

## Besluit **Besluit strekkende tot het verlenen van accreditatie (na herstel) aan de opleiding wo-master European Studies van de Universiteit Maastricht**

### Gegevens

<b>datum</b>	Naam instelling	: Universiteit Maastricht
29 april 2016	Naam opleiding	: wo-master European Studies (60 EC)
<b>onderwerp</b>	Variant opleiding	: voltijd
Besluit	Specialisaties	: European Politics and International Relations, European Public Policy and Administration, Europe in a Globalising World
accreditatie wo-master European Studies van de Universiteit Maastricht (004406)	Locatie opleiding	: Maastricht
<b>ons kenmerk</b>	Datum goedkeuren	
NVAO/20160938/LL	Panel 1	: 23 oktober 2012
<b>bijlagen</b>	Datum eerste locatiebezoek	: 5 en 6 maart 2013
2	Datum eerste visitatierapport	: 15 januari 2014
	Datum herstelplan	: 31 januari 2014, aangevuld in april 2014
	Datum herstelbesluit NVAO	: 30 juni 2014
	Datum tweede locatiebezoek	: 14 oktober 2015
	Datum tweede visitatierapport	: 9 december 2015
	Datum aanvraag 2 (na herstel)	: 18 december 2015
	Instellingstoets kwaliteitszorg	: ja, positief besluit van 16 mei 2013

### Voorgeschiedenis

Op 30 december 2013 ontving de NVAO van Universiteit Maastricht een accreditatieaanvraag voor de opleiding wo-master European Studies vergezeld van een paneladvies waarin de standaard 3 (toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties) en daarmee het eindoordeel als onvoldoende zijn beoordeeld. De NVAO nam vervolgens op 30 juni 2014 een besluit tot het verlengen van de accreditatietermijn (zogenoemd herstelbesluit) van de opleiding met een periode van twee jaar, derhalve tot en met 29 juni 2016, op basis van een door het panel positief geadviseerd herstelplan en addendum.

Op 18 december 2015 ontving de NVAO een nieuwe accreditatieaanvraag vergezeld van een rapport van een tweede panel, waarin de betreffende standaard nu positief is beoordeeld. Twee leden uit het oorspronkelijke panel maakten deel uit van het tweede panel. De opleiding heeft naar het oordeel van het tweede panel binnen de herstelperiode van twee jaar de nodige verbeteringen doorgevoerd voor de standaard 3. Het is van mening dat de opleiding na het doorvoeren van de verbeteringen voor deze standaard thans het vereiste niveau heeft bereikt.

- Artikel 5a. 12a. van de Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek (Stb. 2010, 293);
- Accreditatiebesluit WHW (Stb. 2011, 536);
- Beoordelingskader voor de beperkte opleidingsbeoordeling van de NVAO (Stcrt. 2010, nr 21523)

### **Bevindingen**

De NVAO stelt vast dat in beide visitierapporten te samen deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden de kwaliteit van de opleiding voldoende is bevonden.

### **Advies van het visitatiepanel (eerste beoordeling)**

Samenvatting bevindingen en overwegingen van het panel (hierna: the committee).

#### *Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes*

The committee assesses Standard 1 as satisfactory.

The critical reflection states that the master's programme European Studies focuses on European integration and the European Union (EU). It aims to equip students with a nuanced and culturally sensitive understanding of social and historical developments in modern Europe. Furthermore, students gain the ability to analyse contemporary political and social developments and policy-making processes, and reflect critically upon political and philosophical questions raised by European integration and Europe's shifting place in a globalising world. The programme offers three specialisations: European Politics and International Relations; European Public Policy and Administration; and Europe from a Global Perspective. The committee has discussed the programme's profile with several stakeholders and concludes that the programme's focus is currently aimed slightly towards Western Europe despite the programme's commendable efforts to approach Europe in its broadest sense.

The committee compared the content-related intended learning outcomes of the programme to the requirements for master's programmes European Studies stated in the domain-specific reference framework. It concludes that the intended learning outcomes meet the criteria set in this framework. It also verifies that the intended learning outcomes of the programme indeed reflect the level and orientation appropriate for an academic master's programme. Graduates of the master's programme show an understanding of the historical concept of the European integration, for example. They are also able to explain current events and tensions, and they can understand the multi-level system of actors and interests involved in EU policy-making.

#### *Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment*

The committee assesses Standard 2 as satisfactory.

The one-year master's programme comprises 60 EC and is structured well. The first semester focuses on the process of European integration since 1945 and the emerging role of the EU as an international actor. It also offers the first specialisation course in which the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are set. In the second semester students deepen their thematic knowledge in two further specialised courses with an external, internal or

Pagina 3 van 7 global perspective on Europe/the EU, depending on the specialisation. The second half of the second semester is devoted entirely to the thesis.

The committee verified that the content-related learning outcomes are interwoven in the programme. Relevant research is presented adequately in the programme and the literature dealt with in all specialisations is up to date. The committee concluded that students practise academic research, writing and communication skills throughout the programme. The Maastricht European Studies master's programme uses Problem-Based Learning (PBL), an (inter)active student-centred teaching approach that aims to solve abstract and practical problems. Key to a successful learning process is that students are well prepared for sessions and meetings by taking responsibility for their own (and each other's) learning process. Students who have a bachelor's degree from another university may have some problems adjusting to PBL. The committee finds it important that the introduction of PBL to new students receives more attention because of the prominent role it plays in acquiring the intended learning outcomes.

The committee concluded that the interdisciplinary and international profile of the programmes is sufficiently reflected in the composition of the staff. Lecturers come from the Netherlands, Poland and Austria. They also represent different departments, such as the History, Politics, Philosophy and International Relations Departments. The student-staff ratio of the bachelor's programme is 17:1 which is sufficient to execute the programme. The didactic quality of the staff is guaranteed by training in PBL and the Basiskwalificatie onderwijs.

The committee concluded that the programme specific quality assurance is guaranteed by the active approach of the Programme Committee (PC), and the management which takes the EC's evaluations seriously.

#### *Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes*

The committee assesses Standard 3 as unsatisfactory.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has one Board of Examiners that monitors the quality of the achieved learning outcomes by checking the examination dossier of individual students. At the time of the site visit this check had a procedural character, focussing – for example - on plagiarism and a filled-out assessment form. As of September 2013, the Board will start monitoring the achieved learning outcomes by examining random samples of master theses. During the site visit the Board explained that it organises assessment meetings for lecturers twice a year to evaluate the assessments and the related processes. The committee applauds this.

Assessments of master courses always consist of an exam and a paper. The committee studied a variety of exams and assessments during the site visit and concludes that the level as well as the transparency of the examinations and grading are sufficient. The programme works with two assessors per thesis, who confer to come to an agreement on the final grade and incorporate their comments and suggestions on one assessment form. The committee stresses that the second reader must be free to grade theses independently, and that their critique and suggestions should be distinguishable, either on the same assessment form, or (preferably) on a separate form.

For the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes of the master's programme, the committee studied 25 theses. It assessed 7 of these theses as unsatisfactory. Multiple theses lacked a clear phrasing of the research question, and contained an under-defined and/or poorly applied theoretical framework. Also, they were presented in an insufficiently structured way, or posed weak conclusions. These theses, the committee concludes,

Pagina 4 van 7 revealed a lack of analytical skills. The committee noted that the comments of supervisors on the assessment forms were generally thoroughly motivated but that these remarks were not always reflected in the grades that were assigned to the papers.

#### **Advies van het tweede visitatiepanel (beoordeling gerealiseerd herstel)**

On 5 and 6 March 2013, a second assessment panel (hereafter panel) assessed the master'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 had achieved the intended learning outcomes; too many theses revealed a lack of analytical skill. It recommended that the programme reflect on the development of analytical skills in the programme, the introduction of PBL to master's students from other universities, the profile of the 'Europe from a Global Perspective' specialisation, and the assessment procedure of the final thesis. 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) to implement the measures.

On 14 October 2015, an assessment panel again assessed Standard 3 of the programme in order to examine 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 paid attention to the sustainability of the improvements and showed its awareness of the importance of the evaluation of the effects of improvement measures.

The programme introduced a 'Thesis Course' that offers training of the full spectrum of academic skills and is organised around the main steps in the research process. The panel observed that students in the programme now receive a solid training in academic and analytical skills. The programme management has indicated clear deliverables for each important step in the research process, which guarantee that the acquisition of skills by individual students is actively monitored. It also revised one of the programme's three specialisations; 'Europe in a globalizing world'. According to the panel, the alignment between the title, the final qualifications and the curriculum of this specialisation is now much better. The panel also agrees with the implementation of the new course in 'Comparative Regionalism'.

As required by the NVAO, the programme management and the Faculty Board also took measures to improve the introduction of PBL to students and new staff and to improve the quality assurance and assessment procedure of the MA thesis. The panel concluded that the programme 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. The panel is also positive about measures to strengthen the independence of the second reader

Pagina 5 van 7 and the introduction of thesis calibration workshops for thesis assessors. Furthermore, it applauds the development of a document outlining necessary and sufficient conditions for passing the MA thesis.

The panel read 9 MA theses that were finalised in June 2015 and determined that they were of satisfactory academic quality. The programme management conducted evaluations of the effects of improvement measures and identified further improvement measures to be introduced in the academic year 2015-2016. Although the effect of these measures is not yet noticeable, the 2015 panel concluded that the measures taken have already yielded results.

### **Besluit**

Ingevolge het bepaalde in artikel 5a.10, derde lid, van de WHW heeft de NVAO het college van bestuur van de Universiteit Maastricht te Maastricht in de gelegenheid gesteld zijn zienswijze op het voornemen tot besluit van 21 maart 2016 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 European Studies (60 EC; variant: voltijd; locatie: Maastricht) van de Universiteit Maastricht te Maastricht. De NVAO beoordeelt de kwaliteit van de opleiding als voldoende.

Dit besluit treedt in werking op 30 juni 2014 en is van kracht tot en met 29 juni 2020.

Den Haag, 29 april 2016

De NVAO  
Voor deze,

  
Dr. A.H. Flierman  
(voorzitter)

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.

Uit besluit van 30 juni 2014

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

Beoordeling na herstel

Standaard	Standaard	Beoordeling door het panel
<b>3. Toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties</b>	De opleiding beschikt over een adequaat systeem van toetsing en toont aan dat de beoogde eindkwalificaties worden gerealiseerd	<b>Voldoende</b>
<b>Eindoordeel</b>		<b>Voldoende</b>

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

#### **Panel eerste beoordeling en beoordeling herstelplan**

- Prof. Marjan Schwegman (chair), professor of Politics and Culture in the long twentieth century, University of Utrecht, and director of NIOD;
- Prof. Luc François, professor of Contemporary History and former director of Educational Matters, University of Ghent;
- Prof. Jan Orbie, university senior lecturer on EU External Relations, University of Ghent;
- Dr. Ulrich Tiedau, senior lecturer on Modern Low Countries History and Society, University College London;
- Prof. Ingeborg Tömmel, emeritus professor of International and European Politics, University of Osnabrück.
- Anne Stickers, bachelor student of International Relations, University of Groningen.

During the site visit, the committee was supported by M. Jansen (certified), who acted as secretary. M. Frederik (certified), overall project coordinator, took over as secretary after the site visit. In the final stages, L. te Marvelde (certified) acted as liaison for the committee and the institution.

#### **Panel beoordeling gerealiseerd herstel**

- 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.

Het panel werd ondersteund door Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer, secretaris (gecertificeerd).