of Development Studies, the ISS MA programme

1. focuses primarily on social processes and draws almost exclusively on the social sciences;
2. has a particularly strong history of teaching and research focused on the political economy and sociological (both in the broad sense of the word) dimensions of development– and somewhat less so on the cultural dimensions;
3. focuses on the production and transfer of knowledge about processes of structural change, instrumental knowledge as well as reflexive knowledge – all with the intention to contribute to equity and social justice.

The first of these special features is related to ISS' mission as defined already at the time of its establishment. ISS has been established as an institute of social studies, unlike other institutes

for international education that were established more or less in the same era in the Netherlands.⁴

The second feature has grown over time as a result of the particular research interests of the academic staff as well as the policy choices made in the course of ISS' history (with regard to recruitment, the grouping of staff, the awarding of honorary doctorates, etc.). The third results from the two objectives that the ISS generally, but also individual ISS staff members, is committed to: to be taken seriously as a research institute that produces critical and reflexive knowledge, and to contribute to a better world. While the first ambition is increasingly incentivised by procedures and policies within the academic world (e.g. regarding publication requirements, the ranking of journals in research schools, etc), the second is continuously demanded by the students: a large proportion of ISS' students are mid-career professionals from developing countries. They are acutely aware of the various developmental problems in their countries, and although often academically interested and challenged during their MA programme, they also tend to ask 'so what?', and thereby make sure that what they learn is not only interesting but also useful. What is distinctive about the ISS is that it locates the intentional and agency-focused approach to development within the broader context of understanding development as an unique process of modern structural transformation.

4. Benchmarking the ISS MA programme in Development Studies

Within the Netherlands, apart from the Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS), the Universities of Amsterdam, Groningen, Leiden, Maastricht, Utrecht and Wageningen offer Master-level programmes in International Development, Development Studies or similar fields. These programmes are of different types:

1. master degrees (MA or MSc) that have a duration of one year (60 EC), in Universities of Amsterdam, Leiden, Maastricht, Nijmegen and Utrecht)
2. master degrees (MA or MSc) with a duration of 15.5 months (88 EC in EUR/ISS) or two years (120 EC) offered by Wageningen University
3. research master degrees (MA or MSc) that have a duration of two years (120 EC), offered by the Universities of Amsterdam and Groningen)
4. advanced master (meant for students who have a Masters degree already, and who work with an NGO) with a duration of one year (60 EC), offered by Nijmegen University.

Outside the Netherlands, there are dozens of comparable programmes in the United Kingdom (for instance in the London School of Economics and School of Oriental and African Studies, London; Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; University of East Anglia, Norwich; Bath University; Institute of Development Policy Management, Manchester, University of Oxford, etc.). There are several programmes in Scandinavia, in Belgium, Ireland, Spain and Switzerland, and outside Europe in Canada and Japan.⁵

Apart from these generic programmes, there are also development-oriented programmes with a) a specific thematic focus, or b) a specific regional focus. Within the Netherlands, an example of the former is the MA programme Humanitarian Action (90 ECs, offered by the University of Groningen); an example of the latter is the research Masters in African Studies

⁴ These are the Institute of Housing Studies in Rotterdam, the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation in Enschede, the Maastricht School of Management, and UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Management.

⁵ This list is not exhaustive.

that is offered in Leiden University. Within the UK, there are a large numbers of more focused MA programmes. The Institute of Development Studies runs an MA in Development Studies plus seven other thematic Master programmes (with a lot of overlap between these different programmes). The School of International Development (University of East Anglia) even has 15 different Master programmes for full time students, all on development related topics. Apart from these thematically focused Master programmes, several UK Universities also offer regionally focused programmes. Oxford University, for instance, offers MA programmes in African Studies, Contemporary India; Latin American Studies; and Modern Chinese Studies.

Similarities between these Master programmes

All these programmes direct themselves to theories and practices of development. Problems related to poverty and social exclusion are often at the core of these programmes. The programmes are multidisciplinary in nature. As far as we could check, they all start with course work, and end with an individual piece of research.

Differences between these programmes

- Duration: Most Master programmes in the Netherlands (except the one offered by Wageningen University and the research Master programmes) have a nominal duration of one year. Most Master programmes in the UK last twelve months; some have a duration of nine months only. Scandinavian programmes often last two years; the programme offered by the University of Zürich is also just one year.
- Balance between course work and thesis work: By and large, the UK programmes are rather course-based, with a thesis (25% of the overall weight) at the end. There is hardly any time for fieldwork. With the exception of the (12-months) research Masters, there is also not much training in research methodology in these programmes.
- On the whole, the Dutch programmes are more research-oriented than the UK programmes. There is more training in research methods, and there is more emphasis on primary data collection. The one-year long IDS programme of the University of Amsterdam, for instance, has 32 ECs in course work, and 28 ECs are spent on thesis-related research, of which fieldwork is a compulsory component. The (two-year long) IDS programme in Wageningen has six months reserved for the thesis. Many students collect their own data for this.
- Orientation: The UK programmes are, on the whole, academically oriented, with a lot of emphasis on theoretical study, argumentation and essay writing. An exception to this is the MA in Participation, Power and Social Change offered at the Institute of development Studies in Sussex, which includes a large component of work-based learning. Some of the Dutch programmes are more practice-oriented. The (two-year long) International Development Studies programme in Wageningen contains a compulsory internship of four months; the Advanced Masters in International Development (Nijmegen) is a so-called dual Master, i.e. it contains academic training and a work experience programme.
- Focus: Depending on the research interests of the staff and the orientation and expertise within the university as a whole, different programmes have slightly different foci. The IDS programme in Wageningen, for instance, has a rural focus; the programme offered in Leiden combines development sociology with cultural anthropology.
- Level: All the programmes discussed here are master-level (MA or MSc) programmes. Within the Netherlands, the van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences offers a professional master (M). This is higher professional training (HBO), rather than academic training.

- **Type of Students.** The degree of internationalization varies. The Dutch programmes have a Dutch as well as international – often European – clientele. Many of the UK programmes attract mostly students from the UK and other European countries, but also some students from the global South. Most of these programmes attract mainly young graduates.

Distinctive Features ISS MA in Development Studies

1. As compared to most other programmes, the ISS MA in Development Studies is relatively long.
2. Related to this is the weight of the research paper, and the emphasis within the programme on research. The ISS MA has a compulsory workshop (running during two terms) preparing students for their research paper. Apart from that it offers a choice of more specialized research methods training – much more than what is available in the UK programmes (except for the students in the research Master programmes). The weight of the thesis is 28 ECs – which means that students spend almost twice as much time on their research than students in UK universities.
3. Most ISS students have professional experience. Internships are not part of the regular curriculum, but course work and class discussions can draw upon the rich experience that ISS students bring to the classroom. Training is academic, but applied – i.e. ‘real world’ and policy/practice-oriented. The diverse experiences of the students allow for comparative exercises and learning from each other.
4. As compared to many (but certainly not all!) of the other centres and departments offering higher education in Development Studies, ISS has a relatively large staff, and therefore many areas in which students can specialize and sufficient critical mass to produce a very dynamic learning environment.
5. As compared to most other programmes, the ISS has more opportunities to tailor the content of the programme to the specific needs of individual students. This is so because, at various points in the programme, students need to make their own choices: for a specialization; within the overall set of foundation courses and research technique courses; and with regard to the topic and research methodology pursued in/for the final thesis.
6. As compared to many of the other programmes, ISS has a favourable staff-student ratio. This is particularly evident in the time staff spends on research paper supervision. In many UK universities, this is very limited (e.g. 5 hours per student in the University of Bath; three meetings per student in SOAS, London), while it is seven days for a first supervisor within ISS and two days for a second reader.

Recurrent benchmarking within the ISS

Regular benchmarking takes place within the ISS. The most elaborate and recurrent exercise is the involvement of External Assessors in an annual assessment of the programme. Between seven and ten External Assessors are hired to assess each year a) the content of the courses offered by ISS, b) the appropriateness of the mode of assessment of these courses, c) the fairness of assessment within these courses, and d) quality of the research papers. These External Assessors all work in similar programmes in the Netherlands or abroad. They are usually appointed for a term of three years. Apart from their written comments, they attend a one-day meeting during which their observations and suggestions are discussed with the internal board of Examiners and representatives of all specializations.

Apart from this, many of the ISS staff members have experiences in other universities. Several staff members have a simultaneous position in another university. Apart from that, a

large majority of the academic staff has regular ad-hoc contacts with other Master-level programmes elsewhere in the Netherlands or abroad. Staff that is recruited at ISS has often teaching experience elsewhere.

Finally, some of the staff members are also involved in assessments of other programmes outside ISS. The Academic Registrar has recently been a member of an accreditation panel. Several staff members are, or have been involved as, External Assessors of other Master-level programmes elsewhere.

The previous Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs has recently been appointed by EADI as one of the members of the International Accreditation Committee for Development Studies.

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Appendix F: Intended learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete the programme will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- a. define and describe the field of Development Studies as a interdisciplinary field of social science research and practice. This includes the historical emergence of the field, principal disciplinary areas, foundational/core theories, (broad) historical and contemporary practices, and key discourses and debates.
- b. identify the role and practice of development theory in processes of social transformation.
- c. identify foundational theory, key policy frameworks, specific practices and contemporary discourses in the area of their specialization.
- d. outline various methods of social science research; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, relevant to their specialization.

Application of Knowledge and Understanding - Analysis

- e. select and apply general and specialization-specific analytical tools to analyze, critique, examine, contrast and explore a development practice or social, political and/or economic phenomena.
- f. select and apply a variety of general and specialization specific theories/concepts/tools to frame a concrete experience in a way that contributes to overall knowledge and understanding.

Application of Analysis - Making Judgments

- g. identify strategic solutions, specific interventions or tailored recommendations to improve or mitigate development practices or social, political and/or economic phenomena based on the application of theory, analytical evaluation and use of relevant resources within development related disciplinary fields.
- h. identify appropriate research methods for specific queries and/or fields and justify their selection.

Communication

- i. work collaboratively within a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural context and communicate ideas, recommended solutions or interventions and strategies effectively, whether oral or written, to academics, practitioners and stakeholders both individually and within groups.

Attitudes

- j. identify their bias and opinion, and reflect on the strengths and limitations of their perspective.
- k. appreciate the value of varied and opposing perspectives and the importance of context including the advantages and privileges and disadvantages and limitations associated with social, economic and national contexts.
- l. continue and steer their further study and learning process in a way that is largely self-directed.

Appendix G: Overview of the curriculum

The main components of the curriculum are a) the foundation courses, b) the general courses, c) the core courses, d) the specialization, e) the optional courses, f) research techniques courses and g) the research paper process.

Foundation Courses, as offered in 2010-2011:

Economics		
Intermediate	Introduction to Economics	EC 3.5
Intermediate	An Overview of Modern Economic Thought	EC 3.5
Advanced	Development Economics	EC 3.5
Sociology		
Intermediate	Analysis of Social Structure and Change	EC 3.5
Intermediate	Social Action in Communities, Markets and Politics	EC 3.5
Advanced	Contemporary Social Theory	EC 3.5
Political Science		
Intermediate	State, Government and Society	EC 3.5
Intermediate	Global Politics of Development: Democracy, Conflict and Rights	EC 3.5
Advanced	Politics, Power and Development	EC 3.5

General Courses, as offered in 2010-2011:

Obligatory	Development Histories, Theories and Practices	EC 7.0
Obligatory	Academic Skills	EC 2.0
Obligatory	Information Management	EC 1.5
Optional	Remedial Quantitative Skills	[2.0]
Optional	Academic Writing Skills	[5.0]
Obligatory*	Advanced Writing Skills	[5.0]

* Obligatory only for ECD students in the Double Degree programme with the University of Indonesia.

Core Courses, as offered in 2010-2011:

	Specialization*	
Poverty, Inequality and Social Development	CYS, POV, PPSD	EC 7.0
Political Economy of Agriculture and Environment	ESD, RLGC	EC 7.0
Work and Local Development in the Global Context	LDS, WEG	EC 7.0
The Political Economy of Globalization	ECD, IPED	EC 7.0
Critical Perspectives on Economic Globalization	CRS, HDS, WGD	EC 7.0
States, Society and Markets: Embeddedness and Disembeddedness	G&D, PPM	EC 7.0

*DRES students are free to select one of the core courses.

Research Techniques Courses, as offered in 2010-2011:

Regression and Data Analysis	EC 3.5
Methods for Social Development Research	EC 7.0
Topics in Regression Analysis	EC 3.5
Doing your own Survey	EC 7.0
Qualitative Interviewing	EC 3.5
Techniques for Understanding Quantitative Data	EC 3.5
Group Data Collection and Analysis Techniques	EC 3.5
Ethnographic Techniques and Cross-Cultural Reflexivity in Case Studies	EC 3.5
Discourse Analysis: Principles and Methods	EC 7.0

Curriculum Components, and their Contribution to Intended Learning Outcomes

Component	Term	Nr of ECs	Contributes to intended learning outcome											Other contribution		
			a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k		l	
Introductory Programme		0.5														Familiarizing students with ISS, the Hague and each other
Foundation Courses	1A	10.5	X	X												Introduction to core disciplines; contributes to a common ground
General Courses																
Dev't theory	1A+B	7	X	X			X	X			X	X	X			Create a common foundation; support the learning process
Academic Skills and Information Management	1-3	3.5												X		
Core Courses	1B	7	X	X	X		X	X			X					
Specialization Courses	1B-3	17.5			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Optional Courses	2-3	7			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Research Techniques Courses	1B-3	7				X				X					X	
Research Paper Process			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
RP Workshop	2-3	3.5														
Research Paper	2-4	24.5														

Curriculum Components, Teaching Methods and Modes of Assessment

	Average number of contact hours per EC*	Predominant teaching methods**	Predominant modes of assessment***
Foundation courses	7.7	Lectures; Tutorials; Workshops; Participatory Lectures	Written Examination
General Course	4.3 ⁶	Group; Attendance; Lectures; Participatory Lectures	Participation; Group Assignments and a Written Examination
Core Courses	5.0	Lectures; Participatory Lectures; Tutorials; Workshops; Individual	Assignments; Written Examinations
Specialization Courses	5.0	Lectures; Participatory Lectures; Tutorials; Workshops, Individual; Study Visit	Assignments, Written Examinations
Optional Courses	4.9	Lectures; Participatory Lectures; Tutorials; Workshops; Individual; Computer Exercise; Study Visit	Assignments, Written Examinations; Presentations; Take home; Participation; Group
Research Techniques Courses	5.1	Lectures; Computer Exercises; Participatory Group and Individual Exercises	Assignments; Presentations; Group
Research Paper Process	No need	Plenary Sessions; Specialization Sessions; Reflections	Research Paper

* **Average no of contact hours:** according to the ISS norm, this should be 4.6 (based on 32 hours per 7 EC).

****Methods to support learning:**

Lecture:

lectures in larger groups without much interaction with the students except for short Q/A sessions;

Participatory lecture:

lectures with interaction, discussion sessions, interactive sessions, case study based discussions, use of film/videos, role plays, simulation games; guest lectures; seminar series;

Tutorials:

tutorials, group tutorials;

Workshop:

group work, group exercise, discussion groups, student presentations, poster presentations;

Individual:

Individual exercises;

Computer exercise:

sessions in computer class rooms or own laptops, computer workshops;

Study visits:

study visits.

*****Assessment:**

Assignment:

assignment, individual essay and papers, computer based assignments;

Attendance:

obligatory attendance of sessions, classes or activities;

⁶ This is based only on 'Development Histories, Theories and Practices'; this average excludes a large number of tutorials.

Group: group -work, and group based assignments;
 Oral: oral examination;
 Participation: active participation in course;
 Presentation: individual or group presentations;
 Take home: take home exams;
 Written: written examination under invigilated circumstances.

Workload throughout the year (2010-2011). A working week of 40 hours corresponds with 1.43 EC per week.

	Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total programme
Weeks	8.5	9.5	11	13 (including a study visit)	25 (including four weeks between RP submission and graduation)	67
ECs	13.5	15-18.5	14-21	10.5-21	24.5	88
ECs/week	1.6	1.6-1.9	1.3-1.9	0.8-1.6	1.2 (based on 21 weeks)	1.3

Appendix H: Quantitative data regarding the programme

Intake, transfers and graduates

Cohort	Students enrolled (N)	Students dropped out (N)	Students graduated within 15.5 months (N)	Percentage of students graduated within 15.5 months	Total number of students graduated	Percentage of students graduated
2005 – 2006	179	1	169	94%	173	97%
2006 – 2007	186	3	171	92%	180	97%
2007 – 2008	191		181	95%	184	96%
2008 – 2009	198	2	182	92%	186	94%
2009 – 2010	199	4	176	88%	179	90%
2010 – 2011	185					

Teacher-student ratio achieved

Year	2001	2004	2010
Fte academic staff in MA teaching	19.3	18.8	19.7
Fte direct MA support			6.3
Total fte			20.7
Number of student years	202.4	242.9	252.6
student-staff ratio: number of students per fte (only academic staff)	10.5	12.9	13.0
Staff-student ratio overall (all staff involved in MA-teaching)			9.8

Average amount of face-to-face instruction per stage of the study programme

	Term	No of ECs	Average Number of Contact Hours
Foundation courses	1A	10.5	81
General Course	1A+1B	7	30
Other general courses	1A+1B+2	3.5	varies
Core Courses	1B	7	35
Specialization Courses	1B+2+3	17.5	87
Optional Courses	2+3	7	34
Research Techniques Courses	2+3	7	36
Research Paper Process	3+4	28	varies

Academic Staff Situation per 1 July 2011

Category	Male		Female		Total		Percentage with PhD
	Number	FTE	Number	FTE	Number	FTE	
Professor	16	13.7	3	2.8	19	16.5	100%
Associate professor	3	2.6	3	3.0	6	5.6	100%
Senior lecturer	9	9.0	6	5.8	15	14.8	93%
Lecturer	9	9.0	9	9.9	18	18.0	94%
TOTAL	37	34.3	21	20.6	58	54.9	97%