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Research Master Arts & Culture University of Groningen

*Report of the limited programme assessment
19 March 2021*

Utrecht, The Netherlands
July 2021
www.AeQui.nl
Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

Programme

University of Groningen

Research Master Arts & Culture

Tracks: Arts, Media and Literary Studies (AMLS)
Cultural Leadership (CL)

Location: Groningen

Mode of study: fulltime

Croho: 60829

Result of institutional assessment: positive

Panel

prof. dr. Annick Schramme, chair

dr. Peter Sonderen, domain expert

prof. dr. Arjo Klamer, domain expert

Alice Quin Banville, MA, student member

drs. Titia Buising, secretary

The committee 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

Table of contents

Colophon	2
Table of contents	3
Summary	4
1. Intended learning outcomes	8
2. Teaching-learning environment	11
3. Student assessment.....	19
4. Achieved learning outcomes	22
Attachments.....	25
Attachment 1 Assessment committee.....	26
Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment.....	27
Attachment 3 Documents	28

Summary

On 19 March 2021 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the research master programme Arts & Culture at University of Groningen. The committee judges that the programme meets each standard; the overall quality of the programme **meets the standard**. This two-year full-time programme of 120 ECTS consists of two tracks: Arts, Media and Literary Studies (AMLS) and Cultural Leadership (CL).

Intended learning outcomes

The committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes meet the standard. The committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes (exit qualifications) have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation and therefore meet international requirements for arts and culture and are appropriate with the demands from the (academic) field. The programme has a strong focus on fundamental academic research and educating students for a research career in- and outside academia. In addition, the interdisciplinary focus of both tracks is also clear.

Teaching-learning environment

The committee assesses that the programme meets the standard. The committee concludes that the programme (and both tracks) enables students to realise the intended learning outcomes. The programme's focus on core research is reflected in the structure and content of both tracks and (core) modules. The programme is very closely integrated with the research of different research institutes and the lecturers involved. This provides clarity to the strong academic focus and topicality of the tracks and the modules.

The programme is strongly student-centred. Both tracks provide students with ample opportunity to create their own learning path. The electives, tutorials, individual mentoring and the traineeship (in the CL track) contribute to this. The interactive and small-scale teaching methods used and especially the tutorials allow for in-depth discussions that meet the level and intensity of a research master programme.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international profile of the staff involved, the international students attending and the

international character of the fields of study and research. The committee therefore concludes that the international name of the programme is more than appropriate.

The committee notes that the programme has been in organisational turmoil. The recent appointment of two Directors of Studies, one for each track, is however already showing results. Students remarked that their feedback is heard and acted upon.

Lecturers are very competent, strongly qualified and engaged. The staff involved is highly international and very active in (international) research and renowned research schools as well. The legal enrolment criteria are applicable to the programme.

Student assessment

The committee concludes that an adequate system of assessment is in place and that the programme meets this standard. The quality assurance of the assessment system is solid and effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments. These include using the four-eye principle, the use of an assessment plan, assessment criteria and written feedback.

The level of the different assessments studied during the -si assessment was good and an appropriate variety in forms of assessment is used. Students value the feedback they receive from their lecturers and consider the grading to be fair. The Board of Examiners and the ReMa expert team are active in safeguarding the quality of the assessments. The expert team randomly checks the quality of the theses, assessments and traineeships.

Achieved learning outcomes

The committee assesses that the programme meets this standard. An adequate graduation procedure is in place, which involves two (or three) examiners. In

the revision of the assessment form the contribution of all examiners has been made more visible.

Based on the studied documents and the interviews, the committee concludes that graduates of the programme achieve the required masters level and the intended learning outcomes. It was confirmed in the meeting with students and alumni that they are prepared to develop their own career path as PhD or researchers within their specific field.

The committee concludes that the quality of the studied theses is good and agreed with the grades given. The studied theses are thorough and the themes discussed are overarching and very broad. The assessment forms provide students with thoughtful and elaborate qualitative feedback, that reflects the grades given and does justice to the thesis.

Recommendations

To further improve the programme, the committee has made the following suggestions:

- To make the shared vision on the positioning of the CL track and the reflection on the notion of cultural leadership more explicit; in the learning

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework (2018), including the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes, are assessed positively; the committee therefore awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the programme.

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

Annick Schramme
Chair

outcomes as well as in the translation of that vision in the programme.

- To make the complementarity between Groningen University and Roma Tre University and the added value of choosing Rome as a partner more explicit.
- To, within the strongly student centred programme, have continuous attention for building and monitoring the community.
- To examine the added value of the semester in Rome and how this contributes to students research skills and research interests.
- To improve the communication with and information provided to students.
- To further improve the mentoring system; this is especially helpful for students who do not have a clear vision on their research topic.
- To assure that deadlines in grading assessments are met.
- To use the extra rubric on whether the thesis is publishable.

Titia Busing
Secretary

Introduction

This report reflects the site visit of the research master programme Arts & Culture of the University of Groningen. The programme aims to deliver graduates who are able to research the constitutive role of the arts and media, and who can take on leading roles in, and responsibility for the arts, heritage and media sectors.

The institute

The University of Groningen comprises 11 faculties, nine graduate schools, 52 Bachelor's degree programmes and 110 Master's degree programmes (of which 15 are Research Master's programmes). The university employs almost 6,000 FTE staff and has over 30,000 students.

The programme is part of the Faculty of Arts, which offers 16 bachelor's degree programmes and more than 40 master's tracks within 20 master's degree programmes. The faculty has 5,000 students and 700 employees. The faculty is organised in five clusters of related degree programmes. The faculty offers five research master programmes. These programmes are part of the Graduate School of the Humanities.

The programme is closely connected to the faculty's three Research Institutes: Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG), Groningen Institute of Archaeology (GIA) and the Centre for Language and Cognition (CLCG). These research institutes were reviewed in 2016, following the assessment system as specified in the Standard Evaluation Protocol for Public Research Organisations by the Association of Universities in The Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). Both ICOG and CLCG were rated 'very good' in all three categories; GIA received a 'very good' assessment in Scientific Relevance and 'good' on Viability and Relevance to Society.

The programme

The English taught research master programme in Arts & Culture comprises 120 EC and is offered

in a fulltime variant. The yearly intake in the programme is around 20 to 30 students per year. The programme offers two tracks:

- Arts, Media and Literary Studies and;
- Cultural Leadership.

The first track, Arts, Media and Literary Studies (AMLS), focuses on research into the role of the arts and media in culture and society. The Cultural Leadership (CL) track is directed more specifically towards the (extra-) institutional contexts of arts, media, and heritage.

The AMLS track consists of core courses (30 EC), electives and specialisation courses (60 EC) and the thesis (30 EC).

The CL track also consists of core courses (35 EC) and electives (25 EC). The second year comprises a combined research-driven traineeship/thesis trajectory (60 ECTS). The first year of the CL track also includes a semester in Rome, at Roma Tre University. The CL track was co-developed with Roma Tre University and in close cooperation with the European Cultural Foundation's network of arts, media and heritage institutions across Europe. The universities involved aim for a double degree programme (starting in academic year 2022 - 2023).

The programme has made several changes based on the results of the former assessment. These include strengthening of the programme's distinctive profile by drawing more closely from the fields of related research expertise in the Faculty, i.e. the Research Centre for Arts in Society and the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, which are part of afore-mentioned ICOG. Also, the name of the former Literary and Cultural

Studies (LCS) was changed to Arts, Media and Literary Studies (AMLS), to express the additional focus on media research and to cater students from the new bachelor's programme in Media Studies at Groningen University. In addition, the Cultural Leadership (CL) track was implemented, to accommodate students with an interest in research on leadership in the world of arts, media, and heritage. And in the assessment of the thesis, a strict separation between supervisor and second reader is implemented.

The assessment

The University of Groningen assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its research master programme Arts & Culture. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

The site visit and assessment took place in an online format. The committee agreed unanimously to this. The preparatory meeting of the committee and the discussions with representatives of the programme took place digitally, but did not differ from an on-site assessment. The online programme provided the committee with

good insights regarding the quality of the programme.

The (digital) open consultation hour was held during the site visit and attended by one participant. The committee explicitly oriented itself to the cluster the programme is part of. This was done with the full committee, during the preparatory consultations and at the conclusion of the assessment. The knowledge required for this was present in (part of) the committee.

The online assessment took place on March 19 2021 in accordance with the programme in appendix 2. In the present document, the committee reports on its findings, considerations and conclusions according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment (including the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes). The committee assessed in an independent manner. At the conclusion of the online assessment, the results were presented to representatives of the programme. The draft version of this report was sent to the programme representatives; their reactions have led to this final version of the report.

Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue has taken place. The results of this development dialogue have no influence on the assessment presented in this report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes have been adequately concretised with regard to content, level and orientation and meet international requirements. The intended learning outcomes reflect the Dublin descriptors. The programme has a strong focus on fundamental academic research and educating students for a career in research, in- and outside academia. In addition, the programme's interdisciplinary focus is also clear. The committee is of the opinion that a shared vision on the positioning of the CL track and the reflection on the notion of cultural leadership and the related content of the programme could be made more explicit. The committee concludes that the programme meets the criteria for this standard.

Findings

In general, students in a research master programme at University of Groningen learn to recognise and develop their own talents and are trained to be independent, critically-thinking and responsible researchers. They are challenged not only to optimise their research skills, but also to appreciate and apply methods and theories used in other disciplines.

The research master programme Arts & Culture more specifically aims to deliver graduates who are able to research the constitutive role of the arts and media, and who can take on leading roles in, and responsibility for the arts, heritage and media sectors. As mentioned in the introduction, the Arts, Media and Literary Studies (AMLS) track, focuses on research into the role of the arts and media in culture and society. The Cultural Leadership (CL) track is directed more specifically towards the (extra-) institutional contexts of arts, media, and heritage.

In the AMLS track, students learn different ways to investigate the role of the arts and media in society, from the eighteenth century until the present. The track addresses the study of the arts in Western cultures, including their inter-connectedness with other cultural traditions and their circulation in a globalised world. The track presents itself as multi- and interdisciplinary in its setup and aims to cover a broad range of art disciplines (literature, (pop) music, the performative arts, film

and art history) including their uses of new media. In its aim to investigate the role of the arts and media in cultural change, the track offers a range of complementary theoretical and methodological frameworks, including: historical and critical hermeneutical perspectives, the sociological and economic study of art worlds and institutions, and psychological/cognitive and media-analytical frameworks for analysing the effects of the arts and their mediation through criticism and education.

The CL track aims to provide students with the tools to study cultural institutions, practices, and experiences in the rapidly changing, fluid context of a post-digital age. The track focuses on the institutional and extra- institutional artistic, heritage, media, political and curatorial practices and the mechanisms and processes behind artwork. The track approaches cultural leadership as a distributed, sense-making and emergent practice that is performed by cultural professionals, citizens and policy makers. The track has a primarily European perspective. Students learn to analyse cultural leadership in a situated cultural context. Case studies are taken from the fields of literature, film, music, drama, heritage, media, archaeology, museology and art history. In addition to a focus on research, the track also aims for students to become self-aware and ethically responsible actors who will be able to take up leading positions in organisations and institutions in the cultural domain.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme consist of programme-wide learning outcomes and track-specific learning outcomes. With this structure, the programme aims:

- a) for students of both tracks to have an advanced knowledge and understanding of their field of specialisation, as well as an advanced knowledge of the theoretical perspectives relating to their field;
- b) to ensure that students can develop research questions and execute research relevant to that field;
- c) that students can position their research in the relevant academic and professional discourse leading to the ability to start processes of change while also offering an original contribution to the academic field;
- d) for students to be trained to assess (academic) discourse and its impact on the role of arts, media and heritage in shaping society and culture (and to solve problems in complex situations involving ethical judgements
- e) for students to learn skills that are necessary for a successful professional practice

The intended learning outcomes have been translated into course-specific learning outcomes with matching assignments. In a matrix of realised learning outcomes all courses are related to the intended learning outcomes. The tutorial forms show the relation between the intended learning outcomes and the (individually selected) elective courses.

The programme is closely connected to the research of the Research Centre for Arts in Society and the Research Centre for Media and Journalism studies within ICOG (The Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture).

Within the Netherlands, the programme aims to distinguish itself by covering the art disciplines with an explicit emphasis on the role of the arts in society within a multi- and interdisciplinary framework. The programme cooperates with the other programmes in the National Research

Schools. The university currently chairs the network of The Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies and the Research School for Media Studies.

In discussing the perspectives of the two tracks, the committee learned during the site visit that the CL track is more geared towards the constitutional aspects of cultural institutions and leadership and has an empirical focus. Leadership is reflected upon from a sociological and cultural perspective rather than a managerial perspective. The CL track aims to attract students from different disciplines within humanities, and to train them in reflecting on cultural leadership. In addition, the CL track focuses on the transfer of the heritage of culture in policy and museums etcetera in a changing context. And what it means to have a leading role in this context in museums, government etcetera.

It was also noted that the cooperation with Rome is part of an overarching agreement between the two universities. For the programme, this cooperation has been at times challenging. The cooperation with only one faculty in Rome is expected to improve this. It was also remarked that even though the internship might suggest a professional orientation, the track is foremost focused on research and embedded in a research discourse. The internship allows for research in a cultural institution, which helps students to take a position in their field.

Regarding the AMLS track, it was noted that this track is geared towards the hermeneutic engagement with culture objects. Arts and culture are studied from a wide range of perspectives. With the growing number of students, the different backgrounds, the interdisciplinarity and attention for different research methods in different disciplines, are also increasing. Creating an interdisciplinary community and interdisciplinary thinking is part of the core courses. To enhance this, the core courses are taught by lecturers with different

disciplinary backgrounds, guest lecturers are invited and students are invited to attend the colloquia of the research institutes involved.

Considerations

Based on the interviews and the examination of underlying documentation, the committee concludes that both the programme wide and track specific intended learning outcomes tie in with (inter)national requirements for this field.

Based on an overview of the relation between courses and intended learning outcomes (as provided in the matrix of realised learning outcomes) and the course descriptions in course manuals or syllabus, the committee notes that all intended learning outcomes are covered. In addition, the committee concludes that the intended learning outcomes are also in tune with the Dublin descriptors.

The programme has a strong focus on fundamental academic research and educating students for a research career in- and outside academia. In addition, the interdisciplinary focus of both tracks is also clear. The committee is, however, of the opinion that a shared vision on the positioning of the CL track and the reflection on the notion of cultural leadership could be made more explicit, in the learning outcomes as well as in the translation of that vision in the programme. In addition, the complementarity between Groningen University and Roma Tre University and the added value of choosing Rome as a partner could be made more explicit.

The committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes of both tracks **meet the standard**.

2. Teaching-learning environment

The committee concludes that the programme enables students to realise the intended learning outcomes. The programme's focus on fundamental research is reflected in the structure and content of both tracks and the (core) modules. The programme is closely tied in with the research of several research institutes and the lecturers involved. This contributes to the academic focus and topicality of the tracks and (core) courses. The programme has a student-centred focus and offers students ample room for making their own choices within their field. The committee is of the opinion that within this structure continuous attention for building and monitoring the community is important. Regarding the CL track, the committee recommends to examine the added value of the semester in Rome. In addition, the committee also advises the programme to further improve the mentoring system and the communication with and information provided to students. The committee appreciates the interactive and small-scale teaching methods used in the programme and especially the tutorials. This allows for in-depth discussions that meet the level and intensity of a research master programme. The staff is very international, competent and engaged. Lecturers are very active in research as well. Lecturers make their ample contacts inside and outside academia available for their students. The committee notes that the legal enrolment criteria are applicable to the programme and that adequate facilities are available. The committee concludes that the programme meets the criteria for this standard.

Findings

The focus of both tracks is on research; during the core courses students acquire the methodological knowledge and the skills to independently set up and conduct research in their thesis (AMLS track) or traineeship-thesis combination (CL track).

As mentioned before, both tracks consist of core courses, electives and a thesis (or traineeship-thesis combination). In both tracks, the core courses introduce students to research in their fields (theories, methodologies, problems, approaches) and aim to create a sense of community. In addition, supported by their mentor students select their elective / specialisation courses in order to develop their individual research specialisation profile. In the second year of both tracks students specialise and follow an independent and research-focused schedule. This phase of the programme is focused on research design, methodological training, research-driven traineeships and the research thesis.

AMLS track

The AMLS track consists of six compulsory core courses (Theories of Culture and Research; Research Design, Theories and Analysis of Arts, Media and Literature; Research Methods 1; Research Methods 2 and; Arts and Media in Society). In these courses, students learn to reflect on what it means to carry out research into the role of the arts in society and on cultural change. All core courses are compulsory for, and restricted to, AMLS students in order to foster cohort cohesion and to create a sense of community for the students.

In the first core course, Theories of Culture and Research, culture is studied in the Humanities and it is studied in the Social Sciences and Biology. In the second course, Research Design, students learn to develop their own research project. The course is currently moved to the second semester of the first year, so that students have already acquired these skills when entering the second year, which revolves around independent research. The third core course, Theories and Analysis, builds on the introductory course Theories of Culture and Research and addresses a range of prominent theories that are specific for the role of the arts,

media and literature in culture and in their societal contexts. Students explore complementary theoretical and methodological perspectives (ranging from grounded theory to arts and media psychology and sociology) in more detail. The courses on research methods address qualitative ethnographic research methods (fieldwork including data collection and analysis and research planning. These courses also discuss research ethics and historical and historiographical research methods. In the final core course, Arts and Media in Society, identity politics and culture wars are discussed.

The first year also includes electives. With these electives, students can strengthen their disciplinary profile. Students can choose from the master courses and are also required to choose courses at the National Research Schools (10 EC). These schools provide Summer and Winter Schools which give students the opportunity to meet senior scholars and work with peers from other universities. The schools focus on new trends and the latest research in a number of fields and allow students to remain up to date with current research in their field.

In the first semester of the second year, students choose three specialisation courses (25 ECTS in total). These specialisation courses enable students to take individual tutorials with lecturers who specialise in a subject or field that the student wishes to explore further. Specialisation courses can take various formats depending on the student's interests, for example a tutorial; a research-based internship; writing or re-writing a paper to be submitted for publication; or an additional master course. The goals and format of these specialisation courses are formalised in a tutorial contract that is approved by the Director of Studies, the student, and the supervisor and after that formally approved by the Board of Examiners.

In the second year students also embark on their master's thesis. During the first semester Research Design course, students discuss different

theoretical and methodological approaches and write their thesis proposal. Students receive feedback from their peers as well as from their lecturer. In the final semester students write their thesis. This is further elaborated on in standard 4.

AMLS alumni value the input from their lecturers about research and different fields of research. They also noted that in the final phase of the programme, when writing the thesis, room or space could be made available for students to meet and work on their thesis. This can enhance to connection to the community / the programme.

Students of the AMLS track value the interdisciplinary character of their programme and the freedom to focus on research within their own interest. Students are also appreciative of the community and the collaboration with their peers. However, for students enrolling in February this experience can be different.

Students of the AMLS track remarked during the site visit that the information and communication about the programme can be improved. This includes for example information about acquiring a PhD, about electives in the second semester and about the role of the mentor. Students noted that due to the Covid pandemic, mentors were quite busy and information was lacking. Discussions with the Director of Studies about this have led to information on the role of the mentor on the digital learning environment.

CL track

The CL track comprises four core courses (5 EC each) in Groningen, and three core courses in Rome (5 EC each). In the Cultural Leadership I and II courses, students are introduced to the theoretical concepts and research methods for the study of cultural leadership. In the Public Arts Policy in a Global Context course and The Global/Local Leader course students learn how to discuss and systematically analyse arts policies and management practices on a local and global level.

The Heritage course, which students attend in Rome during the second semester of the first year, focuses on the analysis of discussions of (urban) heritage and its preservation (this course includes case studies of, and site visits to, architectural and archaeological sites in Rome). The Culture and Media course focuses on critically analysing processes of digitalisation, digital media and the ways in which they help shape visions, values and cultural practices (including practices in heritage institutions). The final course in Rome, on sustainability and cultural awareness addresses the ethics and practices of preserving urban heritage.

With the collaboration with Roma Tre University, the programme aims to provide students with an international study experience, a complementary research training in the areas of sustainability, media and heritage and preservation studies, and to help them to reflect on cultural differences.

Students of the CL track also choose electives, which allow them to specialise in research in a given cultural field, such as literature, film, music, drama, heritage, media, archaeology, museology and art history. Students divide their electives between the University of Groningen and Roma Tre University.

Students end the first year with a Spring School at the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome (KNIR), where they discuss cultural trends with cultural leaders and explore how they can apply their analytical skills within heritage organisations, museums and other cultural institutions. This is part of the Sustainability course.

The second year consists of a Traineeship and Thesis Preparation class, the traineeship (30 EC) and the master's thesis (30 EC). The preparatory class addresses different theoretical and methodological approaches that students can use to shape their research-driven traineeship and thesis project.

The traineeship aims to provide students with an in-depth research experience in their field of choice and is meant to culminate in their research

master thesis in which students individually demonstrate their research capabilities. The traineeship is executed at a cultural institution where students conduct data-driven, empirical research. Students are guided in this by an academic staff member and a professional supervisor, based at the partner institution.

Students present their research proceedings halfway in a presentation during the programme's Winter School. This also provides peer intervention and expert feedback. In addition, students write a document (report, strategic plan, review of existing practices or an internal publication) aimed at helping the host organisation to make strategic decisions. The master's thesis is discussed in standard 4.

Students of the CL track the committee met with value the broad character of their programme and the combination of theory and practice. The internship provides them with the opportunity to be a bridging function between theory of arts and actual practice of arts. Students noted that the internship does not imply less focus on research; instead it implies a focus on research outside academia. Students remarked that the elective courses can offer more choices related to (cultural) leadership.

Alumni of the CL track noted during the site visit that the traineeship is an added bonus to the programme. The traineeship provides them with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in the fields of cultural policy and cultural leadership. The research master track as a whole gives them the opportunity to discover and expand their own interests. The combination of, and intersection between theory and practice is also valued by the alumni the committee met with. Alumni feel prepared to pursue a PhD as well as a career outside academia. Alumni noted that a more general course and a general overview on research methods could be added to the CL track. Research methods are primarily discussed related to students research questions and more overview on other methods would be welcomed.

Regarding their semester in Rome, alumni of the CL track remarked that it was challenging and thought provoking. Especially the cultural differences, as experienced in the seminars, tutorials and in cooperating with fellow students, added to this. In addition, alumni learned about their own work culture and communication. Alumni noted that their stay in Rome did not fuel their research.

Starting academic year 2020 – 2021, students of both tracks start together with the Theories of Culture and Research (5 ECTS) course. The CL-core courses Cultural Leadership I and II (10 ECTS together) have become one course of 10 ECTS; and The Global/Local Leader course is an elective course.

Regarding the study of culture from a multidisciplinary perspective, it was noted during the site-visit that this starts in the shared first course of both tracks (Theories of Culture and Research). Here, the different aspects and levels of studying culture from an multidisciplinary perspective are addressed. The different disciplines and research methods are discussed and students learn to reflect on those research methods. It was remarked that by addressing the multi- and interdisciplinary approach in for example framing research questions, students also learn to shape their own research interest.

For the AMLS track an traineeship is considered. The programme notes that the experiences in the CL track are positive and the traineeship seem to give students a head start after graduation.

Alumni of both tracks value the interdisciplinarity of the programme and the different perspectives that are addressed. This supported their development in broad and analytical thinking. Alumni however also remarked that the differences in background, are not always helpful in creating a community.

The site visit made clear that critical topics related to gender, environment, racism and inclusion are discussed in both tracks. In the CL track this is for

example part of the courses on policy and sustainability and cultural awareness. In addition, it was noted that students bring in these topics during lectures and discussions.

Learning environment

The programme's educational vision is (a) research driven, (b) multidisciplinary (c) student-centred and (d) activating. Research driven means that the students are confronted with the practice of scholarly research and taught the necessary skills through relevant assignments, which eventually lead to their own research project in the form of a thesis. Multidisciplinary implies that students are confronted with a range of disciplinary approaches to the research topic or research problem under scrutiny and are encouraged to explore and combine several academic disciplines. Student-centred means that all forms of instruction are designed to suit the required educational development of the student. And activating implies that students are encouraged to play an active role, inside and outside of class, for instance in staff-supervised research projects and research-driven traineeships. This also includes that students are expected to work towards their own research goals with increased independence.

The programme is organised around small, activating seminar groups and core courses in which research problems are addressed from different disciplinary perspectives. Most core courses are co-taught by two lecturers with different disciplinary backgrounds. With this approach, the programme aims for continuous and intensive communication between students and their lecturers. Different assignments and formats are used, including written assignments, oral presentations, peer reviewing, or research interview practise.

During the site visit, the committee learned that the tutorials ensure that students can create their own programme, geared towards their research interest. For a tutorial, students contact a lecturer of their choice and together decide on the format and content. Tutorials can also include a research

internship or attending and/or setting up a research colloquium at one of the research schools involved. Students are encouraged to organise tutorials in small groups. All tutorials have to be approved by the Board of Examiners. Currently, the process of tutorials is being aligned by creating an overview of available tutorials and lecturers for tutorials.

The alumni the committee met with, value the small scale character of the programme, the peer reviews and the connection to their mentor.

Recent developments

In 2020 the programme was offered online for a larger part. A central university page is available for information and frequently asked questions regarding the measures due to the corona virus. In addition, students can find all information on the coronavirus on the student portal. Students noted during the site visit that lecturers are understanding of the current situation, move deadlines and reduce some of the assignments. In addition, students remarked that lecturers are involved and actively inform how students are doing.

The site visit made clear that the experiences with online, interactive and blended learning have led to the ambition to integrate this more in the programme in the future, in addition to the onsite lectures.

Incoming students

The legal enrolment criteria apply to programme. The programme has a selective admission procedure in place, which includes submitting a motivation letter, a grade list highlighting an excellent academic record, a cv, two letters of recommendation by relevant experts, and, if applicable, other relevant documents such as language certificates and/or academic articles. Both tracks have their own Admission Board, each consisting of at least three senior members of staff. The Admission Board selects candidates on the basis of previously determined entry requirements. If needed, the Admissions Board conducts an inter-

view with candidates and/or asks for further documentation. The yearly intake varies between 20-30 students for the programme, with the AMLS track attracting slightly more students than the CL track.

Staff

Recently, both tracks have their own Director of Studies. During the site visit it was remarked that this allows for more time and attention for community building with staff and students.

Lecturers are also involved in the (research) master programmes of the other clusters (see introduction), this contributes to the embeddedness of the programme in the faculty. The programme aims for the design of the courses to reflect the research expertise and perspectives of the staff members.

Lectures of the core modules are also mentor, examiner and research traineeships/ theses supervisor in the programme. These lecturers are senior members of one of the five research centres within the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG); most lecturers come from the Research Centre for Arts in Society or the Research Centre for Media and Journalism Studies. In the 2017 review, ICOG received the scores 'very good' for the quality of its research, viability and relevance to society.

Lecturers are selected on the basis of their research expertise. All staff members have a strong national and international academic network, and are in close contact with the national research schools and the international worlds of art, culture, media and heritage. Through the staff's network, students are invited to participate in regular activities of ICOG's Arts in Society research centre. These include guest lectures, conferences and research colloquia, in which staff and PhD students regularly discuss ongoing research, research proposals and core publications.

In regular staff meetings the development, set-up and coherence of the programme and the two tracks are discussed.

For the CL track a Cultural Leader in Residence is appointed, who sees to it that the partner network is varied and steadily growing. The site visit made clear to the committee that the Cultural Leader in Residence is a liaison between the programme, students and external organisations that offer traineeships. The Cultural Leader in Residence also stays in contact with alumni and supports alumni if needed.

All staff members have obtained the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). One staff member has a Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ) and two are enrolled in the STQ-trajectory. New staff members immediately enrol into the UTQ programme under the guidance of an experienced colleague. When hiring new members of staff, attention is paid to English proficiency.

The CL track currently cooperates with three separate faculties within Roma Tre. In the double degree programme (aimed to be effective in academic year 2022 – 2023) this will be with one faculty. According to the programme, this change will benefit the development of a 'common' perspective on the role of arts in society.

Students the committee met with, value the role of the new Directors of Studies. Students feel heard and their recommendations are acted upon. This includes improving the (administrative) system of tutorials, introducing a buddy system for first and second year students and improving the information and communication about the programme. The students are also very appreciative of their lecturers and their extensive knowledge and experience.

Tutoring and student information

The programme recently implemented a mentor system in which students are assigned a mentor at the beginning of the programme. The mentor, a senior member of staff from the programme's core courses, guides students throughout their studies. This includes discussing choices in electives and research tutorials with student and the

Director of Studies. Addressed are which art discipline, or combination of art disciplines the student will focus on and what kind of theoretical perspective the student wishes to develop. The preferences discussed with the mentor determine the student's selection of electives in the first year and their specialisation in the second year. These choices are not rigid; in regular meetings with the mentor, students are encouraged to reflect on how their research interests are developing. The mentor and Director of Studies also actively gear students towards the different research schools and to relevant research groups, the committee learned during the site visit.

The mentor also supports students in finding a thesis supervisor in the second year of the programme, and (in the CL track) in finding a suitable traineeship. For this purpose, students are asked to write an overview of their research interests and of traineeship organisations where they would like to work. The students' ideas are presented in a meeting with the full permanent staff and the specially appointed Cultural Leader in Residence, who coordinates the relations with the network of partners. This meeting results in a list of possible traineeship organisations for each student. Staff members match the students' interests to available traineeship options in their international network. For each student a traineeship and thesis supervisor are assigned. With this system, the programme aims to ensure that all students can start their traineeship on time.

Alumni noted during the site visit that for students with a clear understanding of their research topic, the guidance is appropriate. For students who have not yet determined their research focus, more guidance may be desirable. The students the committee met with, have all different experiences regarding the involvement and support of their mentor.

Students are informed about the programme, the courses and the assessments by the Research Master coordinator, the Director of Studies, their lecturers and the digital learning environment. If

needed, students can also contact the programme's study advisor.

Facilities

Students specialising in literature take part in summer and winter schools and workshops/special lectures offered by the national research schools and ICOG. Students specialising in film and media, moreover, have access to UG's Film Archive & Media Archaeology Lab. The Groninger Museum offers tailor-made introductory and educational tours to the students in the Arts and Culture programme. And students can take an elective course on Art History that is taught in the museum by the museum's director. The Groninger Museum also offers extra-curricular guest lectures, symposia, and winter schools.

Students of the CL track have access to the library collection of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome (KNIR). The KNIR also hosts a five-day Spring School, which takes place at the end of the second semester of the first year and familiarises the students with Rome's academic and cultural networks.

The student association (for all research master students in the Faculty of Arts) organises various social and informative activities during the introduction week and throughout the year. This includes a career event in cooperation with the university's Career Services Centre.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the programme (and both tracks) enables students to realise the intended learning outcomes. For both tracks, the intended learning outcomes are translated in course-specific learning outcomes which are stipulated in the course manual or syllabus.

The programme is academically grounded and supported. The focus on fundamental research is reflected in the structure and content of both tracks and (core) courses. The programme is closely tied in with the research of different research institutes and the lecturers involved. This contributes to the strong academic focus and

topicality of both tracks and the courses. In addition, the committee concludes that topics such as research ethics are addressed. And that students complete the whole research cycle during the programme in formulating their own research project which leads to their thesis.

As mentioned before, the committee also establishes that the research institutes involved were reviewed positively in 2016. Both ICOG and CLCG were rated 'very good' in all three categories; GIA received a 'very good' assessment in Scientific Relevance and 'good' on Viability and Relevance to Society.

The committee also notes that the programme is strongly student-centred. Both tracks provide students with ample opportunity to create their own learning path. The electives, tutorials, individual mentoring and the traineeship (in the CL track) contribute to this. The committee is of the opinion that within this structure continuous attention for building and monitoring the community is important.

Regarding the CL track, the committee recommends to examine the added value of the semester in Rome and how this contributes to students research skills and research interests. Especially since alumni noted that their stay in Rome did not affect their research.

The committee appreciates the interactive and small-scale teaching methods used and especially the tutorials. This allows for in-depth discussions that meet the level and intensity of a research master programme. Based on the studied documents, the committee concludes that relevant and up-to-date literature and articles are used in the programme.

The international character of the programme is reflected in the international profile of the staff involved, the international students attending and the international character of the fields of study and research. The committee therefore concludes that the international name of the programme is more than appropriate. In addition, the

committee establishes that the lecturers involved are experienced in English-language teaching to students from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds.

The committee notes that the programme has been in organisational turmoil. The recent appointment of two Directors of Studies, one for each track, is however already showing results. Students noted that their feedback is heard and acted upon. Although this is now being addressed by the new Directors of Studies, the committee urges the programme to improve the communication with and information provided to students. In addition, the committee recommends the programme to further improve the mentoring system. This is especially helpful for students who do not have a clear vision on their research topic.

During the online assessment, the committee met very competent, strongly qualified and enthusiastic staff members. Lecturers are very engaged with students and the programme. The committee also values the highly international character of lecturers, the varied disciplinary backgrounds of lecturers and that lecturers are very active in (international) research and renowned research schools as well. As said before, this is also reflected in the courses. Lecturers put their contacts inside and outside academia to good use for their students.

The legal enrolment criteria are applicable to the programme. The selection procedure ensures that motivated students enrol the programme. The facilities available are adequate.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

3. Student assessment

The committee concludes that the programme has an effective assessment system in place. The intended learning outcomes are at the basis of this system. Effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments, by using the four-eyes principle, the assessment plan, assessment criteria and written feedback. Students value the feedback from their lecturers and an appropriate variety in forms of assessment is used. The committee recommends the programme to be stricter in meeting deadlines regarding grading assessments. The Board of Examiners and the ReMa expert team are effectively organised and safeguard the quality of the assessments and the end level of the programme. The committee concludes that the programme meets the criteria for this standard.

Findings

The programme aims for an assessment system that is valid, reliable, and transparent. Valid implies that tests are relevant and that the assessment form is chosen in accordance with the intended learning outcomes. This entails a strong focus on the assessment of research and presentation skills. Reliable implies, according to the programme, that assessments deliver comparable results in courses with different teachers. Transparent means that students are provided with an accurate understanding of how the intended learning outcomes are assessed. The course manuals include information about the forms of assessment, including assessment criteria, weighing of the various components and resit possibilities.

The matrix of realised learning outcomes and the assessment plan are used to ensure validity and reliability of the assessments. In addition, only lecturers who have been appointed as examiners by the Board of Examiners can design exams and assignments. And in designing assessments the four-eyes principle is used: the set-up of the assessment is discussed among the core staff before the assessment takes place. For the CL track, the programme aims to organise calibration sessions for the assessment of the theses and course units that are co-taught and are assessed by staff from both universities.

The programme also aims for continuous assessment, as this supports the learning process of the

students. This implies that students are assessed throughout the course through formative assessments with corresponding moments for feedback. The assessment formats tie in with the research-oriented nature of the programme. Students for example practise how to assess existing research in their fields and how to set up and carry out new research projects. The assessment formats also invite students to assess concrete case studies, come up with alternative solutions, and suggest possible courses of action towards the future.

Different assessment forms are used in the programme, including (written or orally presented) critical summaries of pre-circulated reading, peer reviews of different assignments and participation in discussion. Final assessments include written exams, essays and oral presentations. For courses or tutorials taken elsewhere, a procedure is in place, involving approval of the Board of Examiners, the Director of Studies and the supervisor (the latter is involved in the case of tutorials). The programme recently adjusted the rubrics for the thesis assessment form based on calibration sessions with core staff members.

Students of the CL track make an assessment dossier for the Roman courses, which they defend before a forum of Roma Tre lecturers at the end of the course. For the CL track, the programme expects that the double degree programme will lead to a further unification of teaching and assessment formats.

Students remarked during the site visit that the deadlines in reviewing and grading their assignments are not always met by their lecturers. Students also noted that the assessment criteria are clear to them; these are part of the course materials and discussed during the lectures. In general, the grading is fair and students value the feedback from and contact with their lecturers.

Board of Examiners

The programme is under the responsibility of the faculty's centralised Board of Examiners. This board consists of six expert teams that each address matters at programme level. The Arts & Culture programme falls under the remit of the research master expert team (ReMa expert team). The chair of this team is also a member of the central Board of Examiners. The Faculty has appointed an independent assessment professional ('toetsdeskundige') who advises the different expert teams.

The ReMa expert team consists of five members that meet on a monthly basis. The ReMa expert team checks whether the Teaching and Examination Regulations have been implemented correctly and whether the courses correctly assess the learning outcomes. All compulsory courses and/or lecturers are evaluated at least once every three years. This evaluation is based on an assessment folder containing all documents related to the assessment of a course, submitted and signed by all lecturers of the course. The ReMa expert team also evaluates courses if the student evaluations or discussions in the Programme Committee suggest that this is necessary. In addition, the ReMa expert team checks the assessment of theses.

The meeting with representatives from the Board of Examiners and the ReMa expert team made clear that regarding the assessment of the thesis, both examiners fill out an assessment form. This ensures that the input of both examiners is recognisable and visible. The expert team also

checks the quality of the theses by randomly reviewing a sample of theses. The periodic evaluation of courses also includes the traineeship of the CL track. The expert team is not involved in the quality assurance of the assessments at Roma Tre University. This falls under the responsibility of the Roma Tre University.

Students' remarks about the sometimes extended deadlines in reviewing assessments, are recognised and acted upon by the Board of Examiners. This usually leads to an individual meeting with the lecturer involved.

Recent developments

In 2020 the programme was offered online for a larger part. This did not have a large effect on assessments methods, as the programme uses continuous assessment and final assignments which could easily be arranged online. The Board of Examiners provided examiners with the principles and guidance to help them navigate during the assessment weeks and to make sure that the need for extraordinary measures was balanced with the need of maintaining professional standards.

Considerations

The committee concludes that an adequate system of assessment is in place. The quality assurance of the assessment system is solid and effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments. These include using the four-eye principle, the use of an assessment plan, assessment criteria and written feedback.

In general, the level of the different assessments studied by the committee during the online assessment was good. The committee also notes that an appropriate variety in forms of assessment is used. Students value the feedback they receive from their lecturers and consider the grading to be fair. Deadlines in grading assessments however are not always met. The committee recommends the programme to take appropriate action in this.

The Board of Examiners and the ReMa expert team are active in safeguarding the quality of the assessments. The expert team randomly checks the quality of the theses, assessments and traineeships. The board and expert team also acted upon the recommendations made by the prior accreditation committee.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

4. Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the studied documents and the interviews, the committee concludes that graduates of the research master programme achieve the required level and the intended learning outcomes. It was confirmed in the meeting with students and alumni that they are capable of creating their own career path as a PhD or researcher within their specific field in- and outside academia. The committee concludes that the overall academic quality of the studied theses is good and agreed with the grades given. The feedback given to students is elaborate and thoughtful. The studied theses of the CL track do not always reflect the vision of the track. In addition, the interdisciplinary character of the programme is not always visible in the studied theses of both tracks. The committee concludes that the programme meets the criteria for this standard.

Findings

The programme is finalised by the research master thesis (30 EC) and completing the traineeship (CL-track only). The aims, procedures, deadlines and assessment (including rubrics) of the thesis are described in the Thesis Regulations. In the thesis, all intended learning outcomes converge.

Both tracks organise thesis classes in which students work on a proposal for their thesis. These courses offer support and guidance in how to construct (theory, methodology and time frame) and write a research proposal.

AMLS

The thesis is written during the last semester of the programme. This is the final project in which students demonstrate that they are able to carry out an academically sound research project in a responsible and independent way, and to communicate the results in an appropriate manner. The programme notes that the extensive thesis project prepares students for taking on responsible and independent analytical and critical research tasks in their future professions. The level of argumentation and the mastery of the relevant literature should be such that the thesis can be reworked into an article for a peer reviewed academic journal. The thesis is supervised by a senior researcher. If needed, for example because of complementary expertise, a second supervisor is involved.

CL

Students of the CL track present their concept thesis proposals during the winter school and receive feedback and input from staff and peers. The final proposals are submitted half-way through the year (in February). During their research-driven traineeship, students devote one day a week to writing their thesis. The thesis is completed after the traineeship. The thesis topic is closely related to the research project carried out during the traineeship and the empirical data gathered during the traineeship serve as a basis for the thesis. The programme notes that the thesis should have a stronger theoretical perspective than the professional document. The thesis is expected to provide suggestions for future academic research, can become a starting point for a PhD proposal and should be of such quality that it can be reworked into a peer-reviewed academic publication.

In both tracks, the first reader supervises and grades the student's thesis; if there are two supervisors, they decide together upon a grade. The second reader (or a third reader if two supervisors have been involved) grades the thesis independently. Both provide the student with written feedback in the thesis assessment form. As mentioned before, the thesis assessment form has recently been revised. The form now includes a separate rubric for the extent to which the final project is deemed publishable. And a separate form for the second (or third) supervisor is used.

The committee learned during the site visit that the alumni are in general content about the guidance and supervision in writing their thesis.

Based on an evaluation amongst alumni, the programme notes that graduates from both tracks have found (junior) research positions (including PhD positions), as well as advisory and management roles in the arts, heritage and media sector and in public administration. Alumni remarked during the site visit that they are invited to attend the winter school and feel free to stay in contact with their mentor.

Considerations

The committee concludes that, for both tracks, the programme has an adequate graduation procedure in place. In assessing students' master thesis two (or three) examiners are involved of whom the second (or third) examiner has an independent role. The committee values the recent revision of the assessment form, in which the contribution of all examiners has been made more visible.

To assess whether students achieve the required end-level and the intended learning outcomes, the committee studied 15 theses, representing both tracks. Based on this, the committee is of the opinion that the quality of the studied theses is good and that students achieve the required master's level.

In general, the committee concludes that the studied theses of both tracks are thorough and that the themes discussed are overarching and very broad. In addition, the committee notes that the themes of the CL theses do not always reflect the programme's vision. This is partly due to the fact that students are free to choose their own research direction, the committee learned during the site visit. Moreover, the committee is under the impression that the interdisciplinary character of both tracks is not always apparent in the studied theses.

The assessment forms provide students with thoughtful and elaborate qualitative feedback, that reflects the grades given and does justice to the thesis. The committee notes that the extra rubric on whether the thesis is publishable (see standard 3) is not always assessed.

The meetings with students and alumni during the online assessment confirmed the good level of the programme. The students and alumni the committee met with, are capable of creating their own career path within their chosen field, inside and outside academia.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

Prof. dr. A. (Annick) Schramme	Annick Schramme is professor cultural management at Antwerp University. She is academic director of the Master Cultuurmanagement and of the Summerschool in Fashion Management in cooperation with l'Institut de La Mode (IFM) in Paris.
Prof. dr. A. (Arjo) Klamer	Arjo Klamer is professor emeritus (since 2019) of Cultural Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam. His research focuses on the cultural dimension of economic life and the values of art.
Dr. P.C. (Peter) Sonderen	Peter Sonderen is Professor (Lector) of Theory in the Arts, ArtEZ Institute of the Arts and Head Honours Programme Theory and research, ArtEZ University of the Arts.
A. (Alice) Quinn Banville, MA	Alice Quinn Banville is research master student Arts & Culture at University of Amsterdam.

The panel was supported by Titia Busing, MSc.

Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

March 19, 2021

08.30 - 08.45	Welcome by Faculty Board
08.45 - 09.45	Meeting management Arts & Culture
10.00 - 11.00	Meeting students Arts & Culture
11.15 - 12.00	Meeting staff Arts & Culture
13.15 - 14.00	Meeting Board of Examiners
14.15 - 15.15	Meeting alumni
15.15 - 16.45	Panel deliberation
16.45 - 17.00	Presentation preliminary findings

Attachment 3 Documents

- Self-evaluation report, including appendices
- Update regarding the impact of COVID
- Teaching and Examination Regulations
- Overview staff members
- Course manuals, assessments and essays of several courses of each track
- Annual report Programme committee 2017-2018
- Annual report Programme committee 2018-2019
- Annual report Programme committee 2019-2020
- Programme committee manual Faculty of Arts 20-21
- Minutes Programme committee meetings
- Assessment plan
- Annual report Board of Examiners 2018-2019
- Annual report Board of Examiners 2019-2020
- Overview of alumni
- Overview of CL partner network
- Theses of 16 students, including assessment forms

