

Assessment report  
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

**Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology**

Utrecht University

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## 1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of Utrecht University, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

The programme objectives are sound. The programme addresses subjects in this domain broadly and offers a range of options to students. The panel welcomes the research-orientation of the programme and appreciates students to be acquainted with empirical research and to be trained in academic and professional skills. The programme objectives are up-to-date.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel appreciates the comparison to programmes abroad and regards this programme to meet international standards.

The panel finds students to be well prepared to enrol in master programmes in this domain or to enter the labour market, acknowledging the latter option to be taken by limited numbers of students.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives and are conform to the bachelor level. The panel advises to phrase the intended learning outcomes in more anthropological and ethnographic terms. Although students are offered the orientation of the professional field, the panel recommends to state this more clearly in the intended learning outcomes.

The panel appreciates the stable student influx numbers over the years. The admission requirements and procedures are adequate, including the matching days.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes. The courses are up to standard. The teaching-learning trajectories appropriately cover the relevant subjects in the curriculum. The labour market orientation is valued positively by the panel. Although research methods are covered adequately, the panel advises to address ethnographic research methods and techniques more systematically. The curriculum is structured well and is coherent. The second year of the curriculum allowing many options is perceived by the panel as positive.

The panel regards the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The panel welcomes the lecturers' team coherence. The panel is positive about the decision of the University Board to start recruiting junior lecturers for periods of four years. The workload of the lecturers may be demanding, but is manageable. The panel suggests that lecturers should be provided with time to adapt courses. The panel also proposes to monitor the time lecturers have available for research.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods in the curriculum as appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The number of hours of face-to-face education is adequate. The student-to-staff ratio is satisfactory. Study guidance in the tutorship, is organised well. Student success rates are satisfactory.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty assessment policies. The positions of the Board of Examiners and Assessment Committee with regard to the examination and assessment processes are adequate.

The examination methods adopted in the programme are appropriate and are consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment procedures for the Bachelor projects, done by pairs of students, are adequate. In the panel's view, these procedures ensure appropriate assessment of students' individual performances. The panel recommends to have the rubrics scoring forms for the Bachelor projects filled out more consistently and more elaborately.

The measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments are satisfactory. The panel advises, however, to carry out the examination and assessment processes more strictly.

The panel regards the Bachelor projects to be well-written and to be satisfactory academic projects. The panel supports the grades given by examiners of the programme, although some of the projects may have been marked slightly too high. One paper was found by the panel to be unsatisfactory, but the panel considers this paper to be an outlier, not being representative of the general quality of the papers. The panel suggests considering adopting more differentiated assessments, using a wider range of grades.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enrol in master programmes or to enter the labour market.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of Utrecht University assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel advises NVAO to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 18 February 2019

Prof. dr. T. Otto  
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren  
(panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Utrecht University to manage the limited framework programme assessment process for the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of this University. The objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Having conferred with management of the Utrecht University programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof dr. T. Otto, full professor of Anthropology and Ethnography, University of Aarhus, Denmark, full professor and tropical leader, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Australia (panel chair);
- Dr E.D. Rasch, associate professor, Sociology of Development and Change Group, Wageningen University (panel member);
- Dr M.E. Pelkmans, associate professor in Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Drs D. Stolk, programme coordinator Cultural Emergency Response, senior member management team, Prins Claus Fonds Amsterdam (panel member);
- K. Donatz, student Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology, VU Amsterdam (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercooteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit was discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected the final projects of 15 graduates from the last few years. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of theses of the programme graduates, these theses being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

Several weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator discussed the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit. Shortly before the site visit date, the complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the theses were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 7 November 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the Utrecht University campus. The site visit schedule was as planned. In a number of separate sessions, the panel was given the opportunity to meet with Faculty Board representatives, programme management, Board of Examiners members, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management were given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the Board of Utrecht University, to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

### 3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: B Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology (B Culturele Antropologie en Ontwikkelingssociologie)  
Orientation, level programme: Academic Bachelor  
Grade: BSc  
Number of credits: 180 EC  
Specialisations: None  
Location: Utrecht  
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction Dutch)  
Registration in CROHO: 50035

Name of institution: Utrecht University  
Status of institution: Legal Entity for Higher Education  
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

## 4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

### 4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

#### *Findings*

The Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme is one of the programmes of the Undergraduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The School is part of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University and encompasses six Bachelor programmes. The dean of the Faculty has the responsibility for all programmes of the Faculty. In the Board of Studies of the School, being composed of the directors of all Bachelor programmes, subjects as programming, information provision and quality assurance of the programmes are decided. The director of this programme is responsible for the coordination and organisation of the programme. The director is advised on the quality assurance of the programme by the Programme Committee, being composed of lecturers and students. Members of this Programme Committee sit on the School-wide Education Committee to advise the Board of Studies. The Board of Examiners of the School has the authority to monitor the quality of examination and assessment processes and products. This and the other programmes are represented by at least one member on the Board. These members specifically monitor the examination and assessment processes for the programme they represent.

The Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of Utrecht University is a three-year, broad, research-based, academic bachelor programme in this field. The programme is directed towards the study of processes of social and cultural change, using ethnographic research methods and studied from holistic and comparative perspectives. The programme aims to educate students in theoretical, methodological and empirical knowledge and skills in this domain. Students are trained both in studying theoretical questions and in solving practical problems. Students acquire research knowledge and skills, academic skills, societal and ethical awareness and views on professional careers. The programme is focused on themes, such as conflict, religion, gender, sustainability.

The objectives of the programme are conform to the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands, which has been drafted by the joint programmes of this assessment cluster in the Netherlands.

Programme management compared this programme to programmes abroad, especially in the United Kingdom and in the United States. The programme may be said to be quite comparable to these programmes. The programme distinguishes itself by requiring students to do empirical research.

Having completed the programme, students may continue to take master programmes in this field or may enter the labour market. Therefore, the programme aims to prepare students for master programmes in this domain or for the labour market. The proportion of students proceeding to the labour market is rather small, however. Organisations in the professional field tend to prefer master graduates. To be up-to-date on trends in the professional field, programme management confers two times per year with the Professional Field Committee about adjusting programme objectives and curriculum to professional field requirements.

The programme objectives have been translated into intended learning outcomes, specifying, as the main points, knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories in the programme domain, knowledge and skills to do research in this field, academic and professional skills, relevant for this domain, analytical skills and critical thinking, written and oral communication skills, ethical and normative awareness and self-reliance in analysing scientific literature, doing research and drawing conclusions.

Programme management presented the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for the bachelor level.

#### *Consideration*

The panel regards the programme objectives to be sound. The programme covers subjects in this domain broadly and offers a range of options to students. The panel welcomes the research-orientation of the programme and appreciates students to be acquainted with empirical research and to be trained in academic and professional skills. The programme objectives are up-to-date.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel appreciates the comparison to programmes abroad and regards this programme to meet international standards.

The panel finds students to be well prepared to enrol in master programmes in this domain or to enter the labour market, acknowledging the latter option to be taken by limited numbers of students.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives and are conform to the bachelor level. As the intended learning outcomes are formulated in rather generic terms, the panel advises to phrase these in more anthropological and ethnographic terms. Although students are offered the professional field orientation, the panel also recommends to state this more clearly in the intended learning outcomes.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

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



## 4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### *Findings*

The student influx numbers are rather stable for the last seven years, being on average 88 students per year. The entry requirements are the pre-university (vwo) diploma, the higher professional education (hbo) propaedeutic diploma or equivalent prior education. Students coming from abroad should meet specific requirements. Prospective students must attend matching days. On these days, they attend lectures and tutorials, take examinations, and may meet with lecturers and students. This way, students may make informed choices for the programme. The programme curriculum takes three years, the total study load being 180 EC. Programme management presented a table, showing the mapping of the intended learning outcomes to the courses. The curriculum has been designed in line with Utrecht Education Model requirements, implying the set-up of major-compulsory courses (75 EC), major-related elective courses (60 EC) and elective courses (45 EC). Major-compulsory courses are courses in the cultural anthropology field, whereas elective courses allow students to broaden the scope of their studies. The first year for the most part includes major-compulsory courses, laying the conceptual, methodological, theoretical, ethical and scientific-philosophical foundations of the programme domain. In the second year, students have ample room to design their own study paths. No mandatory courses are scheduled in this year. Students are offered indications about electives matching major-elective courses and allowing students to specialise in areas, such as conflict, religion, global citizenship and diversity, post colonialism or gender. The third year is primarily determined by the Bachelor project, courses addressing the qualitative research design for the project, fieldwork and writing the Bachelor thesis. In the Bachelor project, methodological and theoretical knowledge are integrated. To promote coherence, the curriculum has been organised in four teaching-learning trajectories, being the research knowledge and skills, academic skills, ethics and labour market orientation trajectories. Courses are part of one of the trajectories. Courses build upon each other in terms of the level of complexity. In the curriculum, internationalisation is promoted. Some courses are offered in English. About 30 % to 50 % of all students take courses abroad in the second year. Over 80 % of all students do fieldwork abroad as part of the Bachelor project. The programme maintains relations with foreign institutions, from which students may benefit. Talented students may take part in the Faculty honours programme, allowing them to deepen or broaden their studies. The lecturing team is composed of 17 permanent staff members and another 17 temporary staff members and junior teachers. The majority of permanent staff members are engaged in both education and research. Most staff members are employed at the Department of Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and do research in the Sovereignty and Social Contestation line of research of the Department. Nearly all permanent staff members have PhDs, about 82 % of them are BKO-certified and about 47 % of them have SKO-certificates as well. Nearly all temporary staff members and junior teachers are trained in education. Junior lecturers are to be recruited for four years, allowing them to build their careers in education. Lecturers meet regularly to discuss the programme. Lecturers experience their work load to be demanding, but manageable. The Faculty is taking measures to alleviate lecturers' work load. As may be derived from surveys, students are content about their lecturers.

The educational concept of the programme is the Utrecht Education Model, this model implying student-activating teaching, small-scale education, differentiation in study programmes and regular feedback and assessment. The number of hours of face-to-face education are about 10 to 12 hours per week in the first year and about 8 to 10 hours per week in the second and the third year. The study methods adopted in the programme include lectures, tutorials, seminars and practical classes. In the first part of the programme, student mentors advise students on a wide range of study-related issues. In the tutorship, students are guided by tutors, being staff members. The tutorship spans all three years of the curriculum. Tutors advise students on choices to be made in the curriculum in the first year and guide them in selecting master programmes and in their labour market orientation in the second and third years. At the end of the first year, students draft their study plan, outlining their study paths in the second and third years. The labour market orientation study activities are partly scheduled in courses. Tutorship meetings are scheduled in all three years and students may at all times contact their tutor for advice. As may be derived from surveys, students are satisfied about the study guidance. The student-to-staff ratio is about 33/1. In the first year and in line with the Binding Study Advice, students must obtain 45 EC. The study load of the curriculum is experienced by students to be manageable. About 20 % to 30 % of the students drop out, mainly in the first year. The student success rates are about 20 % after three years and about 70 % after four years (last three cohorts; proportion students re-entering in second year).

#### *Considerations*

The panel appreciates the stable student influx numbers over the years. The admission requirements and procedures are adequate, including the matching days.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The courses are up to standard. The teaching-learning trajectories appropriately cover the relevant subjects in the curriculum. The labour market orientation is valued positively and is encouraged by the panel. Although research methods are covered adequately, the panel advises to address ethnographic research methods and techniques more systematically and earlier in the curriculum. The curriculum is structured well and is coherent. The second year of the curriculum allowing many options is welcomed by students and is perceived by the panel as positive.

The panel regards the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The panel welcomes the lecturers' team coherence. The panel is positive about the decision of the University Board to start recruiting junior lecturers for periods of four years. The workload of the lecturers may be demanding, but is manageable. The panel suggests that lecturers should be provided with time to adapt courses. The panel also proposes to monitor the time lecturers have available for research.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods in the curriculum as appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The number of hours of face-to-face education are adequate. The student-to-staff ratio is satisfactory. Study guidance in the tutorship, is organised well. Student success rates are satisfactory.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be satisfactory.

### 4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

#### *Findings*

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are in line with the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences Assessment Policy Plan. As has been indicated, the Board of Examiners has the authority to monitor the quality of programme examination and assessment processes and products, one of the members of the Board being specifically responsible for this programme.

The examination methods for the courses are selected in line with the courses' goals and contents. In nearly all of the courses, multiple examinations are scheduled. The examination methods in the programme include written examinations, written assignments, papers, reports, take-home examinations, and presentations. In addition, formative examinations are scheduled to promote students' study pace. To complete the tutorship at the end of the third year, students are required to submit their portfolio. The portfolios include assignments, done by students as part of their own professional development and as part of their labour market orientation.

The final project of the programme is the Bachelor project. This is a research project, being conducted by two students. In the qualitative research design course, students draft the research plan for the project. Students are responsible for specific parts of this plan. The plan having been approved by the supervisor, students go on to do ethnographic fieldwork. Students either do comparative research at two locations or do research on distinct dimensions of one topic. Cooperation is one of the learning goals in the programme. Students submit three fieldwork reports, which are assessed for every student individually. Having completed the fieldwork, students complete the thesis. Students have to indicate for which parts they are responsible. Theses are assessed by two examiners, using rubrics scoring forms. In case of substantive differences in the judgments, a third examiner will study the thesis and give the final grade.

Programme management and the Board of Examiners have taken measures to promote the quality of examinations and assessments. The assessment plan for the programme outlines the relations of the intended learning outcomes, courses' goals and examination methods adopted. The Board of Examiners appoints examiners, who should be BKO-certified. For courses, course dossiers have been compiled to show the examinations meeting the course goals. Course examinations are peer-reviewed. Test matrices have been adopted. For a number of courses, rubrics assessment forms are being used. On behalf of the Board of Examiners, the Assessment Committee on a regular basis inspects, among others, the programme assessment plan and the assessment procedures applied for the Bachelor projects. Written reports, including theses, are checked for fraud and plagiarism.

### *Considerations*

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty assessment policies. The positions of the Board of Examiners and Assessment Committee with regard to the examination and assessment processes are adequate.

The panel is positive about the examination methods adopted by the programme. These are consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment procedures for the Bachelor projects are adequate. In the panel's view, these procedures ensure appropriate assessment of students' individual performances. The first and second examiners always discuss their separate assessments together and if they don't reach an agreement a third examiner is called in. As examiners fill out the rubrics scoring forms in different ways, the panel recommends to have these forms filled out more consistently and more elaborately.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be satisfactory. The panel advises, however, to carry out the examination and assessment processes more strictly.

### *Assessment of this standard*

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

#### 4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

##### *Findings*

The panel reviewed 15 Bachelor projects of programme graduates of the last two years. The average grade for these projects is 7.4 for the last four years.

Programme management conducted yearly surveys among programme graduates of the years 2013 to 2017 (response rate about 20 %). The results of the surveys show the vast majority of the graduates to continue their studies at master level, either directly or after a gap year. Approximately 10 % to 15 % may enter the labour market.

##### *Considerations*

The panel regards the Bachelor projects to be well-written and to be satisfactory academic projects. The panel supports the grades given by examiners of the programme, although some of the projects may have been marked slightly too high. One paper was found by the panel to be unsatisfactory, but the panel considers this paper to be an outlier, not being representative of the general quality of the papers. The panel suggests to consider adopting more differentiated assessments, using a wider range of grades.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enrol in master programmes or to enter the labour market.

##### *Assessment of this standard*

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

## 5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory

## 6. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below. These panel recommendations are the following.

- To phrase the intended learning outcomes in more pronounced anthropological and ethnographic terms.
- To state students' orientation of the professional field more clearly in the intended learning outcomes.
- To address ethnographic research methods and techniques more systematically in the curriculum.
- To allow lecturers time to adapt courses.
- To monitor lecturers having sufficient time to do research.
- To have rubrics scoring forms for Bachelor projects filled out more consistently and more elaborately by examiners.
- To carry out the examination and assessment processes more strictly.
- To consider adopting more differentiated assessments for the Bachelor projects, using a wider range of grades.

