



**B Liberal Arts & Sciences  
Erasmus University College  
Erasmus University Rotterdam**

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[www.academion.nl](http://www.academion.nl)  
[info@academion.nl](mailto:info@academion.nl)

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## Summary

### Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The Liberal Arts and Sciences programme offered at Erasmus University College (EUC-LAS) has an ambitious and clear profile that reflects the above-average ambitions of a LAS bachelor's programme. The programme distinguishes itself particularly through connecting to the city of Rotterdam and through offering distinctive specialization opportunities. The Premed and Economics & Business majors stand out in this regard, as well as EUC-LAS's collaboration with art academies Codarts and Willem de Kooning in RASL. The panel finds the programme's intended learning outcomes to be clear, concise and well-written. They reflect the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes and demonstrate the above-average level and orientation aimed for. The ILOs also express clearly the broadening and development of required personal attitudes and skills.

### Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel is pleased with the high quality of EUC-LAS. The programme has a solid and clear structure, and offers students valuable course content that matches the intended level. The programme offers students a wide range of specialization options and electives, allowing them to broaden their horizons and acquire relevant personal attitudes and skills. Students are offered opportunities to step outside the college and engage with societal issues. The extracurricular options and activities, which are inextricably bound with the curriculum, also contribute to this engagement, as some impressive examples demonstrated. The programme has a challenging didactic PBL approach, requiring student participation and preparation in a manner that suits the small-scale and intensive nature of EUC-LAS. The PBL methodology was further developed to meet the needs of the programme and this development is accompanied by staff training, which the panel applauds. The panel agrees with the choice for English as the language of instruction (and an English programme name) since it plays an essential role in achieving the intended learning outcomes of the programme, with regard to both skills and contents. The programme has a sound selection procedure in place and is taught by enthusiastic, dedicated, high-quality and didactically skilled staff, who form a vibrant learning community with the students. Staff quantity is clearly sufficient.

The programme's facilities (the impressive EUC building and the student housing) promote this learning community and are well suited for a small-scale and intensive programme as well as extracurricular and social activities. The panel does recommend further improving (communication on) accessibility of these facilities for students with mobility issues to create an even more open and inclusive learning community. The panel finds that the programme is feasible and applauds the extensive guidance and support system constructed for students. It recommends introducing more organized support at the start of year 2 to ease the transition from the large amount of guidance in year 1 to years 2 and 3, where guidance is optional and depends on students' own initiative.

### Standard 3. Student assessment

The panel is pleased with the system of assessment and the varied assessment types in EUC-LAS. The assessment matrix demonstrating the link between ILOs, curriculum components and assessment types provides a good structure to check whether all students meet the learning outcomes. The Examination Board is clearly in control of safeguarding the quality of assessment. The assessment of the Capstone thesis is done well, and the redesign of the assessment form has proven to be effective. The panel is pleased to see that the programme is proactively working to reduce the discrepancy in thesis grades between disciplines.

#### Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The panel is pleased with the achieved level of EUC graduates. The Capstone theses demonstrate the required level and alumni end up well in a wide range of professional environments, look back positively on their programme, and are often still involved with EUC. The panel finds that the programme succeeds in achieving the success rates required for a small-scale and intensive bachelor's programme.

#### Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

##### *Bachelor's programme Liberal Arts & Sciences*

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

##### *The panel assesses the Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education of the bachelor's programme Liberal Arts & Sciences as follows:*

Criterion A: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Criterion B: Curriculum – contents	meets the standard
Criterion C: Curriculum – learning environment	meets the standard
Criterion D: Intake	meets the standard
Criterion E: Staff	meets the standard
Criterion F: Facilities	meets the standard
Criterion G: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

Em. prof. dr. Ton van Haften, panel chair  
Date: 28 November 2024

Dr. Fiona Schouten, panel secretary

# Introduction

## Procedure

### Assessment

On 3 October 2024, the bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences at Erasmus University College of the Erasmus University Rotterdam was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment Liberal Arts and Sciences. The assessment cluster consists of 8 bachelor's programmes, offered by University College Twente (University of Twente), Leiden University College (Leiden University), Amsterdam University College (University of Amsterdam/Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), University College Roosevelt, University College Utrecht and the School of Liberal Arts (Utrecht University), Erasmus University College (Erasmus University Rotterdam), University College Groningen (University of Groningen), University College Maastricht, University College Venlo and the Maastricht Science Programme (Maastricht University) and University College Tilburg (Tilburg University). The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (valid from 1 April 2024). It also applied the Criteria Pertaining to Distinctive Feature of Small-scale and Intensive Education (also published in the 2024 Uitvoeringsregels Accreditatiestelsel Hoger Onderwijs Nederland).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Liberal Arts and Sciences. Fiona Schouten acted as coordinator and panel secretary. Peter Hildering, Irene Conradie, and Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer also acted as panel secretaries in the cluster assessment. They have all been certified and registered by the NVAO. Marieke Schoots was approved as the panel secretary for the assessment of the programme of Erasmus University College, but was unable to act as secretary for health reasons. She was replaced by Fiona Schouten as the panel secretary upon NVAO approval on 20 September 2024.

### Preparation

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members as well as consistency within the cluster. On 19 April 2024, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

Erasmus University College composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The programme selected representative partners for the various interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would be made part of the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programme provided the secretary with a list of graduates over the academic year 2021-2023. In consultation with the secretary, the panel chair selected 15 theses of the programme. They took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account and selected 3 theses for each of the 5 disciplinary specialization areas (Humanities, Economics & Business, Social Sciences & Behaviour, Life Sciences, Interdepartmental). One of the theses selected for the Life Sciences major was written in the RASL/Willem de Kooning cooperation (see standards 1 and 2). Prior to the site visit, the programme provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. It also provided the panel with an information file and additional materials (see appendix 4).

The panel members studied the information and sent their findings to the secretary. The secretary collected the panel's questions and remarks in a document and shared this with the panel members. In a preliminary meeting, the panel discussed the initial findings on the information file and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. The panel was also informed on the assessment frameworks, the working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

#### Site visit

During the site visit, the panel interviewed various programme representatives (see appendix 3). The panel also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. Two persons requested a consultation. The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the preliminary findings.

#### Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings. This report is structured along the four NVAO standards, and integrates the seven criteria of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in the discussion of the respective standards for the bachelor's programme. The report was first submitted within Academion for peer assessment and then to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the programme in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalized the report, and the coordinator sent it to Erasmus University College and Erasmus University Rotterdam.

#### Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Em. prof. dr. T. (Ton) van Haaften, professor emeritus at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics of Leiden University [panel chair];
- Em. prof. dr. L. (Laurent) Boetsch, professor emeritus in Romance Languages at Washington and Lee University in Virginia (United States) and founding executive co-director and president emeritus of the European Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences (ECOLAS) [panel chair Leiden University];
- Dr. S. (Samuel) Abraham, rector/president of and professor in Political Science at the Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (Slovakia);
- Prof. dr. M.K. (Marlies) Van Bael, professor in Chemistry at Hasselt University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. S.B. (Stéphanie) Balme, director of the Center for International Studies (CERI) of the research university Sciences Po (France);
- Prof. dr. W.J.P. (Wim) Beenakker, professor in High Energy Physics at Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. H. (Helen) Brookman, professor of Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Education at King's College London (United Kingdom);
- Em. prof. dr. G. (Gerda) Croiset, professor emeritus and former dean in Education and Training in Health and Life Sciences at the University of Groningen;
- Dr. M.M.T.E. (Maud) Huynen, assistant professor at the Maastricht Sustainability Institute of Maastricht University;
- Dr. W.D.B.H.M. (Wim) Lambrechts, associate professor at the Faculty of Management of the Open University;
- Dr. B. (Bente) Nørgaard, associate professor at the Center for Problem-based Learning in Engineering Science and Sustainability of Aalborg University (Denmark);

- Em. prof. dr. J. (Janneke) Plantenga, professor emeritus in Economics of Public Welfare at Utrecht University;
- Dr.-Ing. S. (Sabine) Sané, lecturer and major coordinator in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences at University College Freiburg (Germany);
- Prof. dr. J. (Jenny) Slatman, professor in Medical & Health Humanities at Tilburg University;
- Prof. mr. dr. H.S. (Sanne) Taekema, professor in Jurisprudence at the Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Prof. dr. J. (Jolanda) Vanderwal Taylor, professor in Dutch and German at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States);
- Prof. UAS. dr. J.I.A. (Irene) Visscher-Voerman, professor of applied sciences in Innovative and Effective Education at Saxion University of Applied Sciences;
- Prof. dr. H. (Henrik) von Wehrden, professor of Normativity of Methods at Leuphana University Lueneburg (Germany);
- N.B. (Nara) Coutinho, bachelor's student Liberal Arts and Sciences at University College Venlo (Maastricht University) [student member];
- M. (Milan) Gomes BSc, master's student Educational Science and Technology at University of Twente [student member];
- B.L. (Borbála Lucy) Karvalits, bachelor's student Liberal Arts and Sciences at Erasmus University College (Erasmus University Rotterdam) [student member];
- J.G. (Jamie) Wolvekamp, bachelor's student Liberal Arts and Sciences at University College Tilburg (Tilburg University) [student member].

The panel assessing the bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences at Erasmus University College consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. T. (Ton) van Haften, professor emeritus at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics of Leiden University [panel chair];
- Prof. dr. H. (Helen) Brookman, professor of Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Education at King's College London (United Kingdom);
- Dr.-Ing. S. (Sabine) Sané, lecturer and major coordinator in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences at University College Freiburg (Germany);
- Prof. UAS. dr. J.I.A. (Irene) Visscher-Voerman, professor of applied sciences in Innovative and Effective Education at Saxion University of Applied Sciences;
- N.B. (Nara) Coutinho, bachelor's student Liberal Arts and Sciences at University College Venlo (Maastricht University) [student member].

## Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Liberal Arts and Sciences
CROHO number:	50393
Level:	Bachelor
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specializations or tracks:	Humanities

Location:  
Mode of study:  
Language of instruction:  
Submission date NVAO:

Economics & Business  
Social Sciences & Behaviour  
Life Sciences  
Interdepartmental  
Rotterdam  
Fulltime  
English  
1 May 2025

## Description of the assessment

### Organization

The Liberal Arts and Sciences bachelor's programme (EUC-LAS) offered by Erasmus University College (EUC) resides in the centre of Rotterdam, in its own, historical building, and is headed by a Director.

Organizationally, EUC is embedded in the Erasmus School of Social & Behavioural Sciences (ESSB) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). ESSB's management team consists of the dean of the faculty, the faculty director, the vice-dean of research, and the vice-dean of education.

EUC has a programme committee consisting of several staff members (one of each EUC department) and students. It also has an EUC-specific examination board, which is responsible for quality assurance with regard to examination at EUC.

### Recommendations previous accreditation

The previous accreditation panel recommended clarifying the programme's profile and ensuring alignment of the intended learning outcomes with course goals and assessment. It also advised the programme to continue developing its advisory systems to enhance student guidance. The programme is currently working on improving its mission in dialogue with students and staff after a (competitor) analysis. The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been adjusted and aligned with learning goals. The advisory systems were improved by means of the introduction of the personal and professional development track for first-year students (PDT), involving alumni in study and career advice, collaboration with the EUR network on student well-being, and a clear dividing line between general academic advice (given by mentors, major coordinators, and heads of departments) and guidance for students with personal circumstances (done by student counsellors). The panel concludes that the previous panel's recommendations were taken up by the programme, and that EUC is consistently working on further improvement.

### 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

#### Profile

The Liberal Arts and Sciences programme of Erasmus University College (EUC-LAS) aims to help students develop into critical world citizens who use their knowledge, insight, and creativity to unravel today's complex scientific and social issues. EUC aims to achieve this by embracing the educational philosophy of the liberal arts and science education that emphasizes the importance of intellectual growth through broad and deep learning. This approach is rooted in the following core values:

1. Embracing imagination and rigour by combining creativity and the free spirit of an open-minded orientation ("imagination") with evidence-based contributions and pragmatic implementation ("rigour").
2. Making connections. EUC is an active part of Rotterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), and the programme makes the city part of education in a reciprocal way (i.e., learning from and contributing to the city) while using the broad content range and systematic structure of EUR.

3. Learning together. EUC fosters a collaborative educational and organizational environment in which students and staff learn from each other by actively working together, combined with open communication.

EUC has specified nine core features which define the programme, both in aims and goals and in educational choices and programme design. These include:

1. Commitment to LAS liberal education through combining disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary collaboration, with a strong focus on discipline-transcending skills.
2. Connection to the city of Rotterdam, for instance in courses organized with the city and through residence in the centre of Rotterdam.
3. The option to combine EUC with RASL (Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Lab), allowing students to simultaneously follow a programme at EUC and at art academies Codarts or the Willem de Kooning Academy. RASL students obtain two diplomas in 5 years (instead of the 7 years, for a 4-year arts programme and a 3-year scientific BSc programme).
4. The diverse student body (from approximately 75 countries).
5. Active, student-centred small-scale learning.
6. Focus on personal and professional development.
7. Structure of the programme, offering students a wide variety of courses and majors to choose from.
8. Focus on skill acquisition.
9. The option of a major in Economics & Business, and the Pre-Med major, which allows access to the premaster programme Medicine (in Dutch) offered by Erasmus MC, the School of Medicine of St-Georges University, Grenada, or any biomedical master's programme.

The panel discussed the programme's profile and its defining features with EUC representatives during the site visit. It finds that the profile is in line with what can be expected of a LAS programme, and that the core values with their focus on combining imagination and rigour express the nature and ambition of the programme. Among the core features, the panel finds the distinctive RASL collaboration and the Pre-Med major very interesting. These are options that are not offered everywhere and that add to the attraction and profile of EUC-LAS. The panel also considers the Economics & Business major to be well-matched with the specific focus of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). Furthermore, the panel is impressed with the way EUC is connected to the city of Rotterdam, as this offers students many options to work on real-life challenges (see standard 2) and deepen their personal attitudes and skills. Rotterdam is a diverse and internationally oriented port city that offers EUC students the opportunity to experience and reflect on becoming the 'critical world citizens' EUC-LAS aims for.

During the site visit, the panel and the programme management discussed the programme's combination of disciplinary depth with multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration. At the moment, the programme is set up to have students combine disciplines mainly in a multidisciplinary manner. Students choose one of 17 majors in their second and third years and combine this with a minor and/or other elective elements alongside it. The programme has an Academic Core (see also standard 2) that offers interdisciplinary elements and courses, so that all students experience interdisciplinary collaboration. In addition, some majors are interdepartmental and combine multi- and interdisciplinarity (for instance the Sustainability major). Nevertheless, as the programme progresses students become more specialized within a discipline. The panel learned that the programme wants to increase interdisciplinarity throughout the programme and is looking for ways to strengthen this. The panel encourages this development, which will heighten EUC-LAS's coherence and add to its distinctive nature.

### *Intended learning outcomes*

EUC-LAS has a set of 14 intended learning outcomes (ILOs, see Appendix 1) which reflect the programme's profile as well as the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes. In line with the previous panel's recommendations, the ILOs have been revised: they are now clearer and more concise, while better matching the course goals and assessments. The programme added an ILO that refers to reflection on personal development and the future career (ILO #14), since a Personal Development Track was introduced in the first bachelor year (see standard 2).

The panel appreciates the new ILOs, which match the level and orientation of a LAS bachelor's programme. It applauds the way in which the programme's aim for an above-average professional and academic level is expressed in these ILOs. Graduates are expected to have foundational knowledge of various disciplines, as well as specific knowledge in the discipline of their major; moreover, they are expected to be able to reflect and work on social and academic issues in a multi- and interdisciplinary way. The ILOs also clearly express the required broadening and development of personal attitudes and skills, including (ethical and professional) reflection, communication skills towards various audiences and the ability to act as a 'change agent' in society.

### Considerations

The LAS programme at EUC has an ambitious and clear profile that reflects the above-average ambitions of a LAS bachelor's programme. The programme distinguishes itself particularly through connecting to the city of Rotterdam and through offering distinctive specialization opportunities. The Premed and Economics & Business majors stand out in this regard, as well as EUC-LAS's collaboration with art academies Codarts and Willem de Kooning in RASL. The panel finds the programme's intended learning outcomes to be clear, concise and well-written. They reflect the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes and demonstrate the above-average level and orientation aimed for. The ILOs also express clearly the broadening and development of required personal attitudes and skills.

### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1 of the NVAO framework.

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard A of the framework for the Distinctive Feature "Small-scale and Intensive Education".

## 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

#### *Curriculum structure and contents*

EUC-LAS is offered full-time, with a total study load of 180 EC. Each academic year consists of two semesters that are further divided into two quads of 8 weeks each. During a quad, the typical study load is 15 EC, made up of three courses of 5 EC each. In their first year, students participate in nine compulsory courses that together constitute the Academic Core (4 content courses and 5 skill courses = 45 EC). Here, students get acquainted with all the disciplines offered at EUC. In addition, they choose three elective courses (15 EC). See Appendix 2 for an overview of the curriculum.

At the end of their first year, students declare a major. This is a cohesive and predefined selection of EUC-specific courses. Students choose one of 17 majors offered by the Economics & Business, Humanities, Life Science, and Social & Behavioural Science departments at EUC. They can also opt for an Interdepartmental major organized through a collaboration between departments. EUC ensures that majors are aligned with master's programmes at EUR and beyond, so that students are prepared for life and studies after EUC-LAS.

Students combine their specialization with a variety of elective courses (chosen from over 100 courses in total). They can choose to follow an EUC minor (a cohesive selection of six EUC courses), an LDE minor (offered in cooperation by the universities of Leiden, Delft and Rotterdam), or additional off-campus courses, as well as choose to study abroad. Students in the RASL collaboration fill the 60 EC of EUC elective space with Willem de Kooning Academy (WdKA) courses, allowing them to combine both programmes and complete both the full EUC curriculum and the WdKA curriculum in only 5 years. The programme concludes with the Capstone (15 EC), a thesis where students prove their proficiency in their chosen field of expertise.

Throughout the curriculum, EUC-LAS offers a continuous, horizontal skills learning line. For first-year students, this comprises 15 EC in courses, culminating in a 10 EC Basestone project. In the second and third years, this is built upon through various skill courses (such as intermediate statistics, cultural analysis, news literacy skills) all building up to the Capstone project (15 EC). EUC-LAS has also developed a critical world citizenship skills toolkit that ties in with social competencies development. Through this curriculum setup, the programme aims to combine disciplinary depth with multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration and reflection.

In addition, students in the programme participate in, and organize jointly with staff members, a set of extracurricular activities that tie in with the curriculum. One of these is the Engaged Citizens Programme, an extracurricular course that runs for the full academic year and empowers participants to tackle real-world challenges in the Rotterdam region, particularly in the areas of well-being and environmental sustainability, by connecting their academic learning with impactful community projects. Another extracurricular option is the Erasmus University College Study Association (EUCSA), led by an elected board of students, which organizes social events, the introduction week and other extracurricular activities. In addition, there are currently 29 student committees in place. Several committees work together with staff in organizing events and activities (e.g., Students Academic Journal) or making improvements to the building (e.g., Accessibility Co) or the environment (e.g., the Sustainability Co). In September, two students of the Sustainability Co won the Erasmus Sustainability Award 2024 for their plan to plant a garden in the square next to the EUC building. Their plan was approved by the municipality of Rotterdam and construction will start shortly.

Yet another extracurricular element in EUC-LAS is MEDA, a newly established collaborative committee created through a partnership between SAAC (the Student Academic Affairs Council) and EUCSA. MEDA has been designed to foster academic engagement and represent the intellectual interests of the four main departmental groups at EUC: Muse (Humanities), Ethos (Social & Behavioural Sciences), DNA (Life Sciences), and Asset (Economics & Business). MEDA's mission is to support both disciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives that enhance academic engagement within EUC's community by organizing educational and future oriented events (such as a career week) and providing an outlet for extracurricular academic ambitions in a communal way. Finally, EUC offers extracurricular language courses to help students prepare for an international (or Dutch) career, in cooperation with the EUR Language and Training Center (LTC). Besides the activities mentioned above, there is a whole variety of other extra-curricular activities either within the community (such as guest lectures, movie nights, performances, book sharing), via the broader EUR community (open cinema, debate podium, entrepreneurial challenge), or in collaboration with other University Colleges (through the University College Student Representatives of the Netherlands).

The panel is pleased with the clear setup and content of EUC-LAS. It learned from students that they are enthusiastic about their programme. Students that the panel interviewed praised the varied content, broadness, and topicality of the courses offered in the Academic Core in year 1, and the close involvement and drive of their teachers. The courses here take multi- and interdisciplinary focus. Especially the skills courses are interdisciplinary in nature and are co-taught by staff from various disciplines. The courses allow students to get acquainted with qualitative and quantitative research. The first year also comes with a personal and professional development track (PDT, see also 'Student guidance and feasibility') that allows students to reflect on their own development and attitudes.

Students are also happy with the wide range of choices offered them after the first year, and the flexibility they have to design and adapt their programme according to their needs. A positive aspect is that students can switch majors at a relatively late stage with no or limited time loss, by making courses from the prior major part of the elective space, and due to courses being part of multiple majors. This allows students to take full advantage of the breadth the programme offers them and the options to experience various disciplinary approaches. Students can develop during their learning trajectory and discover their own potential and interests over the course of the programme. While offering such flexibility, EUC-LAS ensures there is sufficient coherence through the Academic Core and the major structure. Each major has a major coordinator who checks whether its students meet all ILOs at the end of their studies, irrespective of the choices they make. Most majors are directly linked to master's programmes in the wider university, ensuring that students have an exit profile that enables them to enter into a relevant master's programme without issues.

The programme seeks to connect with the city. This transdisciplinarity is an aspect that students appreciate: while they are happy to study in the activating, small-scale and intensive learning environment that EUC offers, they also value stepping out into wider society and contribute to solving real-life issues. The panel agrees that this is important and applauds the fact that the connection with the city of Rotterdam and wider society is actively sought, both within the courses and in the various elective options, as well as in the extracurriculars. The panel found that there are different ways in which EUC's connectedness within the city of Rotterdam is shaped. The programme offers courses (such as City as a Lab, Health Psychology, Multiple Modernities, Analysing Contemporary Culture), projects (Brain Awareness Week) and minors (A Global View on Migration) in which students and staff work together with and learn from the city of Rotterdam, its institutions and its inhabitants. Other relevant courses (e.g., urban sociology, food & nutrition environmental law) engage with the current social, economic, political, and environmental challenges the city faces, inviting students to propose possible (partial) solutions to these challenges using knowledge and skills they acquire through their education at EUC. In this way, students can be empowered to put their theoretical knowledge to practice and to create positive societal impact on the nearby community and the broader city of Rotterdam. The panel also found the (extracurricular) Engaged Citizens Programme mentioned above and the Sustainability Committee working with the neighbourhood and the municipality to plant a garden to be good examples of this impact. According to the panel, such projects demonstrate that EUC's extracurricular activities are intertwined with and bound to the curriculum of EUC-LAS and that their content is in line with, and enhances, the programme's focus on complex societal and sustainable challenges.

The panel learnt during the site visit that the programme is planning to expand on interdisciplinarity and enhance components that engage with society and the city. In order to achieve this, it is considering creating larger, 10 EC courses instead of the current 5 EC ones where possible. This would enable EUC-LAS to combine smaller courses with a disciplinary focus into larger interdisciplinary ones, while creating making more time and space for projects outside EUC. Furthermore, students would benefit from a reduced workload, less

assessments, and more time to reflect and achieve depth of understanding. The panel considers this a good idea and encourages the programme to continue in this direction.

The panel found that while the programme seeks connections to the wider university, for instance through its majors and their links to EUR master's programmes, this connection could be further strengthened. EUC is located in the centre of Rotterdam, at some distance from EUR's Woudestein campus. Students and alumni reported that they experienced some disconnect regarding the other parts of the EUR located there. The programme management is well aware of this and is looking into ways to enable more exchange between EUC and the EUR faculties on campus. In the case of the humanities, the connection is quite strong already and students are mobile in both directions. With other faculties, this is still work in progress. The panel thinks that the connection with the EUR would be beneficial for all students involved. It encourages the programme to continue investing in the connection with the EUR at large.

### *Learning environment*

The EUC learning environment is characterized by its specific didactic approach: teaching is done in a small-scale and intensive manner through the method of problem-based learning (PBL). In PBL sessions (tutorials), 12-14 students work closely together on specific problems under the guidance of a tutor. This method ensures an active role for students. On average, a student may expect at least 5 hours per course of face-to-face education per week, consisting of a tutorial session, a lecture or other activity (e.g., going outside for a project, close reading hours) and a moment for questions, feedback, or other contact. A tutorial group is made up of a maximum of 14 students, ensuring the small-scale and intensive setting of the programme. In this way, EUC-LAS aims to offer active, student-centred education, as students develop the fundamental skills for and disposition towards critical thought, intellectual flexibility, creative problem-solving, social engagement and interaction, entrepreneurship and international and intercultural awareness.

Due to the wish to avoid 'PBL fatigue' among students, and following remarks of the previous accreditation panel, the programme expanded its teaching methodology to include five didactic approaches (PBL constellations) besides the 'classic' 7-step PBL method. All these approaches adhere to the principles of PBL: collaborative learning in small groups with an active role for students (student-centred), self-directed, and a connection to real-world issues. The approaches are different in teaching method (e.g., level of students' self-direction and role of the teacher), delivery of education (e.g., preferred group size, role of lectures, and the duration of a course) and the level of connection with society (e.g., more theoretical vs. putting theory in practice). The choice for a specific didactic approach is made by the course coordinator, who bases this on the learning objectives and the level of the course with respect to skills and content. The six different approaches (the classic PBL method and the 5 constellations) allow for flexibility and provide opportunities for other ways of student learning and for creating avenues for societal impact.

The panel interviewed students and alumni on their experiences with the PBL method. They were generally pleased with the way in which this allowed them to contribute to the classes and bring in their own interests and experience. Especially later on in the programme, when students have chosen a major, the PBL method provides a good opportunity for bringing together the resulting variety in disciplinary perspectives in courses shared between majors. According to students and alumni, the PBL methodology helps them develop collaboration and presentation skills while providing them with problem-solving skills.

In general, students praised the active role of their teachers and the strong connections generated between students and staff through the activating classes. Students stressed that their teachers were always helpful and approachable, and willing to provide guidance where possible. The panel also learnt from students that from their first year onwards, they have opportunities to become involved in the research projects of their

teachers, in the context of a course or as an extracurricular activity. Both students and staff told the panel that the sense of community within EUC is quite strong and an asset of the programme. The small-scale nature of the programme contributes to such direct lines of communication.

The panel praises EUC for creating a tightly knit community of staff and students that promotes small-scale learning through a well-suited didactical concept. Staff and students cooperate in the courses and the extracurriculars, and student experience their courses as inspiring and challenging. The panel specifically applauds the broadening of PBL that was undertaken by the programme. It understood from staff and students that this creates more flexibility to address current issues around multi-faceted themes such as sustainability, matching the programme's profile.

### *Facilities*

A part of the learning environment that is important to maintaining and promoting the EUC community is the housing in one of the few historical buildings left in the city. Its inner design is made suitable for small-scale and intensive education, with purpose-built tutorial rooms, open study spaces, a library, cafeteria and multi-purpose and communal spaces (basement) to foster a community feeling. Staff members have their offices at the top floor of the building. The panel was shown around the building during the site visit and found it impressive, offering many opportunities for studying individually, in project groups, or in larger groups according to students' needs.

First-year students are housed at the Lucia building, a student residency with fully furnished rooms including private kitchen and bathroom, located in the city centre. Since the rooms in Lucia are not equipped for wheelchairs, the programme grants waivers for this residential requirement for wheelchair users or students with other mobility impairments. In addition, those waivers are also granted for students with other disabilities (e.g., eating disorders). In the second and third years, students are required to venture out of the EUC community and find housing elsewhere. They are helped by EUC support staff and fellow students and alumni. Students told the panel that looking for a place can cause some stress but that it usually works out. A benefit is that second- and third-year students are spread throughout the city, so that they are challenged to get to know the city better.

According to the panel, EUC's impressive facilities are very apt for small-scale and intensive education. The EUC building provides students with a welcoming, dynamic and safe space, yet its location in the city centre of Rotterdam invites them to go outside their own community as well. The fact that second- and third-year students have to find living space in the city also contributes to students 'stepping out' increasingly. EUC's facilities are therefore well-suited for the programme.

At the same time, the panel noticed some options to further improve these facilities and with it the community and learning environment. Students pointed out to the panel that neither the Lucia building nor the EUC building are completely attuned to the needs of students with functional, and particularly physical impairments. The historical EUC building has a steep staircase at the entrance and while it offers wheelchair access on the ground floor, this is not easily visible for visitors. Once inside, the classrooms, study places and lecture halls are easily accessible for users of wheelchairs or other mobility support devices. The Lucia building is deemed not suitable for students with mobility issues and they therefore receive a waiver for living there. As a result, these students cannot be part of the community-building taking place in the shared housing.

According to EUC students, more could be done to promote accessibility for all students. The students' recently instated Accessibility Committee is currently bringing this under the attention of the programme

management. The panel discussed these matters with staff, students and programme management. It understood from the management that the issue is now on the agenda and that additional measures will be taken shortly in answer to student suggestions.

The panel agrees with the students that promoting accessibility requires urgent attention. It particularly regrets that students with mobility issues cannot partake in the community-building that takes place in the Lucia housing unit. The panel recommends improving the accessibility of the EUC building and of the Lucia building to accommodate all students. This can be done with relatively simple measures, such as making clear signs pointing to the wheelchair access, creating a couple of rooms at Lucia that do permit wheelchair access, communicating clearly on the website what measures are in place, etc. The message to all students should be that they are welcomed into the community irrespective of any functional impairments.

#### *Language of instruction*

EUC's LAS programme is offered in English and has an English-language programme name. This is in line with the programme's ambition: it aims for students to work towards becoming critical world citizens. The content of courses at EUC transcends national borders by addressing global developments and international or general theories, methods, and skills that, although applicable in the Netherlands, are not bound to the Netherlands. English facilitates an international learning environment in which students are directly exposed to different cultures and perspectives, which is essential for addressing global challenges.

While the programme highlights its specific connection with Rotterdam in terms of assignments and extracurriculars, the issues and developments dealt with throughout the programme are internationally on the agenda, relevant and urgent. The use of English equips graduates with the prerequisite to develop global skills sought after in both the Dutch and international labour market. In particular, EUC students learn to work in a multicultural and international environment (for instance, the international and diverse port city of Rotterdam). Furthermore, the level of English proficiency enables students to pursue master studies abroad.

The panel agrees with the choice for English since it has an essential role in achieving the intended learning outcomes of the programme, with regard to both skills and contents. The English name fits this choice and reflects the Anglophone tradition from which LAS programmes stem and which has no Dutch-language equivalent. It found that staff members are well-equipped to teach in English, as students confirmed.

#### *Intake*

The EUC-LAS programme has a selection procedure in place aimed at admitting motivated and academically talented students. Students are selected on their academic level and motivation, and EUC strives for a diverse and inclusive international classroom. Since EUC-LAS wants to attract more Dutch students (currently 35% of the student population) it has a dedicated marketing and recruitment strategy for Dutch high schools and for students from families where going to a university is not an obvious choice.

Students are admissible to the programme if they have obtained or will obtain a Dutch pre-university secondary education (VWO) diploma or a foreign equivalent, and possess a certain level of proficiency in mathematics and English either determined by their high-school grade or a standardized test. The selection criteria are visible on the EUC website and are announced during open and experience days.

Actual admission to the programme depends on the outcome of the selection procedure. The admission committee, consisting of a member of each department and the admission team, reads all motivation letters of students eligible for the LAS programme. This means that each motivation letter and CV is graded by one member of the admission team and one member of the admission committee, who are trained for this. The

final selection is based on this grading system and on interviews that are held with the prospective student, by a staff-member and an EUC-LAS student. Wildcards are available for highly motivated students who do not completely fulfil the requirements; yearly, approximately five wildcards are awarded.

The panel is satisfied with EUC-LAS's selection procedure, which it considers well-designed and fitting with the small-scale and intensive nature of the programme. The panel appreciates the emphasis placed on motivation, the participation of a student in the interview procedure, and the flexibility offered by wildcards. It agrees with EUC's wish to attract a diverse student population.

#### *Student guidance and feasibility*

Students in EUC-LAS told the panel that they consider the programme to be intense, but feasible. The student chapter of the self-evaluation highlights that students experience an intensive workload: PBL requires dynamic and relatively short-span activity. Also, students find the crafting of personalized study plans to be complicated, especially if they move away from the more standard study paths, for instance by switching majors. Students who the panel interviewed pointed out that the programme's strong point, its diverse course offering, makes the programme challenging as well, since it requires students to navigate the many options. In addition, the high expected level, the intense learning environment and the specific nature of university college education can cause a sense of pressure among students to perform well.

In order to enhance feasibility and offer students the necessary support, EUC has a system of guidance and counselling in place. Guidance starts before students enter into the programme with a 'get to know each other day' for admitted students in April. The programme also participates in the EUR-wide Pre-Academic Programme (PAP). This is a summer course before the start of the study in which admitted students can learn to study effectively and develop personal leadership. At the start of the first year, EUC staff and students organize an introduction week for all new first-year students which combines social activities with information on academic matters.

Once in the programme, first-year students follow the personal and professional development track (PDT) alongside their courses. In this one-year trajectory, students are allocated a mentor and a peer-mentor (a second- or third-year student) for individual mentoring, workshops, and group sessions. The mentors and peer-mentors have a monitoring role in conversations about student life as well as study- and career-related matters, and are trained to assist in referring students to the appropriate avenues of support where needed (such as student counsellors and well-being organisation at EUR). For second- and third-year students, the major coordinators take over this mentoring role; students are not obliged to contact their major coordinator. In addition, there is a (voluntary) Mentor-Me programme in which alumni serve as a buddy for students to help them with their career choices. Aside from this EUC support structure, students can make use of EUR counsellors, study advisors and coaches. Informally, they can also ask the EUC teaching staff for guidance and support.

When students enter the final phase of their programme, they write the Capstone thesis. Depending on the student's major, this can be a research paper, systematic literature review, critical analysis and so on. The Capstone process is scheduled in year 3 from the end of quad 2 until the end of quad 4 with a clear timeline of all activities. Information sessions and workshops are scheduled before the actual start of the process. Students are assigned an individual supervisor based on the expertise and availability of supervisors. Students are free in choosing a topic and method, but they need approval from their supervisor on their topic, method, relevance, and short theoretical framework. In case revisions are deemed necessary, they have three weeks to improve their research proposal. During the process, students receive feedback from their supervisor and have regular meetings with them.

The panel learned during the site visit that on top of these activities and measures, the programme is consistently looking to enhance guidance and feasibility. The introduction of the PDT is an example of this; EUC is now considering expanding it to years 2 and 3. EUC also introduced reading weeks that allow students to review challenging topics and complete assignments before the examination week in the third and fourth blocks. The reading weeks allow for reflection space in between the intensive PBL blocks. Also, EUC made a distinction between academic support offered by mentors, major coordinators and heads of department on the one hand, and personal support offered by student counsellors on the other. This should make clearer where students can go with issues they encounter. Finally, the panel was informed that a planning app was introduced where students can check whether the courses they take add up to the major and ILO requirements and give access to specific master's programmes.

The panel appreciates the extensive guidance and support system in place at EUC. It particularly praises the consistent efforts to improve guidance and feasibility on behalf of the programme. The information on study success the panel received (see standard 4) indicates that the programme is indeed feasible and that the programme can be finished on time even including the many extracurricular options. During the site visit, the panel learnt that the introduction of PDT and the reading weeks were welcomed by students and staff alike as effective support measures. Students are also quite happy with the clear structure and the guidance they receive during the Capstone phase.

At the same time, the panel realized during the visit and based on the documentation that further steps can be taken. Students told the panel that they are very happy with the extensive support structure in year 1, which allows them to get adjusted to the programme and make a personal study plan for the rest of their trajectory. However, they experience the transition to years 2 and 3, where guidance is optional and less prominently offered, to be abrupt. Students told the panel that they tend to find their way when in need of personal counselling, but that some experience a barrier in approaching EUC staff. Not all students go see their major coordinator or ask staff members for assistance.

The panel considers feasibility, guidance and information provision to be clearly adequate for a small-scale and intensive programme, and praises the way students are guided, especially in their first year. The panel considers it a good thing that guidance becomes less intensive as the programme progresses: students should be expected to become more independent and able to distinguish their own learning needs. Nevertheless, the panel recommends softening the transition from year 1 to the rest of the programme. This can be done by introducing more organized support at the start of year 2 and by reaching out to students. The major coordinators could play a more proactive role in inviting students in. The panel recommends the programme management to consult students on this matter and reflect with them on the best measures to take.

#### *Teaching staff*

EUC's academic staff consists of tutors, lecturers, and senior lecturers (associate and full professor). Currently, around 60-70% of teaching staff holds a PhD or is obtaining one. Currently, EUC has 55 fte support and academic (ratio 1:3) staff. EUC (like all LAS colleges) is aware of the complex future prospects and growth opportunities for academic staff. Staff at EUC is hired primarily for teaching in a small-scale and intensive programme. This education focus does not match the career opportunities in the standard Dutch academic system well, where the focus is primarily on research performance. Where possible, EUC staff is encouraged to actively do scientific research by means of research vouchers (0.2 fte of a full-time contract).

To ensure that academic staff members possess the didactic skills needed for small-scale and intensive teaching on a PBL basis, EUC set up its own University Teaching Qualification programme (UTQ) in 2016. Almost all EUC staff members have obtained the UTQ or are in the process of obtaining it. This trajectory was adapted to include the 'broader' interpretation of PBL now current in EUC-LAS and offers teaching staff help in deciding the specific didactic approach in their courses. Staff already in possession of a UTQ will be offered additional training on this shortly. In addition, for academic staff members who want to develop themselves further, EUR offers Senior University Teaching Qualification (SUTQ). So far, 30% of academic staff members have obtained the SUTQ or are in the process of doing so.

In addition to EUC's own staff, a clear role is given to EUC fellows. These are staff members of other faculties of EUR as well as other universities. The role of fellows is to act as experts in their field by giving lectures and help out with certain courses. The overall coordination of the courses is still done by EUC staff to ensure course alignment and quality control.

The panel finds that teaching staff at EUC is very well suited for providing challenging and intensive small-scale teaching. It appreciates the attention paid to didactic quality, and the development of an EUC-specific UTQ trajectory. The panel applauds the number of staff members with a UTQ and STQ. Students told the panel that they find their teachers inspiring, approachable and didactically skilled. They report that their teachers are enthusiastic and cooperative, and willing to sit with them to provide help and guidance. The panel praises the dedication of EUC's teaching staff.

The programme's efforts to enhance career opportunities for staff members by introducing research vouchers are very positive, according to the panel. The staff members who make use of these are motivated to combine teaching with research and feel it adds to their working life and career prospects. The panel also discussed the theme of 'recognition and rewards' with staff and programme management, and is happy to hear that EUR is currently exploring the development of career paths and tenure tracks other than those focused on research. It agrees with the programme that such development options are important. The panel encourages the programme to keep creating opportunities for personal development of staff.

The panel learnt during the site visit that previously, new staff members were required to have a PhD. At present, this is no longer the case. EUC does prefer candidates with a PhD in cases of equal aptness. While the percentage of staff members with a PhD and/or a research profile is currently high enough according to the panel, it suggests caution in applying this new policy. The panel finds that the connection of teaching and research enhances the programme's quality and that education can receive a positive impulse from staff members' research interests.

### Considerations

The panel is pleased with the high quality of EUC-LAS. The programme has a solid and clear structure, and offers students valuable course content that matches the intended level. The programme offers students a wide range of specialization options and electives, allowing them to broaden their horizons and acquire relevant personal attitudes and skills. Students are offered opportunities to step outside the college and engage with societal issues. The extracurricular options and activities, which are inextricably bound with the curriculum, also contribute to this engagement, as some impressive examples demonstrated. The programme has a challenging didactic PBL approach, requiring student participation and preparation in a manner that suits the small-scale and intensive nature of EUC-LAS. The PBL methodology was further developed to meet the needs of the programme and this development is accompanied by staff training, which the panel applauds. The panel agrees with the choice for English as the language of instruction (and an English programme name) since it plays an essential role in achieving the intended learning outcomes of

the programme, with regard to both skills and contents. The programme has a sound selection procedure in place and is taught by enthusiastic, dedicated, high-quality and didactically skilled staff, who form a vibrant learning community with the students. Staff quantity is clearly sufficient.

The programme's facilities (the impressive EUC building and the student housing) promote this learning community and are well suited for a small-scale and intensive programme as well as extracurricular and social activities. The panel does recommend further improving (communication on) accessibility of these facilities for students with mobility issues to create an even more open and inclusive learning community. The panel finds that the programme is feasible and applauds the extensive guidance and support system constructed for students. It recommends introducing more organized support at the start of year 2 to ease the transition from the large amount of guidance in year 1 to years 2 and 3, where guidance is optional and depends on students' own initiative.

### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 2 of the NVAO framework.

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard B, C, D, E and F of the framework for the Distinctive Feature "Small-scale and Intensive Education".

### Standard 3. Student assessment

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

### Findings

#### *System of assessment*

EUC's key elements of assessment are described in EUC's assessment policy document. Assessment within the programme starts with a set of principles:

1. Assessment gives students the opportunity to show what they have learned and which skills they have acquired in a variety of assessment methods.
2. Ideally, assessments also provide learning opportunities for students to rethink the material or practice certain skills in another way and to make connections they have not made before.
3. Control and feedback measures are used to ensure that quality standards for assessment are met, and that grades are based on similar, objective criteria.
4. EUC set standards for the assessment quality at three levels: the programme, each course, and individual assessment methods.

The programme's assessment system has four main functions: 1) assessing students' learning progress and achievement based on the learning objectives, 2) provision of feedback on learning, 3) guiding study behaviour and performance, and 4) quality assurance of the LAS programme. At EUC-LAS, courses are assessed using three types of assessment methods: written exams, assignments, and evaluation of professional conduct. These methods are combined according to one of three pre-described assessment formats that determine the weight of elements in the final grade. EUC assessment follows the EUR guidelines set by the EUR-wide accepted examination system. As a result, students are required to obtain all 60 EC in one year (in the academic year 2020-2021 adjusted to 50 EC, due to COVID-19).

Assessment in EUC-LAS has been set up in such a way that all students, regardless of their individual study plan, meet the requirements of all ILOs. This is made visible in an assessment matrix plan that connects the course objectives, assessment methods and ILOs of the programme. Assignments can take many forms such as an essay, a presentation, a research paper, a project, a simulation, a video, or another product. The examiner of a course (usually the course coordinator) has the liberty to decide which of the formats and types of assignment is best suited to assess if students have reached the learning objectives of that course.

The panel is pleased with the system of assessment at EUC, which it finds well-designed. The panel thinks that the assessment matrix demonstrating the link between ILOs, curriculum components and assessment types provides a good structure to check whether all students meet the learning outcomes.

One element of course assessment that the panel discussed in-depth with students, staff, Examination Board and programme management during the site visit, is the 'evaluation of professional conduct' used for PBL project groups. This makes up 10% of the grade for a course. The grade is based on three criteria: attendance, preparedness, and participation. The professional behaviour assessment can have three different outcomes. In the first, the student obtains a course grade, which means that the student displayed sufficient professional behaviour. In this case, the score for professional behaviour is equal to the weighted average of the grades of the other assignments of the course. The second possible outcome, '0', means that the student does not have a sufficient score for professional behaviour. In this case, the professional behaviour score, which has a weight of 10% of the course grade, is set to 0. The third possibility, 'Fail', ensures that students fail the course.

Students told the panel that the way the assessment is done centres strongly on the 'attendance' criterion. They are allowed to miss one mandatory session per course without consequences. Students who miss two mandatory sessions fail the professional behaviour component of the course and receive the score '0' for professional behaviour. Students who miss more than two mandatory sessions obtain a 'Fail' for professional behaviour, and thereby also fail the course. According to students, this is very strict and creates stress with those who already missed a session.

The panel understands that the programme wants to assess professional behaviour and that attendance in class is an important element in PBL courses. It noted that this grade only applies to project groups, and that lectures are exempt. The programme also understood from the programme management and the Examination Board that in practice, exemptions are easily granted by the Examination Board. It therefore considers the assessment of professional behaviour to be done adequately. At the same time, this manner of assessing seems to be a serious issue for students, who experience it as stress-inducing and strict. The panel therefore offers the suggestion to reconsider this way of assessing professional behaviour.

#### *Examination Board*

EUC has an Examination Board that is supported by two secretaries. The Board performs an annual review of sample courses to check how assessment is done, and regularly checks the assessment matrices of all courses. The board also examines seven Capstone theses from the different departments each year to guarantee the exit level of graduate is up to standard. The Examination Board actively participates in the biweekly meetings of the 'Overleg Voorzitters Examencommissies' (OVE), exchanging experiences with other EUR Examination Boards. A recent result of this is the harmonization of EUR's plagiarism policy. One of its members obtained the Senior Examination Qualification (SEQ) based on a project on the alignment of the Capstone process between departments.

In order to better distinguish between the Examination Board's role in safeguarding quality of assessment and the more proactive designing and improving of assessment quality, EUC has established a permanent Assessment Committee with representation of the four departments (alternating members may be added in the future). The Assessment Committee is independent of the Board of Examiners and advises the programme management on improving assessment quality. A Capstone Committee was also established with a similar function specifically regarding the Capstone.

The Examination Board plays a role in dealing with the use of AI tools at EUC, contributing to the EUC policy regarding the use of generative AI. Besides preventing fraud, EUC is currently investigating how to structurally incorporate AI into the way students are assessed. Teachers have already used generative AI in their assessment in different ways, for example by letting students critique the essays that were produced by ChatGPT, comparing the different outputs from ChatGPT on the same prompt, or discover the biases and normative statements of ChatGPT. The next versions of EUC's assessment policy and the guidelines and procedures of the Examination Board should include a paragraph on how to use generative AI in such a way that it benefits learning while at the same time adheres to ethical standards.

The panel discussed quality of assessment in the programme with the Examination Board during the site visit. It was positively impressed with the way the Examination Board stays on top of examination quality and with the professional way it is set up. In dealing with students' requests, exemptions and complaints, the Board stated that it strives to safeguard care as well as quality: exceptions can be made if the student's development, wellbeing and progress are at stake, but always within proportion and taking into account what is required. The Board is flanked by an Assessment and a Capstone Committee, and this setup seems to work well for all those involved. The board can focus on checking the quality of courses and exams and on dealing with student requests, but is still actively involved in an advisory role. The panel also appreciates the attention paid to the urgent matter of AI tools.

#### *Capstone thesis assessment*

Two independent assessors always assess the Capstone theses to ensure reliable assessment. The supervisor is the first assessor. Capstone coordinators of each department appoint the second assessor to ensure independence. There are two scenarios for the second assessor: 1) in case the second assessor is from within EUC, this assessor will act as second reader for grading the Capstone, or 2) in case the second assessor is appointed outside EUC, for example, when students do research in another organization, this assessor will act as second reader and may act as co-supervisor. Both assessors will assess the Capstone content and propose a grade independently. In case the grades for the content proposed by each assessor do not differ by more than 15%, they will together determine the grade for the Capstone content. If the grades proposed by the assessors differ by more than 15%, if the assessors do not agree whether the result is insufficient or sufficient, or if the examiners cannot reach agreement on the final grade, the departmental Capstone coordinator will decide on the grade after consultation of a third assessor and both initial assessors. A Capstone coordinator can also serve as third assessor.

Although the set-up and method of a Capstone thesis might vary between majors, all Capstone supervisors use the same assessment form, stating the main assessment criteria. The assessment form consists of two parts: the content of the thesis (90% of the grade) and the process (10% of the grade). The minimum grade for successfully completing the Capstone thesis is 55%. If the grade for the Capstone is below 55% but above 40%, students have failed the Capstone thesis but will be allowed to revise the thesis to successfully complete it. If the grade for the Capstone thesis is between 55% and 60%, students have passed the Capstone but are nevertheless allowed to revise the Capstone thesis. The maximum grade that can be obtained after revision is 60%. Since the previous accreditation, the assessment of the Capstone was

improved by the introduction of a new Capstone assessment form. The form now includes comment boxes per element that are available to students, and a new element is added to the rubric: holistic assessment, in which the interdisciplinary part of a Capstone thesis plays an important role.

The panel is pleased with the assessment method of the Capstone. It appreciates the addition of boxes for commentary per criterion. The panel noticed that the assessment form uses rather broad grade categories that allow the assessor some freedom in determining a specific grade. For instance, if they score a criterion as 'very good', they can choose a numerical score between 75 and 84 out of 100. The panel understood from staff members that they appreciate the freedom this allows them to distinguish between students in the same category. Staff members confirmed to the panel that the assessment method of the Capstone works well for them.

The panel studied 15 Capstone theses and their assessment. It noted that there is quite some discrepancy in the thesis grades between disciplines: some seem to grade higher than others. The panel also noted a lot of variety in the way feedback was provided, ranging from no to extensive feedback, and found that sometimes the feedback did not entirely reflect the grade given. Both the programme management and the Examination Board have noticed this as well, and are working on reducing such discrepancies through organizing calibration sessions. The panel is pleased to see that this issue was taken up and that the programme is moving in the right direction.

#### Considerations

The panel is pleased with the system of assessment and the varied assessment types in EUC-LAS. The assessment matrix demonstrating the link between ILOs, curriculum components and assessment types provides a good structure to check whether all students meet the learning outcomes. The Examination Board is clearly in control of safeguarding the quality of assessment. The assessment of the Capstone thesis is done well, and the redesign of the assessment form has proven to be effective. The panel is pleased to see that the programme is proactively working to reduce the discrepancy in thesis grades between disciplines.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3 of the NVAO framework.

#### Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

#### Findings

##### *Capstone level and study success rates*

The panel read 15 EUC Capstone theses and concluded that their overall quality matches the level that may be expected of a LAS bachelor's programme. The theses are usually well-researched and well-presented, and frequently demonstrate good use of and reflection on methodology.

Over the past period, EUC-LAS graduates completed their programme nominally in 60-70% of the cases. After 4 years, 85-94% has graduated. These numbers are substantially higher than those of regular bachelor's programmes and can also be considered fitting in the context of LAS programmes in the Netherlands. Although many students take longer than 3 years to graduate, the panel was told by students and alumni that this is usually the consequence of students' choices. The programme offers a lot of options and students are free to discover their own interests as they progress. Choosing more subjects than required, or switching

majors at a later stage, are often mentioned as the cause for delay. The panel therefore concludes that the programme succeeds in achieving the success rates required for a small-scale and intensive bachelor's programme.

#### *Alumni success*

Upon graduation, most students choose to continue with a premaster, master, or research master, while others opt to work or start their own company. Around 35% of alumni enrols in a EUR master's programme. Students also get admitted to other Dutch universities ( $\pm 30\%$ ). A survey among alumni from EUC graduated between 2016 and 2023 indicates 35% of this group of alumni opted for a master's degree at an international university. Students end up in a wide variety of programmes, from Molecular Medicine to International Relations and Media Studies. From the senior graduates, 85% have a paid occupation. They fan out over a broad range of industry branches. Besides (financial) business services and research institutions, EUC alumni found jobs in research, government, IT, education, and health care, amongst others.

EUC-LAS invests in maintaining an alumni community. Most of the graduates (93%) are still in contact with EUC after graduation mainly via the ACES (Alumni Community of EUC Students) newsletter and 70% of alumni are willing to contribute in some way to EUC. Examples of contributions include giving a guest lecture or other teaching activities, advising students during or after their studies, thinking about improving the programme, and being an ambassador for marketing and recruitment activities. The introduction of an alumni officer for one day a week at EUC has significantly improved the monitoring of alumni and has initiated actions based on the feedback from alumni. Examples are the MentorMe programme and the introduction of career-related workshops for second and third-year students.

The panel is pleased to see that alumni end up well in a wide range of professional environments, and that they look back positively on their programme. It considers it a good thing that alumni are often still involved with EUC in some way.

#### Considerations

The panel is pleased with the achieved level of EUC graduates. The Capstone theses demonstrate the required level and alumni end up well in a wide range of professional environments, look back positively on their programme, and are often still involved with EUC. The panel finds that the programme succeeds in achieving the success rates required for a small-scale and intensive bachelor's programme.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4 of the NVAO framework.

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard G of the framework for the Distinctive Feature "Small-scale and Intensive Education".

#### General conclusion NVAO Framework

The panel has established that the bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences meets all four NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the quality of the bachelor programme Liberal Arts and Sciences is positive.

## Recommendations

1. Further improve the accessibility of the facilities for students with a functional impairment to create an even more open and inclusive learning community, as well as the communication about the accessibility measures and options.
2. Introduce more organized support and guidance at the start of year 2. Reflect with students on how best to do this.

## Distinctive Feature Small-Scale Intensive Education

The bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences obtained the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in 2013. Four years later, the panel performing the practice-based assessment considered that further progress had been made, both in terms of the evaluation criteria and with regard to the points of attention raised by the initial review team. Another six years later, in 2024, the bachelor programme and its distinctive feature are up for re-accreditation. The current assessment panel has looked at whether the programme still meets the conditions for granting the distinctive feature. In line with the NVAO Guidelines, the panel checked whether small-scale and intensive education has evolved into a quintessential feature of the bachelor programme. In the core part of this report, the panel has taken into account the criteria of the distinctive feature when assessing the quality of the bachelor's programme. In this section, the panel brings together its specific findings and considerations on these criteria and indicates whether an extension of the 'Small-scale and intensive education' distinctive feature is justified.

### **A. Intended learning outcomes**

EUC-LAS has an ambitious and clear profile that reflects the above-average ambitions of a LAS bachelor's programme. The programme distinguishes itself particularly through connecting to the city of Rotterdam and through offering distinctive specialization opportunities. The panel finds that the programme's intended learning outcomes demonstrate the above-average level and orientation aimed for. They also clearly express the broadening and development of personal attitudes and skills required, including (ethical and professional) reflection, communication skills towards various audiences and the ability to act as a 'change agent' in society.

### **B. Curriculum: contents**

The panel is pleased with the high quality of the EUC-LAS curriculum. The curriculum has a solid and clear structure and offers students valuable course content that matches the intended level. In year 1, students follow the Academic Core courses. These take a multi- and interdisciplinary focus and allow students to get acquainted with qualitative and quantitative research. In the first year, students follow a personal and professional development track (PDT) that allows them to reflect on their own development and attitudes. After year 1, the programme offers students a wide range of specialization options (17 majors), as well as many elective options, allowing them to broaden their horizons and acquire relevant personal attitudes and skills. A positive aspect is that students can switch majors at a relatively late stage with no or limited time loss. This allows students to take full advantage of the breadth the programme offers them and the options to experience various disciplinary approaches. Students are also offered opportunities to step outside the college and engage with societal issues. The extracurricular options and activities, which are inextricably bound with the curriculum, contribute to this engagement. Students and staff share responsibility for organizing these.

### **C. Curriculum: learning environment**

The programme has a challenging didactic PBL approach, requiring student participation and preparation in a manner that suits the small-scale and intensive nature of EUC-LAS. The PBL approach was further developed to meet the needs of the programme and this development is accompanied by staff training, which the panel applauds. Students and staff form a vibrant learning community from which they mutually benefit. Classes are taught at a small scale, as students work in project groups of 12-14 students. The programme is feasible and enables nominal study progress. The guidance structure is clearly adequate, though the panel recommends enhancing support at the start of year 2 to provide a smoother transition from year 1.

#### **D. Intake**

The programme has a sound selection procedure in place, aimed at admitting motivated students of a high academic quality. Motivation to take an active role in the small-scale and intensive environment is part of the selection criteria. The programme also aims at a diverse learning environment and therefore uses 'wildcards' to admit students who do not fulfil all requirements but who are considered admissible for other reasons. The panel is pleased with the intake strategy of EUC-LAS.

#### **E. Staff**

The programme clearly has sufficient staff for providing small-scale and intensive education, and makes sure that staff members are all didactically trained to teach various PBL methods within the context of a university college. Staff members have sufficient research expertise, so that the programme can offer research-inspired teaching.

#### **F. Facilities**

EUC is housed in a beautiful and well-suited building that provides students with a stimulating and safe space throughout their studies. The building offers spaces designed for small-scale and project-based learning, as well as for larger gatherings and social activities. The building's location in the city centre enables students to 'step outside' for societally driven projects and extracurricular or social activities. Students have residence in the Lucia building during their first year, which is close to EUC. The panel found that these facilities greatly contribute to creating a strong learning community. It recommends further improving the accessibility of these buildings to make the facilities even more welcoming and inclusive, as well as improving the communication about accessibility measures and options.

#### **G. Achieved learning outcomes**

The panel considers the achieved level of the programme to be clearly up to standard. The Capstone theses demonstrate that the level set down in the intended learning outcomes is achieved. Graduates are admitted to demanding postgraduate programmes and/or jobs in a wide range of fields. The programme's success rates are substantially higher than those of other relevant programmes that do not carry the distinctive feature, and are at least on a par with other LAS programmes in the Netherlands.

### **General conclusion Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education**

The panel has established that the EUC bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences meets all seven criteria of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education: intended learning outcomes, programme content, learning environment, intake, staff, material facilities, and achieved learning outcomes. It considers that small-scale and intensive education has become an integral part of the bachelor programme.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in the bachelor programme Liberal Arts and Sciences is positive.

## Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Intended learning outcomes Graduates of this programme:	Dublin Descriptor				
	Knowledge and understanding	Applying knowledge and understanding	Making judgments	Communication	Learning Skills
1. Have a foundational level of academic knowledge, skills and competences of a variety of disciplines represented at EUR;	Yes				
2. Have knowledge and understanding of the most prominent theories, methods, traditions and current issues and debates within one of the Majors of EUC to be eligible for a master programme;	Yes				
3. Can reflect on science and scientific practices, as well as their relationship with society;	Yes	Yes			Yes
4. Are able to analyse and critically reflect on social and academic issues in an inter- and multi-disciplinary way;		Yes			
5. Are able to use skills and knowledge to work on a project (as part of the curriculum or extracurricular) that contributes to science and society;		Yes			Yes
6. Are able to perform research in an ethical and academically meaningful manner and communicate about this to peers, professionals, policymakers and the public;		Yes	Yes		Yes
7. Are able to collect relevant and reliable sources and data in order to identify and analyse academic problems;		Yes			Yes
8. Are able to critically relate to, and independently reflect on academic discourse;				Yes	
9. Are able to communicate clearly and effectively in written and spoken academic English;				Yes	
10. Are able to collaborate in a group with members from different backgrounds;			Yes		
11. Are able to act as agents of the change they want to see in society;			Yes		
12. Are able to formulate a reflective and evidence-based opinion, while being prepared to engage with other opinions and arguments;		Yes	Yes		
13. Are able to reflect on their role as a critical world citizen;			Yes	Yes	
14. Are able to make reasoned choices concerning their personal development and future career.					Yes

## Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

Programme of Studies Liberal Arts & Science (180 EC)		
100 level	Academic Core Courses	45 EC
200 / 300 level*	EUC major (at least 20 EC on 300 level)	75 EC**
400 level	CAP400 Capstone	
200 / 300 level*	<i>Any combination of:</i> EUC minors, EUR minors, EUC courses, exchange courses, off-campus courses	60 EC

### Year 1

Academic Core Courses (5 EC each)

- Core Economics
- Humans & Society
- Modernity: From Enlightenment to Rationalisation
- Basics of Life

Academic Skills Courses (5 EC)

- Personal development track (pass/fail, 0 EC)
- Qualitative Research Methods & Analysis
- Quantitative Research Methods & Analysis
- Basestone Research & Writing Project (10 EC)
- Academic Skills

### Years 2-3

At the end of the first year, student choose one of 17 majors offered by the following departments or in collaboration between the departments:

1. Economics & Business department
2. Humanities department
3. Life Science department
4. Social & Behavioural Science department

They also write a Capstone thesis (15 EC) and follow electives and/or minors.



## Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

3 October 2024 - EUC

08.15-08.30	Welcome and coffee
08.30-09.00	Introduction and tour EUC
09.00-09.30	Panel preparation
09.30-09.45	Break
09.45-10.30	Interview programme management
10.30-10.45	Break/panel session
10.45-11.30	Interview students (incl. chair of student members programme committee)
11.30-12.15	Internal panel session including lunch break
12.15-13.00	Interview teaching staff (incl. chair programme committee)
13.00-13.45	Interview Board of Examiners
13.45-14.00	Break/panel session
14.00-14.30	Interview Alumni
14.30-15.15	Internal panel session
15.15-15.45	Concluding session programme management
15.45-17.15	Concluding panel session
17.15-17.45	Development dialogue
17.45-18.15	Oral feedback

## Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Liberal Arts and Sciences. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request.

The panel also studied other materials, which included:

- Academic Rules and Regulations (2023-2024)
- Differences between previous and new ILOs
- Governance structure EUC (2022)
- Staff data
- Key figures students and staff
- Student chapter
- Domain-specific framework Liberal Arts and Sciences (2023)
- Analysis of University Colleges in the Netherlands
- Course Catalogue (2023-2024)
- Overview didactic approaches (e.g. PBL)
- Research voucher policy
- EUC Assessment Policy (2023)
- Annual report Examination Board EUC (2022-2023)
- Capstone assessment form
- Alumni Survey EUC (2023)
- EUC extra curricular activities