Leisure, Tourism and Environment

Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Wageningen University

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This report was finalized on 26 October 2012

Report on the master programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment of Wageningen University

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

Administrative data regarding the programme

Master programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment

Name of the programme:	Leisure, Tourism and Environment
CROHO number:	60111
Level of the programme:	master
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specializations or tracks:	
Location(s):	Wageningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Expiration of accreditation:	31-12-2013

The visit of the assessment committee Leisure, Tourism and Environment to the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of Wageningen University took place on 19 and 20 June 2012.

Administrative data regarding the institution

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

Quantitative data regarding the programmes

The required quantitative data regarding the programmes are included in Appendix 5.

Composition of the assessment committee

The committee that assessed the master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment consisted of:

- Prof. F. Zwarts (chair), professor at University of Groningen and professor and manager at University Campus Fryslân;
- Mrs. R.L. Prenen, MSc, independent educational adviser;
- Prof. J.S. Fleming, professor of Sport and Leisure Studies, Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK);
- Prof. G.W. Richards, professor at Tilburg School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Department of Leisure Studies;

- Mrs. E.L. Holmes, BA, master student in Leisure, Sport and Culture at Leeds Metropolitan University (UK).

The committee was supported by Mrs. dr. M.J.V. Van Bogaert, who acted as secretary. Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the members of the committee.

General information regarding Wageningen University

Educational programme assessments in Life Sciences at Wageningen University
A total of 31 educational programmes of Wageningen University which could not be included in a national disciplinary assessment had to be assessed in 2012 in order to apply for reaccreditation. In consultation with QANU, Wageningen University decided to divide the work among fourteen committees in the period between March and July 2012. For each site visit different expert committee members were invited to assess the programmes. In addition to the expert committee members, two non-expert committee members were involved as core members in all site visits and programme assessments. These non-expert committee members were the chairman, Prof. F. Zwarts, and the educational expert, Mrs. R.L. Prenen, MSc. This construction was chosen to guarantee consistency between the fourteen assessments as well as to respect the diversity between the programmes. Prior to the site visits an extended kick-off meeting was held in February 2012, during which subjects applicable to all programmes were discussed (for the programme, see Appendix 6). In addition to the core members of the committee, an expert member (Prof. E. Van Damme), a student member (Mrs. T.I.E. Veldkamp, BSc) and both secretaries to the committees (Dr M.J.V. Van Bogaert and Mrs. M. Maarleveld, MSc) were present. During the kick-off meeting, interviews were held with representatives of the educational institute, educational committees, study advisers, examining boards and alumni. The findings of the kick-off meeting were used as input for the fourteen site visits and are incorporated in the committee reports on the 31 educational programmes. Based on the information received in the first five site visits, the core committee members held another interview with the examining boards and a selection of study advisers. This meeting was held on 6 June 2012 and provided additional insight into the functioning of and relation between the examining boards and study advisers.

Wageningen University
Wageningen University is comprised of one faculty, the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The Faculty consists of 80 chair groups, arranged in five departments. All educational programmes, bachelor and master, are organized by the Education Institute (OWI). The Board of the OWI is responsible for the content, quality and finances of the educational programmes. Every programme has a programme director and a programme committee, consisting of equal numbers of students and academic staff. The programme committee is responsible for the content and quality of the programme, though in a formal sense this is subject to approval by the Board of the OWI. The programme director is responsible for the realization of the programme.

The courses are provided by staff of the chair groups, the 'supply side'. The programme committees are considered the 'demand side', with the programme director being the 'matchmaker'.

Wageningen has four examining boards, usually consisting of five to eight people from different disciplines. Before the site visit period, these boards were in the process of strengthening the quality management of assessment processes and procedures.

Each programme has one or more study advisers, who are tasked with supporting students throughout their study career. Study advisers provide information and invite students for progress evaluations and meetings to plan the student's individual curriculum. Each student needs the study adviser's approval for the elective parts of the programme s/he has chosen.

Internationalization
Wageningen University has an international reputation, in terms of both research qualities and the number of international master students. The committee especially considered the latter point since there are both possible drawbacks and advantages to having many international students. Extensive discussions during the site visits made it clear to the committee that despite the fact that it will always be difficult to assess the quality of enrolling international students, the programme managements are well aware of the imperfections of its procedures and have tightened the selection in the past few years. Overall the committee thinks that the advantages of having many international students outweigh the disadvantages.

Working method of the assessment committee

Preparation
After receiving the critical reflection, the project manager checked the quality and completeness of the information provided. After approval, the critical reflection was forwarded to the committee, in both printed form and digitally. In addition, the committee members selected and read a total of 15 theses for each programme that was assessed (see Appendix 8).

Before the site visit the project manager created a draft programme for the interviews (see Appendix 6). The draft programme was discussed with the chair of the committee and the coordinator of the educational institute. As requested by QANU, the coordinators of the programmes carefully composed a select and representative panel for all interviews.

Site visit
During the initial meeting at the start of each site visit, the committee members discussed among themselves their findings regarding the critical reflection and the theses. They also discussed their task and working methods and the proposed domain-specific requirements (see Appendix 2).

During the site visit, interviews were held with representatives of the programme, students, staff members, the Educational Committee, and a student adviser. The examining boards were interviewed in the extended kick-off meeting, as can be read on page 6. The committee also received additional information, for example, study books and reports from the meetings of the Educational Committee. This information was examined during the site visit. When considered necessary, committee members could read additional theses during the site visit. A consultation hour was scheduled to give students and staff of the programmes the opportunity to talk to the committee. No requests were received for the consultation hour.

The committee used part of the final day of the site visit to discuss the assessment of the programmes and to prepare a preliminary presentation of the findings. The site visit concluded with an oral presentation by the chairman of the general assessment and several specific findings and impressions of the programme.

Report
After the site visit the project manager wrote a draft report based on the committee's findings. The draft was first commented upon by the committee members and then sent to the faculty to check for factual irregularities. All comments made by the faculty were discussed with the chair of the committee and, if necessary, with the other committee members. After revision, the report became official.

Decision rules
In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments (as of 22 November 2011), the committee used the following definitions for the assessment of each individual programme, both of the standards and the total programme.

Generic quality
The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.

Unsatisfactory
The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

Satisfactory
The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

Good
The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum.

Excellent
The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum and is regarded as an (inter)national example.

Summary judgement

This report provides the findings and considerations of the Life Sciences committee on the master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment at Wageningen University. The committee assessment is based on information in the critical reflection, interviews during the site visit and a selection of theses.

Standard 1: Intended Learning Outcomes
The committee is generally impressed by the positioning of the programme and its intended learning outcomes in a tourism context. This is a developing field and it is to be expected that the best positioning and intended learning outcomes will change over time, even more than once. The committee encourages the programme management and the lecturers to continue the development of the programme taking into account the developments in the field.

There is only one issue where the committee explicitly requests the programme management and educational institute to take action, this is the name of the programme. While the title suggests that *Leisure* and *Tourism* have equal positions in the programme, the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programme are more focussed on *Tourism.* The programme and course content also primarily focus on tourism, with leisure being the supporting discipline. Furthermore, Wageningen University attracts students with an interest in the physical environment and sustainability. As a result, these students interpret the word *environment* as the physical environment, while the programme uses the word in its broadest, social sciences sense. According to the committee, it is understandable that students have certain expectations since the programme is offered in the Wageningen context.

From the interviews it became clear that the programme management agrees that the name is not representative of its content and might cause confusion in the Wageningen context. The committee strongly advices renaming the programme to emphasize its focus on tourism. It would like to stress that changing the name of the programme does not mean that the attention to leisure should be diminished further. In that respect it agrees with the programme management that the amount of leisure that is included is advantageous. The committee also emphasizes that the multiple interpretations of the word environment require communicating more clearly and proactively on the objectives and content of the programme.

Standard 2: Teaching-Learning Environment
The committee has studied the various aspects of the teaching and learning environment of the programme and is very impressed. The curriculum of the programme is robust, coherent and considered to be strong in terms of tourism. The presence of the subject of leisure, albeit limited, certainly adds to the quality of the programme and should be maintained. The intended learning outcomes are all represented in the curriculum. The limited number of electives does not appear to be an issue. The committee recommends paying attention to the numerous students showing an interest in physical environmental tourism.

Despite the Cultural Geography Chair Group being the only one involved in the management of the programme, the committee agrees that the programme is multidisciplinary. However, with the large number of topics in the programme, there is a potential risk of lack of depth. The programme management should be continuously aware of the breadth vs. depth balance.

The committee has looked into the teaching methods, improvements to the curriculum, qualifications of staff, student support, student intake and study load and concludes that they are all good.

Wageningen University has an international reputation, in terms of both high-quality research and the number of international master students, which has both advantages and potential drawbacks. The programme seems to have made full use of the advantages.

Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes
The committee is very positive with regard to the initiatives the Examining Boards of Wageningen University are currently implementing in its programmes. The Examining Boards are in the process of strengthening their role in ensuring the quality of assessment and are committed to formalizing the assessment system. The programme is on schedule to implement the new initiatives. The use of course guides makes the assessment procedures very clear and transparent, and they are very useful to the students. The committee especially values the use of the rubric for the master thesis.

The committee considers the quality of the theses to be good. Since the grades are considered to be rather high, the committee encourages the programme management to use the rubric conscientiously, as in other programmes it appears to have had a positive effect on the verification of the grades.

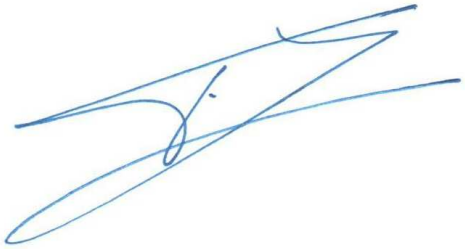
The committee is of the opinion that with the current pressure on graduating in time in the Netherlands, the large number of possible resits at Wageningen University is outdated. If students don't feel the need to pass an exam, they might not take it seriously. This is likely to lead to study delays.

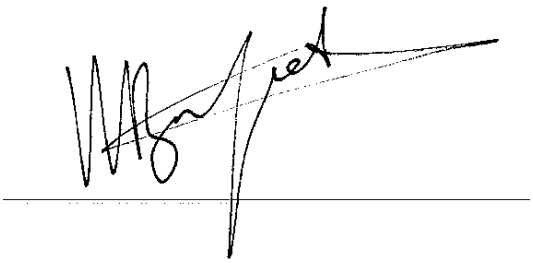
General conclusion
The committee assesses the standards from the Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments in the following way:

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	good
Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes	good
General conclusion	good

The chair and the secretary of the committee hereby declare that all members of the committee 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: 26 October 2012





Prof. F. Zwarts

Dr. M.J.V. Van Bogaert

Description of the standards from the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Explanation:
As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme.

1.1. Findings

In this standard the committee assesses the programme's objectives and profile, intended learning outcomes, and level and orientation. Furthermore, this standard describes the requirements of the professional field and discipline.

Programme objective and profile, intended learning outcomes

The critical reflection states that an increasing number of people throughout the world are spending a growing proportion of their time and money on leisure. This has led to a tremendous growth in the economic and social importance of leisure services. According to the critical reflection, tourism represented 9.4% of global Gross Domestic Product, which is 1 in every 13.1 jobs worldwide. Leisure and tourism are agents of change, affecting both the world and people. They are closely intertwined with major global changes in culture, politics, technology, places, landscapes and the environment and can contribute to the solution of complex problems in contemporary society.

According to the critical reflection, the programme focuses on the relationship between leisure and tourism on the one hand and the social, cultural, economic, political, technological and spatial environment on the local and global levels on the other (see figure 1). The subject-specific reference framework is provided in Appendix 2.

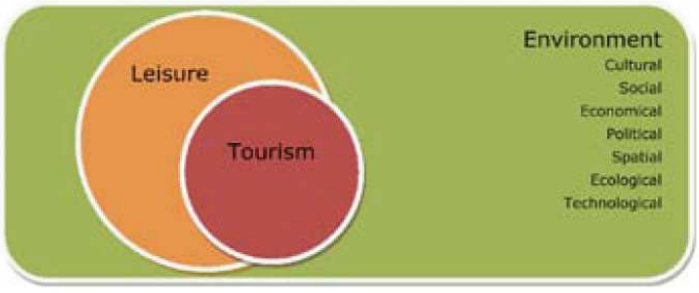


Figure 1: The domains of Leisure, Tourism and the Environment

In the interviews during the site visit, the committee extensively discussed the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programme in relation to its name. While the title suggests that *Leisure* and *Tourism* have equal positions in the programme, the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programme are more focussed on *Tourism*. As can be seen in Standard 2 of this report, the programme and course content also primarily focus on tourism, with leisure being the supporting subject field. From the interview with the programme management, it became clear to the committee that the name of the programme is historical.

The programme management is convinced that leisure is important in the programme, but also acknowledges that the primary focus is on tourism. The committee agrees with the objective of the programme in the tourism context.

From the interview with the students, the committee learned that the word *Environment* in the title might be misleading. Wageningen University attracts students with an interest in the physical environment and sustainability. As a result, these students interpret the word *environment* as the physical environment, while the programme uses the word in its broadest, social sciences sense. According to the committee, it is understandable that students have certain expectations since the programme is offered in the Wageningen context. The programme management is aware of the misinterpretation by a certain number of prospective students and actively informs them of the correct meaning. This is done during the admission procedure, when students have to hand in a motivation letter, as well as during the first introductory course of the programme. Should students want to focus the physical environment, there are 18 credits of free choice to select courses on this topic. The committee considers the arguments of the programme management valid as to why it interprets environment in the broadest sense of the word. However, it also understands that there are multiple interpretations of the word environment. The programme management should communicate more clearly and proactively on the objectives and content of the programme towards (prospective) students.

Intended Learning Outcomes
The intended learning outcomes are provided in Appendix 3. The critical reflection gives an overview which shows that all Dublin Descriptors are reflected in them. The committee agrees with the intended learning outcomes.

The second learning outcome covers a large number of topics. Although both committee and students appreciate the breadth of the programme, the committee encourages the programme management to continue paying attention to the balance of breadth vs. depth.

In Standard 2 one of the three learning principles given is collaborative learning. The committee is surprised that collaboration is not explicitly mentioned in the intended learning outcomes. However, during the site visit the committee has noticed that collaboration is part of the objectives of several courses.

Level and Orientation
Students obtain knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes at an advanced level. The orientation of the programme is academic according to the critical reflection. Students follow academic courses and perform research in an academic context during their thesis work. Graduates value the academic skills they obtained, as was shown in the alumni evaluations (4 to 4.5 on a 5-point scale).

Requirements of the professional field and discipline
The requirements of the professional field and discipline have been laid down in the subject-specific framework (see Appendix 2). The programme at Wageningen University enables students to gain a thorough understanding of the key aspects of the benchmark statements for the subject areas of leisure and tourism. The programme management thoroughly discussed the intended learning outcomes with the External Advisory Committee, who concluded that the programme corresponds to the requirements of the professional field. They have also been peer-reviewed by four professors in the field of leisure, tourism and the

environment, who concluded that the learning outcomes are in line with international standards for a master degree in tourism and leisure studies.
Being a young discipline, there is, as yet, no coherent theoretical framework for leisure and tourism as a subject of study. Knowledge of leisure and tourism is maturing but still draws heavily from other disciplines and consequently remains multidisciplinary. According to a market research survey conducted by Buiten, Bureau voor Economie en Omgeving, only a very limited number of employees in the Dutch tourism sector hold an academic master degree. Employers in the tourism sector stated that the sector needs more academic graduates with a broad knowledge base who can analyse complex societal processes in an integrative manner in order to create innovative solutions for future developments that go beyond the narrow scope of tourism.

In the interview, students mentioned that some of them have difficulties with connecting the academic programme to the professional field. The professional field is still developing, and positions at all levels are predominantly filled by employees without a degree but with working experience. Although it is improving, graduates with a degree but with limited working experience are not always considered an asset. Students see this problem and sometimes experience a gap between the academic programme and the professional field, which should be addressed by the programme. In courses, lecturers explain that having an academic degree is useful not only for students with academic career ambitions, but also for those who are more practice-oriented. The committee agrees with this and is convinced that the professional field would benefit from academically trained employees.

1.2. Considerations

The committee is generally impressed by the positioning of the programme and its intended learning outcomes. From the interviews it became very clear that the programme management is aware of all issues that were raised by the committee and is looking for the best ways to deal with them. Being a developing field it is to be expected that the best solution will change over time, even more than once. The committee has no specific advice, but rather encourages the programme management and the lecturers to continue their search for the best solutions.

There is only one issue where the committee explicitly requests the programme management and educational institute to take action, and this concerns the name of the programme. From the interviews it became clear that the programme management agrees with the committee that the name is not representative of its content and might cause confusion in the Wageningen context. The committee strongly advices renaming the programme to emphasize its focus on tourism. It would like to stress that changing the name of the programme does not mean that the attention to leisure should be diminished further. In that respect it agrees with the programme management that the amount of leisure that is included is advantageous.

1.3. Conclusion

Master's programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment: the committee assesses Standard 1 as **good**.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Explanation:
The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

2.1. Findings

Curriculum and relations with intended learning outcomes

The academic year of Wageningen University consists of two semesters, each with 3 periods. In periods 1, 2 and 5 (six weeks each) two courses are taught, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Periods 3 and 4 are short periods with 4 weeks of teaching and only one course each. Period 6 lasts nine weeks. Each year students can take one exam and two resits for each course. Currently, this system is being reviewed, concerning the number of resits and the timing of the exams.

Of the 120 credits, 42 are reserved for the common part and 18 for electives. A total of 60 credits are reserved for the thesis project and the internship. Wageningen University considers its master programmes to be thesis-oriented. Students are prepared for their thesis with theoretical and methodological courses. They are challenged to find their focus within the research field and apply their knowledge in their thesis.

An overview of the curriculum is provided in Appendix 4. The common part of the first year consists of four advanced domain courses, an advanced research methods course, the *Academic Consultancy Training*, and student-specific skills training. Students have 18 credits for electives, and they are allowed to select courses in very different domains. For example, they may deepen their knowledge in another field of interest, such as communication, international development or governance. The second year is individually organized. The objective is to allow students to illustrate their ability to deliver a robust piece of scientific research in their thesis and explore the professional field in an internship. Overall, the committee is very positive about the content of the programme.

In Standard 1 the committee paid attention to the possibilities of misinterpreting the term *environment*. It accepts the arguments of the programme management that the broadest sense of the term is used in the programme. However, many students are specifically interested in the physical environment and sustainability aspects of tourism. The programme might consider increasing its offer for students with these interests, not by making it a sustainable tourism programme, but by explicitly providing these students with possibilities.

The curriculum and courses have been developed to achieve the intended learning outcomes as given in Standard 1. The committee considers the programme to be predominantly tourism-oriented. In that perspective, it thinks that the programme is a good representation of the intended learning outcomes. In the critical reflection a matrix is presented which relates each course to the intended learning outcomes. From this, it appears that intended learning outcome 9, to integrate ethical responsibility in his/her professional practice at all times, is only present in the thesis and internship. According to the committee, this is insufficient. However, from the interviews the committee learned that many courses pay attention to ethical issues. For several courses this is even described in their learning outcomes. The

committee thus concludes that the intended learning outcomes are represented in the programme.

Coherency of the programme
The large number of free choice credits most programmes provide to their students might lead to issues regarding coherency of the programme. From the critical reflection and the interviews it became clear that the study adviser has a major regulatory role in the selection of courses for the free choice credits. The study adviser and student discuss the students' wishes and possible plans. The study adviser might ask feedback from one of the chair holders prior to advising the student's request of electives. If a request deviates from the standard, the study adviser will assess the programme for coherency, and the Examining Board has to approve it explicitly.

The master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment has a limited number of free choice credits, unlike most master programmes in Wageningen. According to the committee, a total of seven courses (42 credits) make up a coherent programme in tourism. Students consider the 18 free choice credits to be sufficient to select courses for specialization. The committee feels that students have sufficient freedom to add courses of their choice to the programme, for example to focus on tourism and health, sustainable tourism or the physical environment. The aspect of leisure is implicitly coherent with the focus of the programme, but not made explicit. Another confirmation of the coherency of the programme is that students strongly feel part of their year group.

Multidisciplinarity
Wageningen University aims to offer programmes with a multidisciplinary and holistic approach. This is meant to stimulate students to develop a broad view and a wide range of interests. Most of the courses are attended by students from different programmes, creating a setting that favours multidisciplinary education. This could also lead to a possible friction between breadth and depth. The committee assessed whether students receive a multidisciplinary programme with sufficient depth, making them experts in a specific discipline.

Unlike most Wageningen programmes, this programme is organized by only one Chair Group, Cultural Geography. Other Chair Groups are involved in the programme, but not in its management or set-up. Furthermore, the Cultural Geography Group is involved in all thesis projects and internships. In the interviews it was mentioned that for an increasing number of thesis projects, other Chair Groups are involved in co-supervising the students.

After an initial uncertainty, the committee started to appreciate the structure that was chosen. With only one chair group involved in the management, it is easier to develop a coherent programme. At the same time, the programme management should make better use of the unique Wageningen situation, in which it is easy to cross disciplinary boundaries. In addition, by depending on one chair group, the programme is more vulnerable if the head of this chair group leaves.

As mentioned in Standard 1, the committee noticed that a large number of topics are part of the intended learning outcomes. The critical reflection furthermore states that as a result of the maturing stage of the field discipline, knowledge is still heavily drawing on other disciplines and subsequently remains multidisciplinary.

The committee concludes that the programme has the right amount of multidisciplinarity, but asks the programme management not to lose sight of the breadth vs. depth issues that result from including multiple disciplines.

Teaching methods
Wageningen University strives to train its students to become academics with domain knowledge, a multidisciplinary attitude, interested in problem-solving, and an international orientation with a multicultural attitude. The programmes therefore work with small, diverse student groups to stimulate the interaction between students and lecturers. A variety of didactic and learning methods are offered, including lectures, tutorials, group work, practical training, excursion and individual papers. According to the critical reflection, the teaching methods prepare graduates to work in multidisciplinary teams as well as individually, and often in a global context.

Teaching methods are chosen in such a way that they support the learning outcomes of the courses. Each individual course has a mix of teaching methods. The majority of contact hours (66%) in the first year are lectures and tutorials (7%). Practicals and group work take place 17% of the time, and also excursions (7%) form a significant part of the contact time. In the second year, students do an internship (on average 5 contact hours) and work on their thesis (approximately 25 contact hours).

The programme has three learning principles, which are closely connected to the selection of teaching methods. The learning principles are:

- Reflective learning: students are enabled to make themselves, the theories and the methods into objects of reflection. Students are inspired to critically reflect on the assignment, its context and all actors involved (including themselves);
- Experiential learning: Students go through a learning cycle of concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The level of complexity is high from the start and increases in the course of the programme;
- Collaborative learning: Reflexive and experiential learning come together when students are asked to work in groups, to collaborate in the learning process.

In the interviews it became clear to the committee how the learning principles were operationalized. The programme has found a good balance in teaching methods using the three learning principles. Reflection, experiences and collaboration are all present in many of the courses. Although collaboration is not included in the intended learning outcomes, it is clearly embedded in the programme. For example, students have to write scientific papers in pairs.

Improvements to the curriculum
The individual programme committees are responsible for improving the curricula, although occasionally improvements are introduced for all programmes jointly.

Ideas for improvement usually come from online course evaluations. Detailed results are reported to the lecturers and programme committees. Summaries of the results are published on the intranet. In addition to the course evaluations, there are master graduate evaluations, career surveys among alumni, and the Education Monitor.

The programme committees regularly discuss the outcomes of the evaluations and take action when considered necessary. In addition to the online evaluations, many programmes hold

panel meetings with students to obtain oral feedback on the courses and the programmes. Since many of the programmes are small and the attitude between students and lecturers is informal, many issues are often dealt with informally rather than in a formal procedure.

Except for some minor changes (e.g. introducing the *Modular Skills Training* and the *Academic Consultancy Training*), the basic curriculum structure has not changed since 2002/2003. Improvements were made to the courses to make the programme more consistent and to raise their academic level. The critical reflection provides an overview of improvements that were made to specific courses.

Based on the information from the critical reflection, underlying documentation and the interview with the programme committee, the committee concludes that the quality assurance of the programme functions adequately. Many of the topics the committee addressed in the site visit had also been discussed by the programme committee. In addition, minor problems and issues are swiftly and adequately solved, often in an informal way.

Staff

Wageningen University staff generally teach in several programmes, making it difficult to provide exact student-staff ratios. The estimated student-staff ratio of the master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment is 7.2. The committee is impressed by the favourable ratio.

International guest lecturers are invited for each course, forming a connection with the international scientific community and the professional field. The critical reflection provides an overview of the permanent staff and guest lecturers. Guest lecturers are usually intensively involved in courses for an entire week, in which they not only lecture but also advise students on assignments. They provide valuable information on internships and thesis subjects. Some 72% of the teaching is provided by staff from the Cultural Geography Chair Group. Most lecturers are actively engaged in research and are members of the Wageningen School of Social Sciences.

According to the committee, staff members have a good scientific quality overall. The committee was impressed in the interviews by the positive attitude of the lecturers, many of whom had been recently hired. There are no big output indicators to refer to the group as a center of excellence, but this has to do more with the fact that the leading Chair Group is in the social sciences and not in a natural sciences discipline. The committee considers it a strength that the researchers deliver a master programme close to their own expertise. To ensure that subjects outside the expertise of staff members also receive sufficient attention, many guest lecturers are involved in the programme. The committee thinks that the annual return of several guest lecturers has a positive effect on the programme.

Staff members are required to be both an expert in their discipline and a skilful lecturer. This combination allows them to make use of new scientific insights in their teaching. Most lecturers hold a PhD degree.

Wageningen University introduced the University Teaching Qualification (Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs, BKO) for new permanent staff and staff on tenured track positions. Quality of teaching is evaluated after each course, which also evaluates the course content, position of the course in the curriculum, presentation and examinations. Results of these evaluations form input for the annual performance and development interviews of staff members. Tailor-

made training courses are provided by the Educational Staff Development unit for those interested, or as a result of the course evaluation.

According to the critical reflection, the ability of lecturers to effectively share their knowledge and skills inspires students. Their proficiency in English is evaluated and scores high in student evaluations, usually between 4 and 4.5. In the interview with students, the committee did not receive any signals of inadequate teaching qualifications.

Programme-specific services and student support
Wageningen University has chosen to centralize all teaching facilities like lecture rooms, labs, rooms for group work and the university library on the new campus. The main education building is the Forum. The Orion education building is under construction and will add to the existing facilities in 2013. Most chair groups are – or will be – located on the campus.

The programme has one study adviser who is often contacted by prospective students. All students are introduced to the study adviser personally during the introduction days and are informed about programme details and study-related issues. Further support and guidance are given on an individual basis, as all students are invited for an intake interview. In this interview students receive individual study advice based on a discussion of their personal ambitions, strengths and deficiencies. In a second meeting in October of the first year, students are encouraged to produce a balanced study plan, including the selection of electives. In the first year all students have contact with the study adviser at least twice, after they have electronically submitted their master study contract. The study adviser monitors the student's progress, and should a student show too much delay, s/he is invited for a meeting. The committee concludes that the student support is adequate.

Although differences exist between programmes, all Wageningen programmes provide a lot of freedom for the individual student, making the programmes student-centred. The chair groups and their research strongly influence the courses offered, making the programmes also course-oriented. This makes the position of the study advisor crucial and demands certain qualities of him/her. The committee thinks that the study advisor should be a member of the academic staff to be able to support students in their choice for certain courses.

Student intake, study load
The general admission requirements of master students are published on the internet, including detailed information on admission procedures. These requirements include a relevant bachelor degree, a grade point average of 70%, fluency in English, good skills in mathematics and statistics, and fundamental computer skills. Master students are admitted following approval by the Admission Committee. In total, there are four Admission Committees, reflecting the four domains. These Admission Committees consist of the relevant Programme Directors, supported by central staff. The four Admission Committees participate in the joint Admission Policy Committee. In total, approximately 5,600 applications are handled each year.

Student intake varies between 20 and 40 students (between 2002 and 2011). Graduates of the Wageningen University bachelor programmes in Management and Consumer Studies, Forest and Nature Conservation, International Development Studies and Landscape, Architecture and Planning are unconditionally admitted to the programme. However, most enrolling students are graduates from a university of applied science, and an increasing number of students come from non-WU Dutch academic bachelor programmes. International students amount to around 40% of total intake. Students might be required to take additional

introductory courses to ensure they have the minimal entry level in certain areas, e.g. methodology or statistics.

In the first year of the programme, approximately 25% of the study hours are contact hours (412 hours). In the second year this is reduced to 30 hours (2%). The low number of contact hours in the second year is the result of it being dedicated to the internship and the thesis project. Both require fewer contact hours compared to regular courses. In the first year students are regularly supervised, which forces them to work consistently. When the number of contact hours in the first year is compared to other WU master programmes, it shows significantly fewer contact hours. However, when compared to other social sciences master programmes inside and outside the Netherlands, the number of contact hours can be considered very good. Both lecturers and students stated that they were satisfied with the number of contact hours; in addition, students often meet in groups without a lecturer being present.

According to the course evaluations, students experience the study load of the first year as adequate. The committee got a similar response from the students in the interview.

Internationalization
Like all Wageningen master programmes, the Leisure, Tourism and Environment programme has many international students (40%). In addition, it has an international orientation. The committee discussed the advantages and possible disadvantages during the site visit. Despite the occasional international student with inadequate entrance level who passed the admission process, most staff members were very positive about it. Many international students have worked for several years before enrolling in the programme. This gives them valuable knowledge of the professional field, which many Dutch students don't have. Furthermore, discussions in the courses are considered to be very interesting with many international perspectives. The committee learned that internationalization of the programme is not restricted to incoming students; many staff members and guest lecturers are international, and many students go abroad for their thesis project and/or internship. The committee thinks that internationalization is a strong aspect of the programme.

2.2. Considerations
The committee has studied the various aspects of the teaching and learning environment of the programme and is very impressed. The curriculum of the programme is robust, coherent and considered to be strong in terms of tourism. The presence of the subject of leisure, albeit limited, certainly adds to the quality of the programme and should be maintained. The intended learning outcomes are all represented in the curriculum. Although ethics is addressed in several courses, this is not evident in the matrix in the critical reflection. The limited number of electives does not appear to be an issue. The committee recommends paying attention to the numerous students showing an interest in the relationships between tourism and the physical environment.

Despite the Cultural Geography Chair Group being the only one involved in the management of the programme, the committee agrees that the programme is multidisciplinary. The programme should, however, remain open to the input of other chair groups. Furthermore, with the large number of topics in the programme, there is a potential risk of lack of depth. The programme management should be continuously aware of the breadth vs. depth balance.

The committee has looked into the teaching methods, improvements to the curriculum, qualifications of staff, student support, student intake and study load and concludes that they are all good.

Wageningen University has an international reputation, in terms of both high-quality research and the number of international master students. The committee especially considered the latter point since there are also potential drawbacks as well as advantages to having many international students. The master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment seems to have made full use of the advantages.

2.3. Conclusion

Master's programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment: the committee assesses Standard 2 as **good**.

Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Explanation:
The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students.

3.1. Findings

Assessment system

For each course the lecturers have to formulate five to eight intended learning outcomes, which are published in the Study Handbook and course guides. The course guide is obligatory for each course and explains what a course is about, how it is organized, and how students are expected to participate. Part of the course guide covers the assessment strategy, for which requirements have recently been introduced. The assessment strategy clarifies how and when a learning outcome is assessed, who is involved in assessing students, and how the final mark will be determined. It also shows the transparency and validity of the assessment. To enhance the reliability of the assessment, examiners need to explain which elements in the students' answers lead to a certain mark. For multiple choice questions this is embodied in the answer key, and for open answer questions this is shown by model answers, assessment criteria or rubrics (for an example, see Appendix 9). The previous practice was similar to the new theory, but had a less formalized manner. Currently, all Wageningen programmes are in the transition phase from the previous practice to the new situation.

With the changes in the Higher Education and Research Act, the position of the Examining Boards has changed. They are currently in the process of strengthening their role in assuring the quality assessment, both via interim course exams and the evaluation of internships and theses. The new role of the Examining Boards has two elements. The first is that each examiner will be made explicitly responsible for ensuring that an assessment of a course is valid, reliable and transparent. This was made a regular part of the University Teaching Qualification. Wageningen University produced documents to help examiners and lecturers achieve this, and meetings between the Examining Boards and examiners were held in the spring of 2011. The second element is that the Examining Boards will visit chair groups on a regular basis to verify the quality of assessment of courses provided by the groups. Additional visits will take place when required, for example when indicated by the results of course evaluations.

In the critical reflection an example of an assessment strategy is given for the *Concepts and Approaches* course. The validity of the assessment is ensured by a combination of three components: participation, a scientific essay and an exam, which cover all intended learning outcomes of the course. The reliability is ensured both by assessing at several moments during the course and by providing assessment criteria and model answers for the exam. Transparency is achieved by providing the students with the course guide which includes the assessment strategy, assessment criteria and model answers. Students confirmed that all courses have additional assessment forms like writing papers or giving presentations, in addition to a written exam.

For the last two years the internships have been graded. Students write a report on the results of the internship and a reflection report on their personal development. The student's

performance is assessed by the local supervisor, and both the report and reflection report are assessed by the Wageningen University supervisor.

The committee discussed assessments during the site visit. The additional information provided during the site visit clearly showed diversity in the assessment methods. Over the past years some improvements were made. The quality of the examinations the committee inspected was good. The committee thinks that the programme provides a balanced set of assessments.

The committee learned during the site visit that students can do many resits for each course if they don't pass the first time. Each year three exam possibilities are offered for each course and students can retake the exam as often as needed to pass.

Quality and assessment of the thesis work
For master programmes, the thesis, internship and Academic Consultancy Project form important parts of the programme. There is an extensive assessment format for the AMC to evaluate each student's individual contribution to the final product and collaborative process. It aims at securing grading reliability across the large number of teams participating each year. For the internship an assessment form is used which is common to all programmes. An external and an internal supervisor are appointed for the internship: the external supervisor on the quality of the student's performance, the internal supervisor grades the internship. For the thesis a university-wide assessment form has been designed, with which research competences, quality of the thesis report, the colloquium and the final oral examination are assessed. Recently, a rubric was developed for each component of the assessment form to describe the relation between the level of performance and the grades. The rubric can be found in Appendix 9.

The thesis is worth 36 credits and aims to allow students to demonstrate that they are capable of delivering a robust piece of scientific research. Students can explore the professional field in an internship, but they can also choose to prepare a second thesis worth 24 credits. The Cultural Geography Chair Group has the final responsibility for the assessment of all theses although many thesis projects are supervised by more than one Chair Group. Sometimes supervisors from other Dutch universities or from abroad are involved in supervision. The thesis work is always assessed by two supervisors.

Prior to the site visit, the committee members received a total of 15 recent theses, selected from a list in the critical reflection of all theses that were completed during the last two years. This selection was done by the project manager on behalf of the chairman of the committee. When selecting the theses, grading (the same number of high, middle and low scores) and graduation date were considered. Student numbers of the selected theses are provided in Appendix 7.

All theses selected by the committee were of sufficient quality to pass, some were even of high quality. Overall, the committee thinks that the marking of the theses might be too high. However, since it had only the final report to study, it was difficult to establish the cause of the differences in rating between supervisors and the committee. The programme makes use of the rubric to assess the thesis reports, of which the committee approves. Despite the differences in grading, both committee and supervisors graded the best theses with the highest grades.

The committee noticed that almost all of the selected theses involved qualitative research and were not traditional in their design. This is not surprising when looking at the research expertise of the Cultural Geography staff members. Also, more students with an interest in qualitative research might enrol into the programme. However, during the site visit the committee felt the need to point out that the programme should offer both qualitative and quantitative research methods, since graduates will need both in their future career. From the interviews it became clear that approximately 25-30% of the theses involve quantitative research. Furthermore, the programme management convinced the committee that adequate attention is paid to both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research expertise of staff members might indeed lead to more qualitative thesis projects, but both programme management and committee agreed that this is not a problem.

Success rates and performance of graduates
The critical reflection provides an overview of success rates, which have increased over the past five years (see Appendix 5). The number of enrolling students is steady at around 35 students each year.

In the interview the programme manager mentioned that the success rates vary between Dutch and international students. Almost all international students graduate within two years, while Dutch students often take longer. Furthermore, the numbers that are provided in Appendix 5 are somewhat misleading. Many students graduate in just over two years, but they are placed in the category of 'graduated after three years'.

About 70% of the graduates have found a job in the domain of leisure and tourism, 50% has found a job that matches the academic level of a master degree. Approximately 30% of the graduates continue with a PhD programme, which the committee finds impressive. The number of graduates that continue at an academic level in the professional field is somewhat lower compared with other Wageningen master programmes. According to the committee, this is to be expected when looking at the job market for the graduates. The professional field is still not used to academics in the field of tourism. Although this situation is improving, graduates are often considered to be overqualified and lack experience. In the future, once the field is familiar with academics, it is expected that more academics will obtain high positions in the field.

The committee realises that it is difficult to have a programme where students can identify a proper profession and at the same time keep the academic level high. Especially Dutch students with little or no working experience and no academic career ambitions experience a gap between the programme and career opportunities. Therefore, the committee asks the programme management to pay attention continuously to the balance of academic and professional orientation.

3.2. Considerations
The committee is very positive with regard to the initiatives Wageningen University is currently implementing in the bachelor and master programmes. The Examining Boards are in the process of strengthening their role in ensuring the quality of assessment and seem committed to formalizing the assessment system. The committee agrees that having only four Examining Boards is stimulating the consistency and equality of the procedures. However, these four Examining Boards are responsible for a total of 49 programmes. The committee was worried that the limited number of Examining Boards leads to a certain distance from the programmes, making it difficult for the Examining Boards to really be in control at the programme level. During the two meetings with representatives of the Examing Boards and

their secretaries it became clear to the committee that they are in control. The secretaries of the four committees have a key role in the communication between programme management and Examining Board.

The programme is on schedule to implement the new initiatives. The use of course guides makes the assessment procedures very clear and transparent, and they are very useful to the students. The committee especially values the use of the rubric for the master thesis.

The committee considers the quality of the theses to be good. Since the grades are considered to be rather high, the committee encourages the programme management to use the rubric conscientiously, as in other programmes it appears to have had a positive effect on the verification of the grades.

The committee is of the opinion that with the current pressure on graduating in time in the Netherlands, the large number of possible resits at Wageningen University is outdated. If students don't feel the need to pass an exam, they might not take it seriously. This is likely to lead to study delays.

Conclusion
Master's programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment: the committee assesses Standard 3 as **good**.

General conclusion

The master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment, especially concerning the tourism aspect, is at the forefront of a developing academic field. The committee is impressed by the programme in general, it has mainly minor recommendations to make for further improvement. Its primary advice is to change the name of the programme to make it represent the content better.

3.3. Conclusion

The committee assesses the *master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment* as **good**.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Curricula Vitae of the members of the assessment committee

Professor Frans Zwarts was Rector Magnificus of the University of Groningen between 2002 and 2011. He studied linguistics at the University of Amsterdam (1967-1973) and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1974), and wrote a doctoral dissertation on Categorial Grammar and Algebraic Semantics (cum laude). He was appointed lecturer at the University of Groningen in 1975 and became Professor of Linguistics in 1987. He was the initiator of the European Summer School in Logic, Language and Information (ESSLLI) in 1989. In 1992, Zwarts was a visiting scholar at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). Between 1995 and 2002, he was chair of the Netherlands Steering Committee for Research on Developmental Dyslexia, initiated by the NWO as part of a multidisciplinary national research programme. In 1999, he became academic director of the Graduate School of Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences of the University of Groningen. In 2003, he and the Rector Magnificus of Uppsala University established a close partnership between Groningen and Uppsala. This was extended in 2006, when the Universities of Ghent, Göttingen, Groningen, and Uppsala decided to form the U4. In 2011 he was appointed professor and manager to realise the University Campus Fryslân. Zwarts was a member on several NQA assessment committees. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) since 1999.

Mrs. Renate Prenen, MSc is educational advisor and independent entrepreneur in educational advice. She studied Applied Educational Sciences at Twente University. She worked at Randstad employment agency as advisor and programme manager. Later, she worked at the Academic Medical Centre (AMC) of the University of Amsterdam, where she was educational advisor for the Board of the AMC. In September 2009 she started as an independent educational advisor. She has been a committee member on other QANU assessment committees.

Professor Scott Fleming is professor of Sports and Leisure Studies and Director of Research at Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK). He received his PhD in 1992 at Brighton Polytechnic / CNAA. He worked in higher education since 1989, as (senior) lecturer, Head of the School of Sport of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, and principal lecturer.

Professor Greg Richards is professor at the Tilburg School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Leisure Studies. Richards has conducted research on a wide range of topics including cultural tourism, crafts tourism, sustainable tourism, tourism education and labour mobility in the tourism industry. He has also worked extensively on the analysis and development of cultural and creative tourism in cities such as Barcelona (ES), London, Newcastle, Manchester and Edinburgh (UK) Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Den Bosch (NL), Sibiu (RO), Amman (Jordan) and Macau (China). He has recently published a book on 'Eventful Cities' with Robert Palmer and two new volumes, the Social Impact of Events and the Handbook of Cultural Tourims (both from Routledge) are in press. Richards is furthermore involved in several educational programmes at the University of Tilburg, e.g. Organising Leisure, Seminar Leisure Studies, and Contemporary themes in Sport, Tourism and Culture.

Mrs. Elisabeth Holmes, BA holds a bachelor degree in Sport from the University of Durham. She is currently studying for her master degree in Leisure, Sport and Culture at Leeds Metropolitan University. Additionally, she is a Student Academic Representative. In addition to her studies, Holmes runs the dementia unit in a nursing home, involving the

provision of personal care to around 12 residents, assistance at meal times, maintenance of bedrooms and help with bathing.

Appendix 2: Domain-specific framework of reference

1 Introduction

Currently a benchmark for leisure and tourism studies in the Netherlands does not exist. Therefore the Leisure, Tourism and Environment programme refers to Subject Benchmark Statements for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism1[1] that have been developed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education of the United Kingdom. Because these benchmark statements have been developed for bachelor's programmes the Leisure, Tourism and Environment programme also relates to the Master's Degree Characteristics of QAA[2]. The following comparable leisure and tourism master's degrees have also been used as a reference for the curriculum:

- Auckland University of Technology, NZ, Master of Tourism Studies;
- Edinburgh Napier University, UK, MSc Ecotourism;
- Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, MA Leisure, Sport and Culture;
- King's College London, UK, MSc Tourism, Environment & Development;
- Loughborough University, UK, MSc Globalization, Space and Sport;
- La Trobe University Melbourne, AUS, MSc Tourism;
- Sheffield Hallam University, UK, MA Tourism for International Development;
- Tilburg University, NL, MSc Leisure Studies;
- University of Surrey, UK, MSc Tourism Development.

2 The core of leisure and tourism studies

The QAA (2000) has defined the expected content for leisure and tourism honours bachelor's degrees. It did not attempt to set out specific frameworks for content for master's degrees however, because they do not fall within traditional discipline boundaries (QAA, 2010).

According to QAA (2010), graduates of master's degrees in general should be capable of demonstrating a systematic understanding of knowledge, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline, field of study or area of professional practice. They should be capable of demonstrating originality in their application of that knowledge and in addressing problems. They will have demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship. In relation to future employment, master's graduates will be expected to possess the skills needed

The programme can be related to 2 areas and 2 approaches as described in the Subject Benchmark Statements for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (QAA, 2000): it can be linked with the subject areas of both *Leisure* and *Tourism* and with the approaches of both Leisure and Tourism *Studies* and *Science* programmes.

Subject area Leisure

Programmes of study with leisure in the name can, but do not necessarily, encompass recreation, countryside activities, popular leisure, play, tourism, sport and the arts. In the context of these benchmarking statements, the nature of leisure is taken to mean the full range of activities, processes and meanings associated with non-work time, although not

[1] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2000). Subject benchmark statements Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism.

[2] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2010). Master's degree characteristics to exercise independent learning and to develop new skills to a high level.

exclusively so, recognizing that the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred. This would specifically include both rational recreation forms as well as forms of cultural consumption often connected with the popular and commercial sectors. While some aspects of the study of leisure will focus upon, or around, purpose-built facilities these are not the only resources or practices that may be associated with leisure programmes. Thus, the term "leisure" refers to a broad range of cultural and recreational activities and experiences by which people through engagement in a variety of formal or informal modes of participation, seek to enhance the quality of their lives.

The growth of degree programmes in leisure reflects the present organization of work and the attendant implications for societies. Programmes have rapidly increased in number over the past fifteen years in response to structural changes in society, including the decline of manufacturing, the growth of the leisure industries and a parallel expansion in applied leisure research. The outcome has been diversity and a wide ranging number of programmes which cover a variety of areas including the public, private and voluntary organized sector of this fast growing industry.

Leisure has grown into a flourishing inter-disciplinary field of academic endeavour underpinned by a number of academic associations, internationally recognized journals and a substantive literature. Many programmes reflect this inter-disciplinary perspective and consequently leisure is studied for its inherent contribution to an understanding of contemporary society, as well as its contribution to the student's employability and career preparation.

While most programmes include some consideration of all of the areas of study below, different courses have different emphases. Many programmes have management in the name. Some of these focus particularly on business or organizational management. Others with management in the title are more concerned with the management of leisure resources through concepts of planning and policy. The graduate will satisfy the characteristics of one of the two principal approaches of "Studies" or "Management".

Leisure degree programmes will typically involve the study of one or more of the following:

- historical, philosophical, economic, political, sociological and psychological dimensions of leisure;
- the structure, composition and management of the leisure industries;
- the construction of the leisure experience in a range of managerial contexts comprising products, services and opportunities;
- the disaggregation of leisure into concepts, activities, functions and meanings and the implications of these for personal and professional actions;
- differential patterns of leisure consumption and use;
- key directions and trends in the assembly of knowledge about leisure.

Subject area Tourism
The term Tourism refers to the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of people away from their normal home environments for a variety of purposes. Programmes with tourism in the name typically have their origins in providing a vocational understanding relevant for potential employment in some or all of the components of what is loosely referred to as the tourism industry. This includes activities in the private sector such as tour operators, airlines and hotel companies, as well as public and not-for-profit bodies such as tourist boards. Most programmes have broadened from their vocational origins to embrace

wider issues relating to the nature, impacts and meanings of tourism, thereby furnishing an understanding of what is now a major world phenomenon.

Over the past fifteen years the number of programmes in tourism has proliferated. They have a wide range of names. The most common are 'Tourism Management', 'Tourism', 'Leisure and Tourism Management' and 'Tourism Studies' but also included are other titles reflecting the focus of particular programmes such as 'Travel Agency Management', 'Sports Tourism', 'Rural Tourism', 'Sustainable Tourism'. Of the programmes with management in the name many focus particularly on business management. Others are more concerned with the management of scarce resources in the community through concepts of planning and public policy.

Tourism degree programmes typically involve the following:

- a consideration of the concepts and characteristics of tourism as an area of academic and applied study;
- an examination of the nature and characteristics of tourists;
- a study of the products, structure, operations andinteractions within the tourism industry;
- an analysis of tourism in the communities and environments that it affects.

While most include some consideration of all the above areas of study different programmes have different emphases.

Approach of a 'studies' or 'science' degree
According to the Subject Benchmark Statements for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism (QAA, 2000) a programme name that contains the word 'Studies' should inter alia enable students to:

- critique the contributions of a range of academic disciplines that have informed the development of the subject as a field of study;
- demonstrate an appropriate degree of progression within specialist fields;
- display an integrated knowledge of the scope and breadth of the subject domain.

Where a programme name contains the word 'Science' then it should inter alia enable students to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the philosophical basis of scientific paradigms;
- demonstrate evidence of competence in the scientific methods of enquiry, interpretation and analysis of relevant data and appropriate technologies.

According to QAA (2010) graduates of master programmes typically have:

1 Subject-specific attributes
- an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the discipline informed by current scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject;
- the ability to complete a research project in the subject, which may include a critical review of existing literature or other scholarly outputs.

2 Generic attributes (including skills relevant to an employment setting), including the ability to:

- use initiative and take responsibility;
- solve problems in creative and innovative ways;
- make decisions in challenging situations;
- continue to learn independently and to develop professionally;
- communicate effectively, with colleagues and a wider audience, in a variety of media.

At least one third of the programme (with a duration of 9 to 24 months) should be devoted to a research project.

The curricula of master's degrees in leisure and tourism with a studies approach similar to the Wageningen University Leisure, Tourism and Environment programme, at Auckland University of Technology, Edinburgh Napier University, Leeds Metropolitan University, King's College London, Loughborough University, La Trobe University Melbourne, Sheffield Hallam University, Tilburg University and University of Surrey contain the following courses: research methods; research and consultancy project; tourism, leisure and globalization; leisure and space in the information age; leisure and cultural spaces; understanding the leisure and tourism industry; leisure, tourism and the social sciences; the tourism experience; leisure and/or tourism marketing; business strategy; leisure and/or tourism strategy; tourism policy and planning; tourism development; destination management; tourism management; people management; sustainable tourism; humans and wildlife; environmental management.

3 Core curriculum requirements

A typical honours graduate in Leisure will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- understand, critically evaluate and reflect on issues of lifestyle, consumption and culture as they affect people's leisure lives;
- understand the social, political, economic and physical contexts of leisure and analyse the impact of these upon leisure theories;
- utilize, and understand the impact of rationales, sources and assumptions embedded in policy, planning and delivery mechanisms in a leisure context;
- employ a range of 'leisure specific' facilitation skills in the promotion of professional practice.

A typical honours graduate in Tourism will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

- the concepts and characteristics of tourism as an area of academic and applied study including being able to;
- the products, structure of and interactions in the tourism industry including being able to;
- the role of tourism in the communities and environments that it affects and in particular;
- the nature and characteristics of tourists and in particular.

The Leisure, Tourism and Environment programme offers an advanced acquaintance with the key aspects of the benchmark statements for the subject areas of leisure and tourism. Taking the requirement categories of honours graduates in leisure and tourism together the programme should focus on:

- Concepts, characteristics and meanings of leisure and tourism as an area of study;

- Historical, philosophical, economic, political, sociological and psychological dimensions of leisure and tourism and trends in the assembly of knowledge about leisure and tourism;
- Products, structure and interactions in the leisure and tourism industry;
- The construction of leisure and tourism practices and experiences;
- The role of leisure and tourism in communities and environments.

In order to be admitted to the programme applicants with a bachelor's degree are expected to have knowledge and understanding with respect to those five aspects. Furthermore applicants are expected to be able to develop a research proposal and carry out basic quantitative and qualitative empirical research under supervision. In the master's programme itself the five aspects are approached at a much more complex level of cognitive processes: the emphasis is not on identification, understanding and application, but much more on comparison, in-depth analysis, critical evaluation and on the creation and design of new approaches and solutions.

Appendix 3: Intended learning outcomes

	After successful completion of the programme graduates are expected to be able to:	Dublin Descriptors
1	understand and interpret advanced theories and practices of leisure and tourism and their influence on the social and physical environment	Knowledge and understanding
2	appraise the usefulness and relevance of concepts, theories and approaches from sociology, social psychology, human geography, anthropology, political economics and philosophy for a multidisciplinary analysis of leisure and tourism, and to compose and reflect on a theoretical framework for research	Knowledge and understanding
3	assess social science research methods for data collection and analysis and construct an appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative design for advanced empirical research independently	Applying knowledge and understanding Making judgements
4	independently define issues in leisure and tourism in order to develop and execute a complete research project and defend it	Applying knowledge and understanding Making judgements
5	assess needs and opportunities for different (policy) interventions, translate own research outcomes into advice, and independently suggest new and more effective and sustainable solutions in the field of leisure, tourism and environment	Applying knowledge and understanding Making judgements
6	assess issues in leisure, tourism and environment from a comparative point of view and work in an international and multicultural context	Applying knowledge and understanding Making judgements Communication
7	independently acquire new knowledge and skills in order to analyze complex issues and reflect on their academic and professional development	Making judgements Learning skills
8	clearly, argumentatively and unambiguously communicate research results and the knowledge and their rationale in a way that reflects the needs and interests of specific audiences	Communication
9	integrate ethical responsibility in their academic and professional practice at all times	Making judgements
10	demonstrate a scientific (research) attitude of life-long learning as well as an open mind and a critical and (self-) reflective working style	Making judgements Learning Skills

Appendix 4: Overview of the curriculum

Course name	credits	period/year	Lectures	Tutorials	Practical	Excursions	Individual paper	other	Exam method
Modular Skills Training	3	M1							varies
Leisure, Tourism and Environment: Concepts and Approaches	6	M1-1	40			16	3		Eo, Rw
Leisure, Tourism and Environment: Experiences and Environments	6	M1-2	48				3		Eo, Rw
Advanced Research Methods and Techniques in Leisure, Tourism and Environment	6	M1-3	36		25		2		Rw
Leisure, Tourism and Environment: Sustainable Development	6	M1-4	40					25	Eo, Rw
Leisure, Tourism and Globalization	6	M1-5	40			8	3		Eo, Rw
Academic Consultancy Training	9	M1-6							Rw, P
Introduction Leisure, Tourism and Environment	6	M1-1	24						Eo, Rw
Human Geography UK	6	M1-1	24						Eo
Quantitative and Qualitative Research Techniques (in the Social Sciences)	6	M1-2	6	30	12				Eo, Rw
MSc Internship Cultural Geography	24	M2							
MSc Thesis Cultural Geography	36	M2						AV	Rw, Ro

Explanation abbrevations assessment methods:
Em Written exam multiple choice
Eo Written exam open questions
P Performance during practical work
Rw Written report
Ro Oral report

Appendix 5: Quantitative data regarding the programme

Data on intake, transfers and graduation

Success rates for the master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environment

Cohort	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Size at the outset	29	36	37	22	33	38	34	32
Diploma after 2 years (%)	76	58	51	55	42	42		
Diploma after 3 years (%)	93	89	78	82	76			
Diploma after 4 years (%)	97	92	84	82				
Diploma after 5 years (%)	97	92	84					
Drop-outs 1 October 2011 (%/n)	*3/1*	*8/3*	*11/4*	*14/3*	*18/6*	*13/5*	*0/0*	

Teacher-student ratio achieved

For Wageningen University the average student/staff ratio lies between 5.5 and 12.5 for bachelor programmes, and between 5.5 and 10 for master programmes.

For the master programme in Leisure, Tourism and Environement the student/staff ratio is 7.2

Average amount of face-to-face instruction per stage of the study programme

Number of programmed contact hours

Year	Contact hours	Contact hours (% of 1680)
M1	412	25%
M2	30	2%

Appendix 6: Programme of the site visit

20 June 2012

10.30 – 11.15 **Management (responsible for content of the programme)**
Prof. C. (Claudio) Minca (Chair Holder Cultural Geography)
Prof.dr. V.R. (René) van der Duim (Special Professor Tourism and Sustainable Development)
Drs. J.F.B. (Jan) Philipsen (Programme Director)

11.15 – 11.30 **Break**

11.30 – 12.15 **Students MLE**
M.L. (Mathew) Sengelela (1st year student)
M.N. (Nowella) Anyango (2nd year student)
L. (Lusine) Margaryan (2nd year student)
P.J.C. (Patrick) de Baat (1st year student)
S. (Swen) Waterreus (2nd year student)
A.B. (Annika) Bergmann (1st year student)
G.A. (Guido) Klep (1st year student)

12.15 – 13.15 **Lunch (Forum, Grand Café)**

13.15 – 14.00 **Lecturers MLE**
Dr.ir. M. (Martijn) Duineveld (Assistant Professor)
M.E. (Meghann) Ormond PhD (Assistant Professor)
Ir. M.H. (Maarten) Jacobs (Assistant Professor)
Dr. C.E. (Chin Ee) Ong (Assistant Professor)
M.J. (Michael) Marchman MA (Lecturer)
L.B. (Lauren) Wagner PhD (Lecturer)
Dr. I.A.C.M. (Ivo) van der Lans (Assistant Professor)

14.00 – 14.30 **Programme Committee MLE**
M. (Maartje) Roelofsen (Student Member Programme Committee 2009-2011)
L.A. (Lesley) Walet (Student Member Programme Committee 2009-now)
B. (Baiba) Ornina (Student Member Programme Committee 2009-now)
Dr.ir. K.B.M. (Karin) Peters (Staff Member Programme Committee 2009-now)

15.15 – 16.00 **Final meeting with management (final responsibility for programme)**
Prof. C. (Claudio) Minca (Chair Holder Cultural Geography)
Prof.dr. V.R. (René) van der Duim (Special Professor Tourism and Sustainable Development)
Drs. J.F.B. (Jan) Philipsen (Programme Director)

16.45 – 17.00 **Presentation of the preliminary findings by committee chair**

Programme for Kick-off meeting, 21 February: Common part of critical reflections

09.00 09.15	**Welcome by the Rector and the Director of the EI**[3]
09.15-11.00	**Preparatory meeting of assessment panel**
11.00-12.15	**General management programmes**:
	P. (Paulien) Poelarends (member, Board of the EI)
	R.A. (Rosella) Koning (member, Board of the EI)
	Prof. T.W.M. (Thom) Kuyper (member, Board of the EI)
	Prof. L.E. (Leontine) Visser (member, Board of the EI)
	Prof. E.W. (Pim)Brascamp (Director of the EI)
	J.J. (Jan) Steen (Quality assurance and enhancement officer)
12.15-12.45	Lunch
12.45-13.30	**Study Advisers:**
	Dr. A.E.M. (Anja) Janssen (BSc and MSc Food Technology, Food Safety, Food Quality Management)
	C.M. (Neeltje) van Hulten (BSc and MSc Agriculture and Bioresource Engineering)
	C.Q.J.M. (Stijn) Heukels (BSc and MSc Landscape Architecture and Planning)
	W.T. (Willy) ten Haaf (MSc Geo-Information Science)
	Dr. W. (Wouter) Hazeleger (MSc Animal Sciences) [not present]
	R.N.M. (Gineke) Boven (BSc Management and Consumer Studies)
13.30-14.30	**Examining boards**:
	Dr. P.B.M. (Paul) Berentsen (secretary, EB[4] Social Sciences)
	Dr. M.C.R. (Maurice) Franssen (secretary, EB Technology and Nutrition)
	C.P.G.M. (Lisette) de Groot (chair, EB Technology and Nutrition)
	Dr. D. (Dick) van der Hoek (secretary, EB Environment and Landscape)
	Dr. K. (Klaas) Swart (secretary, EB Life Sciences)
	Prof. W (Willem) Takken (chair, EB Life Sciences)
14.30-14.45	Break
14.45-15.45	**Lecturers of Programme Committees:**
	Dr. A.J.B. (Ton) van Boxtel (Biotechnology and Bioinformatics)
	Dr. J. (Jan) den Ouden (Forest and Nature Conservation)
	Dr. K.B.M. (Karin) Peters (Leisure, Tourism and Environment)
	Dr. W.A.H. (Walter) Rossing (Organic Agriculture)
	Dr. R. (Rico) Lie (International Development Studies)
	Dr. W.T. (Wilma) Steegenga (Nutrition and Health)
15.45-17.15	**Meeting of assessment panel**: evaluation and first findings
17.15-18.00	**Graduates**:
	Francesco Cecchi, MSc (MSc International Development Studies)
	Prof. Charlotte de Fraiture (MSc International Land and Water Management)
	Dr. Dinand Ekkel (MSc Animal Sciences)
	Loes Mertens (MSc Organic Agriculture)
	M. Visser (MSc Forest and Nature Conservation)

[3] EI = Education Institute
[4] EB = Examining Board

Appendix 7: Theses and documents studied by the committee

Prior to the site visit, the committee studied the theses of the students with the following student numbers:

student number
770505455070
791218852060
840622284060
880202987040
831216984130
851027179080
830316978010
841108359130
850515734120
781105927030
840202599080
860206024080
850406921130
830713574080
780710157110

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

- Reports of consultations with relevant committees / organs (programme committee and examinations committee, relevant ad-hoc committees);
- Examination tasks with associated evaluation criteria and standard (answer keys) and a representative selection of completed examinations (presentations, internship and/or research reports, portfolios, etc.) and their evaluations;
- List of required literature;
- Summary and analysis of recent evaluation results and relevant management information;
- Thesis regulations and guidelines for preparing projects;
- Internship regulations/handbooks;
- Course, staff and curriculum evaluations, student satisfaction survey(s), etc.;
- Alumni/exit questionnaires;
- Material about the student associations;
- Documentation on teaching staff satisfaction.

Appendix 8: Declarations of independence

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

THE UNDERSIGNED

NAME: FRANS ZWARTS

HOME ADDRESS: PETRUS CAMPERSINGEL 253
9713 AP GRONINGEN

HAS BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME AS AN EXPERT / ~~SECRETARY~~:

LIFE SCIENCES, SEE ATTACHMENT

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTION:

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT MAINTAINING ANY (FAMILY) CONNECTIONS OR TIES OF A PERSONAL NATURE OR AS A RESEARCHER / TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL OR CONSULTANT WITH THE ABOVE INSTITUTION, WHICH COULD AFFECT A FULLY INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE SENSE;

1

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nederlands - vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT HAVING MAINTAINED SUCH CONNECTIONS OR TIES WITH THE INSTITUTION DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS;

CERTIFIES TO OBSERVING STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH REGARD TO ALL THAT HAS COME AND WILL COME TO HIS/HER NOTICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSESSMENT, INSOFAR AS SUCH CONFIDENTIALITY CAN REASONABLY BE CLAIMED BY THE PROGRAMME, THE INSTITUTION OR NVAO;

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO BEING ACQUAINTED WITH THE NVAO CODE OF CONDUCT.

PLACE: Wageningen DATE: March 30, 2012

SIGNATURE:

2

Bijlage bij onafhankelijkheidsverklaring

Visitatiebezoek	Opleiding (CROHO-nummer):	Variant:
A. Food Technology	B Levensmiddelentechnologie (BLT; 56973)	Voltijd
	M Food Safety (MFS; 60112)	Voltijd
	M Food Technology (MLT; 66973)	Voltijd
	M Food Quality Management (MQ; 60109)	Voltijd
B. Biotechnology en Bio-Informatics	B Biotechnologie (BBT; 56841)	Voltijd
	M Biotechnology (MBT; 66841)	Voltijd
	M Bioinformatics (MBF; 60106)	Voltijd
C. Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering	B Agrotechnologie (BAT; 56831)	Voltijd
	M Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering (MAB; 66831)	Voltijd
D. Forest and Nature conservation	B Bos- en Natuurbeheer (BBN; 56219)	Voltijd
	M Forest and Nature Conservation (MFN; 66219)	Voltijd
E. International Land and Water Management	B Internationaal Land- en Waterbeheer (BIL; 50100)	Voltijd
	M International Land and Water Management (MIL; 60104)	Voltijd
F. Landscape, Architecture and Planning	B Landschapsarchitectuur en ruim. Planning (BLP; 56848)	Voltijd
	M Landscape, Architecture and Planning (MLP; 66848)	Voltijd
G. Leisure, Tourism and Environment	M Leisure, Tourism and Environment (MLE; 60111)	Voltijd
H. Geo-Information Science	M Geo-Information Science (MGI; 60108)	Voltijd
I. Plant Sciences	B Planterwetenschappen (BPW; 56835)	Voltijd
	M Plant Sciences (MPS; 66835)	Voltijd
	M Organic Agriculture (MOA; 66300)	Voltijd
	M Plant Biotechnology (MPB; 60105)	Voltijd
J. Animal Sciences	B Dierwetenschappen (BDW; 56849)	Voltijd
	M Animal Sciences (MAS; 66849)	Voltijd
K. Climate Studies	M Climate Studies (MCL; 60107)	Voltijd
L. International Development Studies	B Internationale Ontwikkelingsstudies (BIN; 56837)	Voltijd
	M International Development Studies (MID; 66837)	Voltijd
	M Development and Rural Innovation (MDR; 60103)	Voltijd
M. Management, Economics and Consumer Studies	B Bedrijfs- en Consumentenwetenschappen (BBC; 56836)	Voltijd
	M Management, Economics and Consumer Studies (MME; 66836)	Voltijd
N. Nutrition and Health	B Voeding en Gezondheid (BVG; 56868)	Voltijd
	M Nutrition and Health (MNH; 66868)	Voltijd

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

THE UNDERSIGNED

NAME: RENATE PRENEN

HOME ADDRESS: Simon Stevinweg 21
1401 TB Bussum

HAS BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME AS AN EXPERT / ~~SECRETARY~~:

LIFE SCIENCES - SEE ATTACHMENT

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTION:

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT MAINTAINING ANY (FAMILY) CONNECTIONS OR TIES OF A PERSONAL NATURE OR AS A RESEARCHER / TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL OR CONSULTANT WITH THE ABOVE INSTITUTION, WHICH COULD AFFECT A FULLY INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE SENSE;

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HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT HAVING MAINTAINED SUCH CONNECTIONS OR TIES WITH THE INSTITUTION DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS;

CERTIFIES TO OBSERVING STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH REGARD TO ALL THAT HAS COME AND WILL COME TO HIS/HER NOTICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSESSMENT, INSOFAR AS SUCH CONFIDENTIALITY CAN REASONABLY BE CLAIMED BY THE PROGRAMME, THE INSTITUTION OR NVAO;

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO BEING ACQUAINTED WITH THE NVAO CODE OF CONDUCT.

PLACE: Wageningen DATE: 29-03-'12

SIGNATURE:

Bijlage bij onafhankelijkheidsverklaring

Visitatiebezoek	Opleiding (CROHO-nummer):	Variant:
A. Food Technology	B Levensmiddelentechnologie (BLT; 56973)	Voltijd
	M Food Safety (MFS; 60112)	Voltijd
	M Food Technology (MLT; 66973)	Voltijd
	M Food Quality Management (MQ; 60109)	Voltijd
B. Biotechnology en Bio-Informatics	B Biotechnologie (BBT; 56841)	Voltijd
	M Biotechnology (MBT; 66841)	Voltijd
	M Bioinformatics (MBF; 60106)	Voltijd
C. Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering	B Agrotechnologie (BAT; 56831)	Voltijd
	M Agricultural and Bioresource Engineering (MAB; 66831)	Voltijd
D. Forest and Nature conservation	B Bos- en Natuurbeheer (BBN; 56219)	Voltijd
	M Forest and Nature Conservation (MFN; 66219)	Voltijd
E. International Land and Water Management	B Internationaal Land- en Waterbeheer (BIL; 50100)	Voltijd
	M International Land and Water Management (MIL; 60104)	Voltijd
F. Landscape, Architecture and Planning	B Landschapsarchitectuur en ruim. Planning (BLP; 56848)	Voltijd
	M Landscape, Architecture and Planning (MLP; 66848)	Voltijd
G. Leisure, Tourism and Environment	M Leisure, Tourism and Environment (MLE; 60111)	Voltijd
H. Geo-Information Science	M Geo-Information Science (MGI; 60108)	Voltijd
I. Plant Sciences	B Plantenwetenschappen (BPW; 56835)	Voltijd
	M Plant Sciences (MPS; 66835)	Voltijd
	M Organic Agriculture (MOA; 69300)	Voltijd
	M Plant Biotechnology (MPB; 60106)	Voltijd
J. Animal Sciences	B Dierwetenschappen (BDW: 56849)	Voltijd
	M Animal Sciences (MAS; 66849)	Voltijd
K. Climate Studies	M Climate Studies (MCL; 60107)	Voltijd
L. International Development Studies	B Internationale Ontwikkelingsstudies (BIN; 56837)	Voltijd
	M International Development Studies (MID; 66837)	Voltijd
	M Development and Rural Innovation (MDR; 60103)	Voltijd
M. Management, Economics and Consumer Studies	B Bedrijfs- en Consumentenwetenschappen (BBC; 56836)	Voltijd
	M Management, Economics and Consumer Studies (MME; 66836)	Voltijd
N. Nutrition and Health	B Voeding en Gezondheid (BVG; 56868)	Voltijd
	M Nutrition and Health (MNH; 66868)	Voltijd

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

THE UNDERSIGNED

NAME: Elizabeth Holmes

HOME ADDRESS: 199 Wetherby Road
Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS17 8ND
ENGLAND

HAS BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME AS AN EXPERT / ~~SECRETARY~~:

Life Sciences Leisure Tourism and Environment

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTION:

Wageningen University

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT MAINTAINING ANY (FAMILY) CONNECTIONS OR TIES OF A PERSONAL NATURE OR AS A RESEARCHER / TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL OR CONSULTANT WITH THE ABOVE INSTITUTION, WHICH COULD AFFECT A FULLY INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE SENSE;

1

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HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT HAVING MAINTAINED SUCH CONNECTIONS OR TIES WITH THE INSTITUTION DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS;

CERTIFIES TO OBSERVING STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH REGARD TO ALL THAT HAS COME AND WILL COME TO HIS/HER NOTICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSESSMENT, INSOFAR AS SUCH CONFIDENTIALITY CAN REASONABLY BE CLAIMED BY THE PROGRAMME, THE INSTITUTION OR NVAO;

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO BEING ACQUAINTED WITH THE NVAO CODE OF CONDUCT.

PLACE: Wageningen DATE: 19/06/12

SIGNATURE: [signature]

2

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

THE UNDERSIGNED

NAME: PROFESSOR SCOTT FLEMING

HOME ADDRESS: 5 MILL PARK, COWBRIDGE,
VALE OF GLAMORGAN, UK
CF71 7BG

HAS BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME AS AN EXPERT / SECRETARY:

M.A. / M.Sc. LEISURE, TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTION:

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT MAINTAINING ANY (FAMILY) CONNECTIONS OR TIES OF A PERSONAL NATURE OR AS A RESEARCHER / TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL OR CONSULTANT WITH THE ABOVE INSTITUTION, WHICH COULD AFFECT A FULLY INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE SENSE;

1

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nederlands-vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT HAVING MAINTAINED SUCH CONNECTIONS OR TIES WITH THE INSTITUTION DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS;

CERTIFIES TO OBSERVING STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH REGARD TO ALL THAT HAS COME AND WILL COME TO HIS/HER NOTICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSESSMENT, INSOFAR AS SUCH CONFIDENTIALITY CAN REASONABLY BE CLAIMED BY THE PROGRAMME, THE INSTITUTION OR NVAO;

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO BEING ACQUAINTED WITH THE NVAO CODE OF CONDUCT.

PLACE: UNIVERSITY OF WALES INSTITUTE, CARDIFF, UK DATE: 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

SIGNATURE: Scott Fleming.

2

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DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

TO BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

THE UNDERSIGNED

NAME: Greg Richards

HOME ADDRESS:

HAS BEEN ASKED TO ASSESS THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMME AS AN EXPERT / ~~SECRETARY~~:

Life Sciences - Leisure Tourism and Environment

APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTION:

Wageningen University

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT MAINTAINING ANY (FAMILY) CONNECTIONS OR TIES OF A PERSONAL NATURE OR AS A RESEARCHER / TEACHER, PROFESSIONAL OR CONSULTANT WITH THE ABOVE INSTITUTION, WHICH COULD AFFECT A FULLY INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMME IN EITHER A POSITIVE OR A NEGATIVE SENSE;

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nvao
nederlands - vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO NOT HAVING MAINTAINED SUCH CONNECTIONS OR TIES WITH THE INSTITUTION DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS;

CERTIFIES TO OBSERVING STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY WITH REGARD TO ALL THAT HAS COME AND WILL COME TO HIS/HER NOTICE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSESSMENT, INSOFAR AS SUCH CONFIDENTIALITY CAN REASONABLY BE CLAIMED BY THE PROGRAMME, THE INSTITUTION OR NVAO;

HEREBY CERTIFIES TO BEING ACQUAINTED WITH THE NVAO CODE OF CONDUCT.

PLACE: Wageningen DATE: 19/6/2012

SIGNATURE:

2

Appendix 9: Rubric for the assessment of a MSc-thesis

Author: Arnold F. Moene, Meteorology and Air Quality Group, Wageningen University
Version: 1.1 (December 15, 2010)

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
1. Research competence (30-60%) *						
1.1. Commitment and perseverance	Student is not motivated. Student escapes work and gives up regularly	Student has little motivation. Tends to be distracted easily. Has given up once or twice	Student is motivated at times, but often, sees the work as a compulsory task. Is distracted from thesis work now and then.	The student is motivated. Overcomes an occasional setback with help of the supervisor.	The student is motivated and/or overcomes an occasional setback on his own and considers the work as his "own" project.	The student is very motivated, goes at length to get the most out of the project. Takes complete control of his own project. Considers setbacks as an extra motivation.
1.2. Initiative and creativity	Student shows no initiative or new ideas at all.	Student picks up some initiatives and/or new ideas suggested by others (e.g. supervisor), but the selection is not motivated.	Student shows some initiative and/or together with the supervisor develops one or two new ideas on minor parts of the research.	Student initiates discussions on new ideas with supervisor and develops one or two own ideas on minor parts of the research.	Student has his own creative ideas on hypothesis formulation, design or data processing.	Innovative research methods and/or data-analysis methods developed. Possibly the scientific problem has been formulated by the student.
1.3. Independence	The student can only perform the project properly after repeated detailed instructions and with direct help from the supervisor.	The student needs frequent instructions and well-defined tasks from the supervisor and the supervisor needs careful checks to see if all tasks have been performed.	The supervisor is the main responsible for setting out the tasks, but the student is able to perform them mostly independently	Student selects and plans the tasks together with the supervisor and performs these tasks on his own	Student plans and performs tasks mostly independently, asks for help from the supervisor when needed.	Student plans and performs tasks independently and organizes his sources of help independently.
	No critical self-reflection at all.	No critical self-reflection at all.	Student is able to reflect on his functioning with the help of the supervisor only.	The student occasionally shows critical self-reflection.	Student actively performs critical self-reflection on some aspects of his functioning	Student actively performs critical self-reflection on various aspects of his own functioning and performance.
1.4. Efficiency in working with data Note: depending on the characteristics of the thesis work, not all three aspects	**Experimental work** Student is not able to setup and/or execute an experiment.	Student is able to execute detailed instructions to some extent, but errors are made often, invalidating (part of) the experiment.	Student is able to execute an experiment that has been designed by someone else (without critical assessment of sources of error and uncertainty).	Student is able to execute an experiment that has been designed by someone else. Takes sources of error and uncertainty into account in a qualitative sense.	Student is able to judge the setup of an existing experiment and to include modifications if needed. Takes into account sources of error and uncertainty quantitatively.	Student is able to setup or modify an experiment exactly tailored to answering the research questions. Quantitative consideration of sources of error and uncertainty. Execution of the experiment is flawless.

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
(experimental work, data analysis and model development) may be relevant and some may be omitted	**Data analysis** Student is lost when using data. Is not able to use a spreadsheet program or any other appropriate data-processing program.	Student is able to organize the data, but is not able to perform checks and/or simple analyses	Student is able to organize data and perform some simple checks; but the way the data are used does not clearly contribute to answering of the research questions and/or he is unable to analyze the data independently.	Student is able to organize the data, perform some basic checks and perform basic analyses that contribute to the research question	Student is able to organize the data, perform commonly used checks and perform some advanced analyses on the data	Student is able to organize the data, perform thorough checks and perform advanced and original analyses on the data.
	Model development Student is not able to make any modification/addition to an existing model.	Student modifies an existing model, but errors occur and persist. No validation.	Student is able to make minor modifications (say a single formula) to an existing model. Superficial validation or no validation at all.	Student is able to make major modifications to an existing model, based on literature. Validation using some basic measures of quality.	Student is able to make major modifications to an existing model, based on literature or own analyses. Validation using appropriate statistical measures.	Student is able to develop a model from scratch, or add an important new part to an existing model. Excellent theoretical basis for modelling as well as use of advanced validation methods.
1.5. Handling supervisor's comments and development of research skills	Student does not pick up suggestions and ideas of the supervisor	The supervisor needs to act as an instructor and/or supervisor needs to suggest solutions for problems	Student incorporates some of the comments of the supervisor, but ignores others without arguments	Student incorporates most or all of the supervisor's comments.	Supervisor's comments are weighed by the student and asked for when needed.	Supervisor's comments are critically weighed by the student and asked for when needed, also from other staff members or students.
	Knowledge and insight of the student (in relation to the prerequisites) is insufficient and the student is not able to take appropriate action to remedy this	There is some progress in the research skills of the student, but suggestions of the supervisor are also ignored occasionally.	The student is able to adopt some skills as they are presented during supervision	The student is able to adopt skills as they are presented during supervision and develops some skills independently as well	The student is able to adopt new skills mostly independently, and asks for assistance from the supervisor if needed.	The student has knowledge and insight on a scientific level, i.e. he explores solutions on his own, increases skills and knowledge where necessary.
1.6. Keeping to the time schedule	Final version of thesis or colloquium more than 50% of the nominal period overdue without a valid reason (force majeure)	Final version of thesis or colloquium at most 50% of the nominal period overdue (without a valid reason).	Final version of thesis or colloquium at most 25% of nominal period overdue (without valid reason)	Final version of thesis or colloquium at most 10% of nominal period overdue (without valid reasons)	Final version of thesis or colloquium at most 5% of nominal period overdue (without good reasons)	Final version of thesis and colloquium finished within planned period (or overdue but with good reason).
	No time schedule made.	No realistic time schedule.	Mostly realistic time schedule, but no timely adjustment of time schedule.	Realistic time schedule, with some adjustments (but not enough or not all in time) in times only.	Realistic time schedule, with timely adjustments. of times only.	Realistic time schedule, with timely adjustments of both time and tasks.

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
2. Thesis report (30-60%) *						
2.1. Relevance research, clearness goals, delineation research	No link is made to existing research on the topic. No research context is described.	The context of the topic at hand is described in broad terms but there is no link between what is known and what will be researched.	The link between the thesis research and existing research does not go beyond the information provided by the supervisor.	Context of the research is defined well, with input from the student. There is a link between the context and research questions.	Context of the research is defined sharply and to-the-point. Research questions emerge directly from the described context.	Thesis research is positioned sharply in the relevant scientific field. Novelty and innovation of the research are indicated.
	There is no researchable research question and the delineation of the research is absent	Most research questions are unclear, or not researchable and the delineation of the research is weak	At least either the research questions or the delineation of the research are clear	The research questions and the delineation are mostly clear but could have been defined sharper at some points	The research questions are clear and researchable and the delineation is clear.	The research questions are clear and formulated to-the-point and limits of the research are well-defined.
2.2. Theoretical underpinning, use of literature	No discussion of underlying theory.	There is some discussion of underlying theory, but the description shows serious errors.	The relevant theory is used, but the description has not been tailored to the research at hand or shows occasional errors.	The relevant theory is used, and the description has been tailored partially successful to the research at hand. Few errors occur.	The relevant theory is used, it is nicely synthesized, and it is successfully tailored to the research at hand.	Clear, complete and coherent overview of relevant theory on the level of an up-to-date review paper. Exactly tailored to the research at hand.
	No peer-reviewed/primary scientific papers in reference list except for those already suggested by the supervisor	Only a couple of peer-reviewed papers in reference list.	Some peer-reviewed papers in reference list but also a significant body of grey literature.	Relevant peer-reviewed papers in reference list but also some grey literature or text books. Some included references less relevant.	Mostly peer-reviewed papers or specialized monographs in reference list. An occasional reference may be less relevant.	Almost exclusively peer-reviewed papers in reference list or specialized monographs (not text books). All papers included are relevant.
2.3. Use of methods and data	No description of methods and/or data.	Research is not reproducible due to insufficient information on data (collection and/or treatment) and analysis methods	Some aspects of the research regarding data-collection, data-treatment, models or the analysis methods are described insufficiently so that that particular aspect of the research is not reproducible.	Description of the data (collection, treatment) or models as well as the analysis methods used is lacking in a number of places so that at most a more or less similar research could be performed.	Description of the data (collection, treatment) or models as well as the analysis methods used is mostly complete, but exact reproduction of the research is not possible due to lack of some details.	Description of the data (collection, treatment) or models as well as the analysis methods is complete and clear so that exact reproduction of the research is possible.
2.4. Critical reflection on the research performed (discussion)	No discussion and/or reflection on the research. Discussion only touches trivial or very general points of criticism.	Only some possible weaknesses and/or weaknesses which are in reality irrelevant or non-existent have been identified.	Most weaknesses in the research are indicated, but impacts on the main results are not weighed relative to each other.	Most weaknesses in the research are indicated and impacts on the main results are weighed relative to each other.	All weaknesses in the research are indicated and weighed relative to each other. Furthermore, (better) alternatives for the methods used are indicated.	Not only all possible weaknesses in the research are indicated, but also it is indicated which weaknesses affect the conclusions most.

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
	No confrontation with existing literature.	Confrontation with irrelevant existing literature.	Only trivial reflection vis-a-vis existing literature.	Only most obvious conflicts and correspondences with existing literature are identified. The value of the study is described, but it is not related to existing research.	Minor and major conflicts and correspondences with literature are shown. The added value of the research relative to existing literature is identified.	Results are critically confronted with existing literature. In case of conflicts, the relative weight of own results and existing literature is assessed. The contribution of his work to the development of scientific concepts is identified.
2.5. Clarity of conclusions and recommendations	No link between research questions, results and conclusions.	Conclusions are drawn, but in many cases these are only partial answers to the research question. Conclusions merely repeat results.	Conclusions are linked to the research questions, but not all questions are addressed. Some conclusions are not substantiated by results or merely repeat results.	Most conclusions well-linked to research questions and substantiated by results. Conclusions are mostly formulated clearly but with some vagueness in wording.	Clear link between research questions and conclusions. All conclusions substantiated by results. Conclusions are formulated exact.	Clear link between research questions and conclusions. Conclusions substantiated by results. Conclusions are formulated exact and concise. Conclusions are grouped/ordered in a logical way.
	No recommendations given.	Recommendations are absent or trivial.	Some recommendations are given, but the link of those to the conclusions is not always clear.	Recommendations are well-linked to the conclusions.	Recommendations are to-the-point, well-linked to the conclusions and original.	Recommendations are to-the-point, well-linked to the conclusions, original and are extensive enough to serve as project description for a new thesis project.
2.6. Writing skills	Thesis is badly structured. In many cases information appears in wrong locations. Level of detail is inappropriate throughout.	Main structure incorrect in some places, and placement of material in different chapters illogical in many places. Level of detail varies widely (information missing, or irrelevant information given).	Main structure is correct, but lower level hierarchy of sections is not logical in places. Some sections have overlapping functions leading to ambiguity in placement of information. Level of detail varies widely (information missing, or irrelevant information given).	Main structure correct, but placement of material in different chapters illogical in places. Level of detail inappropriate in a number of places (irrelevant information given).	Most sections have a clear and unique function. Hierarchy of sections is mostly correct. Ordering of sections is mostly logical. All information occurs at the correct place, with few exceptions. In most places level of detail is appropriate.	Well-structured: each section has a clear and unique function. Hierarchy of sections is correct. Ordering of sections is logical. All information occurs at the correct place. Level of detail is appropriate throughout.
	Formulations in the text are often incorrect/inexact inhibiting a correct interpretation of the text.	Vagueness and/or inexactness in wording occur regularly and it affects the interpretation of the text.	The text is ambiguous in some places but this does not always inhibit a correct interpretation of the text.	Formulations in text are predominantly clear and exact. Thesis could have been written more concisely.	Formulations in text are clear and exact, as well as concise.	*Textual* quality of thesis (or manuscript in the form of a journal paper) is such that it could be acceptable for a pear-reviewed journal.

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
3. Colloquium (5%) *						
3.1. Graphical presentation	Presentation has no structure.	Presentation has unclear structure.	Presentation is structured, though the audience gets lost in some places.	Presentation has a clear structure with only few exceptions.	Presentation has a clear structure. Mostly a good separation between the main message and side-steps.	Presentation clearly structured, concise and to-the-point. Good separation between the main message and side-steps.
	Unclear lay-out. Unbalanced use of text, graphs, tables or graphics throughout. Too small font size, too many or too few slides.	Lay-out in many places insufficient: too much text and too few graphics (or graphs, tables) or vice verse.	Quality of the layout of the slides is mixed. Inappropriate use of text, tables, graphs and graphics in some places.	Lay-out is mostly clear, with unbalanced use of text, tables, graphs and graphics in few places only.	Lay-out is clear. Appropriate use of text, tables, graphs and graphics.	Lay-out is functional and clear. Clever use of graphs and graphics.
3.2. Verbal presentation and defense	Spoken in such a way that majority of audience could not follow the presentation.	Presentation is uninspired and/or monotonous and/or student reads from slides: attention of audience not captured	Quality of presentation is mixed: sometimes clear, sometimes hard to follow.	Mostly clearly spoken. Perhaps monotonous in some places.	Clearly spoken.	Relaxed and lively though concentrated presentation. Clearly spoken.
	Level of audience not taken into consideration at all.	Level of audience hardly taken intro consideration.	Presentation not at appropriate level of audience.	Level of presentation mostly targeted at audience.	Level of presentation well-targeted at audience. Student is able to adjust to some extent to signals from audience that certain parts are not understood.	Clear take-home message. Level well-targeted at audience. Student is able to adjust to signals from audience that certain parts are not understood.
	Bad timing (way too short or too long).	Timing not well kept (at most 30% deviation from planned time).	Timing not well kept (at most 20% deviation from planned time).	Timing is OK (at most 10% deviation from planned time).	Timing is OK.	Presentation finished well in time.
	Student is not able to answer questions.	Student is able to answer only the simplest questions	Student answers at least half of the questions appropriately.	Student is able to answer nearly all questions in an appropriate way.	Student is able to answer all questions in an appropriate way, although not to-the-point in some cases.	Student is able to give appropriate, clear and to-the-point answers to all questions.

Item	Mark for item					
	2-3	**4-5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9-10**
4. Examination (5%) *						
4.1. Defense of the thesis	Student is not able to defend/discuss his thesis. He does not master the contents	The student has difficulty to explain the subject matter of the thesis.	Student is able to defend his thesis. He mostly masters the contents of what he wrote, but for a limited number of items he is not able to explain what he did, or why.	Student is able to defend his thesis. He masters the contents of what he wrote, but not beyond that. Is not able to place thesis in scientific or practical context.	Student is able to defend his thesis, including indications where the work could have been done better. Student is able to place thesis in either scientific or practical context.	Student is able to freely discuss the contents of the thesis and to place the thesis in the context of current scientific literature and practical contexts.
4.2. Knowledge of study domain	Student does not master the most basic knowledge (even below the starting level for the thesis).	The student does not understand all of the subject matter discussed in the thesis.	The student understands the subject matter of the thesis on a textbook level.	The student understands the subject matter of the thesis including the literature used in the thesis.	Student is well on top of subjects discussed in thesis: not only does he understand but he is also aware of current discussions in the literature related to the thesis topic.	Student is well on top of subjects discussed in thesis: not only does he understand but he is also aware of discussions in the literature beyond the topic (but related to) of the thesis.

Manual for use of the thesis evaluation form and the MSc-thesis assessment rubric (version 1.1) of Wageningen University

User instructions

- Grading the thesis work is generally done by two persons, the daily supervisor and the second reviewer/examiner. For the sake of grading uniformity, it is highly recommended by the Exam Boards that the second reviewer within a chair group is always the same person. Preferably it is the head of the group.
- The thesis evaluation form has four categories. The research competence category can only be filled in by the daily supervisor as this person has worked with the student. The Thesis report category can most objectively be filled in by the second reviewer who was not involved in the thesis process, as grading the thesis report should not be biased by positive or negative experiences with the student. The daily supervisor who has these experiences can take these into account when grading the research competence.
- Use of the comment fields on the thesis evaluation form is highly recommended. It is an extra feedback for the student.
- The assessment rubric has the form of an analytic rubric (see e.g. Andrade (2005), Reynolds *et al.* (2009), URL1, URL2). Each line discusses one **criterion** for assessment. Each column gives a **level** for the grading. Each cell contains the **descriptor** of the level for that criterion.
- The criteria in the rubric exactly follow the items presented in the Excel worksheet "Thesis evaluation Wageningen University" constructed by the Exam Boards. In a few cases the criteria in the original thesis evaluation document were split into two or more parts because the description of the criteria clearly covered different subjects.
- Since the final mark is composed of so many criteria, the scores on individual criteria should be discriminative. Not all levels are equally broad in marks. Since the final marks of theses usually range between 6 and 9, in the rubric individual levels have been established for the marks of 6, 7 and 8. When performance is at the 9-10 level, decide whether the student is on the low edge (9) or high edge (10) of this level. Descriptions at the 9-10 level tend to describe the ultimate performance (10). Hence, if a student performs well above 8, but below the description at the 9-10 level, a 9 would be the appropriate mark.
- Keep in mind that each line in the rubric should be read independently: it could be that a student scores a 2-3 on one criterion and a 9-10 on another.
- Always start at the lowest mark in the rubric, and test if the student should be awarded the next higher mark. In some cases achievements of a next lower level are not repeated at the higher level (i.e. the lower level achievements are implicit in the higher levels). Furthermore, if a level has a range of marks, choose the most appropriate one (consider the description of the level of performance as a continuum, rather than a discrete description).
- Wherever the student is indicated as 'he', one can also read 'she'.

Remarks

- This rubric has been validated by a number of supervisors by comparing the original grade of a number of theses to the grade resulting from this rubric.

- The main intention of using a rubric is enhance homogeneity of assessments and the ability to communicate about assessments both with students and with colleagues. Furthermore, it clarifies to students the expectations of the supervisor and helps the supervisor to structure feedback during the process of thesis research.
  Although the intention is to homogenize the process of assessment, it should be noted that even with the use of a rubric some arbitrariness will remain.

- The two main categories on the thesis evaluation form (research competence and thesis report) should have an assessment of 'sufficient' (i.e. ≥ 5.5) before the total thesis work can be considered as sufficient. So, no compensation between these main categories is possible to obtain the lowest final mark of 6.0.
- Please report any positive or negative experiences with and suggestions for the rubric to arnold.moene@wur.nl.

- Author of the rubric: Arnold F. Moene (Meteorology and Air Quality Group, Wageningen University), with valuable contributions from Ellis Hofland, Edwin Peeters, Tamar Nieuwenhuizen, Maarten Holtslag, George Bier, Gerard Ros, Lijbert Brussaard, Judith Gulikers and Paul Berentsen.

References

Andrade, H.G, 2005. Teaching With Rubrics: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. *College Teaching* **53**, p. 27-31.

Reynolds, J., R. Smith, C. Moskovitz and A. Sayle, 2009. BioTAP: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Scientific Writing and Evaluating Undergraduate Theses. *Bioscience* **59**, p. 896-903.

URL1: http://jonathan.mueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/rubrics.htm (last visited November 17, 2009).

URL2: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubric_(academic) (last visited November 17, 2009).