## Assessment report Limited Framework Programme Assessment

## **Master Anthropology and Development Studies**

### Radboud University

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## 1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Master Anthropology and Development Studies programme of Radboud University, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

The programme objectives are sound. The programme covers subjects in this domain broadly. The panel appreciates the interdisciplinary character of the programme, allowing students to be educated in both the anthropology and development studies disciplines. The panel welcomes the programme being focused on subjects of cultural diversity and inequality and more specifically on different forms of solidarity. The panel supports the strong research-orientation of the programme. The programme objectives are up-to-date.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel welcomes the comparison to other programmes in the Netherlands and regards this programme at the same time to be comparable to these programmes and to have a clearly distinguishing profile.

The panel supports the programme aims to prepare students for positions as interdisciplinary academic professionals or researchers.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives, are well-articulated and conform to the master level.

The entry requirements and admission procedures of the programme are adequate. The panel welcomes the pre-master programme being offered. The panel supports programme management's intentions to try and raise the student influx numbers. The panel supports the programme plans to foster student and staff diversity.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The courses are up to standard. The panel appreciates the clear organisation of the curriculum and the solid coherence of the curriculum.

The panel regards the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The panel values that the lecturers are strongly education-minded and appreciates that the lecturers introduce their research in the courses. The panel notes that the lecturers are very accessible to students. The workload of the lecturers may be demanding, but the Faculty is taking measures to balance the workload.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods in the curriculum as appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The panel appreciates the small-scale, intensive and student-activating education in the programme. Study guidance is organised well. The study load is balanced and the student success rates are up to standard.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty policies. The panel is positive about the roles and activities of the Examination Board and the Assessment Committee in assuring the quality of examinations and assessments.

The panel looks favourably upon the examination methods adopted in the programme. These are varied and are consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master theses have been well-organised. The panel suggests, however, to have the examiners add sufficient written comments to the thesis scoring forms.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be satisfactory.

The panel regards the Master theses to be appropriate academic projects. The panel finds the theses rather strong in terms of methodology. The panel supports the grades given by examiners of the programme, although some of the theses may have been marked slightly too high.

The panel appreciates the measures taken in the programme to promote the labour market orientation of students and to foster the preparation for their future careers. The panel recommends to elaborate on the inter-disciplinary character of the programme in terms of labour market opportunities.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enter the labour market and to find appropriate positions.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Master Anthropology and Development Studies programme of Radboud University assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel advises NVAO to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 7 March 2019

Prof. dr. T. Otto (panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren (panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Radboud University to manage the limited framework programme assessment process for the Master Anthropology and Development Studies programme of this University. The objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Having conferred with management of the Radboud University programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof dr. T. Otto, full professor of Anthropology and Ethnography, University of Aarhus, Denmark, full professor and tropical leader, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Australia (panel chair);
- Dr E.D. Rasch, associate professor, Sociology of Development and Change Group, Wageningen University (panel member);
- Dr M.E. Pelkmans, associate professor in Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Drs D. Stolk, programme coordinator Cultural Emergency Response, senior member management team, Prins Claus Fonds Amsterdam (panel member);
- C.J. Stam MSc, student Master Sustainable Development, Utrecht University, recently graduated (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs W. Vercouteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit was discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected the final projects of 15 graduates from the last few years. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of theses of the programme graduates, these theses being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

Several weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator discussed the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the theses were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 8 November 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the Radboud University campus. The site visit schedule was as planned. In a number of separate sessions, the panel was given the opportunity to meet with Faculty Board representatives, programme management, Examination Board members, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management were given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the Board of Radboud University, to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

## 3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: M Anthropology and Development Studies

Orientation, level programme: Academic Master

Grade: MSc
Number of credits: 60 EC
Specialisations: None
Location: Nijmegen

Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction English)

Registration in CROHO: 60253

Name of institution: Radboud University

Status of institution: Government-funded University

Institution's quality assurance: Approved

### 4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

#### 4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

#### **Findings**

The Master Anthropology and Development Studies programme is one of the programmes of the Teaching Institute Social and Cultural Sciences of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Radboud University. The Faculty offers seven Bachelor programmes, seven Master programmes and three Research Master programmes. The dean of the Faculty has the responsibility for all programmes of the Faculty. Programme management is shared by this programme and the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme. The director of these programmes is responsible for the coordination and organisation of the programme. The director is advised on the quality assurance of the programme by the Programme Committee, being composed of lecturers and students. The Examination Board for both programmes has the authority to monitor the quality of examination and assessment processes and products.

The Master Anthropology and Development Studies programme of Radboud University is a one-year, research-based, academic master programme in this field. The programme is inter-disciplinary, being based upon concepts and methods of both cultural anthropology and development studies. The domain of Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies is, broadly stated, directed towards the study of cultural similarities and differences within and between societies and the study of processes of social and cultural change. These subjects are studied from holistic and comparative perspectives and using qualitative and quantitative research methods, among which ethnographic research methods are predominant. The objectives of the programme at Radboud University are, more specifically, to educate students in the themes of cultural diversity and inequality with a special focus in the Master programme on the subject of Shifting Solidarities, studying social network changes in societies with increasing diversity and growing inequality. Students are educated to address contemporary problems, being trained to transfer classical concepts in this domain to present-day situations. The programme is strongly research-based and the programme objectives meet the research lines of the staff involved. Students are trained to do research independently.

The objectives of the programme conform to the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands, which has been drafted by the joint programmes of this assessment cluster in the Netherlands.

Programme management compared the programme to other programmes in this field in the Netherlands. This programme distinguishes itself by focusing on the themes of cultural diversity and inequality and by being strongly directed toward the critical reflection on processes of social and cultural change, especially the shifting role of solidarity therein.

The programme aims to prepare students for positions as interdisciplinary academic professionals or researchers in both anthropology and development studies fields. To align the programme to professional field requirements, programme management regularly discusses the programme with professional field representatives.

The programme objectives have been translated into intended learning outcomes, addressing theoretical competences, application of knowledge and insights in themes, methods and techniques, and skills and attitude. The intended learning outcomes specify having critical views on the most important theoretical and social debates in cultural anthropology and development studies, especially regarding the solidarity theme; knowledge and understanding of cultural anthropology and development studies, especially regarding forms of solidarity in social contexts of cultural diversity and inequality; knowledge and skills to do independent research in this field; communication skills and cultural sensitivity.

Programme management presented the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for the master level.

#### **Considerations**

The panel regards the programme objectives to be sound. The programme covers subjects in this domain broadly. The panel appreciates the interdisciplinary character of the programme, allowing students to be educated in both the anthropology and development studies disciplines. The panel welcomes the programme being focused on subjects of cultural diversity and inequality and more specifically on forms of solidarity. The panel supports the strong research-orientation of the programme. The programme objectives are up-to-date.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel welcomes the comparison to other programmes in the Netherlands and regards this programme at the same time to be comparable to these programmes and to have a clearly distinguishing profile.

The panel supports the programme aims to prepare students for positions as interdisciplinary academic professionals or researchers.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives, are well-articulated and conform to the master level.

#### Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, Intended learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

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

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

#### **Findings**

The student influx numbers rose from 27 students in 2013 to 37 students in 2015 to decrease to 27 incoming students in 2017. Programme management is taking measures to reverse the trend of the last two years. Applicants having obtained the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology degree of any Dutch University are admitted to the programme. Applications by students with academic (wo) or higher professional education (hbo) bachelor degrees in other disciplines are reviewed on an individual basis by the programme Admission Board. The same procedure applies to foreign applicants. Students with deficiencies have to complete the pre-master programme, consisting of courses of the second and third years of the Bachelor programme.

The programme curriculum takes one year, the total study load being 60 EC. For the programme, the programme assessment plan has been drafted, specifying the relations between the intended learning outcomes, the course goals and the examination methods. The curriculum consists of two courses, addressing the theme of the programme Shifting Solidarities. Students are introduced to theories in this field (first course) and then further specialise within this theme with the following options: diversity and citizenship, climate change and natural resources, and international cooperation and civil society. These courses are followed by the course on quantitative and qualitative research methods, allowing students to specialise in research methods and techniques, suited to the subject of their Master thesis. To prepare for the Master thesis, students do fieldwork research either abroad or in the Netherlands. Students complete the Master thesis, commenting on each other's work in the course Reflecting and Reporting. At the end of the curriculum, the Career Event is scheduled to prepare students for the labour market.

The lecturing team is composed of 14 permanent staff members and 4 temporary staff members. Staff members are employed at the Teaching Institute Social and Cultural Sciences. All lecturers are engaged in both education and research, being members of the Research Institute Social and Cultural Research. All staff members have PhDs, about 78 % of them are BKO-certified and another two of them are in the process of acquiring the certificate. About 44 % of them have SKO-certificates as well. Staff members have additionally been trained in interactive teaching and in assessments. Lecturers experience their workload to be demanding. The Faculty is taking measures to alleviate lecturers' workload by curtailing administrative duties. The programme strives to increase the staff diversity. Students appreciate the lecturers, including their accessibility.

The educational concept of the programme is research-based, small-scale and interactive learning. The study methods adopted in the programme are tutorials, working groups, peer-review or individual supervision. Tutorials tend to have class sizes of about 25 students, whereas class sizes in working groups are about 5 to 10 students. Students discuss subjects and review each other's products. Throughout the whole year, they are guided by their thesis supervisor. Study guidance is offered by the programme study advisor. Students may contact the study advisor in case of questions or problems. The student-to-staff ratio is about 20/1. The study load is experienced by students to be manageable. The student success rates are about 62 % after one year and about 85 % after two years (last four to five cohorts).

#### **Considerations**

The entry requirements and admission procedures of the programme are adequate. The panel welcomes the pre-master programme being offered. The panel supports programme management's intentions to try and raise the student influx numbers. The panel supports the programme plans to foster student and staff diversity.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The courses are up to standard. The panel appreciates the clear organisation of the curriculum and the solid coherence of the curriculum.

The panel regards the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The panel values that the lecturers are strongly education-minded and appreciates that the lecturers introduce their research in the courses. The panel notes that the lecturers are very accessible to students. The workload of the lecturers may be demanding, but the Faculty is taking measure to balance the workload.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods in the curriculum as appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The panel appreciates the small-scale, intensive and student-activating education in the programme. Study guidance is organised well. The study load is balanced and the student success rates are up to standard.

#### Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be satisfactory.

#### 4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

#### **Findings**

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations correspond to the Faculty of Social Sciences guidelines. As has been indicated, the Examination Board has the authority to monitor the quality of programme examination and assessment processes and products. On behalf of the Examination Board, the Assessment Committee monitors examinations and assessments.

The examination methods for the courses are selected in line with the courses' goals and contents. Examination methods in the courses include written assignments, essays, reports and presentations. Written examinations are rarely used. All examinations are individual.

The final project of the programme is the Master thesis. In the Research Design course, students draft the research proposal and select the research methods to be adopted. Students go on fieldwork for three months, doing their research. During the fieldwork, they submit two interim fieldwork reports and one final report. Having submitted their final report, students start writing the Master thesis. In the course Reflecting and Reporting, students discuss theses and comment on each other's work. Throughout the whole process, students are guided individually by their supervisor. About 50 % of the research projects are conducted within organisations. Master theses are assessed by two examiners independently, using rubrics scoring forms. In case of differences in judgments of more than 1.5 points or in case one examiner assesses the thesis to be unsatisfactory, a third examiner will also assess the thesis. The Examination Board will thereupon determine the final grade.

Programme management and the Board of Examiners have taken measures to promote the quality of examinations and assessments. The assessment plan for the programme outlines the relations of the intended learning outcomes, courses' goals and examination methods adopted. For each of the courses, course dossiers have been compiled. These include the course learning goals, examination methods, assessment criteria and the specifications of relations between course goals, programme intended learning outcomes and the examinations. Examinations including answer models or assessment scoring forms are peer-reviewed. Examinations with deviant grade distributions are inspected by the Examination Board. The Board on a regular basis inspects Master theses. The Assessment Committee reviews, among others, the matching of examinations and course learning goals.

#### Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty policies. The panel is positive about the roles and activities of the Examination Board and the Assessment Committee in assuring the quality of examinations and assessments.

The panel looks favourably upon the examination methods adopted in the programme. These are varied and are consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master theses have been well-organised. The panel suggests, however, to have the examiners add sufficient written comments to the thesis scoring forms.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be satisfactory.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3, Student assessment, to be satisfactory.

#### 4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

#### **Findings**

The panel reviewed 15 Master theses of programme graduates of the last two years. The average grade for these projects is about 7.3 for the last five years.

The programme graduates expressed feeling well-prepared for their careers.

Programme graduates find positions as policy advisors, consultants or researchers in the public sector or as project managers or middle managers in private organisations or as lecturers or coaches in education. As the professional careers of graduates are very diverse and the professional profile of graduates remains somewhat diffuse, programme management has taken steps to clarify career opportunities for graduates. Career events are scheduled, guest lecturers from the professional field give guest lectures and contacts with the professional field and programme alumni are maintained.

#### **Considerations**

The panel regards the Master theses to be appropriate academic projects. The panel finds the theses rather strong in terms of methodology. The panel supports the grades given by examiners of the programme, although some of the theses may have been marked slightly too high.

The panel appreciates the measures taken in the programme to promote the labour market orientation of students and to foster the preparation for their future careers. The panel recommends to elaborate on the inter-disciplinary character of the programme in terms of labour market opportunities.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enter the labour market and to find appropriate positions.

#### Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

# 5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory

### 6. Recommendations

In this report, one recommendations by the panel has been listed. This panel recommendation is the following.

- To elaborate on the inter-disciplinary character of the programme in terms of labour market opportunities.
- To have the examiners add sufficient written comments to the thesis scoring forms.