

The logo for AeQui, featuring the letters 'AeQui' in a purple, sans-serif font. A light blue, hand-drawn style line loops around the letters, starting from the 'A', passing under the 'e', and ending under the 'i'.

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Master of Science
Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Report of the limited programme assessment
16 – 18 November 2022

Utrecht, The Netherlands

March 2023

www.AeQui.nl

Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics

VU Amsterdam

Academic Master (wo-ma)

Location: Amsterdam

Mode of study: full-time

CROHO: 60444

Result of institutional assessment: positive (June 2020)

Panel

Hans van Ees, chair

Niels Hermes, domain expert

Eelke de Jong, domain expert

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The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of

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This document is best printed in duplex

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Summary

From 16 to 18 November 2022 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the School of Business and Economics (SBE) at VU Amsterdam to perform a quality assessment of 11 degree programmes in Economics. This document reports on the committee's assessment of the Master of Science (MSc) in Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics (STEE) according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. The MSc STEE is a one-year full-time 60 ECTS programme offered in English. It focuses on the particular field of economics which addresses the allocation of scarce spatial resources in relation to social welfare. Students choose one of four specialisations that together form the academic scope of spatial economics: Urban and Regional Economics, Transport Economics, Environmental Economics, or Real Estate Economics and Finance. The assessment committee has established that the Economics programme meets all four NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment and achieved learning outcomes. As a result, the committee's overall assessment of the quality of the MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics is **positive**.

Intended learning outcomes

The MSc STEE offers a broad perspective on what essentially is a niche (spatial economics) within the economics domain. Its profile is rooted in the vision on education of both VU and SBE and is adequately reflected in the learning outcomes and curriculum of the programme. Since the previous accreditation, the intended learning outcomes have been restructured and reformulated: the current set reflects the domain, level and orientation of the programme. In order to do justice to the breadth of the programme and its specialisations, the formulation of the learning outcomes could be targeted more to the four distinctive specialisations. The programme pays considerable attention to the professional component in the curriculum. Because STEE students are trained to bridge theory and practice, the programme seeks input from external stakeholders to keep its curriculum up-to-date. The dedicated advisory board constitutes an important and useful instrument in this respect. The assessment committee judges that the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Teaching-learning environment

The teaching-learning environment of the MSc STEE is strongly developed. Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme team redesigned the curriculum, which resulted in a coherent structure that befits the specific set-up of the programme, and allows students to gradually build up their knowledge and skills. The specialisations correspond with the research interests of the Spatial Economics department, which means that the latest scientific devel-

opments find their way into the teaching programme. The course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes are well attuned and thus ensure that - irrespective of the specialisation - all STEE students can achieve all intended learning outcomes. The committee endorses the choice of the school to offer the STEE programme in English. In terms of didactics, the learning environment reflects the priorities and vision of both VU and SBE. There is a clear move towards more activating forms of learning: qualified and motivated educational innovators are taking the lead in introducing active blended learning in courses. Their work now needs to be picked up and streamlined across programmes. The high share of international students in the programme allows staff to use the mixed composition of the class for didactic purposes. The size of the cohorts and the structure of the programme, moreover, lead to the set-up of courses as small-size educational units offering many opportunities for interaction. Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme managed to increase the student intake, enhance the pre-master programme and strengthen student guidance before and during the programme. These developments have resulted in an increasingly heterogeneous student body with drop-out and success rates that are comparable to other programmes. Both local and international students feel welcome at VU and praised the attention of the university services to student wellbeing, notably, but not exclusively, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the programme and its specialisations are ambitious, the curriculum is feasible in one year if students commit to this goal. The number

and quality of staff involved in the STEE programme is good: recent hirings have ensured that students can be taught and tutored in adequate conditions and by a sufficient number of properly qualified research staff. The committee also thinks highly of the professional development opportunities for staff, and in particular of the fact that they also make use of these opportunities. The assessment committee judges that the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Assessment

The assessment of the STEE programme is robust. This appreciation is based first and foremost on the fact that both course and thesis assessment are embedded in well-established policies and frameworks at the level of the university and the school. The sample of assessment formats shows that the assessment principles and policies are properly implemented in the course assessments. The STEE assessment plan demonstrates that course learning goals are assessed adequately, which in turn ensures that all learning outcomes at programme level are covered. Since the previous accreditation visit, both school and programme have made considerable efforts to bring assessment quality up to par. The Examination Board has grown in capacity and competency, as is demonstrated by the variety of assessments tasks it has been assuming, and is capable to assure the assessment quality of the STEE programme. Thesis assessment is organised very well. The programme can rely on a solid and transparently communicated thesis procedure and policy. It is using a relevant evaluation form with adequate criteria, an extensive assessment matrix and space for individual appreciations and feedback of the supervisor and the second reader. Moreover, the sample of thesis assessments reviewed by the committee showed that in all cases, the final grade was in line with the committee's appreciation and that almost all assessors had provided clear, insightful and constructively critical feedback. The assessment

In view of its positive assessment of the programme quality as a whole and its judgement on each of the four accreditation standards, the committee issues a **positive advice** to NVAO regarding the accreditation of the MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics at the School of Business and Economics of VU Amsterdam.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee, Utrecht, March 2023

Hans van Ees

Chair

Mark Delmartino

Secretary

committee judges that the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Achieved learning outcomes

In order to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved, the committee reviewed a sample of master theses and checked what graduates were doing professionally after they finished the programme. The thesis sample and the discussions on-site revealed that upon graduation, MSc STEE students have definitely achieved all programme learning outcomes. The thesis review has shown that students are capable of writing high quality final products, with some of the best theses leading to scientific publications. The discussion with alumni confirmed that the MSc STEE programme prepares students for a relevant professional – and sometimes academic – career with public, private and research bodies. Irrespective of the specialisation followed, STEE graduates are in high demand on the labour market. The assessment committee judges that the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Recommendations

The assessment committee has issued a positive judgement on the STEE programme and on the quality of each individual accreditation standard. Nonetheless the committee also sees room for improvement in a number of areas. The following suggestions constitute no formal recommendations, but points for attention the committee picked up during the visit and reported in the respective assessment standards. The committee advises the MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics to:

- explicitly mention how the programme level learning objectives are reflected in each of the four specialisations;
- streamline the (results of the) work on educational innovation / active blended learning across programmes.

Introduction

The School of Business and Economics at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers a one-year full-time MSc programme in Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics. Students choose one of four specialisations: Urban and Regional Economics, Transport Economics, Environmental Economics, and Real Estate Economics and Finance. Over the years, the student intake has grown to around 65 students; about half of the intake by now is international. The external assessment of the MSc STEE is part of a wider cluster assessment covering degree programmes at Erasmus University Rotterdam, VU Amsterdam, the University of Utrecht and Wageningen University.

Institution

Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam is a university with nine faculties in Humanities, STEM, Social and Medical Sciences. Since its foundation in 1880, VU Amsterdam has stood for scientific and value-driven education, research and knowledge transfer. Its education and research are closely linked and have a strong social orientation. All education is provided on one campus in the heart of the Zuidas Knowledge District.

The School of Business and Economics (SBE) is one of VU's faculties and offers four BSc, ten MSc and 15 postgraduate programmes in economics and business administration. Since its establishment in 1948, SBE has evolved into a school with more than 8,000 students and over 500 academic and non-academic staff members.

The school is governed by the SBE faculty board under the leadership of the dean. The academic staff is divided in departments; each head of department assigns the teaching, research and administrative tasks. SBE has a well-established system of quality assurance of teaching and assessment, which is based on the VU Manual for quality assurance of teaching and learning and to which all programmes adhere. SBE has two examination boards in the economics cluster: one governing all government-funded programmes and one for accredited postgraduate programmes.

Programme

Each degree programme has a dedicated programme director who is responsible for content, organisation and quality assurance. The director

ensures that the curriculum is adjusted to the intended learning outcomes and that the learning environment meets the quality requirements of SBE. In the bachelor and larger master programmes, one or more programme coordinators assist the director. Each degree programme has a programme committee comprising of an equal number of students and lecturers, appointed by the SBE faculty board.

The MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics is a one-year full-time 60 ECTS programme offered in English. Students can choose one of four specialisations: Urban and Regional Economics, Transport Economics, Environmental Economics, and Real Estate Economics and Finance. Over the years, the student intake has grown to around 65 students; about half of the intake in September 2021 was international.

Assessment

This assessment is part of a wider cluster assessment Economics group 1, which consists of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, VU Amsterdam, Utrecht University and Wageningen University. The group assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its bachelor, master and research master programmes in Economics. Together with the cluster group and its individual schools/faculties, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. The committee members are shortly presented in attachment 1.

At VU Amsterdam, the cluster assessment features 11 bachelor, master and post-experience (executive) master programmes. In the run-up to

the visit, a preparatory meeting was held with representatives of SBE to exchange information and plan the dates and programme of the site visit. The visit was carried out from 16 until 18 November 2022 according to the programme presented in attachment 2.

In so far as the Master of Science (MSc) Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics (STEE) is concerned, the assessment committee members studied the programme's self-evaluation report and reviewed a sample of 15 MSc STEE theses. Their first impressions on the report and the thesis (evaluations) formed the basis for discussion during an online preparatory meeting on 8 November 2022, and guided the committee's questions during the site visit.

Prior to the visit, the committee held an Open Consultation Hour for students, teaching and support staff; eventually nobody used the opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the committee. Initiated by the programmes, the visit also featured a Development Dialogue. The results of this dialogue have no influence on the assessment in this report.

Furthermore, the programme put at disposition many relevant materials, which served as background information for the assessment committee before and during the visit. An overview of these materials is listed in attachment 3.

The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; in relation to, and in consideration of, the cluster of programmes in which this programme is placed. The contextualisation of the programme within its cluster was conducted by the complete committee during the preliminary meeting and the final deliberations. At the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programmes and the school.

In the underlying document, the committee is reporting on its findings, considerations and conclusions according to the NVAO framework 2018 for limited programme assessment. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management at the end of February 2023; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The MSc STEE offers a broad perspective on a specific subdiscipline in the economics domain: spatial economics. This focus and its embedding in SBE's Spatial Economics department make the programme stand out. The intended learning outcomes reflect the domain, level and orientation of the programme, but their formulation could be targeted more to the four distinctive specialisations. The programme pays considerable attention to the professional component in the curriculum. Because STEE students are trained to bridge theory and practice, the programme seeks input from external stakeholders – including an advisory board – to keep its curriculum up-to-date. According to the committee, the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Findings

Purpose

The Master of Science (MSc) in Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics (STEE) focuses on the field of economics addressing the allocation of scarce spatial resources in relation to social welfare. The academic scope of spatial economics comprises four closely related sub-disciplines: regional and urban economics, real estate economics, transport economics, and environmental economics. Spatial economics seeks answers to questions such as: What does economic theory teach us about policy challenges that metropolitan areas face, such as crime, social segregation, housing affordability, traffic congestion and environmental pollution? What are the implications of market power in network markets such as aviation and public transport, and how should we address these in transport policy? To what extent are environmental taxes too low, and why? What is the impact of land use regulation, transport infrastructure, and public policy on real estate price dynamics? These issues touch on various aspects of spatial economics. Understanding and analysing these issues requires determining the relationships between diverse phenomena, such as urbanisation, economics, migration, trade, infrastructure, location choice, accessibility, environment and safety. As a subfield of economics, the perspective of spatial economics is primarily economic, but also involves an understanding and appreciation of knowledge and methods from related disciplines, such as geography, traffic management, environmental management and spatial planning.

The assessment committee was informed that following the advice of the previous accreditation panel, the programme team considered changing the title of the programme. Eventually, however, it was decided to drop the then abbreviated title STREEM and mention instead the programme's full name in all communications. Moreover, the programme renamed its specialisations. The rationale for this choice is that by spelling out the full title Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics and having clear-cut self-explanatory specialisations, would indicate what the programme stands for and describe properly the breadth and contents of the programme and its specialisations. Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the committee endorses the choice of the programme team.

The assessment committee gathered from the written materials and the discussions that the objective of this master programme aligns with the vision of both VU and SBE, which is formulated along two axes: (1) the behavioural component is firmly embedded in the core values responsible, personal and open of the VU; and (2) the content component consists of the roles academic, professional and citizen. These elements have guided the elaboration of education in the MSc STEE and are reflected in the learning outcomes of the programme and the course learning goals. The committee endorses that integrating the academic, professional and citizen roles with the behavioural components responsible, personal and open creates a unique profile for both SBE and for

the master students that graduate from the STEE programme. The programme structure and content also reflect the core values of both university and faculty and come to life through emphasis on small student groups, on close student/lecturer interaction, and on the opportunities to personalise study programmes through specialisation featuring optional and elective courses. The committee gathered from the student input to the site visit that the small-scale low-threshold interaction and the freedom to tailor one's own study programme are an important value added of the programme, and sometimes even decisive in the student's decision to enrol at VU. These features also hold for the MSc STEE: students emphasised to the committee that they value the programme's four distinct specialisations, as well as the diversity of courses on offer.

Furthermore, the committee noticed in the benchmark section of the self-evaluation report that several master programmes at different universities in the Netherlands address regional and urban development. These programmes often focus on one sub-discipline and/or take a multi-disciplinary perspective, but hardly address the topic(s) from an economic point of view. Internationally, there are programmes on subsets of spatial, transport and environmental economics. However, the combination of sub-disciplines as they are offered in STEE is reportedly unique in Europe. The committee acknowledges that the programme's broad perspective on spatial economic issues and the extent to which it is embedded in SBE's department of Spatial Economics constitutes a major strength of the programme.

Intended Learning Outcomes

The programme's intended learning outcomes consist of learning goals and learning objectives: the goals refer to what graduates are or have and are set SBE-wide; the objectives refer to what graduates can do or make and are specific to the STEE programme. The committee observed that there is a direct link between the respective goals and objectives, and that both goals and objec-

tives are clustered around five dimensions: academic and research skills, bridging theory and practice, social skills, broadening horizons, and self-awareness.

The STEE programme features five learning goals and six learning objectives. Compared to the previous accreditation visit, the intended learning outcomes have been reformulated to reflect the AACSB format: the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business is a highly reputed accreditation body whose international quality standard SBE managed to obtain since the previous accreditation visit. The current assessment committee has studied the intended learning outcomes and noticed that they are formulated at the appropriate master level and reflect the academic orientation of the programme.

The STEE programme has one set of intended learning outcomes, which apply to all students irrespective of the chosen specialisation. The committee noticed that the six learning outcomes are formulated in very general terms; they relate first and foremost to the economics domain, with only one reference to urban, transport and environmental economics and no indication of real estate and finance. Moreover, the STEE learning outcomes hardly differ from the ones applied in the MSc Economics. According to the programme team, it has been a conscious choice to keep the formulation of the intended learning outcomes general in order to benefit students from all STEE specialisations. The team also indicated that at the course level, the learning goals of the respective courses are a specific translation of the programme learning outcomes. Every specialisation comes with a dedicated set of courses. By meeting the course learning goals, students in each specialisation will have achieved the end level qualifications of the STEE programme by the time they graduate.

Anticipating on what will be presented under the next standard, the committee acknowledges that the programme learning outcomes are reflected in the course learning goals. The committee also

appreciates the profile of the programme and the way it incorporates the specialisations. Nonetheless, the committee sees room for making the specificity of these specialisations more explicit already at the level of the (intended) programme learning outcomes. This could happen, for instance, by adding a separate column to the set of learning outcomes in which the existing statements, notably regarding academic and research skills and bridging theory and practice, are translated into specific end-level qualifications per specialisation. This approach would allow the STEE programme to maintain its overall set of learning outcomes, while doing justice to the four different specialisations.

Professional Field

In line with the vision of both VU and SBE, the STEE programme aims to educate its students to become responsible professional practitioners. The committee noticed that there is ample attention to the professional component in both learning outcomes and curriculum. In order to keep the curriculum up-to-date, the programme obtains useful input from internship supervisors, from staff members who are also active in the professional field and from organisations which eventually employ STEE graduates.

Moreover, the committee was informed that the MSc STEE programme has a dedicated advisory board to ensure a close connection between the academic and the professional world. This advisory board consists of six members, who occupy senior positions in both public and private organisations and represent a wide range of professions and employers in the field of environmental, transport, urban, regional and real estate economics. The advisory board convenes yearly to discuss programme developments and its members contribute to the courses by providing case studies and teaching guest lectures. According to the committee, the advisory board plays an important role in monitoring and evaluating the professional dimension and relevance of the programme.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the assessment committee considers that the MSc STEE has a specific profile, which is rooted in the vision on education of both VU and SBE and is adequately reflected in the learning outcomes and curriculum of the programme. The programme captures a niche in terms of specific curriculum content and its integration of four sub-disciplines in spatial economics is quite unique. The specialisations, moreover, align with the research expertise of the staff in the Spatial Economics department of SBE.

The committee endorses the way the intended learning outcomes have been restructured and reformulated since the previous visit; the current set of learning goals and learning objectives reflects the domain (spatial economics), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme. In order to do justice to the breadth of the programme and the specificity of its specialisations, the committee advises the programme team to explicitly mention – as part of the set of intended learning outcomes – how the overall programme level learning objectives are reflected in the respective specialisations.

The committee appreciates the attention of the programme to the professional component in the curriculum. As MSc STEE students are trained to bridge theory and practice, the programme seeks input from external stakeholders to keep its curriculum up-to-date. The advisory board constitutes an important and useful instrument in this respect.

In view of the above findings and considerations, the assessment committee judges that **the MSc STEE programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

2. Teaching-learning environment

The programme's teaching-learning environment is strongly developed and reflects the priorities and vision of both VU and SBE. Since the previous accreditation visit, the curriculum has been redesigned resulting in a coherent structure that befits the specific set-up of the programme, and allows students to gradually build up their knowledge and skills. The specialisations correspond with the research interests of the Spatial Economics department. The course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes are well attuned. The committee endorses the decision to offer the STEE programme in English. Both the School and the programme are developing activating forms of learning and educational innovators are introducing blended learning in courses. Their work now needs to be picked up and streamlined across programmes. The programme team managed to increase the student intake, enhance the pre-master programme and strengthen student guidance before and during the programme. Cohorts are increasingly heterogeneous, which allows staff to use the mixed composition of the class for didactic purposes. The ambitious curriculum is feasible if students commit to this goal. The number and quality of staff involved in the STEE programme is good. According to the committee, the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Findings

Programme

The MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics is a one-year full-time programme that amounts to 60 ECTS. Following the advice of the previous accreditation panel, the programme has redesigned the curriculum to improve its coherence. This has been realised by changing the order of certain courses, by introducing a new specialisation and by ensuring more integration between courses. The programme now consists of five core courses (18 ECTS), two specialisation courses (12 ECTS), two electives (12 ECTS) and a master thesis (18 ECTS). Each specialisation builds on the same set of theoretical and empirical techniques and methods, and includes two dedicated courses. Students also choose two electives among the courses from other specialisations. The committee understood from the discussions that students can also decide not to choose a specialisation and focus instead on more than one sub-discipline.

The structure of the STEE programme allows students to gradually build up their knowledge and skills: starting with the basic components of spatial economics in period 1, the foundation is expanded to include specialised and specific knowledge and skills in periods 2, 3 and 4 before

all elements are integrated in the master thesis in periods 5 and 6. The programme aims to balance skills and content: the methodological foundations are emphasised in period 1, while content takes a higher priority in periods 2 and 4, and presentation and writing skills are central in periods 3 and 5/6 (thesis). Across the curriculum, skills and contents are closely connected as teaching staff present theories as well as applications. All courses, moreover, emphasise the relevance of theory for policy issues. According to the committee, the programme team has put in a lot of effort to redesign the curriculum. This has resulted in an adjusted programme structure, which the committee finds coherent and particularly befitting for the specific set-up of the programme.

Further to what was mentioned before, the committee learned that there is a link between the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes, which is not only visible on paper – the committee studied the curriculum map, the assessment plan and the study guide – but is also implemented in the day-to-day teaching and assessment practice of the courses. The committee gathered from the extensive description in the self-evaluation report that the respective programme learning objectives are addressed throughout the curriculum and that each course

has formulated specific course objectives that contribute to an overall programme objective and are assessed explicitly.

The relationship between course-level objectives and programme-level intended learning outcomes is made clear to students in the course descriptions in the study guide. Moreover, the learning objectives and their related course objectives are presented in the Assessment Plan, which also indicates the forms of assessment used in each course in relation to the course-level learning objectives. The committee observed in the assessment plan that irrespective of the specialisations, the courses and the thesis together ensure that all learning outcomes are covered in the curriculum.

During the visit, the committee discussed the organisation of the first period and in particular the rationale for offering four foundational courses of 3 ECTS each. According to the programme team, this approach is still relatively new. Before there were two foundational courses of 6 ECTS, which were split on request of the students. The contents have not changed, but are offered in smaller units. Right from the start, students have group assignments, which also helps them to get to know each other. This proved particularly useful during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another topic of discussion was the organisation of the master thesis. The programme team clarified that the core thesis trajectory consists of twelve weeks: two weeks for the research proposal and ten weeks to do research and write the thesis. However, students start thinking about a possible topic before and are encouraged to match their topic with a supervisor and possibly arrange an internship prior to the start of period 5. Admitting that the master thesis 'course' is quite condensed with tight deadlines and set moments for supervision, the programme team is convinced that it is feasible for students to go through the entire trajectory in the time foreseen. Students from their side confirmed the feasibility of the set-up if every element of the thesis trajec-

tory proceeds as planned. However, they also indicated that the programme could offer more information about the research options and organise events to discuss the research process, notably the process of finding an academic advisor to work with. In this regard, the students appreciated the student-run 'speed-dating' event where they meet some of the professors who supervise research projects and theses. Students advocated with the committee that this event should become a structural part of the programme in the future.

The committee gathered from the discussions that there is more and more interest from both students and employers to include an internship during the study. While internships are promoted and facilitated by SBE, they are not an official part of the curriculum in the sense that no credits are allocated to the internship itself. The department of Spatial Economics actively helps in matching students with firms and government departments offering internships. Each year an increasing number of STEE students pursue an internship, which they typically combine with writing their thesis. Internships also help to improve the ties with potential employers and ensure a smooth transition of students to the labour market.

The discussion with students revealed that the STEE programme meets their expectations in terms of subject matter, lectures, and tutorials. As points for attention students indicated that because the first period is fast-paced, several students did not feel properly prepared. Incoming students have a wide variety of academic and professional backgrounds and felt that the programme could have offered more preparation material next to the week-long "refresher" course. Moreover, students would like to take more courses while completing their study. Currently, the curriculum is taught in four periods and consists of five regular and four short courses. According to the programme team, students can – and do – take additional courses beyond 60 ECTS; their results are indicated on the diploma.

Language of instruction

For a long time now, the language of instruction in the MSc STEE has been English. The committee understood that it was a conscious choice of SBE to offer this master programme in English as it is the leading language in both academia and the business world. Although many graduates will join Dutch firms or international firms in the Netherlands, these organisations have an international workforce and also operate outside the Netherlands. The language of instruction therefore aligns with the international orientation of the programme and is consistent with comparable degree programmes in the Netherlands. An English-language programme offers students a better preparation for a professional or academic career, for example by offering them the opportunity to work with international teams already during their study. Based on the materials in the report and the discussions on-site, the assessment committee endorses the motivation of SBE and the programme team to offer the MSc STEE in English.

Didactics

The committee gathered from the informative description in the self-evaluation report that the educational vision of the STEE programme consists of five characteristics: (i) focus on the main questions and key concepts in the discipline; (ii) students become acquainted with research and learn how to work as academic professionals; (iii) students work on authentic tasks that are illustrative of work in their future professional situation; (iv) reflection and independent judgement are encouraged; and (v) individual talents and ambitions are recognized and encouraged. The discussions on-site with different stakeholders have taught the committee that these educational principles are also implemented in the day-to-day reality of the STEE programme.

Furthermore, the MSc STEE is aligned with the educational vision of VU and the teaching methods at SBE: most courses and staff make intensive use of activating teaching formats and interactive tools to involve students as much as possible and

to check whether they have understood the course materials. The committee was informed that such teaching formats are explicitly promoted by VU and SBE because it helps students to understand the materials in greater depth, it enhances their analytical and problem-solving skills, and it develops an attitude towards self-reflection. In this regard, the committee noticed that the didactic approach of the STEE programme is indeed based on interactivity, lectures in small groups and close and direct personal contact with lecturers.

The discussions, moreover, have confirmed the committee's impression that the research dimension of the STEE programme is particularly developed: teaching methods are geared to course content, the literature used is current, and all teaching staff members are researchers in the fields they teach. Moreover, the courses use recent international graduate textbooks by renowned authors or recent research articles. In seminars, students are requested to present and discuss recent state-of-the-art research papers. In sum, the courses enable students to master a certain field of literature, identify the relative value of contributions to this field, as well as the remaining blind spots, and structure this newly acquired knowledge in both written reports and oral presentations.

The committee gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the need for - and the possibilities of - new ways of teaching. SBE is using the lessons learned during the lockdown to develop its education vision on and implementation of promising online teaching tools and techniques that are relevant beyond a single course. In this regard, the committee noticed that the Faculty Board promotes blended learning as an important instrument for teaching innovation, yet leaves a lot of discretion to the individual programmes for implementing such forms of educational innovation. The STEE programme is discussed with the Task Force Ac-

tive Blended Learning set up by the SBE. As a result a working group “active blended learning” was started and has in the meantime reached all staff involved in the programme. Currently, the courses Urban Economic Challenges and Policies, and Real Estate Economics are used as pilot cases with high potential for active blended learning. The committee noticed during the visit that the individual lecturers and staff in the Task Force have not only adequate expertise but also a clear vision on active blended learning in the SBE programmes; the committee welcomes this expertise and vision, and encourages the innovators to continue disseminating the good practices to their colleagues. At some point, however, these good practices should also be shared across programmes at the level of the school, which according to the committee has not yet been realised.

Furthermore, the committee noticed that reference is made in the materials to the VU-wide concept of the ‘mixed classroom’. During the visit, several stakeholders indicated that the number of international students has grown, which in turn has led to a more mixed composition of the MSc STEE cohorts and thus to classrooms featuring students from different nationalities. Compared to several other programmes under review, the STEE programme tends to attract a relatively high share of international students as about half of the students admitted are from abroad. Students indicated that outside class, they tend to mingle in a national and a non-Dutch group. In class, however, the students mix in heterogeneous groups for team work and presentations. In this way, teaching staff use the international composition of the class for didactic purposes. The committee welcomes this approach and encourages the programme team and the teaching staff to continue making optimal use of the mixed composition of the cohorts. It also advises the programme team to share with other SBE programmes any good teaching practice that does justice to the mixed classroom.

Students

The committee read in the self-evaluation report and the detailed appendix on student data that since the previous accreditation visit, the yearly intake has grown from 23 students in 2016 over 70 in 2018 to 61 students in 2021. The number of students with a foreign bachelor education has increased to almost 50%; although the share is fluctuating, currently about one in three STEE students is female. According to the list of graduates, the most popular specialisation is Environmental Economics, which attracts 40% of the students.

Following the advice of the previous accreditation panel, the programme team managed to raise the number of incoming students. According to the team, reasons for the growing intake are the more explicit and clear profile (see previous standard), the interest in the specialisation Environmental Economics, and the consistently high ratings of the STEE programme in the National Student Survey.

The MSc STEE programme does not operate a competitive selection procedure or a *numerus fixus*. The programme is designed for students with bachelor degrees in economics or in a field that is sufficiently related to economics. About half of students admitted are from abroad and hold a bachelor in economics, while 15% to 20% studied the bachelor Earth, Economics & Sustainability at VU. Many accepted students struggle with microeconomics. Hence, every international student is advised individually how to prepare for the programme.

The programme team also took at heart the recommendation of the previous panel to develop a dedicated pre-master programme. This pre-master consists of five courses in mathematics and economics, as well as a GRE-test, and is targeted specifically at students with a Dutch higher vocational (HBO) degree. The programme is currently developing a dynamic tailor-made online deficiency programme for international students, featuring courses in microeconomics, econometrics

and applied mathematics. For those students enrolled in the programme, the MSc STEE and the MSc Economics organise a refresher week at the end of August. This is particularly useful for – and appreciated by – students without an economics background as it refreshes their knowledge on microeconomics and econometrics. Once the programme has started, the study progress of students is closely monitored, particularly during the first period. The committee was informed that the tutorial support on offer proves to be effective as many weaker students voluntarily choose to make use of this support.

The committee noticed that the drop-out rate of the STEE programme was rather low, but has increased during the pandemic. Those who do graduate, finish the programme on average in 16 months. Available data on the success rate of entire cohorts show that around 40% of the STEE students finish within the nominal duration of one year, while more than 75% does so in two years. These figures seem to be comparable to similar programmes at VU and elsewhere in the Netherlands.

Students and staff mentioned that the STEE programme is feasible in one year. However, many students do not want to finish their study right away but prefer to extend their thesis period by participating in an internship during the study programme, or combine two master programmes. The committee noticed that there is no (social) pressure on students to finish in time. On the contrary, several students and alumni indicated that they felt more fit for purpose after an internship. As the MSc STEE programme prepares students for the labour market, including a placement period during their studies is making their position only stronger.

Staff

The committee gathered from the self-evaluation report that most of the teaching and the coordination is performed by staff belonging to the Spatial Economics Department of SBE. All staff members are active in research and their research

interests are very much in line with the topics they teach in this master programme. Hence, they are particularly suited to guide students to the current academic research frontiers and to help them shape their conceptual skills and engage in research. The committee endorses the statement in the report that the department of Spatial Economics is recognised worldwide for its specific research expertise.

According to the overview in the appendix to the report, the MSc STEE programme consists of 22 academic staff who have an average 0.8 FTE appointment with SBE. About one third of the staff is international and 14% is female. The steady growth in student numbers has led to additional staff recruitment. However, the enrolment figures are not easy to predict and make the programme team rely on a small group of (near) full-time staff and a flexible pool of adjunct staff. The discussions on-site have convinced the committee that the current number of staff is sufficient to deliver the STEE programme in good quality. Nonetheless, certain courses such as Economics of Climate Change are becoming quite popular among students and oblige teaching staff to adopt different teaching methods. Other courses with a relatively low uptake continue to be offered, because they are also open to students from other programmes.

Furthermore, the committee noticed that staff development is well organised at the MSc STEE as it is embedded in policies and documents including 'SBE HRM educational policy', 'SBE BKO policy', and 'SBE Tenure Track procedure'. All academic staff members are expected to have English language proficiency at level C1. Permanent staff members can pursue continuing education in specific fields such as active blended learning, mixed classroom, activating work formats, examinations and assessments. Currently, 79% of the academic staff involved in the STEE programme holds a university teaching qualification (BKO) and four staff also obtained the senior qualification (SKO). Some staff members are particularly active in course innovation, notably with regard

to active blended learning in both teaching and assessment. Several lecturers also joined KnowVU, the knowledge network on teaching operated by the university and dedicated to educational innovation and improvement. Asking about career opportunities, the committee was informed that tenure track staff who engage in programme/course design and innovation can make promotion based on their educational performance and track record.

Facilities

The committee was informed that the programme-specific learning environment stands out for its close relationship with SPINlab (Spatial Information Laboratory). Geographical Information Systems (GIS) are often crucial in spatial economics research and specialised GIS software and databases are made available to the students. In addition, students are invited to academic presentations as staff and PhD students present their work at the Eureka research seminars every two weeks. These meetings are particularly useful sources of inspiration for thesis topics and introduce students to the diversity of research topics in the department.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on-site, the assessment committee considers that the teaching-learning environment of the MSc STEE is strongly developed.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme team redesigned the curriculum. According to the committee, the adjusted programme structure is coherent, befits the specific set-up of the programme, and allows students to gradually build up their knowledge and skills. The committee also established that there is a clear link between the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes. By the time of their graduation, all STEE students will have achieved all intended learning outcomes, irrespective of the chosen specialisation.

The committee thinks highly of the programme's research orientation as the specialisations on offer correspond closely with the research interests of SBE's Spatial Economics department. This, in turn, ensures that the latest scientific developments find their way into the teaching programme.

Moreover, the committee endorses the choice of the school and the programme to offer the MSc STEE programme in English.

In terms of didactics, the committee considers that the programme's approach reflects the priorities and vision of both VU and SBE. Moreover, the programme-specific educational principles are effectively implemented in the day-to-day reality of the STEE programme. Hence, the didactic approach of the STEE programme is based on interactivity, lectures in small groups and close and direct personal contact with lecturers. Moreover, there is a move towards more activating forms of learning, which the committee appreciates. In terms of blended learning, a lot is going on at individual course level. While there are qualified and motivated educational innovators among the programme staff, their work needs to be picked up and streamlined at programme (and school) level. Compared to other SBE programmes under review, the MSc STEE has a high share of non-Dutch students, which allows staff to use the international composition of the class for didactic purposes. The committee welcomes this approach and encourages the programme team to share good teaching practice that does justice to the mixed classroom. Given the size of the cohorts and the structure of the programme, many courses are in fact set-up as small-size educational units offering plenty of opportunities for interaction among students and between students and staff.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme team managed to increase the student intake, enhance the transfer (pre-master) programme and strengthen student guidance before and during the programme. These developments

have resulted in an increasingly heterogeneous student body with drop-out and success rates that are comparable to other programmes. Although the programme and its specialisations are ambitious – in particular for such a diverse student body – the committee is convinced that the curriculum is feasible in one year if students commit to this goal. However, the committee also understands that there are reasons why students may want to postpone their graduation.

The number and quality of staff involved in the STEE programme is good: recent hirings have ensured that students can be taught and tutored in adequate conditions and by a sufficient number of properly qualified staff. Hence, the growth in

student numbers has not affected the quality of education. The committee also thinks highly of the professional development opportunities for staff, and in particular of the fact that they also use these opportunities.

In view of the above findings and considerations, the assessment committee judges that **the MSc STEE programme meets standard 2, teaching-learning environment.**

3. Student assessment

The MSc STEE features a robust system of assessment, which is embedded in the central policies and procedures of the VU and SBE. The assessment principles are properly implemented in the course assessments. The programme's assessment plan monitors that course learning goals are assessed adequately, which in turn ensures that all learning outcomes at programme level are covered. The current assessment committee recognises that since the previous accreditation visit, both School and programme have made considerable efforts to bring assessment quality up to par. The Examination Board has grown in capacity and competency, and monitors and assures the assessment quality of the MSc STEE. Assessors are making good use of the thesis evaluation form and its extensive assessment matrix to grade the master theses and provide insightful feedback. According to the committee, the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Findings

System of assessment

The committee gathers from the written materials and the discussions on site that the STEE programme operates an assessment system that complies with the assessment policy and procedures of SBE, which in turn are based on a university-wide policy on assessment quality. The programme has put at disposition both policy documents, the *Handboek Onderwijskwaliteit - VU Toetskader* and the *SBE Beleidsplan – Toetsbeleid*.

Moreover, the committee noticed that STEE has its own programme-specific Assessment Plan with a vision on education and on assessment, a curriculum map, and an overview of course learning objectives and assessment types. The assessment plan describes the forms of testing; in this way both programme director and examination board have an instrument to control the relationship between the programme's intended learning outcomes and course-level objectives and assessment.

Furthermore, each course coordinator creates an assessment file. This file contains, among other things, a test blueprint, the exam, resit exam and/or assignments, a model answer plus scoring guide, a test and item analysis, the results of the course evaluation, and a short reflection report by the examiner. According to the committee, next to good quality policy documents, STEE also de-

veloped a relevant assessment plan that does justice to both central policies and the specificity of the Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics degree programme.

Courses

At the level of individual courses, coordinators select the most appropriate assessment methods for testing the learning goals. They do so in close collaboration with the programme director who ensures that across the programme a variety of assessment methods is used. Course coordinators are free to tailor the different exam components to the requirements of their course, provided they inform the programme management accordingly. Teaching staff is encouraged to experiment with innovative forms of teaching and testing; in every course, however, the individual student performance should be the decisive factor in the assessment. The committee agrees to the emphasis on individual exam components and to the promotion of diversity and innovation in assessment formats.

The committee noticed that SBE and STEE uphold the four eyes principle: when constructing the exam, the examiner – who very often is also the course coordinator – takes the course objectives into account and the extent to which these are assessed by the exam. Every course coordinator appoints a co-reader with content knowledge to check the contents of the exam, thus ensuring that all draft exams are reviewed by at least one

other member of staff. The committee welcomes this approach.

The committee gathered from the student contributions in the report and the discussion that they are generally satisfied with the way assessment is organised in the STEE programme. Students particularly appreciate the variety of formative and summative assessment formats including presentations, group work and quizzes. They also like the more hands-on practical projects in periods 2 and 4. As points for attention, students mentioned that they could have received more feedback and more detailed comments on their assignments in order to better prepare for the exam. This proved to be all the more important as for some courses, the exam questions were ambiguous and students felt they had not been assessed fairly on their knowledge from the course. These issues have been reported in the course evaluations and to the student representatives, and will be followed-up in the programme committee.

In the run-up to the site visit, the STEE programme put at disposition a few individual courses and their assessments. According to the committee, these materials reflected the overall provisions for assessment and were in line with what one can expect of exams in a master programme of academic orientation.

Thesis evaluation

The master thesis is the culmination of the STEE programme. The thesis process is governed by clear rules and procedures, which are explained in an information session to students and in the thesis manual. The master thesis is conceived as a course with a thesis coordinator, course learning goals and a detailed assessment grid. This approach has resulted in a clear thesis policy and procedure. In terms of assessment, there is one evaluation form across all specialisations, which is completed by the supervisor and the second assessor separately before they reach a final assessment on each criterion. In addition to scoring grids, the evaluation form also features a dedicated space for motivating the grade and the

scores per criterion. The extensive and informative manual on the master thesis contains an assessment matrix: each of the eight evaluation criteria has rubrics per score (below 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10). According to the committee, the STEE programme has a solid master thesis policy and procedure.

As part of its external assessment, the committee reviewed a sample of 15 master theses and their evaluation forms. Reporting on their review, committee members appreciated that the evaluation form addressed all relevant criteria and allowed for (extensive) feedback. Overall, the committee had a very positive impression on the way the theses were evaluated: in all fifteen cases, the final grade was in line with their own appreciation and almost all assessors had provided clear, insightful and constructively-critical feedback to motivate their grade.

During the discussion on-site, the programme team indicated – and alumni confirmed – that students do get extensive and constructive feedback orally or by e-mail during the thesis trajectory and again after the final presentation. The committee was also informed that SBE and the STEE programme are awaiting the introduction of a VU-wide online thesis trajectory platform. This initiative was put temporarily on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic and should facilitate among others consistent qualitative feedback by the assessors.

The committee's distinctly positive impression on thesis evaluation in the MSc STEE seems to confirm that the efforts of the programme and the Examination Board since the previous accreditation visit are paying off. The Examination Board investigated a sample of completed thesis forms in the year 2019-2020, while an external assessor reviewed some MSc STEE theses as part of the programme's mid-term review. In both cases the results were positive, i.e. in line with the original assessment.

Quality assurance

The committee gathered from the written materials that different stakeholders are involved in assuring the quality of assessment: there is first and foremost the Examination Board, but also the programme director and individual examiners play a role. The Examination Board supervises the examination process and carries final responsibility for safeguarding the quality control of assessment and examinations. It investigates systematically whether the process of assessment within SBE is carried out according to predefined criteria. These criteria are well established and include the reliability and validity of the tests. In the event that tests are not up to standard, the Examination Board reports to the programme director and the examiner and issues interventions for improvement.

During the site visit, the committee met with representatives of the Examination Boards. It gathered from the written materials and the discussion that these Boards – there is one for all publicly funded degrees and another one for privately funded programmes – fulfil their legal tasks adequately and have relevant expertise regarding assessment, fraud and legal issues. The external member has extensive assessment expertise. It is a conscious decision of SBE to have several programmes supervised by one Examination Board as this leads to greater uniformity, clarity and authority.

The committee noticed, moreover, that since the previous accreditation visit, the Examination Boards have grown in capacity and competence, taking on board the recommendations of the previous NVAO report. In terms of assessment quality assurance, the examination board currently does not only guard the quality of assessment, but also looks into assessment policy, assessment plans, assessment construction, and organization. The committee also established with satisfaction that over the past few years the Examination Boards have stepped up the inspections of course examinations and theses.

The Examination Board for publicly funded degree programmes is in charge of assuring the assessment in the STEE programme. The committee noticed from the materials and discussions that the Examination Board follows-up attentively any issue that may pop up in the programme and that the STEE programme has been served with similar intensity as all other publicly funded degree programmes. Just as for other programmes, the Examination Board has paid considerable attention to online assessment recently and informed students and staff about plagiarism. According to the committee the quality assurance of the assessment in the MSc STEE is in competent hands with the Examination Board.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on-site, the assessment committee considers that assessment in the MSc STEE is robust. This appreciation is based first and foremost on the fact that both course and thesis assessment are embedded in well-established policies and frameworks at the level of the university and the school. The sample of assessment formats the committee has reviewed shows that the assessment principles and policies are properly implemented in the course assessments. The STEE assessment plan, moreover, demonstrates that course learning goals are assessed adequately. This, in turn, ensures that the learning outcomes at programme level are covered.

Furthermore, the committee considers that both school and programme have made considerable efforts since the previous accreditation to bring assessment quality up to par. Similarly, the Examination Board has grown in capacity and competency, as demonstrated by the variety of assessments tasks it has been assuming over time. The committee welcomes these developments and is convinced that the Examination Board is very capable to assure the assessment quality of the MSc STEE programme.

The committee considers that thesis assessment is organised very well. The STEE programme can rely on a solid thesis procedure and policy, which are communicated effectively in person and on paper to the students. The programme is using a relevant evaluation form with adequate criteria, an extensive assessment matrix, and space for individual appreciations and feedback of the supervisor and the second reader. Moreover, the sample of thesis assessments reviewed by the committee showed that in all cases, the final grade

was in line with the committee's appreciation and that almost all assessors had provided clear, insightful and constructively critical feedback.

In view of the above findings and considerations, the assessment committee judges that **the MSc STEE programme meets standard 3, assessment.**

4. Achieved learning outcomes

The MSc STEE is set up in such a way that students, irrespective of the chosen study path, achieve the intended learning outcomes. This was confirmed by the committee when it established through its review of a sample of master theses that the thesis quality in the STEE programme is good. Some theses even led to publications or PhD trajectories. The discussion with alumni showed that the programme prepares students for a relevant professional – and sometimes academic – career and that after their study, STEE graduates are high in demand on the labour market and easily find relevant jobs. According to the committee, the MSc STEE **meets this standard**.

Findings

There are two ways to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved – through a quality review of the final products and through checking what graduates are doing after they finished the programme. The committee has looked at both elements when assessing the end level qualifications of the STEE programme.

Thesis quality

The master thesis is seen as the final product of the educational programme and the ultimate test whether students have achieved all learning outcomes. It emphasises the creation of an original contribution that goes beyond what can be found elsewhere in the literature. While the final thesis product is scored, going through the process of writing a thesis constitutes an important learning moment for students.

As part of their external assessment, committee members reviewed a sample of 15 MSc STEE theses. The sample selection was based on a list featuring 104 students who graduated in the academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The selection was representative in terms of scoring and specialisations, and the theses had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the committee, all theses were clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was reallocated internally for a second opinion. The committee found that the overall thesis writing process was strong and the quality of most theses very good. According to the

committee, STEE students show through their master thesis that they have achieved the programme learning outcomes.

In view of the quality of the thesis sample, it comes as no surprise to the committee that some theses have led to scientific publications and that some students were invited to apply for PhD positions. Asked whether STEE students consider joining the (second year of the) research master programme, the programme team indicated that STEE graduates who envisage pursuing a PhD are more than sufficiently qualified to apply for a PhD position right away.

Graduate performance

The committee gathered from the written materials that the STEE programme opens up various career opportunities. In fact, the demand for academically educated professionals with a sound knowledge of economic techniques and methods is growing. Students who finish the STEE programme also have a clear understanding of the complex interaction between land use and regional development, spatial interaction, transport and environmental quality, and can contribute to policy development and scientific knowledge in this field. Irrespective of their specialisation, STEE graduates have good labour market prospects in a variety of sectors. In the public and private sector, professionals with a background in spatial economics are increasingly needed, for instance in large transport companies such as KLM, Schiphol Group and the Dutch Railways (NS). An orientation in spatial economics is also useful in

sectors such as banking, real estate and insurance. Moreover, national government and large municipalities demand staff with a strong background in spatial economics. In sum, STEE graduates are highly in demand and tend to find a relevant job quickly.

During the programme, the interaction with the business community is for a large part organised through the SBE Career Services, which facilitates both contact between students and the business world and between faculty and alumni. STEE alumni indicated to the committee that the substance of the programme prepared them adequately for the labour market. Both current and past students referred in positive terms to the role of individual lecturers, as well as to the SBE Career Services and the study association Aureus.

Considerations

Based on the written materials, the thesis sample and the discussions on site, the committee considers that upon graduation, MSc STEE students have achieved all programme learning outcomes. The thesis review has shown that students are capable of writing high quality final products. The discussion with alumni confirmed the committee's finding that the MSc STEE programme at VU prepares students for a relevant professional – and sometimes academic – career. Irrespective of their specialisation, STEE students are high in demand on the labour market and easily find relevant jobs.

In view of the above findings and considerations, the assessment committee judges that **the MSc STEE programme meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.**

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Hans van Ees, chair

Prof. dr. van Ees is emeritus professor Corporate Governance and Institutions at the University of Groningen and former Dean of the University College Groningen. His research deals with corporate governance, board of directors and sustainable corporate performance. Hans has extensive accreditation experience.

Niels Hermes, member

Prof. dr. Hermes is professor International Finance at the University of Groningen. His expertise lies in the fields of corporate governance, microfinance, international finance, financial systems and economic growth. Niels has extensive accreditation experience.

Eelke de Jong, member

Prof. dr. de Jong is emeritus professor of International Economics at Radboud University in Nijmegen. His research focuses on the role of culture, in the sense of norms and values, in economic behaviour. Eelke has extensive accreditation experience.

Hans van Trijp, member

Prof. dr. ir. van Trijp is professor of Marketing and Consumer Behaviour at Wageningen University. His expertise lays in the domains of consumer studies, environmental marketing, cooperatives, and supply chain management. Hans has relevant accreditation experience.

Judith Kikkert, student-member

Ms Kikkert is a master student MSc Management, Economics and Consumer Studies at Wageningen University and student-member of the university-wide Board of Education. Judith holds a bachelor's degree *Economie en Beleid* from Wageningen.

Mark Delmartino, external secretary

Mark Delmartino is owner of the Antwerp-based company MDM CONSULTANCY. As certified NVAO secretary he regularly supports assessment committees.

All committee members and the secretary have signed a declaration of independence. The assessment committee has been submitted to, and validated by, NVAO prior to the site visit.

Attachment 2 Site visit programme

Venue: VU Amsterdam, De Boelelaan, Amsterdam

Wednesday 16 November 2022

- 08.30 Arrival of the committee and set-up
- 09.00 Session with Faculty Board
- 10.00 Session with Management BSc EBE, BSc EOR & MSc EOR
- 11.00 Session with Students and Alumni BSc EBE, BSc EOR & MSc EOR
- 12.00 Session with Staff BSc EBE, BSc EOR & MSc EOR
- 13.00 Lunch and internal meeting
- 14.00 Session with Management MSc RMFI
- 14.40 Session with Students and Alumni MSc RMFI
- 15.20 Session with Staff MSc RMFI
- 16.00 Break and internal deliberation
- 16.30 Return meeting with Management MSc RMFI
- 17.00 Internal deliberation
- 17.30 End of day 1

Thursday 17 November 2022

- 08.30 Arrival of the committee and internal meeting
- 09.00 Session with Examination Board
- 10.00 Session with Management MSc ECO & MSc STEE
- 10.50 Session with Students and Alumni MSc ECO & MSc STEE
- 11.40 Session with Staff MSc ECO & MSc STEE
- 12.30 Lunch and internal meeting
- 13.30 Session with Management MSc Marketing FT + PT
- 14.20 Session with Students and Alumni MSc Marketing FT + PT
- 15.10 Session with Staff MSc Marketing FT + PT
- 16.00 Break and internal deliberation
- 16.30 Return meeting with Management MSc ECO & MSc STEE
- 17.00 Internal deliberation
- 17.30 End of day 2

Friday 18 November 2022

- 08.30 Arrival of the committee and internal meeting
- 09.00 Session with Management MSc FIN, MSc AC & MSc ITACA
- 10.15 Session with Students and Alumni MSc FIN, MSc AC & MSc ITACA
- 11.30 Session with Staff MSc FIN, MSc AC & MSc ITACA
- 12.45 Lunch and internal deliberation
- 14.00 Return meeting with Management MSc ITACA

- 14.30 Internal deliberation
- 15.30 Preliminary feedback
- 16.00 Development Dialogue Executive Programmes
- 17.00 Development Dialogue Funded Programmes
- 18.00 End of site visit

A list with the names of the participants is available at AeQui.

Attachment 3 Overview of materials

Information materials

Self-evaluation report MSc Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics, VU School of Business and Economics, 2022.

Appendices to the self-evaluation report

- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Programme 2021-2022
- Course descriptions 2021-2022
- Assessment plan 2021-2022
- Thesis Manual and thesis assessment form 2021-2022
- Teaching and Examination regulations 2021-2022
- Regulations and Guidelines regarding examinations SBE 2021-2022
- Overview of academic staff including quality
- List of all graduates in academic years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022
- Intake, drop out and success rates
- AACSB Memorandum

Additional materials

Following materials were made available online for the committee:

- VU Assessment Policy
- SBE Assessment Policy
- Annual Reports Examination Committees
- Annual Reports Programme Committees

Graduation products

For every programme under review, the assessment committee studied a sample of graduation projects. In case of the MSc STEE programme, the committee reviewed 15 master theses which had been successfully submitted by students in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The selection was representative in terms of scoring, tracks and specialisations, and supervised by a variety of staff.

A list with student numbers is available at AeQui