

Master Shipping and Transport STC Group Foundation

*Report of the additional assessment
1 December 2020*

Colophon

Programme

STC Group Foundation

Master Shipping and Transport

Location: Rotterdam

Mode of study: fulltime, parttime

Croho: 70213

Result of institutional assessment: not applied for

Committee

Raoul van Aalst, chair

Gerrit van Leunen, domain expert

Hans van den Broek, domain expert

Bas Janssen, work field expert

Hugo Triesscheijn, student-member

Barbara van Balen, secretary

The committee was identical to the committee that performed the assessment in 2019.

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of AeQui VBI

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This document is best printed in duplex

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Summary

On 1 December 2020, an assessment committee revisited the master's programme Shipping and Transport, offered by STC Group foundation, to assess whether the programme meets the conditions for reaccreditation formulated by the NVAO in 2019. These conditions were: 'the programme should elaborate the Management and Research Skills (MRS) domain and include more focus on literature analysis and reflection on the research project design.'

The committee established that the MRS course is now more focused on reflection and research literature analysis, and that the research skills are more integrated in the whole curriculum. In addition to these improvements in the curriculum, the committee notes that the position of research is growing more central to the programme, befitting a master's programme orientation. Furthermore, the committee was satisfied to note that the improvements are visible in the master's theses of the students.

The committee concluded that the master's programme has implemented improvements to meet the conditions of the NVAO. It has elaborated the Management and Research Skills domain and included more focus on literature analysis and reflection on the research project design. The committee therefore assesses standard 2 as 'meets the standard' and advises **positively** on accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,
Utrecht, January 2021

Raoul van Aalst
Chair

Barbara van Balen
Secretary

Introduction

This report describes the additional assessment of the master's programme Shipping and Transport offered by the Maritime and Logistics University of applied sciences (MLU) (previously known as Netherlands Maritime University (NMU)), part of the STC Group Foundation.

The institute

The STC Group in Rotterdam provides a combination of education, training, research, support, consultancy and implementation for the entire maritime and logistics industry worldwide. The industry consists of the entire nautical industry, ports, transport and the supply chain, as well as port-related oil and chemical industry. The institute offers education from prevocational education to master's degree level in an international setting. The STC-NMU was established in 2007 in order to offer a specialised master's programme to professionals in the maritime industry.

The programme

The master's programme in Shipping and Transport is a one year full-time or two year part-time professional master's programme, amounting to 60 EC.

The assessment

An assessment committee of AeQui visited the master's programme in Shipping and Transport 11 February 2019. The committee reported that the programme offered students a thorough understanding of the shipping and transport sector on professional master's level. Furthermore, it found the connection of the curriculum to the field of shipping and transport very well developed. The courses offered in the domains Ship Management, Logistics and Transport, Economics and Finance and Transport Law are clearly orientated on the professional field and indicate the level that is expected from a professional master's degree programme.

The committee, however, noticed the Management and Research Skills (MRS) course contained training in the research skills literature review, problem definition, research strategy and data collection, but had no room for analysis and reflection. Furthermore, it found that the absence of this focus in the course is reflected in some of the theses studied. These theses showed that the students were not able to reflect on the scope of their projects: the problem definition and research questions were too broad to cover in a research project for a master's thesis. The committee also found the analysis of the literature in these theses too limited. It was of the opinion that students needed a more focused and integrated training in research methodology and research literature analysis.

The committee judged that the programme met the generic quality standards to a significant extent and advised conditionally positive about the programme. According to the committee the programme partially met standard 2 'Orientation of the programme'. Following the advice of the committee the NVAO formulated the following condition for reaccreditation: 'the programme should elaborate the Management and Research Skills domain and include more focus on literature analysis and reflection on the research project design.'

Revisit

In December 2020 the assessment committee revisited the master's programme to assess whether the programme meets the condition formulated by the NVAO. The 2018 framework for the extended programme assessment was handled.

In the run-up to the revisit, the assessment committee has studied the improvement plan, course materials for the Management and Research Skills course and reviewed the theses of 2019 and 2020.

The revisit was carried out online on 1 December 2020 according to the programme presented in attachment 2. The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment

committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme and the institution.

In this document, the committee is reporting on its findings, considerations and conclusions with regard to standard 2 of the NVAO assessment framework. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

Improvement Curriculum

Findings

In response to the conditions imposed by the NVAO, the programme developed an improvement plan. In a separate document the programme expanded on, and justified, the choices made for the assessment committee.

Improved MRS course

The programme contracted an expert in research skills teaching to develop the MRS learning line. The content of the MRS course has been completely renovated and developed into detailed course manuals, lectures and assignments. To allow for more integration in the programme, and to support the students in an earlier phase in their preparation for the thesis research, the MRS course has been rescheduled to the first quarter in the curriculum.

In the new curriculum, application of the research skills and knowledge is required in assignments in the first and third quarter of the curriculum, and collected in a portfolio. Also, the connection between the assignments in the various other courses and the MRS course is strengthened.

The MRS course has a summative assessment in the form of a research proposal at the start of the thesis trajectory.

Research Culture

In addition to the improved MRS course, the programme has taken measures to build a more research-oriented culture. To this end the programme organized meetings for the teachers to professionalize in research skills teaching and research skills assessment. These meetings also contained calibration of assessment criteria and supervision. In follow-up, teachers are stimulated to use peer-feedback and peer-reviewing systematically.

The existing cooperation with the University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam is strengthened in order to reinforce the common knowledge base and to build a common and substantial research environment for the staff and students. The

boards of the cooperating institutes have decided to establish a chair in maritime research.

Assessment

An assessment form with rubrics has been developed for the research proposal and tuned to the rubrics for the theses. In the assessment of the research proposal there is more attention for the thoroughness and quality of the literature search and analysis.

During the additional site visit the committee learned about further improvements to be implemented. The programme intends to put yet more emphasis on literature analysis in the research projects. It furthermore is searching for an effective strategy to incorporate literature analysis in the integration case assignments during the programme, and it wants to further extend the integration of research skills in other courses in the curriculum.

The committee noted that the plan-do-check-act principle is applied by the programme. All improvements are monitored, and evaluated. Where needed follow-up is planned.

Considerations

The committee has established that the programme has implemented many improvements and concludes that the programme **meets standard 2** Orientation: 'The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.'

The committee has studied the course material for the MRS course and checked whether the improvements are reflected in the eleven recent graduation theses.

The committee concludes that the MRS course is now more focused on reflection and research literature analysis and that the research skills are more integrated in the whole curriculum. In

addition to these improvements in the curriculum, the committee notes that the position of research is growing more central to the programme, befitting a master's programme orientation.

The committee established that the improvements are visible in the master's theses of the students. The committee studied the theses of all students who graduated after the assessment in February 2019. The panel found the theses in 2020 of clearly higher quality than the theses in 2019, in particular on the aspects literature analysis, quality of reflection, and the use of a focused research question.

The committee has a very positive impression of the contribution of the expert in research skills

teaching to the quality and orientation of the master's programme. Furthermore, the committee is pleased with the reinforced cooperation of the institute with the University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam which, the committee expects, will lead to a prosperous research environment for teachers and students and an assurance for the future of this master's programme.

The committee recommends to continue the development of the programme as planned. With a view on the future, the committee suggests developing a thematic vision for a research programme. This may further strengthen the research orientation, and offer opportunities as a centre for knowledge in the field.

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Naam panellid (incl. tituluur)	Korte functiebeschrijving van de panelleden (1-3 zinnen)
Drs R.R. van Aalst	Raoul van Aalst is programmamanager 'Always energy' bij TenneT. Hij zit met regelmaat visitatiepanels voor
Dr. J. van den Broek	Hans van den Broek is lector Human Factors in Maritime Automation, Research Centre for Sustainable Port Cities, aan de Hogeschool van Rotterdam
Mr. B.D.M. Janssen	Bas Janssen is directeur van Deltalinqs – ondernemersorganisatie voor haven en industrie. Hij is onder andere actief betrokken bij adviesraden op het gebied van internationaal opleidingsbeleid
Mr.ing. G. van Leunen	Gerrit van Leunen is directeur van het Maritiem Instituut Willem Barentsz (Terschelling, onderdeel van NHL Stenden Hogeschool) en als docent verbonden aan de M Marine Shipping Innovations.
H. Triesscheijn, BSc	Hugo Triesscheijn, BSc is masterstudent International Relations – Conflict, Politics and Power aan Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen en masterstudent Military Strategic Studies aan de Dutch Militaire Academie te Breda.
B. van Balen PhD	Barbara van Balen trad op als secretaris van het panel

The panel and secretary are identical to the one that carried out the assessment in 2019. All panel members and secretary have signed a declaration of independence in the preparation for this revisit.

Attachment 2 Program of the assessment

1 December 2020	Online
12.30-13.30	Preparatory meeting committee
13.30-14.30	Interview with management, staff and examination committee
14.30-15.00	Committee deliberation
15.00-15.30	Feedback

Attachment 3 Documents

- Herstelplan
- Verantwoordingsdocument Herstelplan
- Competency Profile MST MNU
- OER NMU augustus 2020
- Course Guide MSc Shipping and Transport 2020
- Cursusmateriaal MRS
- 11 graduation Projects of students