

Besluit

Besluit strekkende tot het verlenen van accreditatie aan de opleiding wo-master Applied Communication Science van de Wageningen University en tot instemming met de nieuwe naam van de opleiding wo-master Communication, Health and Life Sciences

datum	28 februari 2017	Gegevens	
onderwerp	Besluit accreditatie wo-ma Applied Communication Science van de Wageningen University (005258)	Naam instelling	: Wageningen University
uw kenmerk	16/05531	Naam opleiding	: wo-master Applied Communication Science (120 EC)
ons kenmerk	NVAO/20170368/ND	Gevraagde nieuwe naam	: wo-master Communication, Health and Life Sciences
bijlagen	2	Datum aanvraag	: 23 december 2016
		Variant opleiding	: voltijd
		Tracks/specialisaties	: Communication and Innovation; Health and Society
		Locatie opleiding	: Wageningen
		Datum goedkeuren	
		Panel	: 13 september 2016
		Datum locatiebezoek	: 3 oktober 2016
		Datum visitatierapport	: 2 december 2016
		Instellingstoets kwaliteitszorg	: ja, positief besluit van 2 juli 2012

Beoordelingskaders

Beoordelingskader voor de beperkte opleidingsbeoordeling van de NVAO ((Stcrt. 2014, nr 36791).

Artikel 7.3, vijfde lid, in verbinding met art. 5a. 2, lid 2a, van de wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek.

Bevindingen

De NVAO stelt vast dat in het visitatierapport deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden het panel de kwaliteit van de opleiding voldoende heeft bevonden en positief heeft geadviseerd over de naamswijziging. Het visitatierapport geeft de bevindingen en overwegingen weer van het panel over de bacheloropleiding Communicatiewetenschappen en de masteropleiding Applied Communication Science van de Wageningen University. Het panel heeft beide opleidingen en de voorgestelde naamswijzigingen gezamenlijk beoordeeld.

Samenvatting bevindingen en overwegingen van het panel.

Wageningen University presents a rather unique communication programme focusing on life sciences, health and their interaction with complex societal challenges. With this strong link of communication sciences to a particular theme, the panel believes the master programme discerns itself from other communication science programmes in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the programme management is of the opinion that the existing names do not cover the objectives and content of the master programme well enough.

Therefore the master programme requests to change its name to MSc Communication, Health and Life Sciences.

After considering the profile, the programme and receiving input from stakeholders, the panel fully endorses the proposed name change and regards this as an important improvement in the profiling of the programme. As Wageningen University has a unique profile, a name that better covers the essence of the programme will attract more motivated students, and strengthen the community of learners.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The master programme "aims to deliver professionals who understand complex processes of communication and change, and are able to apply these insights to enhance societal problem- solving and innovation in areas related to life science or health issues". This is translated into an outstanding curriculum with two specialisations: Communication and Innovation, and Health and Society. According to the panel, the profile and objectives constitute a master programme that is an international benchmark for how to realize a transdisciplinary programme in the communication sciences and life sciences.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

In the critical reflection, as well as in the discussions with management, teachers and students, the panel noted that the profile of the master programme is translated in challenging curricula that fit well within the overall profile of Wageningen University. The panel was especially impressed by the way in which the programme manages to integrate life sciences and social sciences in the curricula; the inter and transdisciplinary teaching methods are a valuable feature of the bachelor programme. That also presents a challenge, since in some courses a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds of students have to be accommodated. The programme acknowledges this to be a point of attention, and addresses this by actively informing students on preparatory courses, mandatory prior knowledge and advise on study tracks, as well as having introductory lectures at the start of courses that align students' competencies.

The master programme has made a good improvement by developing a 12 EC introductory course Interdisciplinary approaches in communication, health and life sciences. The panel learned that this first course in the master programme presents students with an important overview of interdisciplinary approaches, and applies that to societal problems relating to life sciences.

Although the course needs some fine-tuning, the panel is confident that it is an important contribution to the programme, both intellectually and socially.

Pagina 3 van 6 The second year is almost entirely taken up by the internship (24 EC) and the MSc thesis (33 EC), supplemented with a 3 EC seminar. This allows for a thorough practical and academic specialisation, and makes the master programme stand out. The panel shares the opinion of the examining board that the role and assessment of the internship should be discussed at the level of the entire faculty, ensuring that it is an academic product. In addition, the panel supports the intention of the programme committee to see how study delay with the theses can be handled better, for example by setting and monitoring deadlines more strictly.

The panel acknowledges that the quality of the teaching staff is more than adequate, and was impressed to see that the staff also has close relationships with life scientists, sometimes culminating in joint research projects. The programme meets the WUR policy that skilled lecturers are also scientific experts.

The informal atmosphere in and outside of the lecture-room allows for many interactions and mutual feedback between students and teachers, and amongst teachers themselves. The panel supports the improvements initiated by the programme management, such as organizing a yearly teachers' days, executing a curriculum evaluation via a bottle neck analysis and increasing attention for learning tracks. This exemplifies a constant quality improvement mentality, which the panel values greatly. There is a good support structure for study advice, quality monitoring and student feedback, all in all creating a good, coherent and motivating teaching and learning environment.

Notwithstanding the good quality of the programme, the programme and its students have competitive potential that is not exploited to the fullest. The honours programme could be promoted more amongst talented students. In this way, not only the quality of the programme is showcased better, but it invites staff and students to strive for yet a higher level of accomplishment.

Standard 3. Assessment

During the site visit the panel verified that the programme realizes a transparent and comprehensive assessment strategy. The panel checked course manuals and concluded that the assessment of courses is adequate. It also ascertained that the grading of the theses (including the master internship) is done in the appropriate fashion.

The panel does have a crucial point for improvement in the assessment of theses, which apparently not only applies to these theses in communication sciences. It noticed that students who fail on one of the sub-items (e.g., theory) can compensate that with a pass on other items (e.g., process). The panel thinks this is highly undesirable, as students at academic level should pass on all aspects of the thesis, including important aspects as theory. The panel recommends that all sub-items should pass with at least 5,5 in order for the student to pass the thesis, and that the abstract of the master thesis becomes part of the assessment.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

During the interviews with master students and graduates, and by studying theses of the programme, the panel experienced them to be proficient in identifying the meaning of inter and transdisciplinary research in stimulating social change. The level of the master students is in line with the standards in the field.

Pagina 4 van 6 Alumni with whom the panel has spoken, state that the market value for WUR graduates is high; they are appreciated as critical yet constructive professionals, people that are hands on. They demonstrate a distinct profile which makes them valuable as professionals that can work on topics across life sciences, health and communication. This shows the programme realizes what it aims for. Again, the new name of the programme will assist alumni to highlight their unique selling points more explicitly.

Besluit

Ingevolge het bepaalde in artikel 5a.10, derde lid, van de WHW heeft de NVAO het college van bestuur van de Wageningen University te Wageningen in de gelegenheid gesteld zijn zienswijze op het voornemen tot besluit van 25 januari 2017 naar voren te brengen. Van deze gelegenheid heeft het college van bestuur geen gebruik gemaakt.

De NVAO besluit accreditatie te verlenen aan de wo-master Applied Communication Science (120 EC; variant: voltijd; locatie: Wageningen) van de Wageningen University te Wageningen. De opleiding kent de volgende afstudeerrichtingen: Communication and Innovation; Health and Society . De NVAO beoordeelt de kwaliteit van de opleiding als voldoende.

Dit besluit treedt in werking op 28 februari 2017 en is van kracht tot en met 27 februari 2023.

De NVAO stemt in met de naamswijziging van de opleiding in wo-master Communication, Health and Life Sciences.

Den Haag, 28 februari 2017

De NVAO
Voor deze:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right and then curves upwards.

R.P. Zevenbergen
(bestuurder)

Tegen dit besluit kan op grond van het bepaalde in de Algemene wet bestuursrecht door een belanghebbende bezwaar worden gemaakt bij de NVAO. De termijn voor het indienen van bezwaar bedraagt zes weken.

Onderwerp	Standaard	Beoordeling door het panel
1. Beoogde eindkwalificaties	De beoogde eindkwalificaties van de opleiding zijn wat betreft inhoud, niveau en oriëntatie geconcretiseerd en voldoen aan internationale eisen.	Goed
2. Onderwijsleeromgeving	Het programma, het personeel en de opleidingsspecifieke voorzieningen maken het voor de instromende studenten mogelijk de beoogde eindkwalificaties te realiseren.	Goed
3. Toetsing	De opleiding beschikt over een adequaat systeem van toetsing.	Voldoende
4. Gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties	De opleiding toont aan dat de beoogde eindkwalificaties worden gerealiseerd.	Voldoende
Eindoordeel		Voldoende

De standaarden krijgen het oordeel onvoldoende, voldoende, goed of excellent. Het eindoordeel over de opleiding als geheel wordt op dezelfde schaal gegeven.

Pagina 6 van 6 **Bijlage 2: panelsamenstelling**

- Prof. Hilde Van den Bulck (chair), Professor of Communication Studies and head of the Research Group Media, Policy and Culture at the University of Antwerp (UA), Belgium;
- Prof. Jacqueline Broerse, Professor of innovation and communication in the health and life sciences and head of the section Science Communication at the Athena Institute, VU University Amsterdam;
- Melanie Klösters BSc., Research Master student Behavioural Science, Radboud University Nijmegen;
- Prof. Maurice Mittelmark Professor of Health Promotion, School of Psychology, Department of Health Promotion and Development, University of Bergen, Norway;
- Drs. Jacqueline Vink, strategic advisor Technology and Society, healthy living, Schuttelaar & Partners.

Het panel werd ondersteund door dr. Meg van Bogaert, secretaris (gecertificeerd).