

**BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME**

**TOURISM**

**NHTV BREDA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

**WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY**

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This report was finalized on 5 September 2018.



# REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME TOURISM OF NHTV BREDA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Extensive Programme Assessments as a starting point (September 2016).

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

### Bachelor's programme Tourism

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Name of the programme:         | B Tourism  |
| CROHO number:                  | 55001  |
| Level of the programme:        | bachelor's   |
| Orientation of the programme:  | academic   |
| Number of credits:             | 180 EC   |
| Specializations or tracks:     | -  |
| Locations:                     | Breda, Wageningen  |
| Mode of study:                 | full time  |
| Joint programme:               |  |
| partner institutions involved: | NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences<br>Wageningen University |
| type of degree awarded:        | Joint degree   |
| Language of instruction:       | English  |
| Expiration of accreditation:   | 03/07/2019   |

The visit of the assessment panel Leisure and Tourism to NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences & Wageningen University took place on 24 May 2018 in Breda.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONS

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Name of the institution:                           | NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences |
| Status of the institution:                         | publicly funded institution               |
| Result institutional quality assurance assessment: | not applied                               |
| Name of the institution:                           | Wageningen University                     |
| Status of the institution:                         | publicly funded institution               |
| Result institutional quality assurance assessment: | positive, 15 May 2018                     |

## COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 28 November 2017. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme Tourism consisted of:

- Prof. D.W. (David) Airey (chair), emeritus professor in Tourism Management at the University of Surrey (United Kingdom);
- Prof. A. (Andrew) Holden, professor in Environment and Tourism at the University of Bedfordshire (United Kingdom);
- A. (Anneke) van Mispelaar, partner and project manager at Bureau BUITEN, a consultancy firm in the field of spatial economy, sustainability & energy and leisure economics & heritage;
- L. (Luc) van den Boogaart, alumnus of the master's programme Cultural/Economic Geography & Tourism of the Radboud University in Nijmegen (October 2017).

Dr. D. (Dominique) Sluijsmans, *Lector Professioneel Beoordelen* at Hogeschool Zuyd acted as referee of the panel.

The panel was supported by drs. L.C. (Linda) te Marvelde, who acted as secretary.

## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

QANU received the self-assessment report of the bachelor's programme Tourism on April 10 2018 and made it available to the panel. The panel members read the self-assessment and prepared questions, comments and remarks prior to the site visit. The secretary collected these questions in a document and arranged them according to panel conversation and subject.

In addition, panel members read recent theses from the bachelor's programme. In consultation with the chair, fifteen theses were selected from the academic year 2015-2017, covering the full range of marks given. The panel members also received the grades and the assessment forms filled out by the examiners and supervisors. An overview of all documents and theses reviewed by the panel is included in Appendix 4.

The project manager drafted a programme for the site visit. This was discussed with the chair of the panel and the policy officer. As requested by QANU, the programme carefully selected discussion partners. A schedule of the programme for the site visit is included in Appendix 3.

### *Site visit*

The site visit took place on May 24 2018 at NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences. In a preparatory meeting before the site visit, the panel members discussed their findings based on the self-assessment and on the theses and formulated the questions and issues to be raised in the interviews with representatives of the programme and other stakeholders.

During the site visit, the panel studied a selection of documents provided by programme. They included course descriptions, course materials, written exams, assignments and other assessments.

The panel interviewed the programme management, students, alumni, staff members, study adviser, members of the Programme Committee and members of the Examining Board.

After the final meeting with the management, the panel members discussed their assessment of the programme and prepared a preliminary presentation of the findings. The site visit was concluded with a presentation of these preliminary findings by the chair.

### *Report*

After the visit, the secretary produced a draft version of the report. She submitted the report to the panel members for comments. The secretary processed corrections, remarks and suggestions for improvement provided by the panel members to produce the revised draft report. This was then sent to NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences and to Wageningen University to check for factual errors. The comments and suggestions provided by the programme management were discussed with the chair of the assessment panel and, where necessary, with the other panel members. After incorporating the panel's comments, the secretary compiled the final version of the report.

### *Definition of judgements standards*

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for extensive programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

**Generic quality**

The quality that, in an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

**Unsatisfactory**

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard and shows shortcomings with respect to multiple aspects of the standard.

**Satisfactory**

The programme meets the generic quality standard across its entire spectrum.

**Good**

The programme systematically surpasses the generic quality standard.

**Excellent**

The programme systematically well surpasses the generic quality standard and is regarded as an international example.





## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

The joint degree Bachelor of Science Tourism (BTO) combines the expertise of Wageningen University (WU) and NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences (NHTV) in social, economic and environmental sciences in relation to the domain of tourism. BTO's governance is described in the partnership agreement between the two institutions. The Executive Boards of Wageningen University and NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences have final responsibility on behalf of both institutions.

### *Intended learning outcomes*

BTO approaches tourism as a fundamental force in economic, cultural, social, political, technological and environmental processes. This perspective forms a lens through which global transformations are broadly examined. The programme has made a clear choice to study the externalities of tourism (e.g. climate, over-tourism, overcrowding, social issues etc.) and how to deal with these. The programme's objective is to educate internationally oriented students who have interdisciplinary knowledge of the relationship between tourism and the aforementioned fundamental force and who have the skills to carry out research in sectoral/industry developments. The programme wants to educate students to become reflective and innovative thinkers who can act as change agents in their future jobs.

The panel finds that the general objectives of the programme are properly reflected in BTO's ten intended learning outcomes. The panel also finds that the academic orientation of the programme is evident from the intended learning outcomes as they show that students are confronted with a variety of approaches in tourism, and a multiplicity of scientific views and paradigms in social, economic and environmental sciences.

According to the panel, the joint degree has evident added value in offering an academic programme in tourism and in educating academic professionals who are trained to deal with changes and challenges in the tourism sector.

### *Curriculum*

BTO is an English-taught programme that consists of three years (180 EC). The programme is divided into six semesters. BTO chooses not to offer specialisations in order to facilitate its comprehensive approach.

In the first year, students are introduced to the key disciplines of sociology, economics and environmental sciences and their contributions to tourism. Focus is placed on the understanding of tourism as a multiform phenomenon. In the second year, the focus shifts from the appraisal of interventions in tourism to an interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of issues in the tourism domain. Issues of multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity are discussed. In the third year, students can broaden their scope in the elective space and deepen their knowledge on innovations in technology and governance. The minor may be used to go abroad or to prepare for a master's programme. Students conclude the programme with an individual research project (BSc Thesis Tourism).

According to the panel, the programme's curriculum is clearly and appropriately focussed on the development of academic skills, research skills and academic knowledge acquisition. Courses include suitable academic literature and theory in combination with (academic and practical) skills development. Academic and research skills are clearly defined and intensively interwoven in the entire curriculum allowing students to develop these at a very high level. The panel is enthusiastic about the research orientation of the programme and finds that the curriculum ensures that students are enabled to achieve a particularly high academic level. The programme delivers on its ambition to educate analytical, critical, and strategic thinkers who will be able to adjust to the challenges that the tourism sector faces.

The panel finds that the content of the curriculum is well thought-out and has a clear academic focus whilst at the same time connecting to the real world. The programme systematically includes



engagement with industry and policy making and shows great awareness of the necessity in nurturing both the academic orientation of the programme and the crucial connection to the professional world. National and international fieldwork projects provide students with great learning experiences.

The panel finds that the curriculum is well-structured, coherent and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The structure of the programme guides students logically to become independent academics. Learning paths clearly contribute to the coherence of the curriculum. Theory and skills are very well integrated in the curriculum and the focus on personal development is a very positive aspect in the didactic approach of the programme. The programme has a well-thought-out curriculum that challenges and activates its students using diverse and appropriate methods. Group work is a constant point of attention; the programme management is aware of this.

The panel sees great added value in combining the expertise of NHTV and WU in the programme. It also recognises the challenges of designing and executing a joint degree programme. The panel is impressed by the reflections of the programme's stakeholders on these challenges and the desire to keep working on solving issues that may arise and on improving the collaboration and the programme as a whole.

#### *Intake*

The programme attracts a diverse and international student group which is an asset. If any problems arise due to the diversity of the student population, the programme management has shown to be able to find (individual) solutions.

#### *Staff*

Staff members are active, well-qualified researchers whose research quality is beyond any doubt. This is also evidenced by the research levels that the students attain. The panel concluded that the didactic skills and English proficiency of the lecturers are satisfactory. All lecturers have a didactic qualification or are in the process of obtaining one, either a UTQ or BKO. There are options for further (didactic) training courses for those staff members who are interested. The panel is impressed by the quality of the collaborative model that the programme has created. Most courses have joint staff from WU and NHTV (co-teaching). Not only do they work together in courses, but they also partner in research. NHTV lecturers may do their PhD at Wageningen University. Moreover, the staff members are reflective of their own quality, which the panel finds very positive. To ensure lasting coherence in the team and the curriculum, the programme may consider organising more team meetings or other activities.

#### *Facilities*

The programme is executed at two locations. Students spend years 1 and 2 in Breda, and year 3 in Wageningen. The panel reviewed the current accommodation and facilities and has concluded that these are sufficient for the realization of the BTO curriculum. In the summer of 2018, BTO will move to a new Breda campus that will house all programmes of NHTV's Academy for Tourism and Academy for Hotel & Facility Management. This new campus is expected to provide enough (quiet) space, study areas, and material facilities that students need and that support the student-centred didactic model and working methods of the programme thereby giving further scope to strengthen its academic orientation.

Students have access to the library facilities of both NHTV and WU, which collectively encompass a vast collection of academic and professional resources on tourism, and on social, economic and environmental sciences. Students can access the catalogues, e-journals, special collections, and databases. At the start of the first year, students receive a library instruction and information literacy training from information-specialists of NHTV and WU.

At both institutes, an ICT helpdesk service is available. A personal portal provides students access to their email account, digital storage space, and to a range of student information, such as the

electronic learning environment, online schedules, and grades. Essential software is available through students' personal portals.

#### *Tutoring*

The study adviser and programme coordinator play a crucial role in guiding students. The role of the study advisor is clearly defined and students are offered a structured process that provides them with the information they need to make their own choices. Lecturers are available for personal contact. The programme uses a variety of (digital) channels to communicate with students and the quality of the information provided is good. All in all, the programme has created a tutoring system that strikes a good balance between systematic guidance and tutoring, and the desired independence of the students. The panel is particularly pleased with the use of the personal development plan which is a good instrument to force students to reflect on themselves and their (study) choices and allows them to anticipate which steps to take to become successful academic professionals.

#### *Quality assurance*

The panel discussed the quality assurance system of BTO extensively since managing a joint degree requires a well-functioning mechanism to ensure the lasting quality of the programme. The governing structure of the joint degree is well thought-out and functioning properly. BTO tends to use and follow functioning WU-systems (recording grades, admissions etc.). Since the start of the programme most developmental problems have been solved such as the alignment of systems between the two institutions.

Representatives of both institutions that the panel spoke with showed that they are reflective and aware of the challenges of managing the quality of a joint degree-collaboration. This contributes to the overall quality culture that the panel encountered in which students and staff are expected to actively contribute to the programme's quality. This leads to a positive and open attitude regarding (the maintenance of) quality.

The panel established that the programme's stakeholders are successfully involved in the evaluation of the programme and that the programme's management seriously acts upon suggestions for improvement. Staff and students are involved in course and curriculum evaluations and indicated that their input results in demonstrable measures of improvement which are adequately communicated. The panel finds that the functioning of the Programme Committee is exemplary and makes real, proactive contributions to the quality of the programme. If needed, lecturers receive expert support in improving their courses.

#### *Student assessment*

BTO applies multiple and diverse assessment methods per course. In general, the assessments in courses are adequate and support the students' learning process. Group work remains a point of attention, especially preventing freeriding behaviour. Double marking is not used as a blanket policy in all courses, but the panel understands that this would be quite an intensive method. Differences in achievement level in theses were appropriately reflected in the assigned marks. The marking of theses was fair and properly aligned. The thesis assessment form works and is generally used well.

The panel appreciates the proactive stance that the Examining Board takes. The Board is made up of expert members who are aware of the stronger and weaker points of the system of assessment and who take active measures to make improvements when necessary.

#### *Achieved learning outcomes*

The panel ascertained that graduates of the programme achieve the intended learning outcomes at a high level. Graduates demonstrated a solid grasp of theoretical knowledge and demonstrated an ability to appropriately design and structure their research, posing relevant questions and making use of suitable literature and research methods. The panel concluded that graduates showed a high level of ability and showed that they are very well prepared for progression to a master's programme either in tourism, or related to tourism.



The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for extensive programme assessments* in the following way:

*Bachelor's programme Tourism*

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes       | satisfactory |
| Standard 2: Curriculum, orientation          | good         |
| Standard 3: Curriculum, content              | good         |
| Standard 4: Curriculum, learning environment | good         |
| Standard 5: Intake                           | satisfactory |
| Standard 6: Staff                            | satisfactory |
| Standard 7: Facilities                       | satisfactory |
| Standard 8: Tutoring                         | good         |
| Standard 9: Quality assurance                | good         |
| Standard 10: Student assessment              | satisfactory |
| Standard 11: Achieved learning outcomes      | good         |
| General conclusion                           | good         |

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

Date: 5 September 2018

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Prof. David Airey

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Drs. Linda te Marvelde

# DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR EXTENSIVE FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

The joint degree Bachelor of Science Tourism (BTO) combines the expertise of Wageningen University (WU) and NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences (NHTV) in social, economic and environmental sciences in relation to the domain of tourism.

BTO's governance is described in the partnership agreement between the two institutions. The Executive Boards of Wageningen University and NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences have final responsibility on behalf of both institutions.

## **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 Bachelor of Science Tourism (BTO) approaches tourism as a fundamental force in economic, cultural, social, political, technological and environmental processes. This perspective forms a lens through which global transformations are broadly examined. The programme has made a clear choice to study the externalities of tourism (e.g. climate, over-tourism, overcrowding, social issues etc.) and how to deal with these. The study of externalities was underrepresented in the Netherlands but is now a current and pressing field of study.

The programme's objective is to train internationally oriented students who have interdisciplinary knowledge of the relationship between tourism and the aforementioned fundamental force and who have the skills to carry out research in sectoral/industry developments. The programme wants to educate students to become reflective and innovative thinkers who can act as change agents in their future jobs.

The programme covers six dimensions:

- The tourist perspective (including motivation, choice, satisfaction, interaction, and experience);
- The community perspective (including identity, authenticity, economic, social and cultural impacts);
- The societal perspective (including economic, environmental and cultural effects);
- The business perspective (including marketing, corporate strategy and management);
- The policy and governance perspective (including performance measurement of tourism policy and planning);
- The environmental perspective (including ecological and environmental drivers and impacts).

BTO incorporates knowledge of three interrelated disciplinary fields:

- Social sciences  
Sociology is the core discipline; contributions from psychology, anthropology, history, law and political sciences are also considered relevant;
- Economic sciences  
Economics is the core discipline; contributions from business studies and marketing and management sciences are also considered relevant;
- Environmental sciences  
Environmental systems analysis is the core discipline; contributions from physical geography and natural resource management are also considered relevant.

## *Intended learning outcomes*

The panel finds that the general objectives of the programme are properly reflected in BTO's ten intended learning outcomes (appendix 1). Graduates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and



understanding of the nature and characteristics of tourism, the structure of and interactions in the international tourism industry, and the relationships between tourism and its social, economic, environmental, political and cultural contexts.

The panel also finds that the academic orientation of the programme is evident from the intended learning outcomes as they show that students are confronted with a variety of approaches in tourism, and a multiplicity of scientific views and paradigms in social, economic and environmental sciences. Philosophy of science and ethics helps students understand complexity, by addressing philosophical approaches and their influence on contemporary thinking and important ethical dilemmas in tourism. In addition, the intended learning outcomes explicitly show that graduates should be able to execute an individual research project under supervision, translate research outcomes into recommendations, function effectively with others, reflect critically on theories, research, policy and development of tourism, assess ethical and sustainability issues, communicate ideas and solutions, and take responsibility for their own learning.

The panel concludes that the learning outcomes are appropriately described at an introductory to intermediate level and correspond with the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes.

The intended learning outcomes are aligned with the 2016 subject benchmark statements for tourism programmes of the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. They have been (positively) reviewed by academic peers and by the External Advisory Committee (EAC). The EAC supports the multidisciplinary character of the programme and believes that graduates are well prepared for the challenges that the tourism sector faces. They endorse the programme's viewpoint that BTO graduates are advised to continue their studies with a non-tourism (but tourism relevant) master's programme, to better prepare them for the labour market.

### **Considerations**

The panel has ascertained that the intended learning outcomes of the programme tie in with the level and orientation that may be expected for a programme at the bachelor's level. The intended learning outcomes are appropriate in terms of content (knowledge and skills) and orientation (academic) and have been aligned with the Dublin descriptors. The panel finds merits in the collaboration between NHTV and WU. The joint degree has evident added value in offering an academic programme in tourism and in educating academic professionals who are trained to deal with changes and challenges in the tourism sector.

According to the panel, the broad and multidisciplinary approach of the programme provides a good academic base in tourism which allows students to progress to an academic master's programme. Upon completion, bachelor graduates should be able to embark on a professional career at entry level but in reality, most students progress to a master's programme (cf. standard 11).

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.*

### **Standard 2: Curriculum, orientation**

The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.

### **Findings**

#### *Staff research and education*

The research agendas of the staff members address the relationship between tourism and societal developments such as climate change, economic instabilities, mobility, and health & wellbeing. These themes are clearly reflected in the courses and in the thesis topics. Students align their interests with staff members' research agendas via a yearly "matchmaking" process. Recent developments in

the tourism sector and related societal challenges find their way into the programme through staff members' participation in national (e.g. Gastvrij Nederland, MVO Toerisme netwerk) and international platforms (e.g. ATLAS, UNWTO), conferences and research projects, the input of tourism sector representatives in NHTV's Advisory Board and BTO's External Advisory Committee, and through individual contacts of staff members with tourism organisations. Core staff members from WU and NHTV meet at least once a year as a group to discuss developments in their respective academic fields and the possibilities to incorporate new scientific developments and theories in their courses. The majority of courses are delivered by joint WU-NHTV teams. Lecturers working together in courses also collaborate in research.

### *Skills*

The panel finds that the curriculum is firmly academic and geared towards students conducting an individual research project (under supervision). The complete research cycle is addressed in the programme. Students learn how to design a research project, how to collect empirical data, how to deal with the challenges of conducting research in a different socio-cultural environment (via encouraging students to conduct research abroad), how to apply data analysis techniques, and how to interpret findings. They acquire knowledge of both qualitative and quantitative research and practice their research skills in multiple courses. Students conclude the programme with an individual thesis in which they perform a literature review, integrate academic knowledge, formulate a project proposal, carry out field research, write an academic report and reflect on personal action and thinking.

The programme has explicitly defined important general academic skills that are addressed in courses throughout the programme: information literacy, English writing skills, collaboration skills, presentation skills, communication skills, reflective skills, and computer skills. The panel finds that ample attention is paid to the development of these academic and practical skills that are interwoven in the courses and learning paths during the course of the programme (cf. Standard 4).

### **Considerations**

According to the panel, the programme's curriculum is clearly and appropriately focussed on the development of academic skills, research skills and academic knowledge acquisition. Courses include suitable academic literature and theory in combination with (academic and practical) skills development. Academic and research skills are clearly defined and intensively interwoven in the entire curriculum allowing students to develop these at a very high level.

The panel is enthusiastic about the research orientation of the programme and finds that the curriculum ensures that students are enabled to acquire a particularly high academic level. The programme delivers on its ambition to educate analytical, critical, and strategic thinkers who will be able to adjust to the challenges that the tourism sector faces.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'good'.*

### **Standard 3: Curriculum, content**

The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### **Findings**

The panel studied the information provided in the self-evaluation report (including appendices) and on the reading table, course outlines, a selection of literature and text books and study materials for the bachelor's courses (see also Appendix 4 for a full list of studied material). The panel has ascertained that the contents of the curriculum has a clear relation to the intended learning outcomes, the learning objectives of the various courses, and the assessments. Content of courses is described in the programme's study guide with transparent course outlines, allowing students a clear overview of the topics covered per course. All courses have appropriate learning objectives that



are connected to the programme's intended learning outcomes. An overview exists in which the programme's intended learning outcomes and general academic skills are linked to courses.

BTO is an English-taught programme that consists of three years (180 EC). The programme is divided into six semesters. BTO chooses not to offer specialisations in order to facilitate its comprehensive approach. Appendix 2 contains a schematic overview of the curriculum.

In the first year, students are introduced to the key disciplines of sociology, economics and environmental sciences and their contributions to tourism. Focus is placed on the understanding of tourism as a multiform phenomenon. The year starts with an introduction to the tourism phenomenon. Students are provided with a comprehensive overview of the tourism study landscape and they learn about the development of tourism as a societal phenomenon in a historic perspective (cf. Standard 5). The courses Research Methods 1, and Statistics and Mathematics introduce students to conducting research. At the end of the year, students undertake a National Field Project in which they collect data, perform quantitative analysis and write an academic paper on a tourism experience subject (under supervision). For the last three years BTO has worked with Amsterdam Marketing for the execution of the National Field Project. Students perform research on overcrowding in Amsterdam and the results are submitted to their real-life client Amsterdam Marketing. The panel finds this is a good example on how to create a valuable learning experience by connecting students to pressing questions in the real world.

In the second year, the focus shifts from the appraisal of interventions in tourism (semester 3) to an interdisciplinary analysis and interpretation of issues in the tourism domain (semester 4). The academic orientation is once more emphasised by the course Philosophy of Science and Ethics in Tourism which gives an overview of philosophical approaches in the social sciences and tourism in particular. Furthermore, issues of multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity are discussed. All courses in the fourth semester are strongly connected to the International Field Practicum in which students go through the entire research cycle (under supervision) in an international real-world context. It has a group component and an individual part. Student groups typically spend four weeks somewhere in south-east Asia for this international practicum. Each group works on a different topic and uses different methods. For example, one group spent time in Myanmar to develop a plan for sustainable tourism. The fieldwork is concluded with students presenting their findings to professional and academic stakeholders.

In the third year, students can broaden their scope in the elective space (minor in semester 5) and deepen their knowledge on innovations in technology and governance (semester 6). The minor may be used to go abroad or to prepare for a master's programme. Students conclude the programme with an individual research project (BSc Thesis Tourism). In preparation for the thesis students fill out a survey to test where their interest lies. Topics (and supervisors) are suggested or students may choose their own thesis topic. Via an annual matchmaking process, students align their interest with staff members' research agendas. This leads to relevant student projects and theses which focus on, for example, tourism & utilisation of natural resources; tourism, health & wellbeing; attitudes, emotions & behaviours of individual actors; ethical & political issues.

Students report that they are excited about their programme. The academic focus, diversity of topics, the solid grounding in three academic disciplines and the international approach are elements that are considered particularly strong. Students sometimes question the breadth of the programme which they feel could compromise options to explore topics in-depth. However, the panel finds merits in the broad approach and concludes that the curriculum offers enough opportunities for students to find their own focal points during the course of the programme.

### **Considerations**

The programme has provided an overview of the relationship between the intended learning outcomes, programme components and its contents. In conformity with this overview, each of the course manuals contains the applicable intended learning outcomes, and the derived learning goals.



Students are supported and encouraged in their development by the cumulative complexity of the course material throughout the programme, and the increasing responsibility and expectations.

The panel is very impressed with the content of the programme. The curriculum is well thought-out and has a clear academic focus whilst at the same time connecting to the real world. The programme systematically includes engagement with industry and policy making and shows great awareness of the necessity in nurturing both the academic orientation of the programme and the crucial connection to the professional world. The national and international fieldwork projects provide students with great learning experiences. The programme also listens to suggestions of its students by arranging national trips to places other than Amsterdam as per the wishes of the students.

By offering a multidisciplinary view of tourism the programme succeeds in preventing confinement in a dominant discourse and stimulates creative and innovative approaches, analyses and interventions. The broad scope of the programme allows students to develop a good grounding in critical issues both academic and practical. At the same time, students have the opportunity to study topics that have their personal interest in-depth, for instance during the minor or thesis.

The panel finds that the programme succeeds in its aim to educate students to become academic professionals who can contribute to sustainable solutions for existing and future complex issues, and who take their social, personal and ethical responsibilities seriously. With this curriculum, the panel is convinced that students acquire a critical, investigative attitude and an awareness of societal developments.

All things considered, the panel finds the programme has succeeded in developing a very good curriculum that very successfully brings together the expertise and strong points of both NHTV and WU.

## **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'good'.*

### **Standard 4: Curriculum, learning environment**

The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

## **Findings**

During the course of the programme the focus shifts from acquiring theory to the application of knowledge and skills as students become increasingly independent. Development of study skills is therefore focussed on the awareness of study attitude, stimulation of active learning and self-reliance, strengthening intrinsic motivation, and an increase in personal effectiveness.

To promote coherence in the curriculum, it is structured along four learning paths:

1. The conceptual path focuses on understanding, applying, and critically reflecting on concepts. In the first year, relevant concepts and theories from the three main disciplinary fields are introduced. It is made clear how their concepts apply to tourism studies. Finally, students learn to select and apply concepts and theories for constructing a conceptual model for their bachelor thesis.
2. The skills path deals with the various skills identified in the learning outcomes. It focuses on academic skills needed to carry out research projects (information literacy, English writing, presentation, collaboration, communication, reflection and ICT-skills). Skills are first introduced theoretically, then practiced one by one in specific individual courses, and finally practiced in combination in field projects and the bachelor thesis.
3. The integration path focuses on the combined application of knowledge and skills. The learning curve in this process moves from disciplinary to interdisciplinary, from theory to practice, from campus to living lab, and from understanding to creation. The BTO curriculum has integration



projects at the end of each year that provide learning environments in which communities of students, lecturers, societal parties and professionals share and develop knowledge.

4. The personal development path concerns the abilities of students to make individual study choices. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop their own learning path. Students are asked to compose and continuously reflect on a personal development plan that substantiates coherent choices for a minor or an international exchange, a particular thesis subject, a subsequent master programme, and ultimately a professional career.

The panel finds that the programme uses a variety of appropriate teaching methods that fit the aims of the individual courses, such as lectures, group work, individual writing assignments, presenting, and field-trips. The chosen methods are aimed at activating students. Group work is a point of attention. Students report that group work can be quite challenging, and that there is some freeriding behaviour that is difficult to tackle. Although the students find they do not always get proper support when they encounter problems in a group, the lecturers, the Examining Board, and the programme committee are very much aware of the positive and problematic aspects of group work. They have continuous attention for the challenges of group work and are willing to make changes when necessary.

#### *Locations*

The programme is executed at two locations. Students spend year 1 and 2 in Breda, and year 3 in Wageningen. Most course work is done in Breda since the third year is mainly dedicated to the minor and the thesis. Most students choose to study abroad or elsewhere in the Netherlands in the minor (70%). The transition from Breda to Wageningen can be somewhat challenging, students do not yet experience a soft landing in Wageningen. However, efforts are made to ensure a smooth transition to Wageningen. For first and second year students BTO Wageningen days are organised to support acclimatisation. Guest lectures, a campus tour and meetings with students are all part of the programme. In response to worries of students about the transition to Wageningen BTO's study association Pangea has recently started a collaboration with Licère, the study association of the WU master's programme Leisure, Tourism and Environment. Third year BTO students can join Licère and connect more easily with WU students.

The panel is impressed with the efforts that the staff at Wageningen and Breda make to ensure that the collaboration works. Each course is organised by lecturers from both Wageningen and Breda to ensure coherence in the courses and bring together professional and academic perspectives. The programme is aware that creating and maintaining coherence within courses and throughout the curriculum is particularly challenging in a joint degree programme. The panel is impressed with the efforts that the programme makes to create coherence and with the reflection of the programme's stakeholders on its quality.

#### **Considerations**

The panel finds that the curriculum is well-structured, coherent and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The structure of the programme, as partly described in standard 3, guides students logically to become independent academics. The learning paths clearly contribute to the coherence of the curriculum. Theory and skills are very well integrated in the curriculum and the focus on personal development is a very positive aspect in the didactic approach of the programme. The programme has a well-thought-out curriculum that challenges and activates its students using diverse and appropriate methods. Group work is a constant point of attention; the programme is aware of this.

The panel sees great added value in combining the expertise of NHTV and WU in the programme. It also recognises the challenges of designing and executing a joint degree programme. The panel is impressed by the reflections of the programme's stakeholders on these challenges and the desire to keep working on solving issues that may arise and on improving the collaboration and the programme as a whole.

## Conclusion

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'good'.

### Standard 5: Intake

The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.

## Findings

The bachelor's programme is open to those who have obtained a Dutch vwo-diploma. All secondary school-profiles with mathematics are admissible. Non-Dutch diplomas are assessed on their equivalence with Dutch vwo-diplomas by the BTO Admission Committee. All applicants have to prove their English language proficiency. The BTO admissions website lists the test scores and diploma's that are accepted as valid proof of an applicant's English language ability. WU is responsible for the application, admission and registration process. After being enrolled at WU, students are also registered at NHTV.

The programme has almost 100 registered students and has an average international intake of 31%. The different backgrounds of the students are an asset to the programme, but also pose some challenges. In the first year this is most obvious, as there are differences in the prior knowledge of students which occasionally leads to complaints on course levels. As a solution, the programme tailors course content to individual needs if necessary. The panel encourages the programme's staff to continue the differentiation in providing course content based upon the knowledge level of students (especially in semesters 1 and 2).

## Considerations

The panel found that the entry requirements tie in with the qualifications of incoming students. The programme has a diverse and international intake which is an asset. If any problems arise due to the diversity of the student population, the programme management has shown that it is able to find (individual) solutions.

## Conclusion

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 5 as 'satisfactory'.

### Standard 6: Staff

The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.

## Findings

The programme is executed by a diverse group of educational staff. Twenty WU lecturers from ten Chair Groups (equally distributed among the social, economic and environmental sciences) and twelve NHTV lecturers from the Academy for Tourism and the Academy for Leisure are involved in the programme. NHTV provides essential tourism expertise. Guest lectures are provided by external academics and professionals. The student-staff ratio is 12:1.

All BTO lecturers are active researchers who connect their research to the content of the programme. Most staff are involved in international networks and several lecturers are members of editorial boards of major international journals (e.g., *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, and *Current Issues in Tourism*). Various WU chair groups are involved in tourism research projects, financed by NWO, World Bank and other institutions. The NHTV Centre for Sustainability, Transport and Tourism (CSTT) manages a number of international research projects.

More than 85% of WU staff have a PhD qualification and are they are members of one of the WU Graduate Schools. 67% of NHTV staff have a PhD qualification, and 23% of NHTV staff are currently PhD candidates. More than 90% of WU staff have a research appointment of at least 0.4. 60% of



NHTV staff have a research appointment of at least 0.4 and 25% of NHTV staff have a research appointment of 0.2-0.35. The programme offers teaching and research opportunities for young WU tenure trackers. A group of young and ambitious staff members are thus being trained to constitute the core of teaching and research on tourism.

The information provided shows that the available staff is qualified to teach in the programme. Almost all lecturers have at least a PhD. All lecturers have a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or a *Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (BKO)*, or are in the process of obtaining one. The lecturers' didactic skills and their English-language proficiency are evaluated after each course. In the past three years, the average performance score has improved. In case of an insufficient score, the programme committee and the programme director discuss possible improvements with the course coordinator concerned. Courses for staff development are available as well as 40 personal development hours.

The programme management is aware that maintaining coherence is a particular challenge in a joint degree programme. Most courses have joint staff from WU and NHTV (co-teaching). Not only do they work together in courses, but they also partner in research. Breda lecturers may do their PhD in Wageningen. Staff meetings are organised in Breda and Wageningen where research agendas are discussed. Staff report that this is the most natural or easy way to connect with colleagues. At least once a year a team conference is organised with (for instance) sessions on research, new educational models, and the tasks of the Examining Board. This meeting also provides lecturers an opportunity to present courses to each other. The lecturers also meet each other when students defend their theses.

Students report that they are satisfied with the quality of their lecturers. They are available and approachable. The quality and amount of feedback that students receive depends on the individual lecturers. The combination of the professional and academic perspective that lecturers bring from both institutions is greatly appreciated. The programme needs to remain vigilant in ensuring that all lecturers are (and remain) aware of each other's input in the programme to prevent overlap in content. There may be a need for more team meetings to guarantee sustainable coherence in the programme and in the team. The panel concluded that staff from across the two institutes are very committed to the programme which is evident in the positive collaborative model the programme has managed to organise.

### **Considerations**

Staff members are active, well-qualified researchers. The students are positive about the quality of their teachers and their accessibility. The panel found that the research quality of staff members is beyond any doubt. This is also evidenced by the research levels that the students attain. The panel concluded that the didactic skills and English proficiency of the lecturers are satisfactory. All lecturers have a didactic qualification or are in the process of obtaining one, either a UTQ or BKO. There are options for further (didactic) training courses for those staff members that are interested. The panel is impressed by the quality of the collaborative model that the programme has created. Moreover, the staff members are reflective of their own quality, which the panel finds very positive.

To ensure lasting coherence in the team and the curriculum, the programme may consider organising more team meetings or other activities.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 6 as 'satisfactory'.

**Standard 7: Facilities**

The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.

**Findings**

Students are based in Breda in their first and second year. The NHTV buildings offer lecture halls, classrooms, meeting spaces, restaurant facilities, and a library. In the summer of 2018, BTO will move to a new Breda campus that will house all programmes of NHTV's Academy for Tourism and Academy for Hotel & Facility Management. This new campus is expected to provide enough (quiet) space, study areas, and material facilities that students need and that support the student-centred didactic model and working methods of the programme.

The third year is spent at the Wageningen Campus which has all necessary facilities. The building houses lecture halls, teaching labs, the central university library, the Student Service Centre, the International Office and various restaurant facilities. Students reported that they are particularly impressed by the facilities in Wageningen. The opening hours of the library, the academic environment and quiet study spaces at Wageningen were specifically mentioned as positive points.

Students have access to the library facilities of both NHTV and WU, which collectively encompass a vast collection of academic and professional resources on tourism, and on social, economic and environmental sciences. Students can access the catalogues, e-journals, special collections, and databases. At the start of the first year, students receive a library instruction and information literacy training from information-specialists of NHTV and WU.

Students predominantly work with their own laptop that can access the wireless network at NHTV and WU. At both institutes, an ICT helpdesk service is available. A personal portal provides students access to their email account, digital storage space, and to a range of student information, such as the electronic learning environment CumLaude, online schedules, and grades. Essential software is available through students' personal portals.

**Considerations**

The panel reviewed the current accommodation and facilities and has concluded that these are sufficient for the realization of the curriculum of BTO. The campuses at Wageningen and Breda both offer a satisfactory learning environment with access to suitable lecture halls and facilities. The move to the new Breda campus in 2018 will give students a new and modern academic environment that should support the didactic approach and encourage the academic orientation of the programme as well as offering more study space. The Breda library will also move to the new campus and opening hours will be increased as per the wishes of the students.

**Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 7 as 'satisfactory'.

**Standard 8: Tutoring**

The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.

**Findings**

Student support is primarily provided by the study adviser who has a coaching role. The study adviser is on location in Breda once a week and in Wageningen one day every other week. In six plenary sessions in years 1 and 2, the study adviser provides information about the curriculum set-up, study skills and study progress, the binding study recommendation, minor/free choice/exchange options, the Examining Board, and thesis prerequisites. The study adviser monitors students' study progress. Those who fall behind are invited for an individual meeting to discuss causes and potential solutions such as study skills training. In case of personal problems, the study adviser refers students to the



appropriate support system within the university. The study adviser and programme coordinator collaborate in the guidance of students. The panel is impressed with the hands-on and structured approach of the study adviser.

In year one students make a personal development plan. This forces students to think about the steps they want or need to take. They meet with the study adviser individually to discuss expectations of and experiences with the programme, and their future plans. Second year students discuss their choice of a minor with the study adviser before submitting it to the Examining Board. In the third year, together with the thesis coordinator, a preparatory information meeting is held on the bachelor thesis process. In the third year, individual student appointments with the study adviser focus on the choice of a master's programme.

Student groups are relatively small which provides options for personal contact between students and lecturers. Lecturers are available for face-to-face meetings on teaching days. When teachers are not in-house they are available via email. Students with study delay are regularly contacted and encouraged to update the study advisor in order to assist them in completing their studies as soon as possible. Solutions are available for students with a disability.

#### *Student information*

Students receive information via digital information systems. Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are used to create and maintain a BTO community. Student stories, vlogs, and research outputs are shared on the BSc Tourism blog.

The study association Pangea organises social gatherings, extra-curricular guest lectures, (international) excursions, and round table discussions. They familiarise students with Wageningen and assist the programme with marketing & communication activities. Pangea maintains close contact with academic staff at NHTV and WU, as well as with Licère, the study association of MSc Leisure, Tourism & Environment at WU (cf. standard 4). Together, Licère and Pangea organise the annual IMPACT day and WU Tourism day to show students potential MSc and career possibilities after graduating.

#### **Considerations**

The study adviser and programme coordinator play a crucial role in guiding students. The role of the study advisor is clearly defined and students are offered a structured process that provides them with the information they need to make their own choices. Lecturers are available for personal contact. The programme uses a variety of (digital) channels to communicate with students and the quality of the information provided is good. All in all, the programme has created a tutoring system that strikes a good balance between systematic guidance and tutoring, and the desired independence of the students. The panel is particularly pleased with the use of the personal development plan which is a good instrument to force students to reflect on themselves and their (study) choices and it allows them to anticipate which steps to take to become successful academic professionals.

#### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 8 as 'good'.

#### **Standard 9: Quality assurance**

The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.

#### **Findings**

##### *Governance of the joint degree*

The BTO Board is the governing body of the programme. It consists of a delegate from the WU Programme Board, the director of NHTV's Academy for Tourism, and a BTO student. The Programme

Committee (PC) serves as its main advisory body. It gives advice on educational vision, quality assessment, curriculum proposals, the Education and Examination Regulations and vacancies. The External Advisory Committee (EAC), which consists of representatives from the tourism sector, advises the PC on the relationship between content and quality of the study programme and the requirements of the professional field. BTO has a Programme Team that consists of a programme director (WU), a study advisor, a programme coordinator (NHTV), and a secretary. The programme director is responsible for managing the daily affairs of BTO.

#### *Quality assurance*

BTO has adopted the quality assurance system of WU. The Executive Boards of WU and NHTV together decide on policies, plans and budgets of the programme, which are translated into guidelines for the programme, such as the BTO Education and Examination Regulations. The WU Student Staff Council and NHTV Participation Council have the right to provide consent on these regulations.

The Programme Committee has a crucial role in the quality assurance system. It proposes adjustments and improvements to the study programme to the BTO Board in the yearly Education Modification Cycle. The proposals are based on programme evaluations, student feedback, peer reviews, developments in the professional field, and new ideas for improving and innovating the programme. The most relevant results of several internal and external programme evaluations and success rates are included in the annual Programme Evaluations Report (PER). In the PER, the evaluation results of different evaluations are compared, and the results are compared with results of previous years and WU average results. The PC subsequently formulates a plan for enhancing the programme. The BTO Board monitors this process and decides on this plan.

The PC meets twice a year with the External Advisory Committee (EAC). The EAC evaluates whether the content and intended learning outcomes still match the expectations of, and developments in the professional field. The PC meets the BTO Board at least once a year to discuss the quality and content of the programme. The BTO Board makes final decisions regarding proposed programme changes and improvements.

#### *Evaluations*

Lecturers of WU Chair Groups and NHTV Academies work together as teachers of courses and as thesis supervisors. Chair Groups and Academies assign course coordinators and lecturers to each of the courses. Each course is evaluated by the participating students. The reports of the course evaluations are sent to the course lecturers and to the Programme Director. In this way, lecturers get feedback from their students on their performance. The PC discusses all course evaluation results. If they are dissatisfied with the evaluation results, lecturers are asked to formulate plans for improvement. They are offered help by instructional designers and test experts from WU Education Support Centre. The PC reports the discussion on the evaluation results and improvement plans to the BTO Board. By random sampling, the Examining Board investigates the validity, reliability and transparency of the examinations, and in case they need attention, report these to the PC (cf. Standard 10). The PC organises a yearly staff conference to discuss the quality of courses and the programme with the teaching staff. The BTO Board makes the final decision about proposed course changes. Students informed the panel that they receive feedback on the evaluations and measures taken for improvements.

The panel discussed the quality assurance system of BTO extensively since managing a joint degree requires a well-functioning mechanism to ensure the lasting quality of the programme. BTO tends to use and follow functioning WU-systems (recording grades, admissions etc.). Since the start of the programme most developmental problems have been solved such as the alignment of systems between the two institutions. The panel finds that the governing structure works well and is particularly impressed by the Programme Committee which evidently functions very well and has a central role in the BTO quality assurance system.



The panel finds that the programme has an obvious quality culture. Lecturers are treated as professionals in the lead who have a clear responsibility for the quality of their courses. Students contribute to the quality of education by expressing their educational wishes, by evaluating their courses and their programme and by playing an active role in class. The programme sees them as co-owners of the programme. The panel concludes that this method works very well for BTO.

### **Considerations**

The governing structure of the joint degree is well thought-out and functioning properly. Representatives of both institutions that the panel spoke with showed that they are reflective and aware of the challenges of managing the quality of a joint degree-collaboration. This contributes to the overall quality culture that the panel encountered in which students and staff are expected to actively contribute to the programme's quality. This leads to a positive and open attitude regarding (the maintenance of) quality.

The panel established that the programme's stakeholders are successfully involved in the evaluation of the programme and that the programme's management seriously acts upon suggestions for improvement. Staff and students are involved in course and curriculum evaluations and indicated that their input results in demonstrable measures of improvement which are adequately communicated. The panel finds that the functioning of the PC is exemplary and makes real, proactive contributions to the quality of the programme. If needed, lecturers receive expert support in improving their courses.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 9 as 'good'.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Standard 10: Student assessment</b> |
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|   |
|---|
| The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place. |
|---|

### **Findings**

#### *Course assessments*

Each course uses a variety of assessment methods. In general, written assessments and assignments are used to test basic learning outcomes. More advanced learning outcomes are evaluated by open book assessments, (group) projects, reviews, papers and scientific reports. The WU Study Handbook provides an overview of the assessment methods for each course.

At the start of a course, students receive a course guide that includes the assessment strategy (assessment method in relation to course learning outcomes), guidelines, assessment criteria and rubrics, and weighting of the assessment components. The reliability of the assessment is secured by providing criteria and rubrics for the assessment components. Lecturers use the four-eyes principle when constructing assessments and all exams (including answer models) are submitted to the Examining Board, which the panel appreciates as a good practice. Not all written assignments are handed in through Turnitin, a system that detects fraud. The panel had the impression that it is at the lecturers' discretion to use this system, which the Examining Board described as too sensitive.

Group work remains a point of attention. Students report to the panel that they find that group work makes up too large a part of the programme and that free-riding behaviour is not always adequately addressed. The programme is open to finding more solutions to deal with free-riding such as drafting a code of conduct that all students have to sign. The panel understands the students' concern but also finds that group work provides an opportunity to train many important skills and that the individual components per course suffice. The programme ensures that the individual work in courses makes up at least 60%.



### *Thesis assessments*

Specific procedures and regulations regarding thesis coordination, thesis supervision and thesis assessment are described in the document *Procedures and Regulations of the BSc Thesis Tourism*.

The thesis is assessed by a thesis assessment committee consisting of the thesis supervisor and a second assessor. A thesis is supervised by a WU or NHTV staff member affiliated to the programme. The second assessor is an internal or external person, who is knowledgeable in the domain of tourism, either has a PhD degree or is a PhD student, is an active researcher, and who has not been involved in the thesis supervision. In order to monitor and safeguard the reliability of the assessment a thesis coordinator is appointed who is also the legal examiner of the thesis and who is involved in 20% of all thesis assessments. The thesis coordinator also approves each student's thesis proposal and provides feedback to supervisors to ensure that students undertake research of comparable size and complexity, and to ensure a level playing field across the different supervisors. Students receive a thesis guide at the start of the course which includes the learning outcomes, the learning activities, the assessment strategy and the rubric used by the assessment committee to evaluate the assessment components.

The validity of the assessment is secured by four assessment components that are specified on a thesis assessment form: 1) The ability to execute a research project, 2) The ability to write a research report, 3) The ability to deliver an oral presentation of the research project, and 4) The ability to defend the thesis orally. The supervisor assesses the learning outcomes for research skills and all members of the thesis assessment committee assess the learning outcomes for the research report independently before the colloquium and oral defence take place.

### *Examining Board*

The Examining Board consists of a chairman (WU), a secretary (NHTV), and two lecturers (one from each institute). All grades are registered at Wageningen University. The Examining Board is responsible for the quality assurance of interim examinations in addition to the general responsibility of the PC for the content and quality of the programme. Two documents guide the activities of the Examining Board: the annually updated BTO Education and Examination Regulations and the Rules and Regulations of the BTO Examining Board.

Each year, the Examining Board checks and approves the assessment texts in the WU Study Handbook and appoints the programme's course examiners. Every four years, the Examining Board visits the WU chair groups and NHTV Academies contributing to the programme to review and discuss the course assessment strategies focusing on the validity, reliability, independency, and transparency of the examinations. During the visit, the course interim examinations are reviewed and discussed based on relevant course documents and results of the course evaluations.

Courses are checked regarding the transparency of the exams, for having an assessment strategy, and, in the case of written exams, for providing practice exams. The Examining Board also checks whether a course has answer keys for correcting an exam and, if relevant, a specification table. Furthermore, they review the method of assessing papers. Finally, peer course reviews are held with colleagues from other universities working in the same field or specialisation and the results are reviewed.

The panel appreciates the proactive stance the board takes in undertaking visits to the chair groups and academies and checking the marking of all theses written in 2016-2017. The board is aware of the progress that is made by lecturers of individual courses relating to the quality of their assessments. The board informed the panel that half of the assessment plans are not in order yet, and that the implementation of assessment matrices is a work in progress. The panel finds that this awareness positively contributes to the overall quality of the system of assessment.



### **Considerations**

BTO applies multiple and diverse assessment methods per course. In general, the assessments in courses are adequate and support the students' learning process. Group work remains a point of attention, especially preventing freeriding behaviour. Double marking is not used as a blanket policy in all courses, but the panel understands that this would be quite an intensive method. Differences in achievement level in theses were appropriately reflected in the assigned marks. The marking of theses was fair and properly aligned. The thesis assessment form works and is generally used well.

The panel appreciates the proactive stance that the Examining Board takes. The Board is made up of expert members who are aware of the stronger and weaker points of the system of assessment and who take active measures to make improvements when necessary.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 10 as 'satisfactory'.

### **Standard 11: Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

### **Findings**

To assess the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, the panel studied the results of tests, the bachelor's theses and the performance of graduates in the professional field and in graduate programmes or post-initial education after graduation.

The panel studied 15 theses that were written in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 to verify the achievement levels of graduates of the bachelor's programme (appendix 4). The panel concluded that graduates demonstrated to have met the intended learning outcomes at a very good level. The reports showed that students grasp the essence of academic research. They consistently demonstrate they are able to perform research and show a firm understanding of the methodology and the research process. Students work with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The range of chosen topics reflects the sorts of issues that are appropriate to examine in bachelor theses. The awareness of the literature is generally good and the methods and analyses appropriate.

The majority of graduates continue their studies in a master's programme. If graduates pursue a professional career, BTO students are advised to enrol in a master's programme in a discipline relevant to tourism which offers specialisation, such as health tourism, coastal tourism development or tourism e-marketing, to increase their chances on the labour market. 28% of graduates continued with a master programme at WU (e.g. MSc International Development Studies, MSc Management, Economics and Consumer Studies, MSc Climate Studies). 21% enrolled in a master programme abroad.

### **Considerations**

The panel ascertained that graduates of the programme achieve the intended learning outcomes at a high level. Graduates demonstrated a solid grasp of theoretical knowledge and demonstrated an ability to appropriately design and structure their research, posing relevant questions and making use of suitable literature and research methods. The panel concluded that graduates showed a high level of ability and showed that they are very well prepared for progression to a master's programme either in tourism, or related to tourism.

### **Conclusion**

*Bachelor's programme Tourism:* the panel assesses Standard 11 as 'good'.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel was impressed by the quality of the BSc Tourism. The programme has a broad approach that provides a good academic base in tourism. The programme educates academic professionals by including engagement with industry and policy making in the programme. As a result, students develop good grounding in critical issues of both a practical and academic nature. Student research is particularly strong which is reflected in the high quality of the theses that the panel reviewed. The panel considers the international orientation of the programme an important asset.

The panel encourages the programme management to promote BTO's good reputation and to increase the programme's visibility with employers both in the Netherlands and abroad. Since graduates tend to enrol in non-tourism master's programmes, the panel stresses that it is important to make future employers aware of the existence of BTO.

The panel makes special mention of the committed staff at both participating institutions, which results in a positive collaborative model. The programme's staff and management are reflective of their own quality which leads to a positive quality culture. The programme takes good care of its students and shows interest in their ideas and wishes.

The panel finds that the great efforts the programme makes to create a successful joint degree programme evidently pays off. The panel is impressed with the way the programme deals with the challenges of organising and executing a successful joint degree programme. To guarantee lasting quality, the panel suggests that staff are enabled to meet more often to discuss the content of the programme and to keep each other updated on individual courses so they have a better overview of the entire curriculum. Other than that, the panel encourages the programme to continue on the path they are on, as they are clearly successful at organising and executing a solid, current academic bachelor's degree in tourism.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Tourism* as 'good'.





## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

| Learning outcomes   | Dublin Descriptors                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>After successful completion of this BSc programme graduates are able to:</i>   |                                     |
| 1 explain the characteristics and behaviour of tourists and the significance of tourism for people and societies worldwide  | • knowledge and understanding       |
| 2 explain the structure of and interactions in the international tourism industry and the role of governments, businesses and NGOs in the development and management of destinations  | • knowledge and understanding       |
| 3 explain the relationships between tourism development and global transformations of its social, economic, environmental, political and cultural contexts  | • knowledge and understanding       |
| 4 execute an individual research project under supervision by defining a research problem, planning research, searching and reviewing relevant scientific literature, collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting data, and putting the results in a wider context | • apply knowledge and understanding |
| 5 translate research outcomes into recommendations, thereby contributing to the design and implementation of (policy) interventions with a view to transform tourism into a more sustainable practice   | • apply knowledge and understanding |
| 6 function effectively in international and multicultural teams dealing with research, policy or development of tourism issues  | • apply knowledge and understanding |
| 7 reflect critically on theories, research, policy and development of tourism   | • inform judgments                  |
| 8 assess ethical and sustainability issues, including ethical aspects of functioning as an academic professional  | • inform judgments                  |
| 9 effectively communicate information, ideas and solutions to tourism academics, professionals and the general public, orally as well as in writing   | • communicate information           |
| 10 pro-actively design and plan an individual learning path (under supervision) based on continuous evaluation upon personal knowledge, skills and performance to stimulate lifelong learning   | • Learning skills                   |



## APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

| Year 1 (at NHTV)<br>Introduction: focus on analysis of tourism             |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Semester 1: acquaintance with key-disciplines and domain</b>            | <b>Semester 2: multi-disciplinary exploration of domain</b> |
| Society, History & Globalisation [6 ects]                                  | Sociology & Tourism [6 ects]                                |
| Economics & Tourism [6 ects]   | Consumer Behaviour & Marketing Management [6 ects]          |
| Environment & Tourism [6 ects]   | Tourism Geographies [6 ects]                                |
| Tourism: Principles & Practice [6 ects]                                    | National Field Project [6 ects]                             |
| Research Methods I [6 ects]  | Statistics & Mathematics [6 ects]                           |
| Year 2 (at NHTV)<br>Deepening knowledge: focus on interventions in tourism |   |
| <b>Semester 3: tourism business, policy and governance</b>                 | <b>Semester 4: synthesis</b>                                |
| Tourism, Development & Planning [6 ects]                                   | Cross-Cultural Studies [6 ects]                             |
| Policy, Governance & Law [6 ects]  | Tourism Systems Analysis [6 ects]                           |
| Organisational Behaviour & Business Management [6 ects]                    | Tourism Destination Management [6 ects]                     |
| Philosophy of Science & Ethics of Tourism [6 ects]                         | International Field Project [12 ects]                       |
| Research Methods II [6 ects]   |   |
| Year 3 (at WU)<br>Broadening scope   |   |
| <b>Semester 5: elective component</b>                                      | <b>Semester 6: critical reflection and new approaches</b>   |
|  | Designing Innovative Policy Arrangements [6 ects]           |
| Minor [30 ects]  | Sustainable Technology Development [6 ects]                 |
|  | Bachelor Thesis [18 ects]                                   |

Module descriptions including course learning outcomes and assessment are available in the Study Handbook online: <https://ssc.wur.nl/Handbook/Programme/BTO>



## APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

### 23 May 2018 - NHTV Breda

|               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 16.30 - 18.00 | Preparatory meeting BSc Tourism |
| 18.00 - 18.30 | Alumni                          |

### 24 May 2018 - NHTV Breda

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 08.30 - 09.15 | Arrival of panel, internal meeting and documentation review              |
| 09.15 - 09.30 | Short presentation on programme and collaboration NHTV-WU                |
| 09.30 - 10.25 | Programme management including Programme Committee                       |
| 10.25 - 10.30 | Mini break   |
| 10.30 - 11.15 | Students   |
| 11.15 - 11.30 | Break  |
| 11.30 - 12.15 | Teaching staff   |
| 12.15 - 13.15 | Showcase by programme and lunch  |
| 13.15 - 14.00 | Examining Board (including study adviser)                                |
| 14.00 - 14.45 | Deliberations panel  |
| 14.45 - 15.15 | Final interview with programme management                                |
| 15.15 - 16.45 | Deliberations panel and formulating preliminary findings and conclusions |
| 16.45 - 17.00 | Feedback of preliminary findings and conclusions                         |



## APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Tourism. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

- Minutes BTO Programme Committee 2016-2018
- Annual Report BTO Examining Board 2016/17
- Programme Evaluations Report 2016
- Report on Issues of Enhancement 7 June 2017
- Course Guides and Assessment products of the following three courses:
  - First year: XTO-14806 Statistics & Mathematics
  - Second year: XTO-24312 International Field Practicum
  - Third year: ENP-37803 Sustainable Technology Development and ENP-38803 Sustainable Technology Development: Analysis Assignment