

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

Research Master Media Studies

University of Amsterdam

Contents of the report

1. Executive summary	2
2. Programme administrative information	5
3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard.....	6
3.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes.....	6
3.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	9
3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment.....	12
3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	14
4. Overview of assessments.....	15
5. Recommendations	16
Appendix: Assessment process	17

1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Research Master Media Studies of University of Amsterdam. The programme was 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.

The organisation of the programme is appropriate. Programme management is considered by the panel to be very engaged.

Programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel.

The programme objectives are valid and sound. The panel recognises the humanities signature of the programme, adding to its distinctive profile. The programme is ranked very high among media studies programmes around the world. The three specialisations offered allow students to select the specialisation of their preference or to combine specialisations.

The panel is convinced the programme is strongly embedded in research, as is exemplified by the close relations of the programme to well-established research schools in the Netherlands.

The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the programme's intended learning outcomes. The panel regards the research contents of the intended learning outcomes very strong and more than up to standard.

The panel appreciates the programme offering students the options to work both in academia and in the professional field.

The panel approves of the English name and English as language of instruction of the programme, as the panel regards the reasons given by programme management and the Faculty Board to attract an international student body and to prepare students for this international field to be valid.

The panel is pleased to understand the number of incoming students has risen and now is at the level of about 30 incoming students per year. The panel notes the admission criteria for the programme to be very strict. The admission procedures are up to standard. The panel proposes to add mandatory and graded extra work for research master students in the first semester courses, which are taken together with master students.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are appropriately and evenly covered in the programme curriculum. The panel considers the programme to be very strong in terms of education in research. The panel is pleased to see ethics covered in the curriculum. The methodological training is part of the courses and, therefore, less clearly visible. The panel recommends to bring this training forward more pronouncedly. The coherence of the curriculum is appropriate and the build-up of the curriculum is sound over the semesters.

The lecturers in the programme are internationally reputed scholars in their fields. The educational capabilities of the lecturers are up to standard. They know how to introduce research in the lectures. The panel is positive about them meeting regularly to discuss the programme. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for their lecturers. The panel advises the Faculty Board to monitor the lecturers' work load and to honour staff teaching obligations with respect to staff careers.

The educational concept and teaching methods of the programme emphasise research-based education and are, therefore, appropriate for this research master programme. The panel is positive about the wide range of teaching methods adopted. As the student guidance in the first three semesters of the curriculum is less well-organised, the panel proposes to intensify the student guidance in these semesters. As the study load of research internships does not always meet the credits awarded, the panel recommends to balance the time spent on and the credits awarded for these internships. The student success rates are satisfactory.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty and University guidelines. The formal position and responsibilities of the Faculty Examinations Board are up to standard.

The examination methods show appropriate diversity and correspond to the course contents and course objectives.

The panel is positive about the scheduling, supervision and assessment procedures for the Research Master Thesis. The panel notes, however, the Thesis Seminar and Conference is not graded, implying 12 EC within the thesis project not being graded. The panel, therefore, recommends to reconsider the credit distribution for the Thesis Seminar and Conference and the Research Master Thesis and to consider grading the former. The thesis research questions are assessed in the final assessment together with the other parts of the thesis. The panel advises to assess and grade the research questions earlier in the process, maybe as part of the Thesis Seminar and Conference. The thesis assessments are conducted in a reliable way, involving two examiners and assessment forms with relevant criteria. Some of the comments of the first or second examiner are, however, not traceable. The panel, therefore, suggests to document the grades and comments of both examiners.

The measures taken by programme management and the Examinations Board to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments are considered by the panel to be satisfactory. The measures promote the validity, reliability and transparency of the examinations and assessments. The panel appreciates the calibration of assessments among examiners. The panel feels, however, the Examinations Board ought to be more pro-active in monitoring the assessment standards of the programme and in reviewing examinations and theses.

The course examinations, which the panel reviewed were up to standard. The Research Master Theses the panel studied, definitely match the intended learning outcomes. The panel is impressed by the performances of students in their theses. The research done in the theses and the academic level achieved in the theses are of high standards. A number of theses are considered by the panel to be publishable.

The panel welcomes the programme preparing students both for academia and for the professional field. The panel regards 40 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to funded PhD trajectories to be very good as outcome, testifying to the level achieved by students in the programme.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Research Master Media Studies of University of Amsterdam 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 positive. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to accredit this programme.

Rotterdam, 3 February 2020

Prof dr. A.M.A. van den Oever
(panel chair)

Drs. W. Vercouteren
(panel secretary)

2. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: Master Media Studies (research)
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
Grade: MA
Number of credits: 120 EC
Specialisations: Film Studies
New Media and Digital Culture
Television and Cross-Media Culture
Location: Amsterdam
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction: English)
Registration in CROHO: 21PK-60832
Name of institution: University of Amsterdam
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

3.1 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 Research Master Media Studies of University of Amsterdam is a two-year (120 EC) research master programme in the media studies field.

The programme is one of the research master programmes of the Faculty of Humanities of University of Amsterdam. The programme is part of the Graduate School of Humanities of the Faculty. The Faculty Board regards this research master programme as important for the Faculty, since the programme is the flagship for the media studies field, which field attracts many students. The programme director and the programme coordinator are responsible for the day-to-day management of the programme. The lecturers in the programme are employed at the Media Studies Department within the Faculty. The Programme Committee, being composed of lecturers and students, advises programme management on the quality of the programme. The Graduate School of Humanities Examinations Board has the authority to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments of this programme and the other master programmes of the Faculty.

The panel was informed about the recommendations regarding the programme by the previous external assessment panel, six year ago as well as about the steps programme management has taken to follow up on these recommendations.

The programme objectives are to educate students in gaining new perspectives on media, knowing how media historically transform and understanding how media contribute to cultural forms and practices. The programme combines understanding of theoretical and analytical approaches with insights into the media landscape. The programme focuses on humanities research methods, such as critical theory, cultural studies, media archaeology, and actor-network theory, these being distinct from sociological or communication sciences approaches. This research master programme differs from the one-year master programme in this field in training students to make autonomous decisions on research questions and methodologies and in offering research-based and advanced theoretical and methodological education. The programme allows students to specialise in one of three areas within the media studies field, these being the specialisations *Film Studies*, *New Media and Digital Culture* and *Television and Cross-Media Culture*. Students may also combine specialisations.

Internationally, the programme has a strong reputation, being ranked very high in international comparisons. Compared to other programmes in the Netherlands or abroad, this programme distinguishes itself through the focus on humanities methods and approaches.

The programme maintains close relations with the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) of University of Amsterdam, the Dutch Research School for Media Studies (RMeS) and the Dutch

National Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA). These research schools obtained very favourable results on their research quality in recent external reviews.

Students are trained to proceed to PhD-trajectories and to be employed in academia. Students show, however, also their interest to work in the professional field. The programme is geared towards both options.

The programme objectives have been translated into the programme's intended learning outcomes. These include, as the main elements, knowledge of key research methods in this field, knowledge and skills to assess relevant academic literature, knowledge and skills to autonomously carry out research in this field, competencies to apply insights gained to adjoining domains, competencies to link topics in this field to current social debates and reflection on the own position and on further development.

Programme management drafted a table from which the matching of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for master programmes may be inferred.

The programme name and the language of instruction of the programme are both English. The main reason to offer the programme in the English language is to attract international students, adding to the diversity of the student population. Such diversity enriches, broadens and challenges disciplinary knowledge and paradigms. The programme language is in line with the Faculty of Humanities language policy, which aims for bilingual education and favours programmes both in Dutch or English.

Considerations

The panel regards the organisation of the programme to be appropriate. Programme management is considered by the panel to be very engaged.

The panel notes programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel. The recommendations were followed up on by programme management.

The panel considers the programme objectives to be valid and sound. The panel recognises the humanities signature of the programme. This signature adds to the distinctive profile of the programme. The programme could consider links to sociological methods. The panel acknowledges this programme being a programme within the Faculty of Humanities, whereas other programmes in this field are part of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The three specialisations being offered allow students to select the specialisation of their preference or to combine specialisations. The panel appreciates the international benchmark, noting the programme is ranked very high among media studies programmes around the world.

The panel is convinced the programme is strongly embedded in research, as is exemplified by the close relations of the programme to well-established research schools in the Netherlands.

The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the programme's intended learning outcomes. The panel regards the research contents of the intended learning outcomes very strong and more than up to standard.

The panel appreciates the programme offering students the options to work both in academia and in the professional field.

The panel approves of both the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction of the programme, as the panel regards the reasons given by programme management and the Faculty Board to attract an international student body and to prepare students for this international field to be valid.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.2 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 number of students entering the programme increased significantly over the last few years. The number of incoming students was 19 students in 2016, 21 students in 2017, 38 students in 2018 and 30 students in 2019. The admission requirements for the programme are academic bachelor degrees in the field of media studies or related fields. Students with other bachelor degrees are admitted, provided they can prove to be interested in the media studies field and have knowledge of theory and research in the humanities. To enter the programme, students ought to report the grade point average of 75 %. Applicants should submit application letters and give proof of academic writing skills. They also should be proficient in English. Applications are screened by the research master coordinator and are discussed by this coordinator and the master programme coordinators. The Faculty Admissions Office assists them in selecting applications. At the end of the first semester, students may switch from the one-year Master Media Studies programme to this research master programme. In recent years, about ten students per year did so. Students planning to take this step, have to report high grades. They are also obliged to substantiate in writing their choice to take the research master programme and are required to give proof of their academic writing skills. The research master coordinator and the master programme coordinators discuss these applications.

Programme management presented the programme assessment matrix, demonstrating the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be addressed in the programme curriculum. Programme management also related the courses to the intended learning outcomes in plain text. The curriculum itself comprises 120 EC and takes two years or four semesters to complete. Students take the courses in the first semester together with students of the one-year Master Media Studies programme. In this first semester, students select one of the three specialisations, *Film Studies*, *New Media and Digital Culture* or *Television and Cross-Media Culture*. The first semester consists of core courses and research seminars. In these courses and seminars, students are introduced to the theory and methodology of the specialisation selected. Research master students take the same courses as master students, but may take additional, extra-curricular seminars. After the first semester, research master students only take their own research master courses, separate from the master students. In the second and third semester, two core courses (both 12 EC) are offered. These courses allow students to deepen their theoretical and methodological knowledge and skills of the specialisation chosen. Students also may opt for crossovers in their curriculum, allowing them to combine specialisations. In addition to the core courses, students participate in small-group (maximum of five students), research-based tutorials (maximum 18 EC). Students also take electives, national research school courses or the research internship. These may be additional to tutorials or may replace some of the tutorials. In some of these courses, hands-on research is being done. The electives allow students to gain knowledge of theory and methodology in specialised research areas within the media studies field. The research internship (12 EC) may be external, but is more often done internally, within the University. The internships are primarily research-driven. As an option offered, students may spend the third semester abroad. Several students have done so. In the fourth and last semester, students complete their final projects. The *Thesis Seminar and Conference* (12 EC) allows them to design their research, preparing for the *Research Master Thesis*

(18 EC). The programme is predominantly directed towards teaching methods in the humanities and the curriculum, therefore, mainly addresses these methods.

The lecturers teaching in the programme, are quite numerous, addressing research specialisations in the media studies field and covering the field comprehensively. The thirteen core staff members all have PhDs. They are expert researchers in their specialised fields and publish on a regular basis in academic journals in the media studies field. Among them are three full professors, leading the three specialisations. All but one of the core staff members are BKO-certified (BKO is University Teaching Qualification). Some of them are SKO-certified (SKO is Senior Teaching Qualification). The lecturers cite their research in their classes, with the purpose of achieving research-based education. The research master coordinator regularly discusses the curriculum with staff members and master programme coordinators to assure the required contents and the required level of the courses. Students appreciate the lecturers for their in-depth knowledge of the subjects taught, their accessibility and approachability, the generous sharing of research expertise, and their investments in PhD proposal writing.

The educational concept of the programme is research-intensive education. Students are trained to do independent research and to have the capabilities to define their own academic position in the media studies field. The teaching methods adopted are, among others, doing reading tasks, giving oral presentations, offering peer feedback on their fellow students' results, working on research projects and writing research reports. New study methods are being adopted, such as blended learning and the flipped classroom. In blended learning teaching, the electronic learning system Canvas plays an important role. This system works well and provides students also with the required information on the programme. The size of the programme is small-scale. Tutorials, especially, offer intensive education in groups of about five students. The last few years, the number of hours of face-to-face education in the programme increased. Student guidance is primarily in the hands of the programme coordinator. Students may also turn to Faculty student counsellors or the Faculty student advisor. They are, however, contact persons for many students of many programmes. The student advisor responds promptly to students' queries, which is confirmed by students in this programme. Students experience the curriculum as being challenging, but reasonable in view of the research master character of the programme. The research internships tend to take more time than the 12 EC study load would warrant. The student success rates are satisfactory. For the last three years, on average 52 % of the students complete the programme within two years, whereas about 76 % do so within three years.

Considerations

The panel is pleased to understand the number of incoming students has risen and now is at the level of about 30 incoming students per year. The admission requirements are appropriate for this programme. The panel notes the admission criteria to be very strict. The admission procedures are up to standard. The panel proposes to add mandatory and graded extra work for research master students in the first semester courses, which are taken together with master students.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are appropriately and evenly covered in the programme curriculum. The panel considers the programme to be very strong in terms of education in research, both in the theory and practice of research. The panel is pleased to see ethics covered appropriately in the curriculum. The methodological training is part of the courses and, therefore,

less clearly visible. The panel recommends to bring this training, which is appreciated by students, forward more pronouncedly. The panel is positive about the coherence of the curriculum, the build-up of the curriculum being sound over the semesters.

The lecturers in the programme are regarded by the panel to be very good researchers. They are internationally reputed scholars in their fields. Their educational capabilities are up to standard, among others proven by the high proportion of BKO-certified lecturers. They know how to introduce research in the lectures. The panel welcomes them meeting regularly to discuss the programme. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for their lecturers. The panel advises the Faculty Board to monitor the lecturers' work load and to honour staff teaching obligations with respect to staff careers.

The educational concept and teaching methods of the programme emphasise research-based education and are, therefore, appropriate for this research master programme. The panel is positive about the wide range of teaching methods adopted. As the student guidance in the first three semesters of the curriculum is less well-organised, the panel proposes to intensify the individual student guidance in these semesters. The panel suggests to consider appointing specific staff as personal tutors during the programme's first year to supplement the guidance given by the programme coordinator. As the study load of research internships does not always meet the credits awarded, the panel recommends to balance the time spent on and the credits awarded for these internships. The student success rates are satisfactory.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are derived from the Faculty of Humanities Assessment Policy Framework, which is aligned with the University of Amsterdam assessment policy. The Faculty assessment principles and rules include the alignment of intended learning outcomes, course goals and examination forms in the assessment matrix, transparency about assessment by communicating the course goals and the examination methods timely to students, and quality control of examinations.

As has been indicated, the Graduate School of Humanities Examinations Board has the authority to monitor the quality of examination and assessment processes and products of this programme. For this and the other programmes, delegates within the programme inform the Examinations Board about programme-specific aspects regarding the examinations and assessments.

In nearly all courses, multiple examination methods have been adopted. These methods include written assignments, media assignments, quizzes, presentations, written examinations, and class discussions. Written assignments prevail. In some courses in the first semester of the New Media and Digital Culture specialisation, group assignments are part of the course examinations.

The final thesis procedures, deadlines and assessment criteria are made available to students at the beginning of the thesis process. Students propose the topic and may approach any qualified lecturer in the programme to be their supervisor. They may also have to submit the thesis to the Ethics Committee. The *Thesis Seminar and Conference* course, which is scheduled in parallel to the *Research Master Thesis* itself, is organised around peer feedback sessions with students reporting on their progress. Products of the Thesis Seminar and Conference are the research question, the literature review and positioning the thesis in current thinking and social debate. These products are not graded but assessed in pass/fail terms. The theses themselves are graded and are assessed by two examiners, the supervisor and the second, independent assessor. Both also comment on the theses. These comments are brought together on one assessment form. In case of significant differences in judgement between the examiners, a third examiner is asked to assess the thesis.

Programme management and the Examinations Board have taken measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. Examiners are appointed by the Examinations Board. The programme intended learning outcomes, the course goals and the examination methods are linked in the programme assessment matrix. The Examinations Board checks the programme Teaching and Examination Regulations and the programme assessment matrix. Assessment dossiers are in place for courses, containing all relevant documentation on examinations and assessments. Students are informed about the course goals, examination methods applied and grading schemes. Students indicate examinations to be in line with the course contents. Course examinations are normally assessed by one examiner, but examiners meet to calibrate the assessments. Examiners are assisted in the examination and assessment processes by one of the Faculty assessment experts. Thus far, the Examinations Board did not review any examinations or theses of this programme.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty and University guidelines. The formal position and responsibilities of the Faculty Examinations Board are up to standard.

The panel regards the examination methods to show appropriate diversity. The examination methods correspond to the course contents and course objectives.

The panel is positive about the scheduling, supervision and assessment procedures for the Research Master Thesis. The panel notes, however, the Thesis Seminar and Conference is not graded, implying 12 EC within the thesis project not being graded. The panel, therefore, recommends to reconsider the credit distribution for the Thesis Seminar and Conference and the Research Master Thesis and to consider grading the former. Some of the thesis research questions are seen by the panel as somewhat too broad or not fully developed. The thesis research questions are assessed late in the process, in the final assessment together with the other parts of the thesis. The panel advises to assess and grade the research questions earlier in the process, maybe as part of the Thesis Seminar and Conference. The thesis assessments are conducted in a reliable way, involving two examiners and assessment forms with relevant criteria. Some of the comments of the first or second examiner are, however, not traceable. The panel, therefore, suggests to document the grades and comments of both examiners. These comments are not to be shared with students.

The measures taken by programme management and the Examinations Board to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments are considered by the panel to be satisfactory. The measures promote the validity, reliability and transparency of the examinations and assessments. The panel appreciates the calibration of assessments among examiners. The panel feels, however, the Examinations Board ought to be more pro-active in monitoring the assessment standards of the programme and in reviewing examinations and theses. In line with best practices in other European countries, such as the United Kingdom, this could, specifically, take the form of supplementing the Examinations Board's Faculty-level monitoring with the Department of Media Studies setting up an annual meeting where assessment results across all the Department's Masters degrees would be reported, anonymised data on marking patterns considered, and any common issues regarding the standards, rigour, and comparability of assessment reviewed.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 3, Student assessment.

3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel studied the examinations of a number of courses of the programme.

In addition, the panel reviewed fifteen Research Master Theses of the last two years. In their thesis, students are to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the specialisation or interdisciplinary area, graduate intellectual level, preparedness for a PhD project, knowing to apply theoretical notions in various areas or contexts, and the potential for publication of the thesis.

No less than 40 % of the programme graduates manage to proceed to funded PhD trajectories. The other 60 % of the graduates go on to work in the professional field. They are employed by, among others, broadcasting companies, applied research institutes, cultural and educational institutions, public relations companies or consultancies. In comparison to master students in this field, research master students tend to obtain the more research-oriented positions within organisations.

Programme management is in the process of intensifying the relations with the programme alumni. This process is in the initial phases.

Considerations

The course examinations, which the panel reviewed were up to standard.

The Research Master Theses the panel studied, definitely match the intended learning outcomes. The panel is impressed by the performances of students in their theses. The research done in the theses and the academic level achieved in the theses are of high standards. A number of theses are considered by the panel to be publishable.

The panel welcomes the programme preparing students both for academia and for the professional field. The panel regards 40 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to funded PhD trajectories to be very good as outcome, testifying to the level achieved by students in the programme.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes.

4. Overview of assessments

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

5. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below.

- To add mandatory and graded extra work for research master students in the first semester courses, which are taken together with master students.
- To bring the methodological training in the programme forward more pronouncedly.
- To monitor the lecturers' work load and to honour staff teaching obligations with respect to staff careers.
- To intensify the student guidance in the first three semesters of the curriculum, including considering appointing specific staff as personal tutors during the programme's first year to supplement the guidance given by the programme coordinator.
- To balance the time spent on and the credits awarded for the research internships.
- To reconsider the credit distribution for the Thesis Seminar and Conference and the Research Master Thesis and to consider grading the former.
- To assess and grade the research questions, some of which are at present somewhat too broad or not fully developed, not in the final assessment, but earlier in the process, maybe as part of the Thesis Seminar and Conference.
- To document the grades and comments on the theses of both the first and second examiner.
- For the Examinations Board to be more pro-active in monitoring the assessment standards of the programme and in reviewing examinations and theses.

Appendix: Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by University of Amsterdam to support the limited framework programme assessment process for the Research Master Media Studies 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 of September 2018 (officially published in Stcrt. 2019 no. 3198, on 29 January 2019), and in the NVAO Specification of additional criteria for research master's programmes of 30 May 2016.

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster WO OZM Medias Studies convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of panel candidates.

Having conferred with management of the Research Master Media Studies of University of Amsterdam, 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. A.M.A. van den Oever, Associate Professor of Film, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, the Netherlands; Director of Studies Research Master in Arts Media and Literary Studies and Research Master Cultural Leadership, University of Groningen; Extraordinary Professor of Film and Visual Media, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa, (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. N. Couldry, FRSA, Professor Media, Communications, and Social Theory, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Prof. dr. N.N. Kristensen, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen, Denmark (panel member);
- Dr. S.I. Aasman PhD, Associate Professor Media Studies, Head Department Media and Journalism Studies; Director Centre for Digital Humanities, University of Groningen, the Netherlands (panel member);
- E. Bulten MSc, Graduate Master Communication, Health and Life Sciences, Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands (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 as well as 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 were discussed. In the course of the process of 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 were 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 fifteen final projects from this list. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management. All of the specialisations of the programme were adequately covered in the selection.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme. The self-assessment report addressed the standards of the NVAO Assessment framework. In this report, the student chapter was included. The appendices to the self-assessment report comprised the programme Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER), study guide, curriculum overview, assessment matrix, resumes of core staff, and student enrolment data, study progress figures and NSE scores. The Faculty report on external assessments, and the Research School and National Graduate Schools reviews were sent separately. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates, these final projects being part of the selection made by the process coordinator. The panel members were also sent the Trained Eye Research Masters document of the Certiked evaluation agency, this document being the elaboration of the NVAO Assessment framework.

A number of weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss 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. 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 submitted 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 final projects 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 29 November 2019, the panel conducted the site visit on the University of Amsterdam campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the planned schedule. The schedule was as follows.

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival panel
09.00 – 09.45	Faculty Board representatives and programme director
09.45 – 11.00	Programme director, programme coordinator, study advisor, core lecturers
11.15 – 12.00	Chair and members Examinations Board
12.00 – 12.30	Open office hours
12.30 – 13.00	Panel lunch (closed session)

- 13.00 – 14.00 Lecturers of courses in the programme and final project examiners
- 14.00 – 14.45 Students, Programme Committee student member, and programme alumni
- 14.45 – 16.15 Deliberations panel (closed session)
- 16.15 – 16.30 Presentation by panel chair of main findings to programme representatives
- 16.30 – 17.00 Development dialogue between panel and programme management

Open office hours were communicated timely by programme management to employees, lecturers and students. No persons presented themselves during these open office hours. On the day of the site visit, the panel members were given the opportunity to study Programme Committee minutes, Examinations Board annual reports, course material of courses and examinations of courses.

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 findings, considerations, assessments and recommendations to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, the 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 was given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the University Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.