

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

Master Communication Studies

University of Twente

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Master Communication Studies programme of University of Twente, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016.

The programme objectives are sound and relevant. The programme is clearly focused on the study of communication sciences from organisational, technological, design and digital marketing perspectives. In the panel's view, the study of these perspectives within this domain makes the programme profile very clear and very focused. Both for the contents and for the degree of focus, the profile is greatly appreciated by the panel. In addition, the panel welcomes the programme pursuing both academic depth and practical relevance. The panel is positive about the specialisations offered, allowing students to select subject areas of their preference. The benchmark of the programme against programmes in the Netherlands and abroad in this field, which has been conducted, leads to further clarification of the programme profile.

The panel appreciates the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Communication Science domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master programmes in this domain. The panel regards the objectives of this programme to be clearly aligned with this framework.

The panel endorses the request by the programme to have the name of the programme changed from Master Communication Studies to Master Communication Science.

The panel approves of the students being primarily educated to proceed to the labour market and to find positions in the programme domain.

The clear focus of the programme and the well-defined categories in the intended learning outcomes create a very nicely structured framework, which could serve as an example for other communication science programmes. The intended learning outcomes meet the master level.

The admission requirements and procedures of the programme are appropriate. The panel appreciates the pre-master programme. The panel proposes to monitor the intake numbers of the programme.

The curriculum matches the intended learning outcomes. The obligatory core courses and the specialisation-specific courses are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the curriculum contents. The curriculum coherence is adequately assured. The panel feels the programme succeeds in acquainting students with important, current subjects in the communication science field.

The lecturers are highly committed to the programme and improvement of the programme. The panel is very positive about the expertise, educational capabilities and research track records of the lecturers involved in the programme. The panel is also positive about the lecturers meeting regularly to discuss the programme. The panel urges the Faculty Board to recruit candidates for the senior lecturers' vacancies, taking the gender balance for senior staff into account.

The programme offers student-driven and small-scale education. The study methods are varied. The panel encourages the programme to transpose parts of the project-based education of the Bachelor Communication Science programme to this programme. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. Study guidance is up to standard. As the student success rates are somewhat disappointing, the panel proposes to investigate the causes.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme. The Examination Board monitors the examinations and assessments appropriately. The measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments are up to standard.

The examination methods in the programme are consistent with the course goals and contents. The panel welcomes the range of examination methods adopted. The panel advises to set the proportion of group examination products within courses at a maximum to curb free-riding effects.

Students are provided with well-organised supervision of the Master theses. The panel approves of the thesis assessment procedures. As not all of the examiners seem to be fully informed about the thesis assessment procedures, the panel proposes to support them in that sense.

The Master theses match the intended learning outcomes and are up to standard. The panel advises to monitor the communication science contents of the theses. The panel suggests to adopt more standardised or more strict formats for the theses, especially with regard to the abstract. The panel agrees to the grades given by programme examiners, although for some theses the panel would have given somewhat different grades. Therefore, the panel suggests to schedule, for instance, regular assessments by external experts.

The programme has taken appropriate measures to acquaint students with the professional practice. The panel considers students completing the programme to have reached the intended learning outcomes and regards the programme to have prepared students well for the professional field in this domain.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the Master Communication Studies programme of University of Twente assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel advises NVAO to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 16 April 2019

Prof. dr. H. Vandebosch
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercooteren
(panel secretary)

2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by University of Twente to coordinate the limited framework programme assessment process for the Master Communication Studies programme of this University. This objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster Communication Sciences convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of candidates.

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

- Prof. dr. H. Vandebosch, professor Department of Communication Sciences, University of Antwerp (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. A.A. Maes, professor Communication and Cognition, Tilburg University (panel member);
- Prof. dr. T. Smits, professor Faculty of Social Sciences, Leuven University (panel member);
- C.H.W. Buurman, chair Logeion, Netherlands Association for Communication Professionals (panel member);
- E. Bulten MSc, alumna Master Communication, Health and Life Sciences, Wageningen University (student member).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this preliminary meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the final projects were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 31 January 2019, the panel conducted the site visit on the University of Twente campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, panel members were given the opportunity to meet with Faculty representatives, programme management, Examination Board representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

Very shortly before the site visit, one of the panel members reported ill and declared to be unable to be present at the site visit of 31 January 2019 on the University of Twente campus. After internal deliberations, the panel decided to proceed with the site visit. The programme was informed about the situation and about the panel's proposition to proceed with the site visit. Being conscious of the absence of one of the panel members, programme management informed the panel to support the decision to go on with the site visit and to proceed with the assessment process as planned. The panel member concerned was absent on the day of the site visit, but did study the self-assessment report and appendices of the programme. The panel member also fully participated in the preparation of the site visit. After the site visit, the panel member studied the assessment draft report and commented on the contents of the draft report. The panel member was given the opportunity to make additional inquiries into the proceedings during the site visit.

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

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

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

3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: M Communication Studies
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
Grade: MSc
Number of credits: 60 EC
Specialisations: Organisational Communication & Reputation
Technology & Communication
Marketing Communication & Design
Digital Marketing Communication
Location: Enschede
Mode of study: Full-time (instruction language English)
Registration in CROHO: 21PH-60713
Name of institution: University of Twente
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The Master Communication Studies programme is one of the programmes offered by the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences of University of Twente. The Faculty Board, chaired by the dean, has the responsibility for the quality of education and research within the Faculty. The programme director, assisted by the programme coordinator, takes care of the day-to-day management of the programme. The Programme Committee (both for bachelor and master), consisting of an equal number of lecturers and students, advises programme management on quality issues. The Examination Board Behavioral Sciences covers the B-COM programme, the M-COM program, as well as the Bachelor and Master programmes in Psychology and the Master programme in Educational Science and Technology and has the authority to ensure the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

The programme has the intention to request to have the name of the programme changed from Master Communication Studies to Master Communication Science, bringing the name closer to the Bachelor programme name and reflecting the programme contents more adequately.

The Master Communication Studies programme of University of Twente aims to educate academically trained communication professionals. The programme is directed towards the organisational, technological, design and digital marketing perspectives of communication science. The programme studies the effects technological developments may have on communication practice, addresses communication as factor for success of technologies, and studies (multisensory and visual) communication design. Students are educated to relate communication to organisational contexts, to understand the relation between communication and technology or design, to know the communication domain breadth and communication being woven into subject matter, to go from strategical thinking to practical implementation, and to bridge theory and practice in this domain.

The Bachelor Communication Science and the Master Communication Studies of University of Twente share the focus areas mentioned. The Master, however, addresses more complex and advanced communication phenomena, provides more specialised insights, systematically offers students multiple academic perspectives allowing students to reflect on the value and limitations of academic knowledge, and allows students to contribute to the communication science body of knowledge.

The programme offers four specialisations, being Organisational Communication & Reputation, Technology & Communication, Marketing Communication & Design, and Digital Marketing Communication. The first specialisation studies work and new working situations within organisations and the position and reputation of organisations in the outside world. The second specialisation is

concerned with the effects of technology on communication and on communication as success factor for technological innovation. The third specialisation focuses on reaching customers and on the potential of design as communication tool. The fourth and last specialisation addresses digital marketing strategies.

The programme objectives are aligned with the requirements of the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science. This framework has been drafted by the joint Communication Science programmes in the Netherlands. In this framework, the position of the discipline internationally and in the Netherlands, the joint principles of Dutch Communication Science programmes as well as the general objectives and the final attainment levels for Bachelor and Master Communication Science programmes in the Netherlands have been outlined.

The programme has been benchmarked against programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. The results of the benchmark show the programme to meet international academic standards. The programme is based upon research of researchers of international standing, lecturing in the programme. The programme may be compared to academic programmes in this domain both in Europe and in the rest of the world. The programme distinguishes itself through the organisational, technological and design perspectives within this domain, and through going beyond mediated communication.

Students are primarily prepared to enter the labour market and to find positions in the programme domain.

The objectives of the programme have been translated into the programme intended learning outcomes. These intended learning outcomes specify, as main points, to acquire in depth theoretical knowledge and understanding of communication science; to see the position of communication science in organisations, technology and design; to contribute to the body of knowledge in the specialisation chosen; advanced research competencies; advanced problem-solving competencies; advanced professional skills, such as interacting with stakeholders, understanding organisations, and planning and managing work; advanced academic skills, such as critical reflection on scientific knowledge and ethical awareness; and personal development competencies.

Programme management compared the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for master programmes, to demonstrate these to meet master level requirements.

Considerations

The panel regards the programme objectives to be sound and relevant. The programme is clearly focused on the study of communication sciences from organisational, technological and design perspectives. In the panel's view, the study of these perspectives within this domain makes the programme profile very clear and very focused. Both for the contents and for the degree of focus, the profile is greatly appreciated by the panel. In addition, the panel welcomes the programme pursuing both academic depth and practical relevance. The panel is positive about the specialisations offered, allowing students to select subject areas of their preference.

The panel appreciates the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Communication Science domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master programmes in this domain. The panel regards the objectives of this programme to be clearly aligned with this framework.

The panel endorses the request by the programme to have the name of the programme changed from Master Communication Studies to Master Communication Science.

The panel welcomes the benchmark of the programme against programmes in the Netherlands and abroad in this field, as the benchmark leads to further clarification of the programme profile.

The panel approves of the students being primarily educated to proceed to the labour market and to find positions in the programme domain.

The panel feels the clear focus of the programme and the well-defined categories in the intended learning outcomes create a very nicely structured framework, which could serve as an example for other communication science programmes. They also correspond to the programme objectives. The panel regards the intended learning outcomes to meet the master level.

Assessment of this standard

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

4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The student influx between 2013 and 2017 gradually decreased from about 130 incoming students in 2013 to about 70 incoming students in 2017. The programme wants to raise the intake. The proportion of foreign students is about 30 %. Nearly 50 % of the students have higher professional education (hbo) bachelor diplomas. The admission criteria for the programme are having completed Bachelor programmes in Communication Science. Students with other academic degrees or with higher professional education (hbo) bachelor diplomas should take the entire or part of the pre-master programme (30 EC). The admission committee decides on enrolment.

The curriculum has a study load of 60 EC and takes one year to complete. The programme presented a table, mapping the intended learning outcomes to the curriculum components. Before starting the curriculum, students are to select one of the four specialisations offered. The curriculum consists of three core courses, compulsory for all students. In the *Essentials in Communication Science* course (5 EC), students study and critically assess communication science theories. In the *Societal Challenges* course (5 EC), students work on current societal challenges in which communication theories provide possible solutions. In the *Research Topics* course (5 EC), they draft research proposals to fill gaps in the academic knowledge, which they have identified. In addition, students take two specialisation-specific courses (10 EC). Students are allowed to take two electives (10 EC) in their specialisation, in one of the other specialisations or they take other courses. Other courses have to be approved by the Examination Board. Students may also do internships (max. 10 EC). The Master thesis (25 EC) is the final component of the curriculum, requiring students to do an individual research project. Talented and motivated students may take part in one of the four University-wide honours programmes (15 EC).

A total number of 20 lecturers (5.4 fte) are involved in the programme. This number excludes PhD students and lecturers who participate only occasionally. With exceptions for lecturers of two elective courses, all lecturers are staff members of the Department of Communication Science of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences. These lecturers are researchers in the programme domain. Research done at the Department is valued internationally. At the moment, the Faculty has 22 research departments. The coming years, they will be merged into five research programmes. About 80 % staff members have PhD degrees. About 55 % of the lecturers are BKO-certified, whereas 25 % have been exempted. Lecturers meet on a regular basis to discuss the programme. Lecturers regard the workload to be manageable. At the moment, two senior positions are vacant. The gender balance in senior positions is uneven. Students are very appreciative of the lecturers' educational capabilities and of the support they obtain from their lecturers.

The programme educational concept consists of student-driven learning and small-scale education. Student-driven learning fosters students to take their learning processes into their own hands. Students are expected to do so and learn and work effectively on their own or in groups. The students-to-staff ratio for the programme is about 31/1. The number of hours of face-to-face education is about 4 hours per week (155 hours/42 weeks). In this number of hours, 40 hours of individual guidance during the Master thesis have been included. The study methods adopted in the programme comprise lectures, tutorials, workshops and individual supervision. Tutorials provide small-scale education. Students have access to the lab facilities *DesignLab* or *BMS Lab* to acquire technology-related practical skills. The study counselling system the programme has put in place combines the open-door policy of lecturers with information provision and individual guidance by student counsellors. Student counsellors actively approach students who report disappointing results. This system is appreciated by students. Very few students drop out. The student success rates of the programme for the last three to four cohorts are on average 16 % after one year and on average 63 % after two years.

Considerations

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are appropriate. The panel appreciates the pre-master programme. The panel proposes to monitor the intake numbers of the programme.

The curriculum matches the intended learning outcomes. The obligatory core courses and the specialisation-specific courses are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the curriculum contents. The curriculum coherence is adequately assured. The panel feels the programme succeeds in acquainting students with important, current subjects in the communication science field.

The lecturers are highly committed to the programme and programme improvement. The panel considers the lecturers to be well-qualified instructors. The panel is very positive about the expertise and research track records of the lecturers in the programme. The proportions of lecturers having PhD degrees or being BKO-certified are up to standard. The panel is also very positive about the lecturers meeting regularly to discuss the programme. The panel urges Faculty management to recruit candidates for the senior lecturers' vacancies, taking the gender balance for senior staff into account.

The programme offers student-driven and small-scale education. The study methods are varied and are aligned with the educational concept. The panel encourages the programme to transpose parts of the project-led education of the Bachelor Communication Science programme to this programme. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. Study guidance is up to standard. The panel is positive about the lab facilities *DesignLab* or *BMS Lab* and encourages the programme to use these facilities to the full. As the student success rates are somewhat disappointing, the panel proposes to investigate the causes.

Assessment of this standard

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

4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The examination and assessment rules and regulations of the programme correspond to the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences guidelines and the University of Twente Framework for Student Assessment. Within the Faculty, several Examination Boards oversee and assure the examinations and assessments of programmes of the Faculty. One of these Examination Boards monitors the quality of examinations and assessments of the Bachelor Communication Science and the Master Communication Studies programmes and other programmes.

The examination methods adopted in the courses are aligned with the course goals and contents. The examination methods vary to allow for different course goals to be tested. The examination methods in the programme include written examinations (multiple-choice and/or open-ended questions), individual or group assignments or individual or group presentations. Due to the strengthening of student-driven learning, the proportion of group products within the total of examinations has risen. The programme monitors group projects to prevent free-riding. In the group products assessments, individual performances by students are taken into account and may lead to differentiated grades for group members. Not only summative assessments are scheduled, but also formative assessments. Students very regularly receive feedback from lecturers or from fellow-students.

The Master thesis is the final project of the programme. The projects are individual research projects. To start the thesis, students have to submit their research proposal. They may draft their proposal in the *Research Topics* course, preceding the Master thesis. Many students do so. Topics may correspond to questions raised by organisations in the field and may, therefore, have professional field dimensions. The programme thesis and internship coordinator assigns students to supervisors on the basis of the research proposals. Students are individually guided by their supervisor. During some of the meetings, the second grader is present. Students submit their draft thesis, which is assessed by the supervisor and the second grader. In the so-called *green light meeting*, students are given feedback on the draft thesis and the graduation date is set. The final thesis is assessed by both the supervisor and the second grader. Both use thesis assessment scoring forms. The theses are assessed on the basis of the thesis itself (75 % of the grade), the oral presentation and the oral defence at the colloquium (10 %) and the thesis process (15 %). In case of substantial disparities in the assessment of more than 1.0 point between the examiners, they meet to discuss the differences. If they do not reach an agreement, the third examiner is asked to assess the thesis and the thesis and internship coordinator will decide on the final grade. Further, a sample of 10% of all theses is screened every year. In case of substantial disparities in the original assessment and the assessment of the 2 screeners, an independent person from CELT (Centre of Expertise in Learning and Teaching) of the University of Twente will discuss the differences with the original assessors and the screeners. Conclusions of these talks are reported to the program management.

Programme management and the Examination Board have taken a number of measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The programme assessment plan outlines the relations of the programme intended learning outcomes, course goals and course examinations. The plan is updated yearly. The Examination Board appoints examiners, who should have PhD degrees and who should be BKO-certified. Course examinations include test specification tables or assessment forms with assessment criteria and their weights. Peer review among examiners is promoted. Regularly, assessment experts check course examinations and assessments. Students are informed about the examination formats and grading. The Examination Board reviews samples of theses. All written assignments by students are automatically checked for plagiarism. The Examination Board investigates suspicion of fraud or plagiarism and handles cases in that respect.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences and University of Twente assessment policies and guidelines. The Examination Board monitors the examinations and assessments appropriately.

The examination methods in the programme are consistent with the course goals and contents. The panel welcomes the range of examination methods adopted. Although the measures taken to counter free-riding may be said to be adequate, the panel advises to set the proportion of group examination products within courses at a maximum to curb free-riding effects.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master theses are satisfactory. Students are provided with well-organised supervision. The panel approves of the assessment procedures, the theses being assessed on the basis of clear and weighted criteria. As not all of the examiners seem to be fully informed about the thesis assessment procedures, the panel proposes to support them in that sense.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be up to standard. The panel feels the programme examiners draft and assess course examinations in very organised ways, assuring the quality. Examinations and Master theses are reviewed on a regular basis.

Assessment of this standard

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

4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The final Master theses are individual research projects. In contrast to Bachelor theses, Master theses should contribute to the communication science body of knowledge. In case theses are aligned with more practical problems within organisations, the programme assures these theses are nevertheless academic research projects. Students may present the thesis in either journal article or research project formats. Although the formats are very similar, journal articles may be considered to be more research-oriented. The average grade of Master theses for the last five years is 7.6. The proportions of students graduating with distinction (*cum laude*) vary between 10 % and 18 % over the most recent five years. The panel studied the Master theses of fifteen programme graduates of the most recent years.

The programme has taken initiatives to prepare students for the professional field. In the curriculum, students are not only trained as researchers, but also as problem-solvers and organisers. Students may do internships. Guest lecturers from the professional field are involved in the programme. Recently, the programme started offering the extra-curricular *Prepare Your Future* project, consisting of a series of presentations by professionals in the field. Also, career mentoring and career training by one of the staff members is part of the project. The last years, the programme was discussed with a range of experts from the professional field. Since February 2018, the Work Field Committee provides input on professional field trends as well.

Programme graduates are prepared to enter the labour market and find positions in the programme domain. Every year, the programme surveys graduates' careers. Nearly 90 % of the graduates found jobs within six months after graduation.

Considerations

The Master theses match the intended learning outcomes. The theses are regarded by the panel to be up to standard. The panel advises to monitor the communication science contents of the theses. The panel suggests to adopt more standardised or more strict formats for the theses, especially with regard to the abstract. The panel agrees to the grades given by the programme examiners, although for some theses the panel would have given somewhat different grades. As this is the case, the panel suggests to schedule, for instance, regular assessments by external experts.

The panel feels the programme has taken appropriate measures to acquaint students with the professional practice in the programme domain. The panel considers students completing the programme to have reached the intended learning outcomes and regards the programme to have prepared students well for the professional field in this domain.

Assessment of this standard

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

5. Overview of assessments

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

6. Recommendations

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

- To monitor the intake numbers of the programme.
- To recruit candidates for the senior lecturers' vacancies, taking the gender balance for senior staff into account.
- To investigate the causes for the somewhat disappointing student success rates.
- To set the proportion of group examination products within courses at a maximum to curb free-riding effects.
- To support examiners in applying the Master thesis assessment procedures.
- To calibrate theses' assessments by scheduling, for instance, regular assessments of Master theses by external experts.
- To adopt more standardised or more strict formats for the Master theses, especially with regard to the abstract.
- To monitor the communication science contents of the Master theses.