NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

INITIAL ACCREDITATION

ACADEMIC MASTER
MSC HEALTH AND DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION
Maastricht University

SUMMARY REPORT
17 MARCH 2023

1   Peer review

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

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

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

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

2   Panel

Peer experts
- Prof. dr. Gerda Croiset (*chair*), Dean of Education and Training, University Medical Centre Groningen;
- Dr. Maryam Alimardani, Associate Professor in the domains of brain-computer interfaces (BCI) and human-robot interaction (HRI), School of Humanities and Digital Sciences and Department of Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence, Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. Lisette van Gemert-Pijnen, Professor in Persuasive Health Technology and Head of the Centre for eHealth & Wellbeing Research, University of Twente, Enschede; Associate Professor, University of Waterloo, Canada;
- Koen Wijsman MSc (*student member*), student MSc Medicine, Leiden University; MSc Health Care Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Assisting staff
- Dr. Duco Duchatteau, MBA, secretary;
- Michèle Wera MA, NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator.

Site visit
7 February 2023, Maastricht

3 Outcome

The NVAO approved panel reaches a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the new MSc Health and Digital Transformation offered by Maastricht University. The master's programme Health and Digital Transformation programme is a 60 EC one-year full-time programme. Students can also opt for a part-time format over a period of two years. The programme aims to educate "bridge builders who can facilitate the connection between healthcare and technology in an evidence-based way in order to achieve a sustainable transition within the healthcare domain".

The programme's objectives were developed in close collaboration with the professional field. This ensures that Maastricht University will be educating academic professionals who are welcomed by the field. The panel believes that the programme – and its students – would benefit from increased efforts to establish an international benchmark and increased international collaboration. The panel is, however, sufficiently convinced that Maastricht University will be educating professionals at an academic master's level, in accordance with national and international requirements.

The aims of the programme are translated into a well-structured curriculum. Both the curriculum itself, with ample room for individual choices, as well as the chosen didactical approach of problem-based learning contribute to the student centredness of the programme. The programme aims to attract students with a diverse background. The programme modules are designed so that students can learn from one another, increasing the multidisciplinary nature of student learning.

The panel has formulated some recommendations to monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum: for part-time students as well as for students without a background in data science. The panel is confident nonetheless, that all students can attain the aims of the programme.

The programme will be taught by a multidisciplinary group of experts. They are experts in the fields they teach, and are well prepared for their role in the programme. Faculty members have sufficient time to fulfil their educational duties. The industry will play an important role, since they will be providing placements for the students' group projects and theses. Although the panel has recommended Maastricht University to diligently monitor the availability of high quality placements, the panel is confident that Maastricht University will make effective use of its large network. So far, the university has been successful in engaging relevant industry representatives.

The university's vision on student assessment has been consistently implemented in the programme. The programme uses a wide variety of different assessments. Procedures for a diligent assessment process are in place and the relevant committees are actively involved.

All in all, the NVAO expert panel is of the opinion that Maastricht University has developed a promising and novel academic master's programme educating future 'bridge builders' between healthcare and technology. The panel shares the industry's enthusiasm and is convinced that the programme's graduates will stimulate a data driven change in healthcare.

4 Commendations

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

1. Involvement of the professional field – Future employers were involved in the design of the programme. Maastricht University has clearly listened to the needs of the professional field. Employers remain committed to a continued contribution by means of involvement in students' projects and thesis placements.

2. Thorough programme design – When designing the programme, Maastricht University has followed a rigorous process that has led to a well structured and clear curriculum.

3

Peer review new programme MSc Health and Digital Transformation Universiteit Maastricht
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3. Student centredness – The programme has ample room for individual choices. Students have a great deal of liberty in designing their own goals and objectives. The combination of 'problem-based learning' and the room for individual choices in the programme makes this programme truly student centred

5 Recommendations

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

1. International benchmark and collaboration – Identify international institutions that offer similar programmes and form strategic partnerships. Universities can learn from one another and create synergy in opportunities for research and international student exchange.

2. Conceptual model – Keep the conceptual model that underlays the programme and the interdisciplinary project updated. The conceptual model would increase in strength and relevance when more up to date concepts are used.

3. Part-time students – Monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum for part-time students and the challenges part-time students face in order to ensure that all students experience the full richness of the programme, independent of the mode of study (full-time or part-time).

4. Diverse background of incoming students – Monitor the challenges students with different backgrounds face. For instance, the programme could be more challenging for students without a background in data sciences or not stimulating enough for those who have a strong background in computer (and technology) sciences.

5. Placements – Monitor the availability of high-quality placements for both the group project and the thesis placement. The programme is ambitious in its growth, which must be met by an increase in the number of available placements.

6. Grading Interdisciplinary Project – Reconsider the current pass/fail grading for the large project. The current grading system has limited opportunity to acknowledge excellence.

6 What comes next?

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

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

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[1] https://www.nvao.net/nl/besluiten
[2] https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/faculties/faculty-health-medicine-and-life-sciences-0

7   Summary in Dutch

Het panel oordeelt positief over de kwaliteit van de MSc Health and Digital Transformation van de Universiteit Maastricht. Dit is de uitkomst van de kwaliteitstoets uitgevoerd door een panel van peers op verzoek van de Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (NVAO). Voor deze beoordeling heeft het panel gesprekken gevoerd met de opleiding op 7 februari 2023.

De master Health and Digital Transformation is een éénjarige, voltijdse opleiding van 60 EC. Studenten kunnen ook een tweejarige, parttime opleiding volgen. De nieuwe opleiding beoogt bruggenbouwers op te leiden die de verbinding weten te maken tussen zorg en technologie. Zo kunnen zij een transitie in de zorg realiseren op basis van nieuwe wetenschappelijke inzichten.

De doelen van de opleiding zijn geformuleerd in nauwe samenwerking met het bedrijfsleven. Hierdoor leidt de Universiteit Maastricht daadwerkelijk professionals op waar toekomstige werkgevers behoefte aan hebben. Het panel is van mening dat de opleiding – en de studenten – baat hebben bij een internationale benchmark en meer internationale samenwerking. Desondanks is het panel er voldoende van overtuigd, dat de Universiteit Maastricht professionals op wo-masterniveau opleidt die inhoudelijk voldoen aan hetgeen nationaal en internationaal gevraagd wordt.

De opleidingsdoelen zijn vertaald naar een goed gestructureerd programma. Het curriculum biedt studenten een grote keuzevrijheid. Ook het didactisch model van problem-based learning zorgt ervoor dat studenten hun eigen leerervaring kunnen vormgeven. De opleiding verwacht studenten met een gevarieerde achtergrond aan te trekken. Het programma is zodanig ontworpen dat studenten van elkaars kennis en ervaring kunnen leren. Dit draagt bij aan de multidisciplinaire leerervaring van de student.

Het panel heeft enkele aanbevelingen geformuleerd om de effectiviteit van het programma te monitoren: voor deeltijdse studenten en voor studenten zonder data science achtergrond. Desondanks meent het panel alle studenten de leerdoelen van de opleiding moeten kunnen behalen.

Het programma wordt verzorgd door een multidisciplinaire groep deskundigen. Zij zijn expert in het vak dat zij doceren en zijn goed voorbereid op hun rol. Docenten hebben ook voldoende tijd voor hun taak. De industrie vervult een belangrijke rol en biedt stageplaatsen aan voor het project en de thesis. Niettemin adviseert het panel om het aanbod van kwalitatief hoogwaardige stageplaatsen te monitoren. Het panel gaat ervan uit dat de opleiding doeltreffend gebruik zal maken van zijn uitgebreide netwerk. Tot op heden is de instelling succesvol gebleken in het betrekken van relevante vertegenwoordigers van de industrie.

De visie op toetsing van de universiteit is consistent geïmplementeerd in de nieuwe opleiding. De opleiding maakt gebruik van een grote variatie aan verschillende toetsen, waarbij vorm en inhoud goed op elkaar zijn afgestemd. Er zijn deugdelijke procedures en de relevante commissies zijn actief betrokken.

Al met al is het NVAO-panel van mening dat de Universiteit Maastricht een veelbelovende opleiding heeft ontwikkeld die aan alle kwaliteitseisen voldoet. Toekomstige werkgevers hebben overtuigend aangegeven dat zij zitten te wachten op deze studenten en afgestudeerden. Het panel deelt hun enthousiasme en verwacht dat de afgestudeerden daadwerkelijk een betekenisvolle transitie in de zorg teweeg kunnen brengen.

Meer informatie over de NVAO-werkwijze en de toetsing van nieuwe opleidingen is te vinden op www.nvao.net. Voor informatie over de Universiteit Maastricht verwijzen we naar de website van de instelling.[3]

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[3] https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl

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