

Additional assessment

**Bachelor's programme
European Studies**

**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Maastricht University**

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Project number: Q547

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This report was finalised on 9 December 2015.

Report on the additional assessment of the bachelor's programme European Studies of Maastricht University

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point (22 November 2011).

Administrative data regarding the programme

Bachelor's programme European Studies

Name of the programme:	European Studies
CROHO number:	56051
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	none
Location(s):	Maastricht
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Expiration of accreditation:	29-06-2016

Administrative data regarding the institution

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

Quantitative data regarding the programme

The required quantitative data regarding the programme are included in the assessment report 'History, International Relations and European Studies. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University' (QANU, 15 January 2014).

Composition of the assessment panel

The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme European Studies of Maastricht University consisted of:

- Luc François (chair), professor emeritus of Contemporary History at Ghent University, Belgium;
- Jan Orbie, university senior lecturer on EU External Relations at the Department of Political Science and co-director of the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University, Belgium;
- Sebastian Oberthür, professor for Environment and Sustainable Development at the Institute for European Studies (IES) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium.

The panel was supported by Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer, MA, who acted as project manager and secretary.

The board of Maastricht University and the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) approved the composition of the panel. Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of its members. All members of the panel and the project manager signed a declaration of independence as required by the NVAO protocol to ensure that they judge without bias, personal preference or personal interest, and the judgement is made without undue influence from the institute, the programme or other stakeholders.

Brief description of the procedures

Previous assessment

On 5 and 6 March 2013, the bachelor's programme European Studies was evaluated by an assessment panel. On 15 January 2014, the assessment report based on the NVAO Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments was finalised. The panel assessed Standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) and Standard 2 (Teaching-learning environment) of the programme as 'satisfactory'. Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes), however, was assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. The assessment panel formulated recommendations for improvement for the programme.

Based on these recommendations, the management of the programme prepared an improvement plan, which was sent to the NVAO on 31 January 2014 together with the request to grant the programme an improvement period. In a letter dated 10 April 2014, the NVAO indicated that the improvement plan insufficiently addressed some issues put forward by the panel. It requested to address these issues in an addendum to the improvement plan, which had to be submitted to the panel for approval. The NVAO asked the programme to reconsider the phrasing of the final qualifications (Standard 1), to strengthen the focus on the necessary academic skills (Standard 1 and 2), to pay more attention to training and assessing these skills (Standard 2 and 3), and to professionalise the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) method in the programme (Standard 2).

The panel approved the improvement plan and the addendum. Given the advice of the assessment panel, the NVAO decided to extend the accreditation of the programme and to grant the programme an improvement period to implement its proposed adjustments to fulfil the criteria for accreditation. For the bachelor's programme European Studies, the NVAO added the additional requirement to its decision that the programme improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme.

The 2015 assessment panel consisted of two members from the previous assessment panel (Professor Luc François and Associate Professor Jan Orbie) and one new member, Professor Sebastian Oberthür.

Preparations and working method

The improvement measures of the bachelor's programme European Studies included revision of the Faculty assessment procedure and quality assurance procedures of the final work, improved quality of the final work, restructuring of the final work (one paper instead of two, including transition rules for students of previous cohorts), organisation of assessment information and collegial review sessions, improvement of the curriculum to reflect the final qualifications (with a specific focus on academic skills), adjustment of the final qualifications, introduction of a new skills training course and strengthening the coherence in the skills training trajectory, measures to improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme, and improvements in its PBL practice.

According to the panel, it should be possible to judge the implementation and the effectiveness of the above-mentioned measures with an assessment based on written material. Therefore, in accordance with the 'NVAO points of departure for the assessment of programme granted an improvement period', it opted for a proportional approach. In order to prepare for the additional assessment, the management of the bachelor's programme European Studies provided a report describing the current state of affairs. The panel studied this report and the additional information that was provided. It also read several final works (for an overview, see Appendix 2). These final works were finalised in the summer of 2015 after the implementation of most measures from the improvement plan, including correction of deficiency measures for current students.

Since its findings were positive, the panel decided that it was not necessary to plan a site visit. On 14 October 2015, it held a closed meeting to discuss its findings.

Report

Based on the panel's findings, the secretary drafted a report that was commented upon by the panel members. Subsequently, the programme was given the opportunity to check for factual irregularities. Comments by the programme were discussed with the chair and – when necessary – with other panel members. A few days later, the report was finalised.

Decision rules

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments (as of 22 November 2011), the assessment panel used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

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

On 5 and 6 March 2013, an assessment panel assessed the bachelor's programme European Studies. It assessed Standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) and Standard 2 (Teaching-learning environment) as 'satisfactory'. Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes), however, was assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. Consequently, in line with the framework's decision rules, the panel assessed the programme as a whole as 'unsatisfactory'. The most important reason for this outcome was that the panel was not convinced that all graduates of the programme had achieved the intended learning outcomes; too many theses revealed a lack of research and writing skills. In response to these findings, the programme developed an improvement plan, and later an addendum to this plan. On 30 June 2014, the NVAO approved of the improvement plan plus addendum and decided to extend the accreditation of the programme and to grant the programme an improvement period of two years (until 29 June 2016), during which it had to implement the improvement measures. The NVAO added the request to its decision that the bachelor's programme should also take measures to improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme.

On 14 October 2015, an assessment panel again assessed Standard 3 of the programme in order to find out whether the improvement measures had been implemented successfully and had been effective.

The panel found that the programme management took the advice of the previous assessment panel seriously and carried out the required improvement measures in a professional manner. It not only implemented measures from the improvement plan plus addendum, it also took measures based on progressive insight and paid attention to the sustainability of the improvements. During the improvement period, the programme replaced the two bachelor papers by one bachelor thesis, and took several measures to respond to the critical remarks of the previous assessment panel about the quality of the achieved learning outcomes. They included the implementation of two individual research papers in year 2, the introduction of starting requirements for the bachelor thesis, the revision of the 'BA ES Skills Track Manual', and the implementation of the requirement that all final paper topics be approved by a supervisor. The cohort 2015-2016 will be the first cohort to follow a completely revised skills track. The first results of the improvements to the skills track will not be noticeable until 2016-2017, and their impact on the achieved learning outcomes will only become clear in the BA theses of the academic year 2017-2018. As required by the NVAO, the programme also implemented additional measures to improve the research and writing skills training of students in the cohorts 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. These measures relate to additional guidance during the BA paper via a lecture series, more structured and earlier supervision, and more feedback opportunities. The panel applauds the measures that have been taken to improve the quality of the work and the training in research and writing skills for students in the above-mentioned cohorts.

The programme also reconsidered the practice of PBL in the programme. The panel observed that PBL is still an important aspect of the programme, but that students and staff now receive more information about the expectations and requirements regarding PBL, and that the development of knowledge and skills by individual students is better ensured. Finally, the programme improved the quality assurance and assessment procedure of the final work. The panel is particularly positive about the measures taken to strengthen the independence of the second reader, the introduction of thesis calibration workshops for thesis assessors, and the definitions of criteria developed for grading (and passing) a thesis.

The panel read 9 bachelor theses that were finalised in June 2015 and determined that they were of satisfactory academic quality. It concluded that the improvement measures that have been developed and implemented up until now have been effective. Since European Studies is a three-year programme, the theses studied by the panel do not reveal the overall effect of all interrelated improvement measures. This will only be noticeable in the longer term. The first cohort to follow a completely revised programme will write their bachelor thesis in 2018. However, the panel is positive about the total package of improvement measures, and believes that it will also result in better theses in the future.

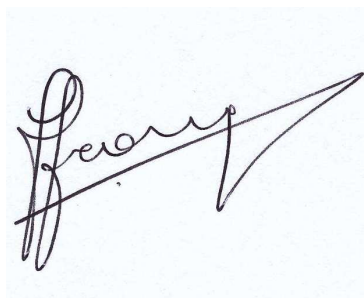
The panel assessed the standards from the Assessment framework for limited programme assessments in the following way:

Bachelor's programme European Studies

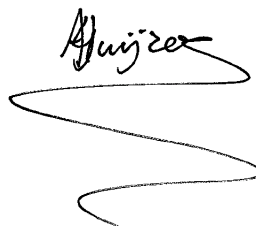
<i>Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes</i>	<i>satisfactory</i>
<i>Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment</i>	<i>satisfactory</i>
<i>Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes</i>	satisfactory
General conclusion	satisfactory

The chair and the secretary of the assessment panel hereby declare that all members of the panel have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in it. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 9 December 2015.



Prof. Luc. François
Chair



Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer, MA
Secretary

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

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 programme. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students.

Relevant issues of the 2013 assessment

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) of Maastricht University has one Board of Examiners. In 2013, the panel concluded that the Board of Examiners of the Faculty had introduced an adequate assessment system that, from September 2013, monitors the achieved learning outcomes by examining random samples of bachelor papers. It also observed that the programme uses a broad variety of assessment methods and that the level, transparency and grading of examinations is sufficient.

However, the panel was rather concerned about the grading and academic quality of the bachelor papers. At the time, it studied 25 bachelor papers, of which 6 were assessed as unsatisfactory. The problems were mainly related to academic research- and writing skills. The panel observed that in most of the unsatisfactory bachelor papers, there was a lack of critical reflection on the literature, insufficient discussion of the research question, or improper justification of the research method. In addition, it found that the comments on the assessment form did not match the final grade. The panel was satisfied with the quality of the curriculum as such and could not pinpoint one specific element which could fully explain the unsatisfactory thesis assessments. Therefore, it recommended that the programme reflect upon the development of academic skills of individual students in the PBL system, the guidance process for the bachelor papers, and other factors that might influence the students' final result. It also urged the programme to reflect on the assessment procedure for bachelor papers.

The approved improvement plan (plus addendum) of the programme promised adjustment of the final qualifications (Standard 1), revision of the research and writing skills trajectory in the programme and improvement of the curriculum to reflect the final qualifications (Standard 2, with a specific focus on academic skills), adjustment of the organisation of the final work (Standard 2), improvements in the Problem-Based Learning practice (Standard 2), improvement of the quality assurance and the assessment procedure of the final work (Standard 3), and improvement of the quality of the final work itself (Standard 3). In addition, the NVAO's decision to grant the programme an improvement period included the requirement that the bachelor's programme should also take measures to improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme in 2013.

Findings in 2015

The 2015 panel was commissioned to reassess Standard 3 and to review the manner in which the programme had improved the shortcomings identified earlier, i.e. the implementation of the improvement measures including their effect. On 29 September 2015, the panel received a

report describing the current state of affairs with regard to the implementation of the approved improvement measures in the programme. It studied this report and concluded that it offers a detailed overview of the current state of affairs of the improvement measures. The panel learned that the management of the programme and the Faculty Board took the advice of the previous assessment panel seriously and carried out the required improvement measures in a professional manner. They not only implemented measures from the improvement plan plus addendum, they also paid attention to the sustainability of the improvements and took measures based on evaluation and progressive insight. For example, the programme management adopted a fine-tuned final work trajectory with newly established requirements for passing the bachelor thesis and implemented an adjusted skills track. Furthermore, the programme management and the Faculty Board took structural measures to further strengthen the monitoring of quality (e.g. extending the compensation for specific members of the Board of Examiners) and facilitate quality improvements (e.g. in March 2015, the Faculty hired an educational specialist, whose effort is geared to issues such as curriculum adjustments and the design of tests and exams).

The measures in the improvement plan and the addendum concerned immediate adjustments as well as ones that had not yet been implemented, or only partly, at the time. The immediate adjustments were endorsed by the 2013 panel in its approval of the improvement plan plus addendum in its letter of 19 May 2014, e.g. the adjustment of the final qualifications (in Annex 1 of the addendum to the improvement plan). The other measures were not yet (fully) implemented or were subject to further observations and advice from the panel. Below, the 2015 panel describes its findings on the improvement measures that were not yet (fully) implemented in 2014 and the effect of the measures taken. The overall effect of all interrelated measures in the three-year programme is not yet noticeable. The cohort of students that has started in 2015 will be the first one exposed to a fully renewed curriculum.

The state of affairs report categorised all observations, recommendations and required improvement measures into four main areas of improvement: Quality of the final work, research and writing skills, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and final work procedure. In addition, improvement measures have been taken to advance the academic skills training of students already in the programme in 2013.

Quality of the final work and Research and writing skills

During the previous assessment, the intended learning outcomes of the programme were assessed by examining two bachelor papers. Plans by the programme management to replace these papers by one bachelor thesis were supported by the 2013 panel. In 2015, this plan was carried out: students now write one bachelor thesis. To improve the quality of this final work, the programme has:

1. Improved training in writing an individual research paper, by replacing two group papers in year 2 by two individual research papers on which students receive personal feedback.
2. Introduced starting requirements for the bachelor thesis. Students in the 2015-2016 and following cohorts need to pass years 1 and 2 before starting on their bachelor thesis.
3. Implemented deficiency measures for current students by introducing compulsory intermediate deadlines and offering extra guidance (see below).
4. Improved communication of the final qualifications of the programme via a revised curriculum catalogue and a 'BA ES Skills Track Manual' that provides an overview of all skills courses and describes how they prepare you for the bachelor thesis.

5. Implemented the requirement that all final paper topics must be approved by a supervisor, and a pilot was conducted with set themes in order to ensure a better match between the topics and the staff's expertise.

In addition, the programme revised the entire BA skills track to better facilitate the gaining and practising of academic research- and writing skills by students (see below). It introduced the skills course 'Developing your own Research Design' in 2013-2014. As a result of further suggestions from the 2013 panel and the outcomes of an internal evaluation of the skills training in the programme, the cohort 2015-2016 will be the first cohort to follow a completely revised skills track. In the revised skills track, special attention is paid to a student's ability to formulate a good research question and prepare a clear research design. The 2015 panel applauds these measures, since they provide an adequate response to the deficiencies in the theses deemed unsatisfactory by the previous assessment panel. It believes that the combined approach of improving the academic research and writing skills track, increasing the number of opportunities for practising writing an individual research paper, and offering students extra guidance and clear information about deadlines and requirements will improve the quality of the final work in the long run. The effects of this approach in the short-term are already noticeable (see below).

Problem-based learning (PBL)

The previous assessment panel was worried that the amount of group work could affect the development of individual research and writing skills and was not convinced that the programme took action as a rule when students did not prepare for a class or did not get involved in discussions. The 2015 panel observed that the development of individual research and writing skills is better guaranteed because of the measures described above. In order to improve the active participation (and its monitoring) of students in PBL, the programme has implemented improvements that focus on the staff as well as the students. The panel found a better way of introducing new staff to the PBL environment (a revised PBL training for new staff and a new follow-up workshop to this training). As of 2015, the programme is working with a compulsory mentor programme with a stronger focus on making students reflect on their own role in the PBL tutorials. In addition, the programme introduced a new portfolio for students, including an extensive section on PBL skills.

The panel concluded that the programme management has adequately tackled the objections of the previous panel to the PBL practice in 2013. PBL is still an important part of the programme, but students and staff now receive better information about the expectations and requirements regarding PBL, and the programme pays adequate attention to the development of knowledge and skills by individual students.

Final work procedure

As announced during the site visit and endorsed by the 2013 panel, the 2013-2014 academic year saw the introduction of a formal, faculty-wide assessment procedure. This procedure includes the introduction of an independent second reader who initiates the assessment process and the implementation of a third reader when the independent reader and supervisor fail to come to an agreement about the final grade. The 2013 panel recommended further reflection on the assessment and quality assurance procedures of the final work. The current panel concluded that the programme management has taken adequate measures to improve them. The adjusted final work procedure has been laid down in the 'FASoS Final Work Procedure', which is updated every year and communicated to all assessors. The panel is particularly positive about measures to strengthen the independence of the second reader, the introduction of thesis calibration workshops for thesis assessors, and the new definition

of criteria for grading (and passing) a thesis. It believes that regular discussions about assessment criteria and grading will improve the validity of the thesis assessments. As the 'FASoS Final Work Procedure' is updated every year, it encourages the programme management to sustain the new assessment procedures in the future.

Remedial measures for current students

The cohort 2015-2016 will be the first cohort to follow a completely revised skills track. The first results of the improvements to the skills track will not be noticeable until 2016-2017, and their impact on the achieved learning outcomes will only become clear in the BA theses of the academic year 2017-2018. In its decision to grant the programme an improvement period, the NVAO also requested the programme to take measures to improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme in 2013 (thus for the cohorts 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016). These measures relate to additional guidance during the writing of the bachelor thesis via a lecture series, more structured and earlier supervision, and more feedback opportunities in the form of, for example, a bachelor thesis conference.

An overview of the measures that were developed and implemented in each cohort to improve the individual skills training is included in Appendix 3. The panel concluded that the programme management thoroughly evaluated possible deficiencies in the individual skills training for each cohort and has taken appropriate action. It studied BA theses from the 2014-2015 cohort and observed that the additional improvement measures for this cohort have yielded positive results.

The effect of the improvement measures on the quality of the BA theses

The 2015 panel read 9 BA theses that were finalised in June 2015. They reflect the achieved learning outcomes after the implementation of the early and intermediate improvement measures and the remedial measures for current students. Since European Studies is a three-year programme, the theses do not reveal the overall effect of all interrelated improvement measures. This will only be noticeable in the longer term. The first cohort to follow a completely revised programme will write their bachelor thesis in 2018. Nevertheless, the 2015 panel concluded that the early and intermediate improvement measures and the remedial measures for current students have already yielded results. It observed that the quality of the BA theses in the programme has improved significantly, especially with regard to problem-oriented approach, embedding in recent scientific literature, research and writing skills. It considers the level of all 9 selected theses of satisfactory academic quality, including those with a low mark (6 and 6.5). From the assessment forms, the panel concluded that the assessment of the theses is now more thorough, transparent and correct. In summary, the combined approach of improving the curriculum to reflect the final qualifications and of formalising the assessment procedure has been successful.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme European Studies: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

General conclusion

The programme has carefully implemented the required improvement measures. The 2015-2016 cohort will be the first to benefit from the entirely improved academic research and writing skills track. Moreover, adequate additional measures have been taken to improve the individual research and writing skills training and the guidance during the bachelor thesis preparation of students in earlier cohorts. The programme has also reconsidered its practice of PBL. At the moment, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is still an important aspect of the programme. However, students and staff now receive more information about the expectations and requirements regarding PBL, and the programme has better ensured the development of knowledge and skills by individual students in the programme. Finally, the programme has improved the quality assurance and assessment procedure of the final work. The panel is particularly positive about measures to strengthen the independence of the second reader, about the introduction of thesis calibration workshops for thesis assessors and about the new definition of criteria for grading (and passing) a thesis.

The panel read 9 bachelor theses that were finalised in June 2015 and determined that they are of satisfactory academic quality. It concluded that the improvement measures that have been developed and implemented up until now have been effective. Since European Studies is a three-year programme, the theses studied by the panel do not reveal the overall effect of all interrelated improvement measures. This will only be noticeable in the longer term. The first cohort to follow a completely revised programme will write their bachelor thesis in 2018.

Conclusion

The panel assesses *the bachelor's programme European Studies* as 'satisfactory'.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Curricula vitae of the members of the assessment panel

Luc François is Professor Emeritus of Contemporary History at Ghent University, Belgium. He also served as Director of the Department of Education (2001-2006) and Rectoral Advisor on Internationalisation (2011-2014). He was chairman of the "HBO5" Committee (2011-2014), which advises the Minister of Education on applications for the set-up of new associate degrees. As of April 1, 2014, he is chair of the Higher Education Committee. He joined several NVAO audit panels assessing the quality of either institutes or educational programmes in the field of history.

Jan Orbie is senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science and co-director of the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University, Belgium. He lectures in different courses in the Master for EU Studies at Ghent University, such as Theories of European Integration, European External Policies, Current Issues in EU Politics, and EU Trade Politics. His research focuses on the international policies of the EU. He is the author of numerous chapters, articles and edited books on EU trade politics and development, the EU's global social policy and democracy promotion. He is also Erasmus coordinator of the Department of Political Science. He has been a member of several visitation committees on European Studies in Flanders (2010-2011) and History, European Studies and International Relations (2012-2013).

Sebastian Oberthür is Professor of Environment and Sustainable Development at the Institute for European Studies (IES) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Trained as a political scientist with a strong background in international law, he focuses on issues of international and European environmental and climate governance, with an emphasis on institutional issues and perspectives. Before joining the IES in 2005, Sebastian Oberthür was assistant professor at Bamberg University (2001-05) and senior research fellow at the Ecologic Institute in Berlin. He received his PhD in political science/International Relations from the Free University Berlin in 1995.

Appendix 2: Documents studied by the assessment panel

Final project products

Bachelor's programme European Studies.

The assessment panel studied 9 bachelor theses of students with the following student numbers:

6045358	6061006
6061969	6049665
6049976	6053718
6052173	6053763
6043742	

In addition, the assessment panel studied the following documents:

- The assessment report 'History, International Relations and European Studies. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University' (QANU 15 January 2014);
- Improvement Plan bachelor's programme European Studies, master's programme European Studies, master's programme European Public Affairs (January 2014);
- 'NVAO Besluit strekkende tot het verlengen van de geldigheidsduur van het accreditatiebesluit van 27 november 2007 zoals bedoeld in artikel 5a12a van de Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek (WHW) van de opleiding wo-bachelor European Studies van Maastricht University' (30 June 2014);
- State of Affairs Report improvement plan Bachelor European Studies (September 2015);
- Bachelor's programme European Studies:
 - Criteria for grading a BA ES Thesis;
 - Overviews of revised Skills Track.

Appendix 3: Overview improvement measures for students who have already started the programme

Table 4. Overview measures per cohort

Starting year cohort	Final year cohort	Measures taken
10 - 11	12 - 13	Year of the site visit
11 - 12	13 - 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year in which the results of the site visit are published • Last cohort to graduate with Bachelor Paper 1 and Bachelor Paper 2 • Introduction of the independent grader: all bachelor papers 2 are assessed by two graders • On the condition that they participated in the first sit or re-sit of the Bachelor Paper 2 and that this paper was the last hurdle before graduation, students who failed their final BA paper could make use of an additional Bachelor Paper 2 exam date on 30 November 2014. Students were offered additional guidance on skills and research methodology (via a special 'BA paper class'), and they were offered additional supervision. An evaluation of this additional opportunity to submit their work, during which 41 students re-submitted their BA paper, is available upon request.
12 - 13	14 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year of the implementation of the improvement plan • First cohort to graduate with one Bachelor Paper; • Took the new Skills training 'Developing your own Research Design' in their second year (as a replacement to Bachelor Paper 1) • PBL skills overview provided for students (in course manual year 1, module 1; and via the electronic learning environment) • In their 3rd year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New and extended course manual 'Bachelor Paper' - More attention for topic selection (pilot project with fixed paper themes) - There is more phasing in the final work writing process highlighting concrete products (abstract, research design, 2 drafts) and compulsory deadlines - The first meeting between student and supervisor is advanced to an earlier stage in the writing process - Introduction of more feedback moments in the form of a 'skills café' and 'student conference' - Introduction of a lecture series for the BA paper students with a particular focus on the use of theories and analytical frameworks - Clearer requirements for the BA paper
13 - 14	15 - 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second cohort to graduate with one Bachelor Paper • Took an improved version of the Skills training 'Developing your own Research Design' in their second year • One group paper in year 2 was changed to an individual paper ('Area Studies') • In their 3rd year: all of the improvements above plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change of name of Bachelor Paper into Bachelor thesis - a further improvement of the Bachelor Thesis course manual and process based on the outcome of the experiences in the previous year - fixed themes per supervisor for all students - additional skills method course 'advanced document analysis' in year 3
14 - 15	16 - 17	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More attention to the PBL skills and the connection between PBL and research skills in the mentor portfolio year 1 • Another group paper in year 2 will be changed to an individual paper ('Policy Domains')
15 - 16	17 - 18	<p>All of the above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the entry requirements (quantitatively for the Bachelor thesis); additionally the skills trajectory will become compulsory for students in the free bachelor • Start revised skills trajectory