

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND
PLANNING**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

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This report was finalized on 29 March 2019

REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S PROGRAMME LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING OF WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

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 Landscape Architecture and Planning

Name of the programme:	B Landschapsarchitectuur en ruimtelijke planning
International name of the programme:	B Landscape Architecture and Planning
CROHO number:	56848
Level and orientation of the programme:	Academic Bachelor of Science
Number of credits:	180 EC
Location(s):	Wageningen
Mode(s) of study:	Full-time
Language of instruction:	Dutch
Expiration of accreditation:	31/12/2019

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

Name of the programme:	M Landscape Architecture and Planning
CROHO number:	66848
Level and orientation of the programme:	Academic Master of Science
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specializations:	Landscape Architecture Spatial Planning
Location(s):	Wageningen
Mode(s) of study:	Full-time
Language of instruction:	English
Expiration of accreditation:	31/12/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Life Sciences to the Department of Environmental Sciences of Wageningen University took place on the 10th and 11th of December 2018.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Wageningen University
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on the 7th of March 2018. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning and the master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning consisted of:

- Prof. dr. S. (Stanley) Brul, professor Molecular Biology and Microbial Food Safety at the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA) and chair of the Dutch institute for Biology (NIBI) (chair);
- Dr. M. (Mieke) Latijnhouwers, assessment advisor at Radboud University Medical Centre Nijmegen, the Netherlands;



- Em. Prof. dr. M. (Elen) Deming, director of the Doctor of Design Program at the College of Design at North Carolina State University and Vice President for Research of the Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) (United States of America);
- Prof. dr. Z. (Zorica) Nedovic-Budic, professor Spatial Planning and Information Technology and since 2017 head of the Department of Urban Planning and Policy at the University of Illinois (United States of America);
- S. (Sietske) Gadella, master student in Infection and Immunity at Utrecht University (student member).

The panel was supported by dr. M.J.V. (Meg) Van Bogaert, who acted as secretary

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

Preparation

In preparation of the site visit, the panel studied several documents, amongst others: the NVAO assessment framework (2016), the institutional audit of WU and the previous programme assessments (of 2012). The accreditation system has entered its third phase (concurrently with a second round of institutional audits). Wageningen University (WU) has recently successfully passed its second institutional audit. The new NVAO assessment framework is 'geared to a quality assurance system that is based on trust in the existing, high quality of Dutch higher education'.

The most recent assessment of the programmes took place in 2012. In this assessment, the bachelor's programme was assessed as 'satisfactory', with partial scores of 'good' for standard 1 and 2 and 'satisfactory' for standard 3. The panel was particularly impressed with the impressive and well-thought out profile, the learning outcomes for each course and the good balance between academic focus and the professional field. Points of improvement were to make ethics and philosophy more explicit in the curriculum, to look at the high study load and success rates. The master's programme received the overall assessment 'good', with partial scores of 'satisfactory' for standard 1 and 'good' for standard 2 and 3. The panel also praised the learning outcomes for each course and the good balance between academic focus and the professional field. Furthermore, the panel considered the master's theses to be of high quality. The panel recommended to clarify the profile of the master's programme and to look at the high study load.

With the new philosophy of the framework and the last assessment of these specific programmes in mind, the panel does not want to elaborate too long on the different criteria of the four standards of the limited framework. The overall evaluation of the programmes by this panel is, as it was in 2012, positive. In this report, therefore, the panel will concentrate specifically on developments since 2012 and on providing suggestions that might help to make the programmes even better than they already are.

QANU received the self-evaluation report of the Landscape and Architecture programmes on 31 October 2018 and made it available to the panel. The panel members read the self-evaluation and prepared questions, comments and remarks prior to the site visit. The secretary collected these questions in a document and arranged them according to panel conversation and subject.

In addition, panel members read recent theses from each programme. In consultation with the chair, fifteen theses per programme were selected from the academic years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, covering the full range of marks given and all specializations. The panel members also received the grades and the assessment forms filled out by the examiners and supervisors. An overview of all documents reviewed by the panel is included in Appendix 4.

The programme management drafted a programme for the site visit. This was discussed with the secretary and chair of the panel. As requested by QANU, the programme management carefully

selected discussion partners. A schedule of the programme for the site visit is included in Appendix 3.

Site visit

The site visit took place on 10 and 11 December 2018 at Wageningen University (WU). In a preparatory meeting on the first day of the site visit, the panel members discussed their findings based on the self-evaluation and on the theses and formulated the questions and issues to be raised in the interviews with representatives of the programme and other stakeholders.

During the site visit, the panel studied a selection of documents provided by the programme management. They included course descriptions, course materials, written exams, assignments and other assessments.

The panel interviewed the programme management, students, alumni, staff members, members of the Programme Committee and members of the Examining Board.

Report

After the visit, the secretary produced a draft version of the report. She submitted the report to the panel members for comments. The secretary processed corrections, remarks and suggestions for improvement provided by the panel members to produce the revised draft report. This was then sent to WU to check for factual errors. The comments and suggestions provided by the programme management were discussed with the chair of the assessment panel and, where necessary, with the other panel members. After incorporating the panel's comments, the secretary compiled the final version of the report.

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.



SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1

The bachelor's and master's programmes in Landscape Architecture and Planning (BLP and MLP) aim at deliberate shaping and governing of landscapes at various scales. The BLP programme has two majors, Landscape Architecture (LA) and Spatial Planning (SP) that are closely connected in the programme. Students with one major are familiarized with the other and both learn to collaborate. The MLP programme builds on knowledge, skills and understanding of planning and design and landscape acquired in a prior bachelor's programme. MLP has two specializations, LA and SP that – similar to BLP – are closely connected in the programme. The panel is pleased with the profiles and interdisciplinarity of BLP and MLP which are rather unique at international level in their combination of spatial planning and landscape architecture in one programme. The panel considers it an advantage that students from one specialisation or major get familiarized with aspects of the other. The positioning of these programmes in Wageningen is emphasized by a focus on life sciences and environmental sciences. Specifically, MLP has a focus on climate change, food systems, health and environment.

The ILOs are adequate and well-formulated. The panel likes the division into sub-ILOs in the BLP programme. The ILOs of MLP are more general, but certainly fulfil the requirements and make a distinction between the LA and SP specializations.

The link with the professional field is present throughout the programmes and the panel is impressed by the involvement of the EAC. Not only is the EAC involved in tuning the ILOs, but members are also involved in other aspects of the programmes.

Standard 2

The backbone of the BLP programme's majors consists of a series of successive design and planning studios, which are project based and interactive learning environments where students learn to apply knowledge and skills. Furthermore, there are supporting courses. The curriculum builds up from basic courses in the first year to more specialised courses in the second and third year. The final project is a 12 EC thesis for both majors. The BLP curriculum is well structured and shows clear concepts and approaches both in landscape architecture and planning. In the first two years an integrated approach is observed between LA and SP. The panel thinks that this is a strength of the programmes and would stimulate them to even further increase these integrative aspects. Students in the MLP choose one of two specializations with five common core courses in the first year. In the second-year students follow an internship, have optional courses and write a thesis. The content of the courses is current and clearly at a master's level. The integration of LA and SP as well as the structure of the MLP curriculum is also good. Specifically, the *Atelier* has an important position in the integration of the specializations and the interdisciplinarity of the programme. A possible improvement for the SP specialization is to include a practical (spatial planning) component in the thesis or a studio. In a studio, students would go through the complex exercise of making a plan. The content of the courses is current and of clear master's level. For both programmes the panel verified and concluded that the curriculum allows the students to realise the ILOs.

The programmes offer their students a good teaching-learning environment, both programmes are characterised by a pleasant atmosphere and a close interaction between teaching staff and students. There is ample and continuous attention to improving the curriculum. The panel observes a creativity in the use of teaching methods of which a variety is used in the programmes. Specifically, the large number of excursions, already in the bachelor's programme, is a positive feature. The discipline is young when it comes to scientific research. The panel is pleased to notice that the core Chair Groups involved in the programmes have strongly developed in this respect over the past years and focus on connecting research to practice.



Student numbers are increasing, specifically in BLP, which puts pressure on the facilities and teaching staff and might result into increasing student numbers of MLP in the near future. So far, the programmes manage well, but the panel is of the opinion that further growth without additional measures might lead to quality loss in the future.

The workload is considered to be very high by students, specifically during studios. The panel appreciates the fact that the programmes take this issue seriously, are analysing the underlying causes and continue to work on plans to improve the experienced workload. Important aspects in this are expectation management, connecting courses in the same period and guidance of students. The teaching staff of the programmes is motivated, qualified and strongly appreciated by students. Lectures are experts in their fields and most have a connection to both research and practice. The increasing workload of staff member requires intensive monitoring.

Standard 3

Both programmes have developed a solid system of assessment, which is based on the WU-wide assessment policy. Sufficient attention is paid to the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations. A strong aspect is the use of peer review to validate the quality of courses including assessment. The design of sample tests studied by the panel is adequate: the examinations sufficiently match the course specific learning goals and teaching methods. The level and content of the examinations is appropriate.

The procedures for assessing the final product of the programmes, the thesis, are clear and the assessment itself is sound. The panel advocates the university-wide implementation of a digital assessment system in which the subsequent steps in the thesis process are fully automated. This could have prevented the large number of thesis assessment forms without signature of the supervisors and could safeguard independent grading by the different assessors. Finally, the use of a tailor-made assessment for the LA specialization/majors is appropriate, although the balance between the specializations/majors would improve if also the SP assessment form was adapted to emphasize the focus on problem solving, plan making or urban policy/strategy.

Finally, the panel established that the Examination Board (EB) safeguards the overall level of assessment in the programmes to the best of its current abilities. The panel is positive about the frequency the EB visits the Chair Groups and by the recommendations that are given to the programme management.

Standard 4

The panel studied a sample of fifteen recently completed theses of the BLP programme. The panel was generally satisfied with the level and content of the theses. With only 12 EC the bachelor's thesis is a small part of the total programme and covers a relatively short period. Students of the LA track also deliver a digital poster, which is a relevant skills-based product. Although the quality of all theses and posters is adequate to good, the panel is of the opinion that the combination of a thesis and a studio in the final semester of the programme seems difficult for students to deal with. The panel also studied a sample of fifteen recently completed MLP theses and concluded that in general the quality was good. The panel admires the design research and theoretical emphasis of the programme which is reflected in the theses. The posters that were part of the LA specializations were considered solid although somewhat conventional.

Graduates of the BLP programme are successful in a wide variety of master's programmes, while graduates of MLP find employment in relevant positions in the professional field. The panel is pleased with the increasing number of graduates that start a PhD project. Alumni generally feel well prepared for the professional field.

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

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

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

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

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

The chair prof. dr. S. Brul and the secretary dr. M. Van Bogaert 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: 29 March 2019

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

Governance structure of Wageningen University

In contrast to many other Dutch Universities, WU has just one faculty: the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Therefore, the governance structure of WU differs from most other universities. The Rector Magnificus of the University is also the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean of the Faculty appoints the Programme Board, which consists of four professors and four students. The Programme Board is the legal governing body of the university's 18 BSc and 28 MSc degree programmes. It is responsible for the design, content, quality and financing of the programmes. Each programme has its own Programme Committee, which consists of an equal number of students and staff members who are appointed by the Programme Board. Programme Committees advise the Programme Board on the design and content of their degree programmes. The Programme Board does not employ the lecturers; these are employed by the 94 Chair Groups, which generally include a Chair Holder (full professor), academic and support staff, postdocs and PhD students. The Programme Board, the Programme Committees and the Chair Groups together form the WU education matrix organization.

The Executive Board of WU has appointed four Examining Boards (EBs), each responsible for a group of related degree programmes (domain) and Chair Groups. Examining Boards are independent from the Programme Board and include staff members from the domain. The Examining Boards assess the individual study programmes of students and award student degrees. The Examining Boards also appoint the course examiners and monitor changes to the assessment strategy of interim examinations in the annual education modification cycle. The Examining Boards assure the quality of the interim examinations, and for that reason periodically visit Chair Groups to discuss the validity and reliability of the 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

Profile

The bachelor's and master's programmes in Landscape Architecture and Planning (BLP and MLP) aim at deliberate shaping and governing of landscapes at various scales. The programmes centre on the process of landscape interventions by means of planning and design, with sound academic reflection on both process and outcomes. The programmes aim are to create, enhance, maintain, and protect landscapes in order to become or remain functional, aesthetically pleasing, meaningful, just, and sustainable.

BLP has two majors:

- A) Landscape Architecture (LA): graduates are skilled in architectural composition, the role of different sketches and maps, and the exploration of relevant reference situations. They are skilled at applying free-hand and digital drawing techniques as well as plant and construction materials.
- B) Spatial Planning (SP): graduates learn methods for collaborative problem-solving in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary settings, and master basic skills to manage public facilitation and stakeholder communication. They are knowledgeable about a diversity of planning instruments and are able to evaluate performance of these instruments for implementing planning policies.

The MLP programme builds on knowledge, skills and understanding of planning and design and of the landscape acquired in a prior bachelor's programme. Students' knowledge, competencies,



international orientation and critical and reflective attitude are taken to an advanced level. MLP is culminated in a thesis and student oriented and students can prepare for a range of careers: designers, planners, consultants, policy makers or researchers. MLP also has two specializations (LA and SP). Within the chosen specialisation, students are stimulated to focus on specific challenges that determine and request important landscape transitions. With this in mind they search for appropriate knowledge which can be applied in the thesis work.

The panel is very pleased with both the BLP and MLP profiles. It is specifically impressed by the close connection between LA and SP. The panel thinks the programmes are unique in the way the specializations are interacting and combined. The major advantage is the way students of one specialization get familiarized with the other. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary nature of the programmes positively stands out. Both programmes, but specifically MLP, focus on climate change, food systems, health and environment. This focus on life- and environmental sciences connects both BLP and MLP programmes to the WU profile.

Benchmark

Both BLP and MLP have two main distinguishing features compared to other Dutch urban and regional planning programmes, but also in international perspective. Firstly, the focus on landscape analysis is strongly embedded in environmental sciences. This gives a typical 'Wageningen flavour' to the programme and its graduates and creates an advantage when operating in a multidisciplinary environment. Secondly, the combination of two majors/specializations combining the perspectives and tools of planners and landscape architects creates a unique profile. The LA students are aware of the government context they operate in and the SP students understand the changes in green environments at a regional level and how a specific landscape can serve as ways to achieve planning objectives. The panel strongly endorses these distinguishing features. Specifically, the combination of LA and SP in one programme seems internationally unique.

Intended learning outcomes

The profile and objectives of the BLP programme have been translated into a set of ten intended learning outcomes (ILOs), which correspond with the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes. Overviews of the ILOs can be found in appendix 1. The BLP ILOs are split up in 30 sub-learning outcomes. Students learn to devise plans and designs that are substantiated by academic knowledge at all times (ILO 3) and are trained to execute academic research under supervision (ILO 6). The BLP programme furthermore acquaints students with theory and academic literature on design and planning, landscape analysis and research, and ethical implications (ILOs 1,4,5,6). It also emphasises the creativity and imagination in applying the knowledge in different settings and promotes scientific curiosity (ILOs 2,4,6,7,9) and reflective and informed judgements (ILOs 2,4), trains students in presentation and communication (ILOs 3,8) and stimulates their critical and self-reflective learning and development (ILOs 8,10). The panel is of the opinion that the BLP ILOs are adequate and well-constructed. It considers elaboration into the sub-ILOs a wise choice in order not to make the ILOs too generic.

The MLP programme has also formulated ten ILOs based on the profile and objectives which correspond with the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. Students enrol in one of the specializations at the start of the programme but join classes in several courses throughout the first year. Two of the ten ILOs therefore differ between the two specializations. An overview of the ILOs can be found in appendix 1. Understanding of theories, methodologies and practices in the LA and planning is deepened to an advanced level (ILOs 1b, 2b). Graduates understand the complexity of global landscape and underlying processes (ILO 4), and are able to conduct research autonomously, and are familiar with academic codes of conduct (ILO7). Graduates are able to develop and execute design, planning and research projects (ILOs 1a,2b,7), and are able to support this with analysis at an advanced level ILO 5), and have the ability to function in multidisciplinary and international teams (ILO 9). Students are able to evaluate the social, environmental and economic implications of planning and design interventions as well as ethical implications on people's lives (ILOs 3,5,6). They can present scientific research, designs and plans

visually, orally and in text to academic and professional audiences (ILO 8). Finally, graduates are able to reflect on their development and demonstrate an attitude of life-long learning (ILO10). The panel also considers the MLP ILOs to be adequate and well-constructed. The ILOs are clearly at master's level, with emphasis on advanced, critical and evaluative aspects. With respect to the SP specialisation the panel observes an opportunity to put more focus on planning and the making of plans and less emphasis on problem solving. The panel is of the opinion that the graduates should know the spatial tools for analysis in addition to statistical tools. Due to the rather implicit articulation of the ILOs this aspect can be easily included into the programme.

Link with professional field

The BLP programme prepares students for a master in the field of landscape architecture, urban and regional planning, and related master's programmes. BLP graduates continue to a great diversity of other WU master's as well as master's at other Dutch or international universities. Nevertheless, the BLP programme does pay attention to the link with the professional field. As written, many programme objectives are skills-oriented and suggest professional orientation, while 'distinguishing features' suggest a highly synthetic geophysical 'flavour.' Good examples of BLP courses are *Studio Participative Planning* and *Concepts and Approaches in Planning Practices*. In MLP the *Ateliers* are a nice example of how the professional field is introduced into the programme. Also, guest lecturers are regularly invited, and field trips organised. The moderate exposure in the BLP to the professional field and the ateliers in MLP are valued by the panel, with practitioners being involved in teaching (see also Standard 2).

The Programme Committee (PC) convenes with the External Advisory Committee (EAC) twice a year to discuss the BLP and MLP programmes and to tune the ILOs to the needs and wishes of future employers. The EAC considers the relationship with the professional practice as a strong point of the programmes. The panel was pleased to read about the involvement of EAC members in the programmes. The requirements of the professional field and discipline have been laid down in a subject-specific reference framework. The structure and competences of this framework are followed by MLP.

Considerations

The panel is pleased with the profiles and interdisciplinarity of BLP and MLP which are rather unique at international level in their combination of spatial planning and landscape architecture in one programme. The panel considers it an advantage that students from one specialisation or major get familiarized with aspects of the other. The positioning of these programmes in Wageningen is emphasized by a focus on life sciences and environmental sciences. The ILOs are adequate and well-formulated. The panel likes the division into sub-ILOs in the BLP programme. The ILOs of MLP are more general, but certainly fulfil the requirements and make a distinction between LA and SP. The link with the professional field is present throughout the programmes and the panel is impressed by the involvement of the EAC.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good'.

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good'.



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

Curriculum bachelor's programme

Over the review period the bachelor's programme's annual intake has been growing rapidly from approximately 50 in 2010 to 86 students starting the programme in 2018. Students are admitted based on their secondary school profile (equivalent of Dutch vwo-diploma with profile in Nature & Technology, Nature & Health, and Economics & Society). Pre-university students with the profile Culture & Society should have passed Mathematics A or B, and Geography or Biology. In the self-evaluation report the programme provides an overview in which the relation of the ILOs and the courses is provided. As a result of the sub-ILOs this overview is very detailed and provides a good overview of the sub-ILOs being covered in different courses.

The programme (180 EC, see appendix 2) has a number of guiding principles to ensure coherence. The backbone of each of the two majors consists of a series of successive design and planning studios. A studio is a project-based and interactive learning environment where the students apply knowledge and skills acquired in other courses to solve environmental and urban problems and develop design, planning or policy solutions. Supporting courses are arranged around these design studios. The studios are characterised by high levels of student group work and short instructive lectures, where appropriate, on demand. Studios challenge student creativity with respect to real work design cases in a dynamic and integrated (cooperative) learning environment. The panel is very positive about the central position of the studios. It was learned during the site visit that the scheduling of supporting courses is intended to be organised in such a way to best support the studios; therefore, adjustments to course schedules are needed on occasion.

The first-year courses introduce the basics of design and planning and the nature of landscape and provides students with an integrative notion of design and planning. At the end of the first-year students choose a major after two courses are provided in which a representative impression is given of the two majors. Study advisers support students in making this decision by exploring their individual interests and core qualities and competences in relationship to the programme's majors and possible future careers. In the second- and third-year courses the knowledge and skills of students are deepened. Students develop an identity as a landscape architect or a spatial planner. The SP major starts with three thematic and theoretical courses, followed by a planning methods course and two studios in which the students learn how to develop and evaluate plans and spatial scenarios at the local/operational level and the regional/strategic level. The LA major starts with a studio at the local level, followed by courses on planting and construction as well as visualization techniques. Knowledge and skills are then applied in the *Studio Urban Design* and the *Studio Regional Design*. The first semester of the third year offers 30 EC of optional courses or a minor to deepen or broaden the knowledge and skills of the students. The final project for both majors is the 12 EC thesis. BLP students tend to be highly motivated to solve societal problems, and are discouraged from posing merely technical or practical focus ('how can?...') topics for the thesis. Instead, students are guided to identify a societal problem and investigate their responding research niche based on analysis of a literature review. Students in the SP major write a research thesis while students in the LA major combine design and research in their thesis. Topics are prepared by staff and students working in groups of 4-5 students on different aspects of the topic.

The panel established that the programme structure and design is sensible with clear concepts and approaches in planning. Some nice improvements were made in the past period to improve the structure. In the first year two integrated studios were introduced to strengthen the integrated planning and design in assignments. Furthermore, the choice for a major was placed earlier in the programme to allow students more time for specialization. The integrative experience between LA and SP, which the panel strongly appreciates, is specifically present in the first year. The panel

would suggest considering a studio that also provides more integration at the end of the second year. This should not be one course for both majors, but students can be working in the same classroom on a similar topic with cross-pollination as a result. The panel is pleased with the introduction of a common course on the history of ideas in landscape architecture and a planning course for both majors in the third year. This aspect was somewhat lacking in the programme, while the panel considers it to be important. With respect to the mathematics and statistics courses, the students remarked that for the LA major it seems less logical to have them as mandatory courses in the second year. The panel thinks that these courses could also be valuable in the LA major, but is of the opinion that the programme should do expectation management to make sure students understand how and why these courses are relevant to both majors.

During the site visit the panel studied a number of sample courses from the BLP curriculum, notably the second-year course *Concepts and Approaches in Planning Practices* (SP major), the second-year course *Concepts and Approaches in Landscape Architecture* (LA major) and the third year *Studio Strategic Planning* (LA major). The panel concludes that the level and content of these courses are of an academic bachelor's level and offer challenges for those who want to go into depth. The curriculum is well structured with clarity of learning goals and teaching methods that support the achievement of these goals. A curriculum matrix shows that the programme as a whole covers all of the ILOs. Like the panel, students are positive about the content of the curriculum, which scored a 3.9/5 in the National Student Enquiry (NSE) of 2018. They particularly appreciate the freedom in the programme, as this fosters and stimulates their creativity. The panel is also impressed by the flexibility that the programme offers students without loss of coherence. The role of the study advisor is crucial in this respect and the panel concludes that both study advisors do well in this respect. Also, the dedication of the programme management and teaching staff to students deserves a compliment: students are supported and facilitated in their individual programmes.

Curriculum master's programme

The average yearly inflow is on average 40 students, consisting of students who continue after the BLP programme, students from a different bachelor's programme who were directly admitted and students who were admitted after completion of a linkage programme of 30 EC. Approximately 40% of the students is international (predominantly from Europe and Asia). The programme (120 EC, see appendix 2) has a common part of 30 EC, 72 EC for the specialization and 18 EC are restricted optional or optional courses. In the self-evaluation report an overview is provided of the connection between ILOs and the courses. This overview shows a good distribution of the ILOs in the courses and each ILO is repeatedly addressed in different courses.

Students choose between two career tracks: the professional track is a consultancy-oriented track and chosen by most students. In the first year of this track students do an internship and follow the *Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning* course. The research track prepares students for a career in science. Students take a (minor) thesis instead of the internship and the *Research Master Cluster: Research Proposal Writing* course instead of the before-mentioned Atelier. This latter track prepares students to pursue a PhD programme. The programme has a common core of five courses in the first year. At the end of the first-year students team up in the common *Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning* course in small multidisciplinary project groups to address real-world planning and design issues. Students choose between two specializations. The Landscape Architecture (LA) specialization is most popular and takes the design skills of the students to a higher level in two advanced design studios: the *Master Studio Park Design* and the *Master Studio Regional Landscape Design*. Students who choose the Spatial Planning (SP) specialization take their analytical and evaluative skills to a higher level in *Planning, Society and Innovation*. The *Planning Perspectives of the 21st Century* courses is the second core course of this specialization. In the optional space students choose one of four thematic foci: a consistent selection of one restricted optional course and two advanced optional courses. Students are encouraged to make a focused choice for the remaining 12 EC of optional courses. In the second year, students in both specializations write a major thesis of at least 36 EC, concluding the specialization. Most students also do an internship of 24 EC, while those who chose the research track write a minor thesis.



The thesis is described in the course guide. Students start by writing a thesis proposal which, after consultation with and feedback of the supervisor, is presented to and discussed with fellow students and staff at a starting colloquium. Student, supervisor and examiner sign a thesis-contract prior to starting the research. In the final stage of the research project the student prepares a draft thesis about six /eight weeks before the expected finishing date. This draft can get a green or red light, depending on whether the supervisor thinks that the thesis can be successfully finalised in the remaining period. A red light leads to an extension of eight weeks, after which another draft report should be handed in. If students get three red lights, a follow-up procedure is discussed. This way the programme stimulates students to graduate on time.

Students have to look for an internship themselves, although a coordinator is available for support. The internship provides students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills acquired, and to acquire work experience in a professional organisation. The internship coordinator has at least one midterm meeting with the host organization supervisor and the student. International students informed the panel that they are stimulated to go abroad for an internship; because many Dutch organisations require Dutch language proficiency, it is a challenge for international students to find an internship in the Netherlands (although most manage to find one in the Netherlands if they really want). The panel agrees with the students that the programme can improve its communication and manage expectations of prospective students towards the practical chances and realities of finding internships. Many students also do an internship of six months in contrast to the four months foreseen by the program. Reasons being that usually the opportunities for a longer internship period are more interesting. Students state that the study delay is worth the experience they get.

The panel has looked at and discussed the curriculum and considers it well structured. It appreciates that the common core allows for a clear interaction between the two specializations, specifically the *Atelier* at the end of the first year, which is integrative and multidisciplinary. The restricted optional (RO) courses connect students from the programme with students from other Wageningen programmes. Students specialize and can use the free choice to adapt the programme to their personal interests. The connection to practice is very nice, specifically in the studios of the LA specialization. The panel does notice the difference in number of applied courses between the two specializations. While the LA specialization has two master studios, the SP specialization is much more theoretical. SP students indicated that although they appreciate the courses, they would have appreciated a studio or at least go through the entire exercise of making a plan. They would also like more opportunities for collaboration across the disciplines. If students graduated from the BLP this is less of an issue since that programme contains a number of studios. The panel learned that the SP planning courses are in a process of renewal, one objective is to connect better with practice. Including a studio is an option, but will also have consequences: as a consequence, other aspects of the programme may get less attention. The panel is pleased to notice that the programme is using the students' feedback to improve the curriculum.

During the site visit the panel studied a number of sample courses from the MLP curriculum, notably the course *Landscape Theory and Analysis* (common course), the *Studio Regional Landscape Architecture* (LA specializations) and the *Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning* (common course). The comment by students in the student chapter on some courses being perceived as 'outdated' was related to the digital skills set, specifically. Upon further probing, it appears that faculty haven't the capacity for teaching the range of advanced digital skills that students desire; thus students are forced to teach themselves by trial and error, which can be time-consuming (and in fact this situation is not unusual among faculty groups dedicated to specialized research, as at WU, and it is widely assumed that students have multiple pathways to learning digital techniques). Students stated that in the *Atelier* they notice a big difference in the visual presentations of products between the two specializations. The SP specialization is less exposed and, therefore, versatile with the tools. With respect to transferable skills, combining the *Atelier* with *Modular Skills Training* was a good step according to the students to develop relevant skills.

The panel concludes that the level and content of these courses is a good reflection of the current state of affairs in the disciplines. The panel recognised in general that theory and other course content represents current thinking in the field of practice. The *Landscape Geography* course is a popular foundational and interdisciplinary course that gives the programmes a special WU flavour. Professional ethics and philosophy are integrated across the curricula; for example, in *Planning Perspectives of the 21st Century*, theories of environmental and spatial justice are applied to patterns of urban development. Another example is the studio on *Regional Landscape Architecture* challenges students at an internationally competitive level of the discipline. Learning goals for students are suitable and match the teaching methods used. A curriculum matrix shows that the programme as a whole covers all of the ILOs. Like the panel, students are positive about the content of the curriculum, which scored a 3.8/5 in the National Student Enquiry (NSE) of 2018. They particularly appreciate the free choice and optional course and the interdisciplinary aspects of the programme. Similar to BLP, the role of the study advisor is crucial in the MLP with respect to the combination of flexibility and coherency of the individual programme of each student. Students also indicated that they like the fact that they are stimulated to reflect on their own development and (critical and creative) thinking. The panel agrees that this is an important and nice feature of the programme, as well as the fact that students learn to reflect on their position in a group.

Teaching-learning environment

Both programmes offer their students a good teaching-learning environment, which is characterised by a pleasant atmosphere and a lot of personal contact with teachers and students. The panel notes that this aspect scored a 4.5 (BSc) / 4.1(MSc) in the NSE 2018 report. Major strengths that were reported by the students during the interviews and in the student chapters included accessibility of staff members and the pleasant, informal contact between staff and students. The panel met with members of the programme committee (PC) that were active and engaged. It became clear that – due to unforeseen circumstances – the past few years were a difficult period. The panel was very pleased to see that together with the programme director, the PC is conscientiously working towards improvements of the programmes. In this respect, many steps were already taken.

The teaching methods used are varied and in line with the learning outcomes of the courses. The panel compliments the adaptability and variety in teaching methods, involving prominently studio classroom teaching. The panel specifically liked the courses using a 'theatre' model for delivery of content. Student creativity is partly dependent on the teacher and the panel considers that many creative teachers are part of these programmes. Not only in studios, but also in other courses the programmes clearly provide a variety of teaching methods. In addition to the more traditional lectures there are practicums, studios, tutorials and a vast number of excursions. Specifically, in BLP over 20% of the contact hours are excursions, experiences that are appreciated by the students. The panel notices that the heterogeneity in enrolling master's students is a point of attention in the MLP programme. The panel also appreciates the premaster sequence for students who did not graduate from the BLP programme.

The panel has discussed the balance between research and practice with staff and students. With respect to research the discipline is relatively young. The panel is of the opinion that the programme tries to connect students both to research and practice, which is a challenge that the programme deals well with. Staff is still in the phase of building a research community themselves, which is a larger trend within the profession. At the same time future employers require graduates to be entrepreneurial, engaged and professional. According to the panel, the Chair Group is positioned very well to deal with this challenge. Staff seems to be focussed on determining the appropriate directions to take and fostering a research environment in balance with design and planning.

Workload

Both in the BLP and the MLP programme students consider the workload to be very high, specifically with regard to studios. Although studio courses entail the same number of credits as



conventional courses, the number of hours student spent on studios is very high; this means other non-studio courses may not always receive the students' best efforts. Students also stated that they feel a lot of pressure to work hard and perform well in studio, naturally, because studio products comprise the portfolio that students typically show to potential employers. The programme management stated that the result of a studio is individual work in which students make design proposals encompassing scientific, ethical and aesthetic choices. The fullness of this responsibility is a lot to deal with for many students. The high workload is reflected in the NSE report (2018) in which the lowest scores of all categories are given to study load (3,2/5 for BLP and 2,9/5 for MLP). The panel is pleased that the programme management did an inquiry to get to the cause of this issue and a number of measures are currently being inserted, e.g. a better tuning between morning and afternoon courses to make them mutually beneficial. The programmes are also focusing more on some deeper issues, to provide an intellectually safe environment in the studio where students are free to experiment, get feedback and are allowed to make mistakes. Finally, expectation management is mentioned by the management. Students find it difficult that – unlike more theoretical courses – there is not one clear moment when their work is fulfilling the requirements.

Learning to master the creative process is not linear or predictable; in order to learn properly, mistakes must be made. The self-discovery thus required is time-consuming, exacerbated by the competitive fact that other students also work long hours. By way of making clear at the beginning of the studio what is expected, and by tutoring and intermediate assignments during the studios, the programme tries to guide students in such a way that studios workloads are manageable. The panel considers that these measures are a good way of dealing with the experienced workload. It does notice that in MLP the combination of studios with another (theoretical) course is difficult to deal with for the LA students, while SP students have two theoretical courses and state that e.g. the *Reflections on Planning and Design Practices* course could be somewhat more challenging. For the BLP programme the panel concludes that the combination of a studio and a second course adds to the problem. Not only do students experience a high workload, they also spend insufficient time on the additional course. Moreover, the end of the third year, with an intensive studio Regional Design and directly afterwards a 12 EC bachelor's thesis that includes a design project, is considered quite stressful by students. Some even choose to postpone the bachelor's thesis until after the summer and accept a delay in starting their master's programme.

Programme specific facilities and student numbers

The panel is very impressed by the use of studios in the programme and considers them valuable and precious assets to the programmes. Although the amount of space is limited and under pressure (e.g. due to increasing student numbers) the programme still manages to provide students with "studio-space" (work-desks, pin-up surfaces, and areas suitable for group work, model-making, and temporary/flexible storage). The panel strongly recommends to the WU to make sure that these spaces will remain in sufficient size and numbers to run the studios and simulate the types of professional working environments that students are preparing to enter.

Student numbers have increased, specifically in BLP, which puts pressure on the facilities and teaching staff. The panel is of the opinion that so far, the programmes seem to be able to deal with this increase, but have reached a threshold of incapacity, where teaching and learning environment is compromised. Further increase will put even more pressure on facilities and staff and the panel thinks that the limits have been reached. Further growth without additional compensatory measures might lead to a loss of educational quality.

Teaching staff

In the BLP programme about 33 lecturers are involved in the entire spectrum of BLP courses, of which 22 are part of the core teaching team of the Chair Groups in Land Use Planning, Landscape Architecture and Cultural Geography. For the MLP programme 31 lecturers are involved of which 24 are part of these three Chair Groups. Over half of the staff members teaches in both programmes. The student staff ratio for BLP is 11:1 and 22:1 for MLP. These are respectable ratios and mirror international norms, especially for studio-based education. The panel is overall very pleased with

the quality of the teaching staff. Lecturers are experts in their fields and are able to combine practice with research in the programme. The content of the courses is very current, and the panel is impressed by the level of teaching staff and engaged practitioners in this respect. International standards for faculty in landscape architecture typically require the professional master's as the terminal degree for teaching in the field, however all course coordinators and most other lecturers surpass that, holding a PhD. The total number of staff holding PhDs has been increasing strongly in the past period. The panel notes that didactic skills are considered important and lecturers are given sufficient opportunities to obtain a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) and/or other qualifications that benefit the quality of their teaching. Most courses involve multiple lecturers, which ensures frequent communication and collaboration. Furthermore, course coordinators from the two core Chair Groups meet annually to discuss and improve the connection and complementarity between courses. Students highly appreciate the staff's didactic quality, which is reflected in high course evaluations and programme evaluations. This was confirmed in the interview the panel held with students who also emphasised the level of the courses and accessibility of lecturers.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the curriculum, teaching-learning environment and staff of the BLP and MLP programmes enables students to realise the ILOs. The BLP curriculum is well structured and shows clear concepts and approaches both in landscape architecture and planning. In the first two years an integrated approach is observed between LA and SP. The panel thinks that this is a strength of the programmes and would stimulate them to even further increase these integrative aspects. The students particularly appreciate the creativity and freedom in the programme and the panel agrees: this flexibility is a good feature of the programme and does not affect the coherency of the curriculum. In this respect the role of the study advisers is crucial.

With respect to the MLP programme, the content of the courses is current and clearly at a master's level. The integration of LA and SP as well as the structure of the MLP curriculum is also good. Specifically, the *Atelier* has an important position in the integration of the specializations and the interdisciplinarity of the programme. A possible improvement for the SP specialization is to include a practical (spatial planning) component in the thesis or a studio. In a studio, students would go through the complex exercise of making a plan. The content of the courses is current and of clear master's level.

The teaching-learning environment is characterised by a pleasant atmosphere and a close interaction between teaching staff and students. There is ample and continuous attention to improving the curriculum. The panel observes a creativity in the use of teaching methods of which a variety is used in the programmes. Specifically, the large number of excursions, already in the bachelor's programme, is a positive feature. The discipline is young when it comes to scientific research. The panel is pleased to notice that the core Chair Groups involved in the programmes have strongly developed in this respect over the past years and focus on connecting research to practice. Student numbers are increasing, specifically in BLP, which puts pressure on the facilities and teaching staff and might result into increasing student numbers of MLP in the near future. So far, the programmes manage, but the panel is of the opinion that further growth without additional measures might lead to quality loss.

The workload is considered to be very high by students, specifically during studios. The panel appreciates the fact that the programmes take this issue seriously, are analysing the underlying causes and continue to work on plans to improve the experienced workload. Important aspects in this are expectation management, connecting courses in the same period and guidance of students.

The teaching staff of the programmes is motivated, qualified and strongly appreciated by students. Lectures are experts in their fields and most have a connection to both research and practice. The increasing workload of staff member requires intensive monitoring.



Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'good'.

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'good'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

System of assessment

The panel established that WU has a sound assessment policy. In 2017, WU renewed its vision on education alongside its education assessment policy. This assessment policy defines why and how WU assesses and how the roles and responsibilities are distributed. Its goal is to generalise assessment rules and policies and to make them transparent to both lecturers and students.

The system of assessment that is in use within the BLP and MLP programmes takes the WU policy as a starting point. To ensure that tests are valid, an assessment strategy is drawn up for each course, linking the course specific learning outcomes to assessment methods. The WU Study Handbook provides an overview of assessment methods for each course and the PC ensures that each assessment method is aligned with the *action verb* in the ILOs. Rubrics are widely used and overall the panel considers the assessment of courses to be well-thought out. More detailed explanation of assessment, including assessment matrices and rubrics is included in the course guide of each course. By publishing the assessment strategies in the Study Handbook, as well as in the study guide of individual courses, the programmes ensure that students are well aware of what is expected of them. To verify that the assessment was valid and transparent, students are asked to reflect on the assessment strategy in the course evaluations. When a course structurally scores less than 3 out of 5 for any of the items, improvements are discussed with the course coordinator. In the MLP programme the revision of the ILOs led to a re-iteration of the assessment strategies to make sure that each ILO is assessed by a proper assessment method and that all ILOs are assessed.

Overall, the panel finds that there is sufficient attention for the validity, reliability and transparency of assessment. It is pleased with the WU wide policy of asking external experts to validate the quality of courses, including the assessment. It notes that this policy of external peer review is conscientiously followed by the Chair Groups involved in the BLP and MLP programmes. The panel, however, also wishes to stress the importance of internal peer review. The panel has furthermore established that the combined assessment of all courses covers the full range of ILOs. This was difficult for the panel, as there was not one central overview of assessment tools used. The panel also asks attention to the use of formative and summative assessments, including clarity in identifying the assessment aspects. The programmes are working on including more formative assessments in the assessment strategies. The panel agrees that more formative assessments would be helpful, specifically in the studios, and stimulates the programmes to continue developing formative assessment methods.

During the site visit, the panel studied assessments and answer models of a number of sample courses at bachelor's and master's level. It found that these assessments are generally well aligned with the learning goals and teaching methods of the course. Often an appropriate combination of assessment methods is used, e.g. a project plan, report, and presentation. The overall level of the assessments is adequate. The assessment reflects the content of the course and sufficiently addresses all of the relevant cognitive levels. From its interviews with stakeholders, the panel concludes that all parties involved are generally pleased with the assessment procedures and

quality of examination. Both bachelor's and master's students scored assessment with a 3.7/5 in the 2018 NSE.

Thesis assessment

The final product of the bachelor's programme is a thesis report and a reflection paper in which the students reflect on the progress and results of the project, and the lessons learned concerning individual learning objectives. Students in the LA track have an additional deliverable, a landscape design usually in the form of a digital poster. To ensure successful completion students are first asked to produce a thesis proposal for evaluation by the supervisor. During group meetings, students present their mid-term results and receive feedback. In the thesis project students demonstrate that they have achieved all of the ILOs. For the theses in the SP track the standard WU assessment form is used in which research competence (45%), thesis report (45%), presentation (5%) and final discussion (5%) are assessed. Given the different nature of design projects the LA thesis is evaluated by using a modified assessment form in which research competence (10-40%), design qualification (10-40%), report (40%), presentation (5%) and final discussion (5%) are included. Rubrics help assessors to score these aspects appropriately. The thesis is assessed by the supervisor and a second, independent reviewer. This reviewer asks questions during the examination and confronts the student with perceived shortcomings. The formal examiner (Chair Holder) reviews random theses to check assessment reliability and guard the overall quality. The panel established that students are generally satisfied with the assessment procedure.

The master's programme is concluded with both an internship and a thesis. The thesis is seen as central to the successful completion of the programme and covers 8 of the 10 ILOs. The final products are a thesis report, an oral presentation (colloquium) and an oral exam. For the SP specialization the standard WU thesis assessment form is used, which assesses research competence (30-60%), thesis report (30-60%), colloquium (5-10%) and oral defence (5-10%). Students in the LA specialization also prepare a poster presentation. The assessment form for this specialization is – similar to the BLP programme – adapted to account for the design components. This leads to an assessment of research competence (20-40%), thesis report (20-40%), design competences (20-40%) colloquium (5-10%) and oral defence (5-10%). The design-thesis of the LA specialization is grounded not only in *research on* design, but also research for design and research by design. The link between research and the design part is a specific topic for feedback in the proposal presentation by students. Rubrics help assessors to score these aspects appropriately. The assessment is done by the supervisor, the second reader and the examiner (Chair Holder) and the final result is established in consultation.

The panel is generally pleased with the (procedures for) thesis assessment. While the general outlines of the assessment are standardised, some of the specifics are determined at Chair Group level. Within a general range set by the Examining Board, Chair Groups are at liberty to define the weight they wish to attach to the different components of the assessment. The panel thinks that using a different assessment form for the LA specialization/major is a good decision. It includes a design qualification, which indeed is a very important aspect of the LA theses. With respect to the balance between the two specializations/majors, the panel considers it to be wise to also include an additional section in the SP thesis assessment form that focuses on problem solving, plan making or urban policy/strategy. This would imply that the thesis requirement has been adjected to include a planning aspect. This will also include adapting the rubric to the new assessment form.

A general issue that needs to be addressed is the fact that the assessments of both assessors are recorded on a single assessment form. To enable external reviewers to establish that both readers have independently phrased their assessment, it is preferable to have each assessor fill out a separate form and administrate both forms. After studying a sample of theses and associated assessment forms, the panel concludes that forms are generally complete and contain relevant feedback. The panel largely agreed with the assessments and grades given by the assessors. The panel noticed that many assessment forms did not include any signatures of the assessors. The



panel has ascertained that in all cases at least two assessors were involved, but it points out that this should be improved.

Examining Board

At WU there are four Examining Boards (EBs), each responsible for the assurance of quality of examination of a group of related degree programmes. The Executive Board appoints EB members and at least one member is independent (not affiliated to the programmes). For each course a member of the lecturing staff is appointed as examiner by the responsible EB. The examiner is responsible for the assessment strategy of the course.

Part of the responsibilities of the EB is to check whether the individual study programmes of students (which can vary widely because of the many different specializations and ample elective space) cover all of the ILOs, thereby assuring that students have achieved the intended end level upon graduation. The panel is convinced that the EB does this to its best current ability. To ensure the quality of assessment, the EB periodically visits the Chair Groups that are involved in the teaching. Prior to these visits, which generally take place every four years, a delegation of EB members accompanied by an external assessment expert checks a sample of theses and internship assessments, as well as course assessment strategies whose validity, reliability and transparency they later discuss with representatives of the Chair Groups. Where necessary, the EB proposes improvements. In 2014 and 2016 the EB visited the core Land Use Planning and Landscape Architecture Chair Groups. Reports of these meetings were shared with the Chair Groups who are now addressing the recommendations. The panel is very positive that the EB has executed more frequent visits than once every four years, due to developments in the Land Use Planning Chair Group.

Although the panel has no particular reasons for concern with respect to the quality of assessment in the BLP and MLP programmes, it does note that the current university-wide system of quality assurance poses some challenges. To start with, there is some distance between the EB and the Chair Groups, which operate with a large measure of autonomy. The limited means that were available to the EBs over the reporting period meant that these may have lacked agency in properly streamlining procedures across Chair Groups and following up on prior recommendations such as assuring that assessment forms always are complete and stored uniformly. An additional issue for WU to consider is that the current system does not seem to allow for taking a snapshot of the assessment quality in a certain programme at a certain moment. Programmes such as BLP and MLP are fortunate in this respect to rely on a limited number of core Chair Groups, although other Chair Groups involved are visited at different times and (sometimes) by different Examining Boards. The panel was very pleased to learn that the Executive Board of WU is doubling the resources for EBs as of 2019. Even so, it does advise the university to carefully consider how these resources can be used to their optimal effect.

Considerations

Both programmes have developed a solid system of assessment, which is based on the WU-wide assessment policy. Sufficient attention is paid to the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations. A strong aspect is the use of peer review to validate the quality of courses including assessment. The design of sample tests studied by the panel is adequate: the examinations sufficiently match the course specific learning goals and teaching methods. The level and content of the examinations is appropriate.

The procedures for assessing the final product of the programmes, the thesis, are clear and the assessment itself is sound. The panel advocates the university-wide implementation of a digital assessment system in which the subsequent steps in the thesis process are fully automated. This could have prevented the large number of thesis assessment forms without signature of the supervisors/examiner and could safeguard independent grading by the different assessors. Finally, the use of a tailor-made assessment for the LA specialization/majors is appropriate, although the

balance between the specializations/majors would improve if also the SP assessment form was adapted to emphasize the focus on problem solving, plan making or urban policy/strategy.

Finally, the panel established that the EB safeguards the overall level of assessment in the programmes to the best of its current abilities. The panel is positive about the frequency the EB visits the Chair Groups and by the recommendations that are given to the programme management.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

To review the achieved ILOs the panel studied documents such as course manuals, fifteen theses for each programme, and spoke to alumni of the programmes.

Theses

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a sample of fifteen recently completed bachelor's theses. The panel was generally satisfied with the level and content of these theses. A general finding of the panel on these theses is that all fulfilled the required level of an academic bachelor's thesis. The panel overall agreed with the grading by the thesis supervisors and on no occasion deviated in its grading with more than one point. With only 12 EC the bachelor's thesis is a small part of the total programme and covers a relatively short period. This is reflected in the quality of the theses, which is overall adequate with respect to the number of ECs. Although there were some good theses in the selection, where the problem definition, theoretical underpinning, description of methods, clarity of argumentation critical discussion and conclusions were of high level, there were also a number of weak(er) theses that were graded accordingly. The theses were judged to be weaker when they were narrowly focused on conventional problems of design or analysis or failed to make a thoroughly grounded investigation into root causes or conditions of noted problems, and/or did not ground the framing of the investigation in deep, current, or comprehensive review of literature or case precedents. In addition to the thesis report and reflection paper, students in the LA track also deliver a digital poster. The panel agrees that a poster is a relevant skills-based product for this track, although it does add to the number of products that have to be delivered in a short period of time. Furthermore, the combination of a thesis and a studio in the final semester of the bachelor's programme seems difficult for students to deal with.

Largely the conclusions on the bachelor's theses also apply to the fifteen master's theses that the panel studied, although the panel is of the opinion that the quality of MLP theses was in general good. The theses in the sample reflect the full range of marks given and some are therefore better than others, but the panel is convinced that all of the theses meet the ILOs. The panel admires the design research and theoretical emphasis of the programme which is reflected in the theses. In the stronger theses challenging frameworks for the performed analysis are deployed. The panel also noticed clear engagement with the literature and application of the theoretical concepts and empirical knowledge to the proposed designs and solutions. This brings with it often the use of innovative methods and analyses approaches involving e.g. 'ride-along' interviews in international settings. These theses generally used a diverse set of lenses to characterize a real-world landscape architectural and/or planning challenge. The weaker theses lack the rich approach and often timed were less strong in one or more of the lenses considered. Thus, analyses were less in-depth. Similar to the LA track of BLP, in the LA specialization the design project results in both a thesis



paper and a poster. The posters were solid, but according to the panel somewhat conventional. The panel concludes that for both specializations the final products clearly fulfil the requirements for a master's thesis project.

Success rates

For both BLP and MLP the overall success rates are lower than the WU average, one cause might be the extended periods for internships. In the self-evaluation report this is referred to as a concern. The panel agrees with this conclusion and is pleased that the programmes are looking into causes for this delay and working on possible solutions.

Position of graduates

The position of graduates after completion of the programmes underlines that students achieve the ILOs. BLP graduates know how to intervene in landscapes, applying knowledge from both the natural and the social sciences, which gives them a unique profile for which a clear niche exists. However, it is not customary for bachelor's graduates to enter the labour market. A large majority of alumni chooses to continue studies at WU, of which approximately 50% chooses the MLP programme. The majority of the other half choose another master in the field of Environmental Sciences at Wageningen University. The other students continue in many other master's programmes in the Netherlands or abroad. Students are prepared for a variety of professions and sectors, after completion of a related master where students can specialize further. At the moment it is not entirely clear what career possibilities are open to graduates who wish to directly enter the labour market.

Master's graduates are prepared for a variety of professions and sectors. Typical jobs include consultant, policy officer, landscape architect, project manager, researcher and/or teacher/lecturer. Graduates easily find jobs directly connected with their specialism, in the area of landscape architecture, urban and regional planning, environmental policy and planning, transport planning, rural development and area development. The panel was pleased to notice that the number of graduates that start a PhD programme is increasing. This is a sign that the signature research orientation is increasingly embedded into the programmes and the Chair Groups. In particular, the *Atelier* course teaches design process as a research method, attempting to bridge the shift between analysis and ideation. This is an emergent approach; some graduate students feel they do not yet have sufficient exposure to practitioners whose practices involve research in this way. Students appreciate the systemic, 'macro-scale' challenges of the master's graduate programme. Many students already find a job before graduation. On the one hand the panel thinks that this is very positive, as the graduates are 'in demand'. Alumni of the master's programme told the panel that they felt well prepared for their position after graduation, and that Dutch corporations increasingly seek to hire researchers and strategic thinkers trained in design. Points of improvement they mentioned with respect to the connection to the professional field were already taken up by the programme.

Considerations

Both the sample theses (and posters) that were studied by the panel and the position of graduates indicate that students achieve the ILOs of the programme. The general level of the final projects of the BLP is satisfactory: the work is of sufficient academic quality, design quality and reflects the two domains combined in the programmes. The level of MLP final projects was considered to be generally good. Graduates of the BLP programme are successful in a wide variety of master's programmes, while graduates of MLP find employment in relevant positions in the professional field. The panel is pleased with the increasing number of graduates that start a PhD project. Alumni generally feel well prepared for the professional field.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'good'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel considers that both programmes have a clear profile that fits well within the Wageningen profile. The curricula are continuously being improved and the panel was impressed by the quality and involvement of staff. The connection to the professional field is good. The assessment and realised ILOs of BLP are adequate, while the quality of the theses in the MLP programme is considered to be good.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning* as 'satisfactory'.

The panel assesses the *master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning* as 'good'.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

After successful completion of this BSc programme, the graduate:

1. is able to distinguish different design and planning theories, methodologies and practices;
2. has the creativity and power of imagination necessary to generate and represent future landscapes and spatial organizations and their impact on society at large and can distinguish different planning or design methods;
3. is able to present models, alternatives and potential scenarios of past, present and future landscape interventions on interrelating scales and/or research results both visually, orally and in text;
4. is able to carry out an analysis of the physical and social dimensions of landscapes and their historical development in order to understand the multidimensional aspects of landscapes and to assess the impact of proposed landscape interventions on people's lives;
5. is able to identify the ethical implications of planning and design interventions in relation to themes as gender, equity, multiculturalism and sustainability
6. is able to execute landscape research under supervision: the student is able to develop a research proposal, to formulate research questions, to collect empirical data and to analyse different types of related literature;
7. has scientific curiosity, is pro-active and able to motivate an opinion;
8. is critical, self-reflective and able to operate according to explicit academic codes of conduct and professional ethical standards;
9. is able to operate in individual and group work settings and to be responsible for all related outcomes;
10. is able to design and plan under supervision his/her own learning path, based on continuous evaluation upon personal knowledge, skills and performance.

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

After successful completion of this MSc programme, the graduates:

- 1a. For Landscape Architects: develop research related landscape designs on interrelating spatial scales and with different temporal horizons using state-of-the-art representational techniques;
- 1b. For Landscape Architects: reflect on different design practices, theories and methods and place the own discipline in an international multidisciplinary and multicultural perspective;
- 2a. For Spatial Planners: conduct scientific analyses on landscapes and effectiveness of steering mechanisms using scenario studies, impact assessments, and other spatial-temporal analysis tools;
- 2b. For Spatial Planners: understand processes of decision-making and plan formation involving various stakeholders and within various cultural and legislative settings;
3. Evaluate the social, environmental and economic implications of planning and design processes;



4. Understand the characteristics of complex global landscape challenges and their underlying processes;
5. Carry out an advanced analysis of the physical and social dimensions of landscapes and their development in order to understand the multidimensional aspects of landscapes and to assess the impact of proposed landscape interventions on people's lives;
6. Identify and critically engage with the ethical implications of planning and design interventions in relation to themes like gender, equity, multiculturalism, and sustainability;
7. Execute landscape research: develop a research proposal and formulate research questions adopting adequate theoretical and methodological approaches, and work in compliance with academic codes of conduct;
8. Present and defend research findings and planning and design findings in a clear and concise manner, both in writing and verbally, geared towards various audiences;
9. Function in multi-disciplinary and international teams in complex planning and design contexts;
10. Design and plan own learning process based on continuous reflection on personal knowledge, skills, attitudes and performance in order to prepare for a professional career and to comply with professional ethical standards.

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

		Period 1 (12 EC)	Period 2 (12 EC)		Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 4 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)	Period 6 (12 EC)	
B-1	MO	PEN-10503 Ecology I	RO1 MAT-14803 Math. 1	LUP-12803 Integrated Studio 2	HWM-10303 Water 1	LUP-13306 Theory and Methodology of Planning and Design	SGL-23312 Landscape Geography	GRS-10806 Geo-Information Science for Planning and Design	LUP-11803 Studio Planning B. (wk. 40-41)
	AF	LAR-13809 Integrated Studio 1	RO1 MAT-15303 Statistics 1	GEO-10306 Human Geography	SGL-11303 Soil 1				LAR-12803 Studio Design B. (wk. 42-43)
B-2	MO	LAR-25806 Studio Site Design	LAR-29806 Planting, Construction and Representation 1		AEP-22306 Landscape Economics and Politics	YRM-21306 Research Methodology for Human Environment Interactions	LAR-27806 Planting, Construction and Representation 2	LAR-28806 Concepts and Approaches in Landscape Architecture	LAR-28306 Studio Urban Design
	AF	LAR-24306 Landscape Engineering	MAT-14903 Math. 2	MAT-15403 Stat. 2			RO2 GEO-23306 Cultural and Hist. Geography		
						RO2 GEO-36306 Environmental Psychology			
B-3	MO	Optional part				LAR-29306 History of Ideas in Landscape arch. and Planning	LAR-38303 Landscape Aesthetics	LAR-81912 BSc Thesis Landscape Architecture	
	AF						LAR-37809 Studio Regional Design		

Legend:

	Common Part		Major A - Landscape Architecture
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	Period 1 (12 EC)	Period 2 (12 EC)		Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 4 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)	Period 6 (12 EC)	
B-1								
MO	PEN-10503 Ecology I	RO1 MAT-14803 Math. 1	LUP-12803 Integrated Studio 2	HWM-10303 Water 1	LUP-13306 Theory and Methodology of Planning and Design	SGL-23312 Landscape Geography	GRS-10806 Geo- Information Science for Planning and Design	LUP-11803 Studio Planning B. (wk. 40-41)
AF	LAR-13809 Integrated Studio 1	RO1 MAT-15303 Statistics 1	GEO-10306 Human Geography	SGL-11303 Soil 1				LAR-12803 Studio Design B. (wk. 42-43)

B-2								
MO	PAP-20806 Public Administration and Environmental Law	LUP-24306 Concepts and Approaches in Planning Practices		AEP-22306 Landscape Economics and Politics	YRM-21306 Research Methodology for Human Environment Interactions	LUP-35806 Mobility & Network Infrastructures	LUP-20306 Planning and Research Methods	LUP-30806 Studio Participative Planning
AF	LAR-24306 Landscape Engineering	MAT-14903 Math. 2	MAT-15403 Stat. 2			RO2 GEO-23306 Cultural and Hist. Geography		
						RO2 GEO-36306 Environmental Psychology		

B-3								
MO	Optional part				LAR-29306 History of Ideas in Land- scape arch. and Planning	LUP-37312 Studio Strategic Planning	LUP-80812 BSc Thesis Spatial Planning	
AF								

Legend:

 Common Part

 Major B - Spatial Planning

Master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning

MSc Landscape Architecture and Planning, specialisation Landscape Architecture

	Period 1 (12 EC)	Period 2 (12 EC)	Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 4 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)	Period 6 (12 EC)	
M-1							
MO	LAR-37306 Reflections on Planning and Design Practices	LUP-36806 Landscape Theory and Analysis	GEO-37806 Research Methodology for Planning and Design	Optional	Optional	YMC-60300 Modular Skills Training	LUP-60309
AF	LAR-39306 Master Studio Park Design: a Narrative Approach	Restricted Optional			LAR-38806 Master Studio Regional Landscape Architecture: A Systems Approach	Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning	

	Period 1 (12 EC)		Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)		
M-2						
MO	LAR-70424 Internship Landscape Architecture		LAR-70424	LAR-80436 Thesis Landscape Architecture		
AF						

MSc Landscape Architecture and Planning, specialisation Spatial Planning

	Period 1 (12 EC)	Period 2 (12 EC)	Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 4 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)	Period 6 (12 EC)	
M-1							
MO	LAR-37306 Reflections on Planning and Design Practices	LUP-36806 Landscape Theory and Analysis	GEO-37806 Research Methodology for Planning and Design	LUP-32806 Planning Perspectives of the 21st Century	Optional	YMC-60300 Modular Skills Training	LUP-60309
AF	LUP-37806 Planning, Society and Innovation	Restricted Optional			Optional	Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning	

	Period 1 (12 EC)		Period 3 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)		
M-2						
MO	LUP-70424 Internship Land Use Planning		LUP-70424	LUP-70424 Thesis Land Use Planning		
AF						

Pre-Master Landscape Architecture linkage programme (February – June)

Legend:

	Common Part
	Major A - Landscape Architecture
	Major B - Spatial Planning

	Period 4 (6 EC)	Period 5 (12 EC)	Period 6 (12 EC)	
M-1				
MO	SGL-11806 Fundamentals of Landscape	LAR-38303 Landscape Aesthetics	LAR-28806 Concepts and Approaches in Landscape Architecture	YRM-21306 Research Methodology for Human Environment Interactions
AF		LAR-35806 Studio Regional Design		

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Definitief programma BLP en MLP

10 December BSc and MSc Landscape Architecture and Planning		
8.45	11.00	Arrival of the panel, Preparation, documentation review
11.00	11.45	Interview with management (including Programme Committee)
11.45	11.50	Mini break
11.50	12.45	Presentation work of students
12.45	13.30	Lunch and deliberations panel
13.30	14.00	Students BSc
14.00	14.05	Mini break
14.05	14.50	Teaching staff BSc
14.50	15.00	Break
15.00	15.45	Students MSc
15.45	15.50	Mini break
15.50	16.35	Teaching staff MSc
16.35	16.45	Break
16.45	17.15	Alumni
17.15	17.45	Internal deliberation panel, short recap day 1

11 December		
8.45	10.00	Deliberations panel and documentation review
10.00	10.30	Examining Board and Study Advisor(s)
10.30	11.00	Deliberations panel
11.00	11.45	Final interview with management
11.45	13.30	Deliberations panel and formulating preliminary findings and conclusions + lunch
13.30	14.00	Feedback of preliminary findings and conclusions



APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning and 15 theses of the master's programme Landscape Architecture and Planning. 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):

- Annual reports by the Examining Board
- Annual reports and minutes by the Programme Committee
- Extensive information and documentation on the following courses:

BLP	
Studio Strategic Planning	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LUP-37312
Concepts and Approaches in Planning Practices	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LUP-24306
Concepts and Approaches in Landscape Architecture	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LAR-28806

MLP	
Landscape Theory and Analysis	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LUP-36806
Studio Regional Landscape Architecture	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LAR-38806
Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning	https://ssc.WU.nl/Studiegids/Vak/LUP-60309