COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

CONTENTS

This report was finalised on 3 October 2019.

REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point (September 2016).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMMES

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

Name of the programme:	Communicatie- en Informatiewetenschappen
International name of the programme:	Communication and Information Studies
CROHO number:	56826
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or variants:	Communication and Information Studies Dutch variant
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full-time
Language of instruction:	English*
Submission date NVAO:	01/11/2019

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

Name of the programme:	Communicatie- & Informatiewetenschappen
International name of the programme:	Communication & Information Studies
CROHO number:	60
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	66826 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Communication Studies (Dutch)
	Communication and Education (Dutch)
	Computer Communication (Dutch)
	Information Science (English)
	Digital Humanities (English)
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full-time
Language of instruction:	Dutch, English
Expiration of accreditation:	01/11/2019

* English is the language of instruction of the bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies. Students may choose a variant of the programme that is (partially) taught in Dutch, see Appendix 2.

The visit of the assessment panel Communication and Information Sciences & Media Studies to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen took place on 15, 16 and 17 May 2019.

The master's programme proposes to change the awarded master grade for the track Information Science from Master of Arts to Master of Science (see Standard 1).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution: University of Groningen
Status of the institution: publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment: positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 20 August 2018. The panel that assessed the bachelor's and the master's programme Communication and Information Studies consisted of:
- Prof. dr. D. (Daniël) Biltereyst, professor in Social Sciences at Ghent University and director of the Center for Cinema and Media Studies (CIMS) [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. P.C. (Peter) Neijens, emeritus professor Media and Persuasion at the University of Amsterdam (chair);
- Prof. dr. G. (Geert) Jacobs, professor Language for Specific Purposes and head of the Linguistics Department of Ghent University;
- Em. prof. dr. J. (Jo) Bardoel, emeritus professor Communication Science at Radboud University Nijmegen;
- Prof. dr. W. (Wilco) Hazeleger, director/CEO of the Netherlands eScience Center (NLeSC);
- Ms. A.C.M.F. (Aimée) Overhof, BA, recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Online Culture at Tilburg University [student member].

The panel was supported by drs. Renate Prenen, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The site visit to the bachelor's and master's programme Communication and Information Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Communication and Information Sciences & Media Studies. Between October 2018 and May 2019 the panel assessed 23 programmes at 9 universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Maastricht University, Radboud University, University of Groningen, Tilburg University, University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, Utrecht University, and VU Amsterdam.

On behalf of the participating universities, quality assurance agency QANU was responsible for logistical support, panel guidance and the production of the reports. Dr. Irene Conradie was project coordinator for QANU. She also acted as secretary in the assessments at Leiden University and University of Amsterdam. The remaining assessments of the cluster were guided by independent NVAO-certified secretaries. Drs. Renate Prenen acted as secretary in the assessments at Maastricht University, Radboud University, University of Groningen, and VU Amsterdam. Drs. Linda te Marvelde acted as secretary in the assessments at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Tilburg University, and Utrecht University.

Panel members
The members of the assessment panel were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence. The panel consisted of the following members:
- Prof. dr. D. (Daniël) Biltereyst, professor of Film and Media Studies at Ghent University and director of the Center for Cinema and Media Studies [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C.J.M. (Carel) Jansen, emeritus professor of Communication and Information Studies at University of Groningen [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. P.C. (Peter) Neijens, emeritus professor of Media and Persuasion at the University of Amsterdam;

- Em. prof. dr. J.L.H. (Jo) Bardoel, emeritus professor of Communication Science at Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. W. (Wilco) Hazeleger, director/CEO of the Netherlands eScience Center (NLeSC);
- Prof. dr. O.M. (Odile) Heynders, professor of Comparative Literature at Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. J.C. (Jaap) de Jong, professor of Journalism and New Media and chairman of the Media Studies programme at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. G. (Geert) Jacobs, professor of Language for Specific Purposes and head of the Linguistics Department of Ghent University;
- Dr. J. (Joyce) Karreman, assistant professor of Communication Science at University of Twente;
- Drs. J. (Judith) Mulder, co-founder and director of FirMM Information + Service Design;
- Drs. M. (Maike) Olij, freelance media consultant and concept developer;
- Prof. dr. S. (Steve) Paulussen, professor of Media and Journalism at University of Antwerp;
- Prof. dr. P.P.R.W. (Patricia) Pisters, professor of Film Studies and Media Studies at University of Amsterdam;
- Dr. B. (Bert) Pol, founder and managing partner at Tabula Rasa, an organisation specialised in behaviour change and communication;
- Dr. E.M.C. (Els) van der Pool, assistant professor of Human Communication Development at the HAN University of Applied Sciences;
- Dr. M. (Mir) Wermuth, founder and owner of Blinkering, an organisation for programme management in the creative industry;
- Drs. G. (Gaby) Wijers, founder and director at LIMA, an international platform for sustainable access to media art;
- Ms. M. (Monique) Kloosterman, BA, master's student Communication Science at University of Groningen [student member];
- Ms. A.C.M.F. (Aimée) Overhof, BA, recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in Online Culture at Tilburg University [student member];
- Ms. B.D.H. (Biba) Becker, bachelor's student Online Culture at Tilburg University [student member].

Preparation
On 20 August 2018, the panel chairs and vice chairs (prof. dr. Daniël Biltereyst, em. prof. dr. Carel Jansen, em. prof. dr. Peter Neijens) were briefed by QANU on their role, the assessment framework, the working method, and the planning of site visits and reports. A preparatory panel meeting was organised on the same day. During this meeting, the panel members were instructed in the use of the assessment framework as well as its principle that the panel operates on the basis of trust and conducts an assessment by peers. The panel also discussed their working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

The project coordinator composed a schedule for the site visit to the University of Groningen in consultation with the Faculty. Prior to the site visit, the Faculty selected representative partners for the various interviews. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit to University of Groningen, QANU received the self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the panel. A thesis selection was made by the panel's chair and the project coordinator. The selection consisted of fifteen theses and their assessment forms for each programme, based on a provided list of recent graduates. A variety of topics, tracks and examiners were included in the selection. The project coordinator and panel chair ensured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

After studying the self-evaluation report, theses and assessment forms, the panel members formulated their preliminary findings. The secretary collected all of the initial questions and remarks and distributed them among the panel members.

At the start of the site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation report and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

Site visit
The site visit to University of Groningen took place on 15, 16 and 17 May 2019. Before and during the site visit, the panel studied the additional documents provided by the programme. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. It conducted interviews with representatives of the programme: students and staff members (including representatives of the Programme Committee), the programme's management, alumni, and representatives of the Examination Board.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

Report
After the site visit, the secretary prepared a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to QANU for peer assessment. Subsequently, she sent the reports to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project coordinator forwarded the draft report to the Faculty for checking for factual irregularities. The project coordinator discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair, and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty and University Board.

Consistency and calibration
In order to ensure the consistency of the assessment within the cluster, various measures were taken:
1. The panel composition ensured regular attendance of key panel members, including the chair;
2. The coordinator was present at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at all site visits;
3. Calibration meetings took place on 13 February 2019 and 28 May 2019. During these meetings, the panel chairs (with the exception of Em. Prof. Dr. Carel Jansen on 13 February 2019 due to unforeseen family circumstances), vice chair, and QANU project coordinator discussed the working method and the assessments.

Definition of judgements standards
In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

Generic quality
The quality that, in an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

Unsatisfactory
The programme does not meet the generic quality standard and shows shortcomings with respect to multiple aspects of the standard.

Satisfactory
The programme meets the generic quality standard across its entire spectrum.

Good
The programme systematically surpasses the generic quality standard.

Excellent
The programme systematically well surpasses the generic quality standard and is regarded as an international example.

Communication and Information Studies, University of Groningen

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes
The panel is positive about the profile of the bachelor´s programme Communication and Information Studies (CIS) and the transition to an international and intercultural programme, with a separate Dutch variant. Yet, it ascertained that the concept of interculturalisation could be further elaborated and implemented in the programme's profile, intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and design. It also found that there could be a clearer vision and profiling of the international versus the Dutch variant in order to serve both groups of students well.

The ILOs of the bachelor's programme are of an adequate academic bachelor's level and in line with national and international requirements. The panel appreciates the link to the professional field. There is an active Advisory Board that gives valuable information and advice about e.g. developments in the field, the connection of the programme to these developments and the overall quality of the programme.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment
The panel established that the bachelor's programme CIS is designed in such a way that it enables students to achieve the ILOs. The setup of the programme, with obligatory learning trajectories, electives and the minor, gives students the opportunity to design their own programme in a cohesive manner that suits their academic interests and career plans.

From the course samples, the overview of the curriculum and interviews with the management, staff and students of the programme, the panel concludes that the content suits an adequate bachelor´s level and is adequately aligned with the programme-specific learning outcomes. The panel is positive about the academic orientation of the programme. In the programme the students learn relevant academic knowledge and insights in the domain of CIS. They also acquire academic skills and are given opportunities to develop their academic and research skills. The panel is satisfied with the attention paid to practical applications and skills within the programme. However, it ascertained that more could be done to increase the opportunities for the students to get acquainted with the professional field. It also recommends broadening the skills part of the programme by including advisory skills as they often prove to be valuable in various fields of communication.

The panel is satisfied with the setup of the individual courses. The teaching methods are in line with the learning outcomes and course contents. The panel appreciates the small-scale classes and seminars which positively contribute to the students' involvement and (inter)active learning. It also appreciates the organisation and guidance of the thesis trajectory. The programme is feasible within the nominal study duration.

The panel is positive about the quality and commitment of the teaching staff. The students are taught by lecturers with a solid background in the field of communication and information studies. They value the involvement and accessibility of their lecturers. The panel ascertained there are various faculty-wide factors that negatively influence the staff's work satisfaction, including a high workload and an unbalanced composition of and burden on staff. Due to different circumstances, the pressure on CIS staff is currently higher than normal, but is likely to be relieved somewhat by the expected staff expansion in the near future. According to the panel, the faculty management should work on structural solutions based on a comprehensive and integrated plan. It also ascertained that programmes within this accreditation assessment operate relatively independently of each other and have few connections with other programmes within the faculty. This is a missed opportunity as programmes can benefit and learn from more collaboration. The panel advises considering how the mutual cohesion and collaboration in and between various programmes can be strengthened.

Standard 3: Assessment
The panel concluded that the bachelor's programme CIS has an adequate assessment system. The tests match the level and content specified in the programme-level learning outcomes, and the assessment methods are aligned with the content and design of the courses. The panel appreciates that the 'four eyes principle' is always applied when drafting exams. It is also positive about the attention paid to feedback given to students. The assessment of the bachelor's thesis takes place in an adequate manner. The panel agrees with the assessment form; it particularly values the addition of criteria related to the thesis process. Yet, it also concluded that the transparency of the assessments could be increased by having the first and second assessors fill out an assessment form independently of each other rather than a jointly completed form.

The quality control of the testing and examinations is adequate. The panel is positive about the functioning of the new Examination Board: it clearly contributes to the quality assurance and control of the testing and evaluation within the programme. It encourages the Board to develop policies to proactively monitor and stimulate the internal consistency of thesis assessments, in addition to the checks afterwards. For example, the programme management could, in consultation with the Examination Board, organise calibration sessions with staff members at the programme level.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes
The panel studied a selection of bachelor's theses and found that their overall quality was satisfactory. They sufficiently demonstrated an academic attitude and understanding. They also testified to considerable skill in executing research and reporting on it. The alumni of the programme are quite successful in their further educational/professional careers. Overall, the panel concluded that they achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes
The panel concluded that the profiles of the separate master's tracks are sufficiently clear and in line with developments in the field. With respect to the overall profile of the master's programme Communication and Information Studies (CIS), the panel ascertained that there is room for further improvement. It advises seeking more coherence on the programme level, and increasing the collaboration and cross-fertilisation between the tracks and with other programmes, such as Media Studies.

The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the master's programme CIS are of an adequate academic master´s level, respectively, and in line with national and international requirements. With regard to the planned evaluation of the learning outcomes, the panel advises carefully looking for a good balance between generic and track-specific outcomes in order to emphasise the overall coherence of the programme and do justice to the differences between the tracks. The panel appreciates the link to the professional field. There is an active Advisory Board that gives valuable information and advice about e.g. developments in the field, the connection of the programme to these developments and the overall quality of the programme.

The panel approves the request to award the degree Master of Science (MSc) to Information Studies master track graduates. It provides a good connection between undergraduate and postgraduate education with the same degree and promotes international recognisability: the programme has a strong emphasis on information science and technology, and similar Information Science(s) programmes also award the MSc degree.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment
The panel established that the master's programme CIS is designed in such a way that it enables students to achieve the ILOs. The separate master's tracks are sufficiently coherent. The overall coherence of and interconnection within the master´s programme, including the thesis trajectories, could be enhanced.

From the course samples, the overview of the curriculum and interviews with the management, staff and students of the programme, the panel concludes that the content suits an adequate master's level and is adequately aligned with the programme-specific learning outcomes. The panel is positive about the academic orientation of the programme. In the programme the students learn relevant academic knowledge and insights in the domain of CIS and are given opportunities to develop their academic and research skills. The panel is also content with the attention paid to practical applications and skills within the programme.

The panel is satisfied with the setup of the individual courses. The teaching methods are in line with the learning outcomes and course contents. The panel appreciates the small-scale classes and seminars which positively contribute to the students' involvement and (inter)active learning. It also appreciates the organisation and guidance of the thesis trajectory. The programme is feasible within the nominal study duration. However, the feasibility is challenged by multiple factors, including an unbalanced spread of workload, the demanding scheduling of the thesis and internship, a potential lack of essential prior knowledge/skills, and two enrolment moments. The panel advises mitigating the risks of study delay by further exploring these issues and taking additional measures. It explicitly recommends discontinuing the second intake moment in February.

The panel is positive about the quality and commitment of the teaching staff. The students are taught by lecturers with a solid background in the field of communication and information studies. They value the involvement and accessibility of their lecturers. The panel ascertained there are various faculty-wide factors that negatively influence the staff's work satisfaction, including a high workload and an unbalanced composition of and burden on staff. Due to different circumstances, the pressure on CIS staff is currently higher than normal, but is likely to be relieved somewhat by the expected staff expansion in the near future. According to the panel, the faculty management should work on structural solutions based on a comprehensive and integrated plan. It also ascertained that programmes within this accreditation assessment operate relatively independently of each other and have few connections with other programmes within the faculty. This is a missed opportunity as programmes can benefit and learn from more collaboration. The panel advises considering how the mutual cohesion and collaboration in and between various programmes can be strengthened.

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The quality control of the testing and examinations is adequate. The panel is positive about the functioning of the new Examination Board: it clearly contributes to the quality assurance and control of the testing and evaluation within the programme. It encourages the Board to develop policies to proactively monitor and stimulate the internal consistency of thesis assessments, in addition to the checks afterwards. For example, it suggests organising calibration sessions with staff members at the programme level.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes
The panel studied a selection of master's theses and found that their overall quality was satisfactory. They sufficiently demonstrated an academic attitude and understanding. They also testified to considerable skill in executing research and reporting on it. The alumni are quite successful in their further professional careers. Overall, the panel concluded that they achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes   satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment   satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment   satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes   satisfactory

General conclusion   satisfactory

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes   satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment   satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment   satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes   satisfactory

General conclusion   satisfactory

The chair, prof. dr. Daniël Biltereyst, and the secretary, drs. Renate Prenen, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 3 October 2019

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

> **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

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies
The bachelor's programme in Communication and Information Studies (CIS) has a focus on language and the study of communication and media from a strongly linguistic perspective. A full multimodal and embodied interpretation of the term language is applied. This means that during their studies, all students encounter a wide variety of communicative settings and products. The panel finds that the emphasis on language gives focus to the programme and contributes positively to its distinctive character. It appreciates that language is considered across the board in its further elaboration, so the programme does not become too narrow (see Standard 2).

Starting from September 2018, CIS has become an international, English-taught programme, a switch which will be implemented incrementally over the next few years. A Dutch variant was developed within the CIS programme to cater to students who wish to prepare more specifically for the Dutch labour market. The programme has formulated a set of intended learning outcomes organised around the five Dublin Descriptors (see Appendix 1). According to the panel, these learning outcomes are in line with national and international standards for bachelor's degree programmes.

During the site visit, the panel spoke with the management and lecturers about the transition to an international programme. It learned from these conversations that the transition is driven by the ambition to create an intercultural programme and learning environment. Because the field of communication and information studies is becoming more and more international, in both the academic and professional domain, the staff considers an awareness of intercultural communication as well as the development of intercultural competences to be crucial for future communication experts. The staff aims for a comprehensive integration of intercultural perspectives and skills throughout the programme. The panel supports these developments. Yet, it ascertained there is still much work to be done. It encourages the staff to further elaborate and implement the concept of interculturalisation in the profile and learning outcomes, as well as in the content and learning environment of the programme. In this light, it was pleased to learn about the application for a Comenius Senior Fellow grant for an educational innovation project to promote internationalisation of the CIS programmes.

With regard to the Dutch variant, the panel noticed that in practice, this variant is not very different from the international variant, in the sense that the two variants have the same intended learning outcomes and the courses largely overlap (see Appendix 2). As the interview with the students showed, students from both variants follow the same English-taught lectures most of the time. Only some courses and parts of others of the Dutch variant are in Dutch. The panel therefore questioned whether it is fruitful to organise a separate Dutch variant in its present shape. As emphasised by the staff, they feel a great responsibility to provide the students with an opportunity to practice and develop their academic skills in Dutch and to prepare themselves specifically for the Dutch labour market. The panel appreciates this. Yet, it feels that, in order to serve both groups of students properly, a more profound vision and strategy are required. Therefore, it advises reconsidering the profiling, also in the light of the programme's shift towards a stronger focus on interculturalisation.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies
The goal of the master's programme CIS at the University of Groningen is to facilitate students to acquire knowledge of and insight into the forms, functions, and effects of a broad range of

interactions involving humans and technology, different media, and a variety of datafication processes. It aims to teach students to make valuable contributions to the effectiveness and efficiency of communication and information processing, analyses, and representations in various organisational and research settings. Its focus is on disciplines within the humanities, in particular communication studies and linguistics. It also integrates subfields of computer science and establishes bridges between these disciplines. More specifically, it builds connections between communication and education studies, communication and computing, linguistics and computing, and humanities studies in general and computing. This inter- and multidisciplinarity is implemented in five different tracks: 1. Communication Studies; 2. Communication and Education; 3. Computer Communication; 4. Digital Humanities; and 5. Information Science. Three tracks are English-taught: Computer Communication, Digital Humanities and Information Science. See Appendix 2 for a short description of each track. The five tracks share a set of learning outcomes that are organised around the Dublin Descriptors (cf. Appendix 1). Two learning outcomes (i.e. learning outcomes 1.1 and 2.2) are specified per track; the other outcomes apply to all tracks.

During the site visit, the panel spoke with staff and students about the profile of the overall CIS programme and that of the five different tracks. It noted that, from an outsider's view, it is hard to grasp the rationale behind the choices of the current tracks. It ascertained that there are overlaps between the tracks, in terms of profile and content, as well as similarities with other programmes within the faculty and university, for example the master's programme Media Studies. Some of the tracks attract only a few students, e.g. Computer Communication and Communication and Education. The development of a new international programme on communication and citizenship is being considered. At the same time, the panel ascertained that the tracks are quite stand-alone, with limited connections between the tracks and with other programmes. As explained by the students, they feel that their track is their home base, and they hardly intermingle with students from other tracks.

According to the panel, the profiles of the separate tracks are clearly described in the self-evaluation report. They respond adequately to contemporary developments in the field, which is also apparent from the success of their alumni (see Standard 4). In the panel's opinion, however, the overall CIS programme is rather fragmented. It also thinks that the limited connecting points between the tracks and with other programmes are missed opportunities. The management agreed with these observations and explained that the master's programme CIS has grown this way historically. It aims to reconsider the profile of the programme and make adjustments in the coming period. The panel fully supports this intention. It advises striving for more cohesion within the master's programme from an integral and widely supported master´s plan and also for stronger collaboration and cross-fertilisation between the tracks and with other programmes, particularly the Media Studies programmes.

Graduates of the master's degree programme in Communication and Information Studies are awarded the degree Master of Arts (MA). The programme management indicated to the panel that the Information Science master track would prefer to award the degree Master of Science (MSc). The self-evaluation report outlined the following reasoning behind this proposal: firstly, the bachelor's programme Information Science has recently changed its awarded degree into a Bachelor of Science. As the Information Science master track is a natural continuation of that programme, it would be consistent to award graduates of the master track with a MSc degree. Secondly, the MSc degree may be advantageous for the graduates, giving them a starting position on the job market that is comparable (although not equal) to that of AI, computer science or data science alumni. Thirdly, certain relevant PhD programmes (international) require applicants to have obtained an MSc degree. Finally, the MSc degree highlights the technical nature of the programme, which can help to attract students with the required technical interest. The panel approves this request because it provides a good connection between undergraduate and postgraduate education with the same degree and promotes international recognisability: the programme has a strong emphasis on information science and technology, and similar Information Science(s) programmes also award the MSc degree, e.g. at VU Amsterdam, Radboud University and Utrecht University.

The panel studied the learning outcomes and established they are in agreement with national and international standards. It finds the learning outcomes to be quite generic, which can be explained by the accommodation of a diversity of tracks under one label. The reconsideration of the programme's profile will be accompanied by an evaluation of the learning outcomes. The panel advises carefully looking for a good balance in this process between generic and track-specific outcomes in order to emphasise the overall coherence of the programme and do justice to the differences between the tracks. Specifically, it considers this a good opportunity for the Information Science master track to highlight its more technical nature.

The panel ascertained that an Advisory Board is consulted twice a year on the developments and innovations in the field and the connection of the CIS bachelor's and master's programmes to the current and potential labour market. In this way, the programmes remain sufficiently up-to-date and fit in with the professional field. The self-evaluation report contained an overview of the main recommendations of the Advisory Board and the reactions of and measures taken by the programmes. According to the panel, this overview was highly informative and showed the very useful, critical role of this Advisory Board. The panel also appreciated the way the programmes responded to the Board's comments and advice. In its opinion, this collaboration with an advisory board is a good example for other programmes.

Considerations
The panel is positive about the profile of the bachelor´s programme and the transition to an international and intercultural programme, with a separate Dutch variant. Yet, it ascertained that the concept of interculturalisation could be further elaborated and implemented in the programme's profile, intended learning outcomes and design. It also found that there could be a clearer vision and profiling of the international versus the Dutch variant in order to serve both groups of students well. It concluded that the profiles of the separate master's tracks are sufficiently clear and in line with developments in the field. With respect to the overall profile of the master's programme CIS, the panel ascertained that there is room for further improvement. It advises seeking more coherence on the programme level, and increasing the collaboration and cross-fertilisation between the tracks and with other programmes, such as Media Studies.

The intended learning outcomes of the bachelor's and master's programmes CIS are of an adequate academic bachelor's and master´s level, respectively, and in line with national and international requirements. With regard to the master's programme's planned evaluation of the learning outcomes, the panel advises carefully looking for a good balance between generic and track-specific outcomes in order to emphasise the overall coherence of the programme and do justice to the differences between the tracks. The panel appreciates the link to the professional field. There is an active Advisory Board that gives valuable information and advice about e.g. developments in the field, the connection of the programmes to these developments and the overall quality of the programmes.

Conclusion
Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.

> **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

Programme: bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies
The three-year bachelor's programme CIS (180 EC) comprises 125 EC of compulsory courses (including a bachelor's thesis of 10 EC), which are organised in six learning trajectories: analysing communication; research methods; academic skills; communication design; corporate and marketing communication; and digital communication. Apart from the courses in these learning trajectories, the students also have a chance to create their own personal profile in a minor (30 EC) and by choosing five optional modules from the CIS programme (25 EC). Appendix 2 shows an overview of the programme. The Dutch variant consists of nine modules (indicated with an asterisk in Appendix 2). Students who follow the Dutch variant take these specific modules in Dutch, i.e. for these students the seminars, assignments, working materials and assessment are in Dutch.

The panel is satisfied with the design of the programme. The learning trajectories with obligatory courses enhance its coherence. The panel appreciates the possibilities the minor and the electives give to students to tailor their programme to either broaden their profile or prepare for a specific master's degree programme or a professional career. Yet, it feels that these components, with a total of 55 EC, form a relatively large part of the programme. It advises reconsidering this point. It established that the programme is well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes. An overview in the self-evaluation report adequately shows how the final objectives are linked to the different curriculum components.

The panel is also satisfied with the programme's content. It studied materials of several courses and noted with appreciation that a broad orientation towards a wide range of forms of communication is offered, i.e. all students encounter a wide variety of communicative settings and products. The programme has a strong focus on research. It advocates communication research from a multi-disciplinary perspective, which means that students are being taught to combine multiple research methods using qualitative and quantitative methods and statistics. The panel approves this multi-disciplinary research approach and sees it clearly reflected in the programme. In various courses within the learning trajectory *research methods*, they learn to apply a wide variety of research methods and statistics. The panel also appreciates the attention paid to the development of the students' academic skills. The courses within the learning trajectory *academic skills*, but also parts of other courses, are focused on academic skills such as research design, academic writing and oral presentation.

The panel observed that the students are of the opinion that the programme pays little attention to the professional field of communication. They feel they gain little insight into the labour market perspectives and are offered too little practical experience during their studies. They mentioned that most courses are very theoretical, and more could be done to connect these courses to the professional field. According to the staff, the programme involves first and foremost academic training, and particularly the academic and research skills distinguish graduates from, for example, those with a higher vocational education background. They emphasised that the programme does include practice-oriented components and activities like case studies and guest lectures. However, not all students associate these with their future professional practice. From the staff's point of view, a part of the problem can be overcome through a better clarification of the attention paid to professional practice as well as clear communication towards the students.

The panel values the programme's clear focus on academic and research skills. It supports the staff's intention to work on better clarification and communication around the concrete connections to the professional field. Yet, it also feels that more could be done to facilitate more opportunities for students to get acquainted with the professional field. It advises reconsidering this point. It also

advises broadening the skills part of the programme. Many graduates find employment in advisory roles in which they not only need analytical skills but also advisory skills like preparing a policy plan or a communication strategy.

Regarding the ambition to increase intercultural perspectives and skills throughout the programme, the panel noted that the first steps have been taken. A new course on intercultural communication has been included. Also, within the so-called international/intercultural classroom, lecturers pay attention to approaching topics from an intercultural perspective, with room for the students' different cultural backgrounds and experiences. The panel appreciates these initiatives. It encourages the staff to further explore and put into practice the concepts of intercultural communication and the international/intercultural classroom.

Students finish their programme with a thesis written as part of the 'Bachelor's thesis and seminar' course (10 EC). In the course, the students can subscribe to a specific theme or topic in the field of communication and information studies. During the first (plenary) part of the course, they have weekly seminars in which they discuss the literature, collect and analyse data, and develop their research questions and research design. In the second (individual) phase, they carry out their research and write their thesis under their lecturer's supervision. Based on the interviews with students and staff, the panel established that the thesis trajectory is functioning adequately. In its opinion, the curtailment of themes and methods as well as the strict procedures and deadlines have proved to work out well. With a view to the academic autonomy of students, it advises ensuring there are enough options for the students.

Programme: master's programme Communication and Information Studies
The master's programme CIS (60 EC) is a one-year programme with five tracks. The panel studied the information in the self-evaluation report about the setup of the individual tracks and the relationship and overlap between modules in the various tracks (see Appendix 2). It also discussed the content and design of the tracks with students, alumni and staff. It remarked that the tracks differ greatly from each other, although there are some overlaps. Some tracks mainly consist of compulsory modules, while others offer more optional modules. Likewise, the internship is compulsory for a number of tracks, but not for others. The panel considers the individual tracks to be well-organised, sufficiently coherent, allowing students to achieve the programme's objectives. As matrices in the self-evaluation report show, all tracks are properly aligned with the rather generic intended learning outcomes. The interviewed students and alumni showed their enthusiasm about the setup of their specific tracks. Yet, the panel believes that the differences between the tracks are now too large, and more conformity and coherence at the programme level should be sought. It points to the fact that all tracks fall under the same CIS label, so a certain degree of uniformity in their setup can be expected. It also emphasises that a better tuning between the tracks increases the possibilities for collaboration and cross-fertilisation, which all tracks can benefit from.

The panel is satisfied with the scientific orientation of the programme. During the courses, the students become acquainted with qualitative and quantitative research designs and learn to apply different research methods in the assignments. During the thesis trajectory, they conduct independent academic research and get the chance to work extensively with one or more quantitative and/or qualitative methods. The panel is also content with the attention paid to the professional field and skills development. Though some alumni believed that the connection to the professional field could be enhanced, most interviewed students and alumni experienced an adequate balance between theory and practice. Nearly all course units combine theoretical lectures with more practice-based seminars in which students are confronted with and work on real-life contemporary issues. Throughout the programme, the students are given opportunities to develop their academic and professional skills further, including academic writing skills, programming skills, communication skills and collaboration skills. In various courses they have to write essays, do experiments (programming), work on collaborative projects, and/or give presentations as part of the assessment (see also Standard 3).

The students conclude their programme with a master's thesis (20 EC), in which they have to show they are able to produce an independently designed and conducted academic research project. While in the past there was considerable variation in supervision, evaluation criteria, and planning, thesis projects are now approached in a more systematic manner. Preparatory activities (topic and data selection, reflection on methods) are done either in a thesis class or in research-oriented courses. Next, the student formulates a thesis plan, which is evaluated by both the first and second supervisor. The first supervisor is responsible for daily supervision. The end result is evaluated by both supervisors, using a standard evaluation form (see also Standard 3). The panel appreciates these measures. Based on the interviews with students, alumni and staff, it concluded that the thesis trajectory is functioning adequately. Yet, it also ascertained that there are still major differences between the tracks in terms of final objectives, choice of subject, process of supervision and assessment, and autonomy of the students. In line with the abovementioned recommendation, it advises a further harmonisation of the tracks' thesis trajectories.

Teaching methods
Based on information in the self-evaluation reports and the interviews with students and staff, the panel ascertained that the teaching methods applied in the bachelor's and master's programmes CIS are sufficiently varied. They are also adequately aligned with the programmes' overall intended learning outcomes and the objectives and content of the courses. The panel appreciates that most courses offer small-scale teaching environments which allow for face-to-face and interactive teaching and give ample opportunities for class discussions. It is also positive that most courses offer seminars in which the students work on assignments, experiments, individual and group projects, etc. These positively stimulate the students' involvement and (inter)active learning.

Feasibility
Based on the information in the self-evaluation report and the interview with students, the panel established that the bachelor's programme CIS is feasible within the nominal study duration. The programme is properly scheduled and lacks unnecessary obstacles and/or peak loads. The number of hours spent per week varies from student to student, but in general the interviewed students could perfectly combine their studies with a job on the side and/or other activities. However, a point of attention concerns the programming of the minor and bachelor's thesis in the third year. As explained by the students, the start of the thesis trajectory is tough for many students. They find it difficult to start the thesis in the second semester after their minor, which often means being absent from the programme for six months. Moreover, because students have to take a compulsory module and two optional modules in the same period as their thesis, a study delay looms. The panel realises that the scheduling of the minor is based on university policy and that the programme cannot deviate from it. It recommends considering how the transition from the minor to the thesis can be as smooth as possible in order to reduce the risk of study delay.

All the interviewed students were satisfied with the guidance provided by the staff during the courses and thesis trajectory. They appreciated the small-scale nature of the programme and the accessible contacts between staff and students. However, some students remarked that lecturers could sometimes provide clearer information about the content, setup and assessments of modules. The panel recommends that the staff pay attention to this.

The panel also ascertained that the master's programme CIS is feasible. In general, the interviewed students and alumni were satisfied with the sequence and scheduling of the courses and experienced the different tracks as doable. Three issues concerning feasibility were raised during the site visit. Firstly, students and alumni highlighted that the workload per course and per semester is somewhat unbalanced, which causes peak loads. They also mentioned that students who combine an internship with writing a thesis struggle and usually complete the programme in 1.5 years as the combination is quite demanding. Thirdly, it turned out that the inflow of students in the different tracks is very diverse. Although there is an adequate intake procedure with clear and strict criteria, sometimes students lack some assumed prior knowledge and/or skills. For example, several students from the Digital Studies track had no statistics in their previous education and experienced difficulty grasping

certain topics. Conversations with staff members revealed they are aware of these problems. They are working on solutions, such as introducing new rules and regulations which require students to complete their thesis before they can start an internship. The panel appreciates the efforts to tackle the problems and encourages the programme to continue and take further necessary steps.

During the interview with the staff, another issue concerning feasibility was discussed. At the moment, following the faculty's general policy, there are two enrolment moments per year, i.e. in September and February. As explained by the staff, this requirement does not fit in easily for all the tracks in the same way. As it is too expensive to offer each course twice a year, the packages of courses offered in September and in February may vary. The main challenge is seen in tracks that have a compulsory introductory course such as Computer Communication or a mandatory programme sequence of courses, such as Digital Humanities.

According to the panel, the two enrolment moments lead to an undesirable situation. Although they have a greater impact on one track than the other, depending on the tracks' content and order of the courses, the panel believes that the overall feasibility of the programmes in terms of students' options for courses and optimal study paths is adversely affected. It encourages the management, in consultation with the Faculty Board, to explore the possibility of discontinuing the second intake moment for all tracks.

Teaching staff
Most lecturers teach in both bachelor's and master's courses. The panel is positive about the scientific and didactical quality of the teaching staff of both programmes. The multidisciplinary teaching teams have the relevant expertise for the programmes, including recent developments in the field. The staff members usually have a PhD degree or are working towards one. Their research takes place in both local and global settings and is tied in to national and international networks. Where possible, they link their and others' current research activities to the content and themes of the courses, which enables the teaching to be based on state-of-the-art research. Most of the staff members also possess a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or are in the process of obtaining one.

The panel ascertained with appreciation that staff members regularly meet to share their teaching experiences, to discuss the content and coherence of the programmes, and to improve the teaching in general. They clearly operate as a team. The students informed the panel that they were satisfied with the quality of the lecturers and the guidance and supervision they received during the courses and graduation trajectories. They particularly appreciated the small-scale nature of the programmes and good contacts between the staff and students.

During the site visit, the panel discussed the workload of the staff extensively with lecturers and management teams from the various programmes, including the CIS programmes, and the Faculty Board. It ascertained that the workload is high across the faculty, and the promotion opportunities are limited. There is also an imbalance within and between the various programmes in terms of staff composition (i.e. the distribution between assistant, associate and full professors) and teaching load. These factors have a negative effect on job satisfaction. The Faculty Board recognises the problems and is working on solutions. For example, resources have been made available to reduce the heavy teaching burden on lecturers and hire new staff members. The panel encourages the Board to work on a comprehensive plan in order to tackle the problems in a structural, integral and future-proof manner.

In addition, the panel observed that the CIS staff has faced challenges with retirements, staff mobility, health issues and temporary staff. The makeup of the staff is quite unbalanced. There are four full professors, of whom three work part-time due to illness, and no associate professors at all. The remainder of the staff consists of assistant professors. This puts high administrative and teaching pressure on these assistant professors. Although the panel commends the current staff for all its hard work, this cannot be a sustainable situation. The CIS programmes are currently in the process of hiring three additional assistant professors, which is appreciated by the panel as this will alleviate

some of the work pressure. It advises the management to closely monitor the workload and take further measures if necessary. It also learned that in the next five years, three of the four full professors will retire. This means that in the short-term, the programme management and staff have an opportunity to reflect on and make a plan for the senior staff positions in the near future in conjunction with further decisions about the profile of the programmes in order to adequately anticipate these foreseeable changes.

The panel also spoke with the lecturers, management teams and the Faculty Board about collaboration between the programmes that form part of this accreditation assessment and with other programmes within the faculty. It noticed that collaboration within and between the different programmes is not a matter of course. In its opinion, this is a missed opportunity; the programmes could benefit a lot from mutual cooperation and cross-fertilisation. The faculty has recently organised all education into five clusters. The cluster boards are responsible for the finances and staffing of the programmes. The panel supports this organisational change, which has brought the decision-making process closer to the programmes. It also offers good opportunities to further connect the programmes within and between the clusters. However, the panel was surprised that the CIS programmes are not part of the same cluster as the adjacent Media Studies programmes. In general, it feels there is still much work to be done. It recommends working at a faculty level on a master plan to strengthen mutual cohesion and collaboration.

Considerations

The panel established that the bachelor's and master's programmes CIS are designed in such a way that they enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The setup of the bachelor´s programme, with obligatory learning trajectories, electives and the minor, gives students the opportunity to design their own programme in a cohesive manner that suits their academic interests and career plans. The separate master's tracks are sufficiently coherent. The overall coherence of and interconnection within the master´s programme, including the thesis trajectories, could be enhanced.

From the course samples, the overview of the curriculum and interviews with the management, staff and students of the programmes, the panel concludes that the contents suit an adequate bachelor´s or master's level, respectively, and are adequately aligned with the programme-specific learning outcomes. The panel is positive about the academic orientation of the programmes. In both programmes the students learn relevant academic knowledge and insights in the domain of CIS. They also acquire academic skills and are given opportunities to develop their academic and research skills. The panel is satisfied with the attention paid to practical applications and skills within the programmes. However, it ascertained that, particularly with regard to the bachelor's programme, more could be done to increase the opportunities for the students to get acquainted with the professional field. It also recommends broadening the skills part of the bachelor's programme by including advisory skills as they often prove to be valuable in various fields of communication.

The panel is satisfied with the setup of the individual courses. The teaching methods are in line with the learning outcomes and course contents. The panel appreciates the small-scale classes and seminars which positively contribute to the students' involvement and (inter)active learning. It also appreciates the organisation and guidance of the thesis trajectories. Both programmes are feasible within the nominal study duration. However, the master's programme's feasibility is challenged by multiple factors, including an unbalanced spread of workload, the demanding scheduling of the thesis and internship, a potential lack of essential prior knowledge/skills, and two enrolment moments. The panel advises mitigating the risks of study delay by further exploring these issues and taking additional measures. It explicitly recommends discontinuing the second intake moment in February.

The panel is positive about the quality and commitment of the teaching staff. The students in both programmes are taught by lecturers with a solid background in the field of communication and information studies. They value the involvement and accessibility of their lecturers. The panel ascertained there are various faculty-wide factors that negatively influence the staff's work

satisfaction, including a high workload and an unbalanced composition of and burden on staff. Due to different circumstances, the pressure on CIS staff is currently higher than normal, but is likely to be relieved somewhat by the expected staff expansion in the near future. According to the panel, the faculty management should work on structural solutions based on a comprehensive and integrated plan. It also ascertained that programmes within this accreditation assessment operate relatively independently of each other and have few connections with other programmes within the faculty. This is a missed opportunity as programmes can benefit and learn from more collaboration. The panel advises considering how the mutual cohesion and collaboration in and between various programmes can be strengthened.

Conclusion
Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 3: Student assessment
The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

Assessment system
The panel learned from the self-evaluation report that assessment within the bachelor's programme CIS is both summative and formative. A variety of assessment forms is used both within and between courses like written exams (multiple choice and/or essay questions), essays and papers. Summative testing is done at the end of the course and assesses whether the learning outcomes of the individual courses are achieved. Formative assessment plays an important role in the teaching of the programme. It provides feedback to students and staff about student performance and course design. The formative assignments are not graded, but students receive feedback from lecturers and peers during seminars or in writing. The panel studied the programme´s assessment plan in which the assessments are indicated for each course. During the site visit, it also examined assessment documents of different courses of the programme and spoke with students and lecturers about the assessment system. Based on these conversations and the materials studied, it ascertained that the assessment methods are sufficiently varied and in line with the learning outcomes, content and didactical design of the courses. It concluded that the assessments match the programme´s level and content. It values the considerable attention paid to feedback in the formative assessment.

The panel is also satisfied with the assessment system of the master´s programme CIS. The programme makes use of various testing forms, such as essays, lab work and collaborative projects. A minority of courses is assessed with a written exam. According to the panel, the assessments are adequately aligned with the learning outcomes of the course and programme. It appreciates that most courses include at least one test, usually a final project, which requires students to integrate knowledge and reflect on that knowledge. This suits the master´s level.

The panel values the attention paid to the quality of assessment by the staff of the programmes. All exams, including model answers and scoring sheet, are peer reviewed by a colleague. This so-called 'four eyes principle' promotes the validity and reliability of the testing. The interviewed bachelor's and master's students indicated that they are satisfied with the assessment. They experienced a varied mix of assessment methods and generally found the exams to be sufficiently transparent and representative.

The assessment of the bachelor's and master's theses occurs on the basis of an assessment form. There are always two staff members involved. The panel agrees with the design of this form and with

the assessment criteria, which are grouped in the categories content, report and process. It expressed its appreciation for the addition of the process component, e.g. the degree to which the student demonstrates the ability to conduct research independently and structurally and to process feedback in a proper manner. It noticed that there is no separate form for the second assessor. In the standard procedure, after joint deliberation on the quality and grading of the thesis, the form is completed and signed by both assessors. Based on the discussions with lecturers and the Examination Board, the panel ascertained that the thesis assessments are conducted conscientiously. Nevertheless, it is of the opinion that both assessors should complete a form independently of each other. In its view, this will improve the transparency of the assessment process, not only towards the student but also towards bodies such as the Examination Board and external accreditation panels.

Examination Board
Since 1 January 2019, six examination boards have been incorporated into a new structure comprising a single central Examination Board for the Faculty of Arts and six disciplinary expert teams. The expert teams are still grouped according to the former classification of examination boards but will be organised cluster-wise by September 2019. With the merger of the examination boards, the faculty is striving for more efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, the establishment of the expertise teams aims to do justice to the individual character of the separate programmes. The renewed Examination Board (EB) has, among other things, worked on standardising procedures, streamlining processes and centralising various tasks and activities.

The panel spoke with representatives of the EB during the site visit. It agreed with the organisational change and noted that lots of work has been done by those involved. It is of the opinion that the formal tasks and responsibilities of the Board are carried out adequately and that there are clear agreements and procedures, including with regard to the quality assurance of assessment. Each year the EB checks several course assessment portfolios (consisting of course description, exams with model answers or scoring sheet, examples of assessed work, overview of the final grades and an explanation by the lecturer) of each programme, including the CIS programmes. It has developed a protocol for this evaluation process. In some cases, advice is given by the faculty assessment expert, who is also an external member of the EB. The EB checks theses and assessment forms of the various programmes. It assesses whether the programmes' intended learning outcomes are being met and looks into detail at the grading in relation to the quality of the theses and the completion of the assessment forms. In the event of uncertainties and/or irregularities in assessment portfolios or thesis assessments, they are discussed with the lecturer(s) and programme management involved. The following year a new evaluation is done, which completes the quality cycle. In addition to these evaluations afterwards, the EB has also started activities to better guarantee the quality of testing prior to the assessments. The assessment expert is available for advising individual departments or staff members about assessment quality.

The panel appreciates the various initiatives of the EB and finds that it is sufficiently in control. With regard to the quality assurance of theses, it advises working on better calibration of the thesis assessments, in addition to the checks afterwards. Currently, the calibration mainly takes place between the first and second assessors when discussing individual theses. According to the panel, the consistency in assessments could be further improved by discussing assessment outliers in a broader context, for example by organising calibration sessions at the programme level.

Considerations
The panel concluded that the bachelor's and master's programmes CIS have an adequate assessment system. The tests match their level and content, and the assessment methods suit their content and design. The panel appreciates that the 'four eyes principle' is always applied when drafting exams. It is also positive about the attention paid to feedback given to students. The assessment of the bachelor's and master's thesis takes place in an adequate manner. The panel agrees with the assessment form; it particularly values the addition of criteria related to the thesis process. Yet, it also concluded that the transparency of the assessments could be increased by having the first and

second assessors fill out an assessment form independently of each other rather than a jointly completed form.

The quality control of the testing and examinations is adequate. The panel is positive about the functioning of the new Examination Board: it clearly contributes to the quality assurance and control of the testing and evaluation within the programmes. It encourages the Board to develop policies to proactively monitor and stimulate the internal consistency of thesis assessments, in addition to the checks afterwards. For example, it suggests organising calibration sessions with staff members at the programme level.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes
The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings
Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a selection of 15 bachelor's and 15 master's theses, as well as the accompanying assessment forms completed by the lecturers. In general, it agreed with the grades awarded by the lecturers. The grading seemed fair and reflected the differences in the students' work. The panel concluded that graduates of both programmes achieved the required level.

Overall, the bachelor's theses were adequately executed and properly written. In most cases the research questions were clearly formulated, the methods substantiated and applied effectively, and the results elaborated and described properly. The panel is also satisfied with the master's theses. In general, sufficient attention was paid to discussions and claims in the literature on the subject. The research methods were well chosen and applied. In most theses the research results were adequately reflected upon and linked to the literature.

Information in the self-evaluation report shows that most graduates of the bachelor's programme CIS successfully move on to a master's degree programme, either at the University of Groningen or at another university. The vast majority continue their studies within communication and information studies, linguistics, business or marketing communication. For the master's programme CIS, a study of the professional profile of the graduates was conducted using LinkedIn. This study revealed that the graduates find a job quite easily and work as a communication specialist either in business/marketing or in the public sector on the management level. The results also showed that alumni find jobs in sectors that feature prominently in the programme. During the site visit, the panel spoke with several alumni of the master's programme CIS. These alumni appeared to be doing well in the job market. They were very satisfied with the education offered in their programme and felt it provided them with a solid basis for a communications career.

Considerations
The panel studied a selection of bachelor's and master's theses and found that their overall quality was satisfactory. They sufficiently demonstrated an academic attitude and understanding. They also testified to considerable skill in executing research and reporting on it. The alumni of both programmes are quite successful in their further educational/professional careers. Overall, the panel concluded that they achieved the programmes' intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assesses Standard 1, 2, 3 and 4 of both the bachelor's and master's programme CIS as 'satisfactory'.

According to the decision rules of NVAO's Framework for limited programme assessments 2016, the panel assesses the bachelor's programme CIS and the master's programme CIS as 'satisfactory'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies* as 'satisfactory'.

The panel assesses the *master's programme Communication and Information Studies* as 'satisfactory'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

De afgestudeerde kan bogen op aantoon-ba(a)r(e):

1. Kennis en Inzicht
1.1 kennis van theorieën onderzoeksmethoden die ten grondslag liggen aan een wetenschappelijke benadering van het gebruik van taal, tekst en beeld in institutionele communicatiecontexten;
1.2 vermogen om de structuur van het vakgebied en de samenhang tussen deelgebieden te begrijpen en de basiskennis op het gebied van de CIW te kunnen reproduceren en toelichten op een samenhangende wijze;
1.3 vermogen nieuwe gegevens en interpretaties te plaatsen in hun context;
1.4 kennis en inzicht in een aanvullend (ander) disciplinegebied, vormgegeven in een minor ter verbreding cq. verdieping van het hoofdvak-programma;

2. Toepassen van kennis en inzicht
2.1 vermogen om verworven kennis, begrip en vaardigheden toe te
passen bij het systematisch en kritisch evalueren van een grote verscheidenheid aan denkbeelden, ideeën en gegevens (die wellicht nog onvolledig zijn), en bi het identificeren en analyseren van complexe/ingewikkelde problemen en vraagstukken;
2.2 vermogen om de belangrijkste principes van de methodologie en theorievorming in het vakgebied te begrijpen en toe te passen, m.n. in een onderzoek dat voldoet aan
professionele eisen van het vakgebied, maar waarbij de grenzen van het vak nog niet hoeven te worden opgezocht;
2.3 vermogen om relevante concepten uit het vakgebied op een analytisch adequate wijze aan data te relateren door toepassing van zowel kwalitatieve als kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden;
2.4 vermogen om zelfstandig een onderzoek van beperkte omvang op te zetten en uit te voeren;
2.5 vaardigheden die verband houden met het bestudeerde vak in situaties en contexten van professionele of vergelijkbare aard, waar het een vereiste is dat persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid, zelfdiscipline, initiatie en zo nodig leiderschap aan de dag worden gelegd; beslissingen worden genomen in complexe en onvoorspelbare situaties; gedacht en geschreven wordt onder
tijdsdruk en omgegaan wordt met deadlines; verdere ontwikkeling op het professionele vlak tot stand gebracht kan worden;
2.6 ICT-vaardigheden, t.w.: tekstverwerking, bestandsbeheer, het gebruik van spreadsheets en databases, het maken van presentaties, het beheersen van technieken van informatievoorziening en communicatie via de computer;

3. Oordeelsvermogen
3.1 vermogen onderzoek binnen het vakgebied op waarde te schatten en de resultaten ervan te interpreteren wat betreft hun praktische implicaties, bijv. in termen van aanbevelingen of praktijkmaatregelen;
3.2 vermogen om kennis, begrip en vaardigheden toe te passen bij het identificeren en analyseren van complexe problemen en vraagstukken;

4. Communicatie
4.1 vermogen om op betrouwbare en accurate wijze te communiceren over de resultaten van eigen vakstudie en ander werk, waarbij de belangrijkste denkbeelden, opvattingen en technieken het vak betreffend worden benut;
4.2 vermogen om strategieën toe te passen om individueel en in teamverband mondelinge en schriftelijke presentaties efficiënt, doel- en kwaliteitsbewust voor te bereiden en uit te voeren;

5. Leervaardigheden
5.1 vermogen om op systematische wijze de eigen leerbehoeften ten aanzien van actuele en nieuwe onderwerpen te identificeren en deze ter hand nemen, gebruik te maken van daarbij behorend

onderzoek, ontwikkelingen en tot het vakgebied behorende materialen, waartoe ook gerekend worden de nieuwste en meest recente ontwikkelingen op het vakgebied.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

Een afgestudeerde Master CIW kan bogen op aantoonba(a)r(e):

1. Kennis en Inzicht
1.1 kennis van (ten minste een deel van) het vakgebied van de CIW, rakend aan de grenzen van de kennis; hieronder worden verstaan de nieuwste theorieën, interpretaties, methoden en technieken;
- [CK] a. kennis van en inzicht in vormen, functies en effecten van het gebruik van taal, tekst en
- beeld in institutionele communicatie;
- [CK] b. kennis en begrip van theorieën en onderzoeksmethoden op het gebied van de communicatiekunde;
- [C&E] kennis van en inzicht in begrippen en theorieën op het terrein van talige communicatievaardigheden en de ontwikkeling van die vaardigheden;
- [CC] a. kennis van en inzicht in diverse aspecten en benaderingen van computer-gemedieerde
- communicatie en mens-computer interactie;
- [CC] b. kennis en begrip van theorieën en onderzoeksmethoden die gangbaar zijn binnen de
- vakgebieden van de 'computer-mediated communication' en de 'human-computer interaction', en van recente ontwikkelingen in onderzoek op deze gebieden;
- [IS] a. kennis van resp. inzicht in voor de Informatiekunde relevante computationele en statistische methoden en technieken;
- [IS] b. kennis en begrip van recente ontwikkelingen in het onderzoek op het gebied van de taal- en webtechnologie, en de computercommunicatie;
- [DH] a. kennis van en inzicht in theorieën en onderzoeksmethoden op het gebied van digital humanities;
- [DH] b. kennis en begrip van de invloed van digitalisering en digitale methoden op de samenleving en de geesteswetenschappen;
1.2 begrip van de structuur van het vakgebied en de samenhang tussen deelgebieden;
1.3 vermogen om op één of enkele deelgebieden van de CIW een originele bijdrage aan de kennis te leveren.

2. Toepassen van kennis en inzicht
2.1 kennis en vaardigheden omtrent de bij het vakgebied behorende methoden en technieken;
2.2 vermogen om methoden en technieken toe te passen bij het zelfstandig opzetten en uitvoeren van een onderzoek
- [CK] vermogen om vanuit de verworven kennis en inzichten complexe wetenschappelijke of praktijkgerelateerde problemen en vraagstellingen te onderzoeken met kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden;
- [C&E] vermogen om vanuit de verworven kennis en inzichten complexe wetenschappelijke of praktijkgerelateerde problemen en vraagstellingen te onderzoeken met kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden;
- [CC] vermogen om problemen op de gebieden van de computer-mediated communication en de mens-computer interactie vanuit een theoretisch perspectief te analyseren en hiervoor gefundeerde en doelgroepgerichte oplossingen te treffen;
- [IS] vermogen om computationele en statistische methoden en technieken toe te passen bij de analyse en oplossing van praktijkgerelateerde en wetenschappelijke taal- en communicatievraagstukken;
- [DH] vermogen om vanuit verworven kennis en inzichten geschikte digitale methoden en technieken te kiezen en toe te passen in onderzoek naar interdisciplinaire geesteswetenschappelijke of praktijkgerichte problemen en vraagstellingen;

2.3 vermogen om de uitkomsten van onderzoek te gebruiken voor verdere theorievorming of voor het ontwikkelen van praktijktoepassingen;

2.4 originaliteit en creativiteit in de behandeling van het vakgebied;

2.5 vermogen om zelf richting te geven aan het ter hand nemen en oplossen van problemen en om zelfstandig taken te plannen en uit te voeren op een professioneel of daaraan gelijkwaardig niveau.

3. Oordeelsvermogen

3.1 vermogen om de wijze waarop waarheidsvinding en theorievorming in beweging zijn, te volgen, te interpreteren en te evalueren;

3.2 vermogen om op systematische en creatieve wijze met complexe vraagstukken om te gaan en zich gefundeerde oordelen te vormen;

3.3 vermogen om initiatief en persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid te tonen;

3.4 vermogen om gefundeerde beslissingen te nemen in complexe en onvoorspelbare situaties.

4. Communicatie

4.1 vermogen om conclusies op heldere wijze over te brengen aan specialisten en niet-specialisten;

4.2 communicatieve competentie die maatschappelijk ruim toepasbaar is: de afgestudeerde heeft een contextgevoelige houding en is in staat zowel zelfstandig als in teamverband producten en diensten af te stemmen op de beoogde doelgroep.

5. Leervaardigheden

5.1 vermogen om zelfstandig te studeren met het oog op een voortgezette professionele ontwikkeling op academisch niveau;

5.2 vermogen om de ontwikkeling van het vakgebied te volgen en dienovereenkomstig kennis en begrip voortdurend te actualiseren, en nieuwe vaardigheden te ontwikkelen.

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

	Semester 1		Semester 2	
	Blok 1	**Blok 2**	**Blok 3**	**Blok 4**
Jaar 1 60 ECTS	*Analysing communication 1: Pragmatics**	*Analysing communication 2: Linguistics for CIS/IS**	*Analysing communication 3: Text analysis 1**	*Analysing communication 5: Conversation analysis 1**
	Digital communication 1	Persuasive communication	*Research methods 1: Qualitative methods*	*Research methods 2: Quantitative methods*
	Academic Skills 1 (v.h. Introduction to communication research + writing academic English)	*Academic Skills 2 (v.h. Introduction to communication research + presenting academic English)*	*Analysing communication 4: Intercultural communication*	Multimodal Communication
Jaar 2 60 ECTS	*Research methods 3: Statistics*	*Communication design 2: Questionnaire Design*	Optional module (Dutch Track: Academisch schrijven en presenteren *)	*Communication design 3: Pictures in professional communication*
	Communication design 1: Design & Evaluation	*Analysing communication 6: Conversation analysis 2**	Optional module	*Analysing communication 7: Text analysis 2**
	Corporate and marketing communication 1 (v.h. Organisationele communicatie)	Corporate and Marketing communication 2 (v.h. Corporate communicatie)	Optional module	*Digital communication 2: Social Media*
Jaar 3 60 ECTS	Minor(en) (30 ECTS)		Bachelor's thesis* (10 ECTS)	
			Communication design 4: Case study* (10 ECTS)	
			Optional module	Optional module

Dutch variant
Students who sign up for the Dutch variant are still part of the International programme and the majority of their courses are in English. However, the Dutch variant provides Dutch speaking students with the opportunity to develop their academic skills in the Dutch language. The variant also allows students to prepare themselves for the Dutch language labour market. The Dutch variant consists of seven Course Modules and the BA thesis. In these modules students will work with Dutch materials, seminars will be in the Dutch language and exams will also be in Dutch. Lectures and course readings are still in English. Participation in the Dutch variant is noted on the diploma. Courses in the Dutch variant: Pragmatics, Linguistics, Text Analysis 1 & 2, Conversation Analysis 1 & 2, Academic communication (Dutch version), BA thesis.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

The master Communication and Information Studies is a one-year full-time programme with five tracks:

Communication Studies
Communication Studies is designed as a broad track consisting of optional modules in order to offer students much freedom to actually create their own 'profile' based on their personal interests. This track has a focus on forms, functions, and effects of verbal and nonverbal communication (spoken and written language, and pictures) in professional settings. Course modules are 5 or 10 ECTS. An internship is optional. The thesis is 20 ECTS.

Communication and Education
This track addresses verbal communication skills and their development from an educational point of view. It focuses on theory and practice of the development and training of language and communication skills of children, adolescents and adults in various educational settings. Course modules are 10 ECTS. An internship is obligatory because of the strong relationship with the professional field. The thesis is 20 ECTS.

Computer Communication
The centre of interest of Computer Communication is interaction with and through the computer. It addresses aspects of human-computer interaction as well as technology-based communication between humans. This track provides a profiled programme and allows students to develop programming skills. Course modules are 5 or 10 ECTS. An internship is optional. The thesis is 20 ECTS.

Information Science
This track focuses on the use of computational and statistical methods and techniques (among which machine learning and neural network methods) in the analysis and processing of unstructured natural language and textual data. Course modules are 5 ECTS. An internship is obligatory because of the strong relationship with the professional field. The thesis is 20 ECTS.

Digital Humanities
This track equips students to look at culture, language, and history through the lens of digital methods, and addresses the impact of digitisation on society. It offers a systematic way to incorporate information technology in humanities research. This track is the most recent one of the programme and is developed as a response to the perceived demand in society for computer-based research in the humanities. Course modules are 5 ECTS. The thesis is 15 ECTS and is preceded by a thesis lab (5 ECTS). One block of 10 weeks consists of 7 weeks for teaching plus 3 weeks for assessment while students take 3 parallel courses each block. 5 ECTS courses are confined to a single block; 10 ECTS courses span two blocks. Research as part of an internship aims to support and optimise non-academic professional practices and processes. The Master's thesis on the other hand aims to contribute to scientific knowledge while it may but need not, at the same time, contribute to solving a professional communication of information problem.

The tables below provide general information about the setup of the individual tracks and the relationship and overlap between modules in the various tracks.

Courses in Master programme CIS 2018-2019, and their distribution among the five tracks (also see Ocasys).

Track	Number of courses (ects)*	Total ects of courses	Thesis ects	Internship of 10 ects	Entrance possibility in February
Communication Studies	13 (9:10; 4:5)	110	20	yes: optional	yes
Communication & Education	3 (3:10)	30	20	yes: mandatory	no
Computer Communication	10 (2:10; 8:5)	60	20	yes: optional	yes
Information Science	9 (9:5)	45	20	yes: mandatory	yes
Digital Humanities	9 (9:5)	45	15	no	no

* Thesis and internship are not included

Overlap of track programmes in number of courses and ECTS.

Track\Track	Communication Studies	Communication and Education	Computer Communication	Information Science	Digital Humanities
Communication Studies	13; 110	3; 30	6; 40	2; 10	0; 0
Communication and Education	3; 30	3; 30	0; 0	0; 0	0; 0
Computer Communication	6; 40	0; 0	10; 60	2; 10	2; 10
Information Science	2; 10	0; 0	2; 10	9; 45	0; 0
Digital Humanities	0; 0	0; 0	2; 10	0; 0	9; 45

Communication and Information Studies, University of Groningen

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

DAY 1		Wednesday 15 May 2019
11.00	11.15	Arrival of the panel and welcome
11.15	14.00	Preparation, internal meeting and documentation review (including lunch)
14.00	14.45	Initial interview with management B Studies and M Media Studies
14.45	15.00	Break / panel meeting
15.00	15.40	Meeting with students B Media Studies (including PC student)
15.45	16.15	Meeting with students M Media Studies (including PC student)
16.15	16.30	Break / panel meeting
16.30	17.15	Meeting with staff B Media Studies / M Media Studies (including PC staff members)
17.15	17.35	Meeting with alumni M Media Studies
17.35	18.15	Panel meeting: preliminary findings day 1
18.45	21.00	Dinner (panel meeting)

DAY 2		Thursday 16 May 2019
8.30	9.30	Arrival of the panel and preparation
9.30	10.15	Initial interview with management B Information Science, B Communication and Information Studies, M Communication and Information Studies
10.15	10.30	Break / panel meeting
10.30	11.10	Meeting with students B Information Science (including PC student)
11.15	11.45	Meeting with staff B Information Science (including PC staff member)
11.45	12.45	Panel meeting with lunch break
12.45	13.25	Meeting with students B Communication and Information Studies (including PC student)
13.30	14.00	Meeting with staff B Communication and Information Studies (including PC staff member)
14.00	14.30	Break / panel meeting
14.30	15.10	Meeting with students M Communication and Information Studies (including PC student)
15.15	15.45	Meeting with staff M Communication and Information Studies (including PC staff member)
15.45	17.30	Panel meeting: preliminary findings day 2
17.30	17.50	Meeting with alumni M Communication and Information Studies
18.30	21.00	Dinner (panel meeting)

DAY 3		Friday 17 May 2019
8.30	9.00	Arrival of panel and preparation
9.00	10.00	Meeting with the Examination Board for all programmes
10.00	10.45	Break / panel meeting
10.45	11.15	Final interview with management B Media and Culture and M Media Studies
11.15	11.45	Final interview with management B Information Science, B Communication and Information Studies, M Communication and Information Studies
11.45	13.45	Deliberations panel, formulating preliminary findings and conclusions with lunch break
13.45	14.15	Feedback of preliminary findings and conclusions
14.15	14.30	Break
14.30	15.30	Development dialogue
15.30	15.45	Site visit complete

Communication and Information Studies, University of Groningen

APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies and 15 theses of the master's programme Communication and Information Studies. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

General information
- Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER)
- Assessment Plans of the bachelor's and master's programme Communication and Information Studies
- Quality Assurance Education documentation
- Reports of the Programme Committee Communication and Information Studies/Informatiekunde
- Reports of the Examination Board

Of the following courses, the panel studied course materials and syllabi:

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies
- Intercultural Communication (LCX021P05)
- CIW Case Study (LCX006B10)

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies
- User Interface Evaluation (LIX024M05)
- Learning from Data (LIX016M05)
- Collecting Data (LHU012M05)
- Taal en Tekstoptimalisatie (LCX026M10)
- Ontwerp van Communicatietrainingen (LCX010M10)