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B & M Communication and Information Studies

B Information Science

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Contents

Summary

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies (CIS) aims to educate academically trained communication experts while also providing students with a foundation for research careers. Students learn to analyse and optimize communication processes from an interdisciplinary perspective. The programme focuses on communication through discourse, including fields such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, experimental pragmatics, multimodal analysis, argumentation theory, and stylistics, in connection with psychological and societal perspectives.
In the bachelor's programme Information Science (IS), students learn the theoretical and practical aspects of language technology at an academic level. The programme focuses on the interplay of technology, language, and communication, more specifically on computational techniques for generating text and for structuring and transforming textual data. The programme is interdisciplinary and includes fields such as (computational) linguistics, communication science, programming, neural networks and machine learning, human-computer interaction, social media, and machine translation.
The master's programme CIS aims to educate students to become academically trained experts in communicating complex issues and critically analysing digital information products and processes. Students are trained to combine theory, skills, and methods in order to contribute to effective and sustainable communication and information processing. The programme is interdisciplinary and focuses on language, communication, digital media, and information management. Students learn to perform advanced research on communication- and information-related topics with a critical reflection on relevant societal and technological developments.

The panel is positive about all three programmes' profiles, which are well aligned with the developments in the professional and academic field of communication and information studies. The broad, interdisciplinary profile of the bachelor CIS is distinctive. The panel also appreciates the programme's strongly research-driven and international orientation. The strength of the profile of the bachelor IS lies in its integration of various disciplines and the combination of theory and practical skills. The bachelor IS has a unique position as an Information Science programme in a humanities faculty. This position benefits the programme in the sense that information science is studied from the perspective of language technology, including the much needed critical and ethical reflections. At the same time, the position creates challenges regarding recruitment of students and possibly lecturers as well. The panel sees opportunities in more collaboration with other faculties, in order to strengthen the programme's visibility, brand, and reputation. The 'AI hub', an initiative in the university which brings together researchers and lecturers associated with AI-related education, may play a role in this respect. Strong aspects of the master CIS's profile are its interdisciplinary approach and international focus. The panel agrees with the planned reduction of five to three tracks (as of academic year 2025-2026), which is expected to lead to a more coherent programme. The panel much appreciates the track Information Science (IS) as part of this master, as it allows the computational aspects to be enriched with perspectives from linguistics and humanities. Similar to the bachelor IS, however, this track would benefit from more collaboration with other related programmes and faculties, to strengthen its position.

The panel considers the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the three programmes to be well formulated and well aligned to the bachelor's and master's level as described in the Dublin descriptors and the Dutch qualification framework NLQF. They cover all relevant topics and skills and match with the international academic field as well as the professional field. Although the programmes have good (mostly ad hoc and/or informal) connections with the professional field, the panel thinks that the systematic alignment with the

professional field needs to be improved. The panel recommends the programmes to install a professional advisory board, including alumni of the programmes, and regularly consult it about the ILOs and the curricula.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

According to the panel, the curricula of all three programmes are well designed and aligned with the programmes' ILOs and profile, covering all relevant topics. Strong aspects include the integration of various disciplines, the strong link between research and education, a good balance between solid foundational knowledge and state-of-the-art insights and societal developments, the way in which students are trained to use artificial intelligence (AI) in a responsible way, and attention for the professional skills and context. The bachelor programmes are in the process of a curriculum revision, in response to a faculty-wide policy change. The panel is impressed with how the staff has embraced the required revision with an open attitude, seeing it as an opportunity for a redesign and improvement of the curriculum. The bachelor IS and the track Digital Humanities (DH) in the master CIS are both dealing with diverse entrance levels of students regarding programming/coding skills, since no prior knowledge in this area is required for admission. The panel understands the challenges this situation creates and thinks that the programmes handle these adequately, by offering extra support and extra challenges where possible and appropriate.

The bachelor and master CIS are partly taught in English, which, according to the panel, follows logically from the inherent international nature of the field of communication and information studies. For students who want to focus on the Dutch context and language, tracks taught (partly) in Dutch are available. The learning environment of the three programmes is characterized by a focus on active learning in small-scale teaching settings allowing for interaction and collaboration between students and staff. Students appreciate the activating environment and teaching methods. They also value the open atmosphere, which makes them feel heard. The bachelor and master CIS are strongly internationally focused, allowing for a culturally diverse classroom. The panel considers this intercultural and inclusive environment to be a strength of the programmes, enriching the learning process.

According to the panel, the admission criteria are appropriate. The panel also considers the programmes to be feasible within the allocated time. The panel is very positive about the overall student guidance in the programmes, provided by study advisors and mentors. Thesis supervision is also well structured. Facilities for students with a disability are appropriate and sufficient. Students have easy access to all relevant information through the well-structured Brightspace environment. The study facilities are appropriate. For students of the bachelor IS and the DH and IS master tracks, extra facilities in terms of computers/servers and software are available.

The teaching staff of the three programmes represents high quality and expertise in all relevant areas. Lecturers are firmly embedded in research groups, which strengthens the connection between research and education. The panel appreciates the international composition of the bachelor and master CIS's teaching team which clearly contributes to the intercultural learning environment. According to the panel, lecturers involved in the three programmes are didactically qualified. Furthermore, they are responsive and accessible towards students. There is good collaboration and alignment within the teaching teams. With regard to the teaching teams involved in the bachelor and master CIS, the panel recommends making sure that a more balanced staff composition is realized and filling the vacancies for the full professors as quickly as possible. This is essential for maintaining the educational quality, ensuring the robustness and resilience of the programmes, and ensuring balanced representation of the programmes and departments towards the Faculty Board, and in various policy processes and committees.

Standard 3. Student assessment

The panel considers the assessment in all three programmes to be well designed, allowing students to achieve the final exit level for all ILOs. In all programmes, a wide variety of appropriate assessment methods is applied, reflecting a good mix of formative and summative assessment as well as theoretical and practical assessment. Appropriate measures are taken by the programmes to improve and assure the quality of assessment, such as the peer-review of assessments and the use of assessment forms. The panel appreciates how the programmes handle AI-related issues in a proactive way. The thesis assessment procedure is well structured. Theses are assessed by two assessors, based on an assessment form, including written feedback. The panel did notice differences between programmes and tracks with regard to the followed procedure and assessment forms used. It recommends improving consistency across programmes and tracks regarding the thesis assessment procedures, assessment forms and written feedback. Additionally, the panel recommends organizing regular calibration sessions for thesis assessors, to further improve consistency across assessors. The panel considers the Board of Examiners to be independent, competent, in control, and proactive with regard to safeguarding the assessment quality in the programmes.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the review of a sample of 15 theses per programme, the panel concludes that the level demonstrated in the theses is appropriate for an academic bachelor's/master's programme. The documentation and the interviews indicate that graduates of the bachelors CIS and IS are well prepared to follow a master's programme. Graduates of the master CIS are well prepared for and prove to be successful in the professional field.

Score table

The panel assesses the programmes as follows:

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies	
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
Master's programme Communication and Information Studies	
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
Bachelor's programme Information Science	
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
em. prof. dr. A.M. (Anneke) Smelik (panel chair)	drs. Anne-Lise Kamphuis (panel secretary)

Date: 1 October 2025

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 2, 3 and 4 June 2025, the bachelor's and master's programmes Communication and Information Studies and the bachelor's programme Information Science of the University of Groningen were assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment WO CIW and Media. The assessment cluster consisted of 23 programmes, offered by the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Radboud University, University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University, Leiden University, Tilburg University, University of Groningen, Maastricht University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (April 2024).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster WO CIW and Media. Fiona Schouten acted as coordinator for the visit to the University of Groningen. Anne-Lise Kamphuis acted as panel secretary for the assessment of the programmes of the University of Groningen. They have both been certified and registered by the NVAO.

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 22 January 2025, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on her role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

The faculty composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). They selected representative partners for the various interviews. It was 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 bachelor's and master's programmes Communication and Information Studies provided the coordinator with a list of graduates from the academic years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024; the bachelor's programme Information Science provided a list of graduates from the academic years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. In consultation with the coordinator, the panel chair selected 15 theses from the bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies. From the Dutch track 2 theses were selected, and from the International track 13 theses were selected. From the master's programme Communication and Information Studies, 15 theses were selected. From the track Communication Studies 4 theses were selected, from the track Health Communication (currently discontinued) 1 thesis was selected, from the track Communication and Education 1 thesis was selected, from the track Computer-Mediated Communication 1 thesis was selected, from the track Digital Humanities 4 theses were selected, and from the track Information Science 4 theses were selected. This selection reflected the number of graduates in each particular track proportionally. From the bachelor's programme Information Science, 15 theses were selected (no tracks).

The chair and coordinator took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account. Prior to the site visit, the programme provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. It also provided the panel with the self-evaluation reports 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 self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. The panel was also informed on the assessment framework, the working method and the planning of the site visit and report.

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. No consultation was requested. 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

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the coordinators for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the University of Groningen 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 the University of Groningen.

Panel

The panel assessing the bachelor's and master's programmes Communication and Information Studies and the bachelor's programme Information Science at the University of Groningen consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. A.M. (Anneke) Smelik, professor emeritus in Visual Culture at the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures of Radboud University (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. H. (Hilde) Van den Bulck, professor of Communication at the het College of Arts and Sciences of Drexel University (United States);
- Prof. dr. V. (Veronique) Hoste, professor in Computational Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. M.J.P. (Margot) van Mulken, professor in Persuasive Communication and Stylistics at the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures of Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. J. (Joris) van Eijnatten, professor in Digital History at the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University and Director of the Netherlands eScience Center in Amsterdam;
- V.C.T. (Vincent) Heijboer BA, master's student Medias Studies, track Film and Photographic Studies, at Leiden University (student member).

Each panel member and the panel secretary filled out the Statement of Impartiality and nondisclosure agreement, as required by the NVAO. They can confirm that the assessment was carried out in complete independence.

Information on the programmes

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
BRIN-number:	21PC
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive

Programme name:	B Communication and Information Studies (Communicatie- en Informatiewetenschappen)
CROHO number:	56826
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Level of the programme:	Bachelor (NLQF 6)
Number of credits:	180 EC
Language of instruction:	Dutch, English
Specializations or tracks:	International track Dutch track
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Awarded degree:	BA
Submission date NVAO:	1 November 2025

Programme name:	M Communication and Information Studies (Communicatie- en Informatiewetenschappen)
CROHO number:	66826
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Level of the programme:	Master (NLQF 7)
Number of credits:	60 EC
Language of instruction:	Dutch, English
Specializations or tracks:	Communication Studies Communication and Education Computer-Mediated Communication Digital Humanities Information Science
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Awarded degree:	MA, MSc (for the track Information Science)
Submission date NVAO:	1 November 2025

Programme name:	B Information Science (Informatiekunde)
CROHO number:	56842
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Level of the programme:	Bachelor (NLQF 6)
Number of credits:	180 EC
Language of instruction:	Dutch
Specializations or tracks:	-
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Awarded degree:	BSc
Submission date NVAO:	1 November 2025

Description of the assessment

About the programmes

The bachelor's and master's programmes Communication and Information Studies (CIS) and the bachelor's programme Information Science (IS) are offered by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen. The University of Groningen consists of eleven faculties, offer 45 bachelor's programmes and 120 master's programmes. More than 34,000 students are enrolled at the university. The Faculty of Arts is a broad arts faculty with over 5,000 students. It offers 16 bachelor's programmes and more than 20 master's programmes in a wide range of academic fields, including the humanities and social sciences, as well as the beta domain. The bachelor CIS is an international BA-programme that has seen a growth in student intake over the past years. The current intake is over 100 students per year. The master CIS is a MA-programme with an annual intake of about 75 students. The bachelor IS is a Dutch-taught programme with an intake of 30-40 students per year. Unlike most programmes in the faculty, it awards a Bachelor of Science degree to graduates.

Recommendations previous panel

The previous accreditation of the bachelor CIS, the master CIS, and the bachelor IS took place in 2019. The panel assessed all four standards as satisfactory for all three programmes. The panel gave a number of recommendations. In response to these recommendations, the programmes implemented several improvements, including strengthening the practice of advisory skills in various courses (bachelor CIS), improving the overall coherence of the programme across tracks (master CIS), introducing new courses on linguistics and ethics to strengthen the programme's position as a humanities programme (IS), reducing the number of electives (IS), implementing didactical and technological innovations in several courses to increase (inter)active learning (IS), increasing the attention for novel approaches and techniques in language technology research and application (IS), and improving the thesis assessment procedure (all programmes). The panel examined the programmes' response to the recommendations and concludes that they have been seriously acted upon by the programmes. The panel is generally content with the improvement measures taken. For a couple of recommendations, the programmes are still in the process of further improvement. These issues will be addressed further on in this report.

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 and vision

Bachelor CIS

The bachelor CIS aims to educate academically trained communication experts while also providing students with a foundation for research careers. Students learn to analyse and optimize communication processes from an interdisciplinary perspective. The programme focuses on communication through discourse, including fields such as discourse analysis, conversation analysis, experimental pragmatics, multimodal analysis, argumentation theory, and stylistics, in connection with psychological and societal perspectives. According to the panel, this broad, interdisciplinary approach is a strength of the programme and provides it with a distinctive profile. The profile is well aligned with the developments in the professional

and academic field of communication and information studies. The panel also appreciates the strongly research-driven and international character of the programme.

Originally, the programme was a Dutch-taught programme. To better align with the increasingly international nature of the field of communication and information studies, the programme has been offered as an English-taught programme from 2019 onward. The programme did maintain a Dutch track (besides the international track), in which students can follow one third of the courses in Dutch.

Bachelor IS

In the bachelor IS, students learn the theoretical and practical aspects of language technology at an academic level. The programme focuses on the interplay of technology, language, and communication, more specifically on computational techniques for generating text and for structuring and transforming textual data. The programme is interdisciplinary and includes fields such as (computational) linguistics, communication science, programming, neural networks and machine learning, human-computer interaction, social media, and machine translation. The panel is positive about the programme's profile and considers it to be well aligned with the academic and professional field of information science.

The programme has a unique position in the Netherlands based on the fact that it is the only Information Science programme located in a humanities faculty. According to the panel, the programme benefits from this position as it enables students to approach information science from a background perspective of language technology, which provides much needed critical and ethical reflections. As current developments in the field of information science and artificial intelligence (AI) are largely related to language technology, this programme is highly relevant in the academic and professional field. While the panel understands and appreciates the choice to embed the programme in the humanities faculty, it also sees that it creates some challenges, especially with regard to recruitment of students and possibly lecturers as well. In the interviews, the programme explained that marketing and recruitment used to be organized at faculty level but are now located closer to the programme. The panel sees opportunities in more collaboration with other faculties, in order to strengthen the programme's visibility, brand, and reputation. At the moment, the programme has a somewhat isolated position, according to the panel, which also affects the inflow of students. The programme would benefit from building bridges to related programmes in the university. In that context, the programme mentioned an initiative called the 'AI hub', which brings together researchers and lecturers associated with AI-related education. The AI hub wants to join forces to improve the visibility of AI-related programmes. At the moment, for example, they are working on developing a university-wide minor. The programme hopes that the AI-hub may be leveraged to promote the bachelor IS. The panel encourages the programme to further invest in this initiative and also explore other possibilities to improve the programme's visibility and brand.

Master CIS

The master CIS aims to educate students to become academically trained experts in communicating complex issues and critically analysing digital information products and processes. Students are trained to combine theory, skills, and methods in order to contribute to effective and sustainable communication and information processing. The programme is interdisciplinary and focuses on language, communication, digital media, and information management. Students learn to perform advanced research on communication- and information-related topics with a critical reflection on relevant societal and technological developments. The panel is positive about the programme's profile, which is well aligned with the developments in the academic and professional field. The panel also appreciates the international focus of the programme.

At the moment of the site visit, the programme had five tracks: Communication Studies (CS), Communication and Education (CE), Computer-Mediated Communication (CC), Digital Humanities (DH), and Information Science (IS). As of academic year 2025-2026, the number of tracks is reduced to three tracks, with the first three communication tracks merged into one new track 'Communication Studies'. The panel agrees with the revision of the tracks and thinks it will lead to a more coherent programme. The resulting three tracks each have a clear profile and corresponding target audience. While the CS track focuses on how language and media shape communication in diverse contexts, the DH track combines computational analysis and skills with theoretical reflections on societal issues, and the IS track centres around computational linguistics, AI, data management, algorithms, and large language models. The panel considers all tracks to be relevant in light of the current (developments in the) field of communication and information studies. The IS track, much like the bachelor IS, is less organically embedded in the faculty and the programme. The panel much appreciates the fact that this track is part of the master CIS, since the computational aspects are enriched with perspectives from linguistics and humanities. In order to strengthen the track's position, the panel encourages the programme to improve collaboration with other related programmes and faculties, possibly through the AI hub, as described earlier.

Intended learning outcomes

For the bachelor CIS, 15 intended learning outcomes (ILOs) were formulated. The ILOs of the two tracks are identical. For the bachelor IS, 22 ILOs are described. For the master CIS, 16 ILOs were formulated, two of which were further specified per track. The ILOs of all three programmes are categorized along the five Dublin descriptors and thereby match the corresponding levels of the of the Dutch qualification framework NLQF (see appendix 1 for an overview of the ILOs). The panel considers the ILOs of all three programmes to be well formulated and appropriate for the academic bachelor's/master's level. The ILOs cover all relevant topics and competencies, are well aligned with the international academic field, and match well with the needs and expectations of the professional field, according to the panel.

Professional field

The panel sees that the three programmes are well connected with the professional field, which is evident in the curricula and the attention devoted to professional skills, amongst others. However, the panel thinks that the systematic alignment with the professional field needs to be improved. Current connections are mostly ad hoc and/or informal, while it is important to involve representatives of the professional field structurally and formally in the development and fine-tuning of the ILOs and curricula (especially given the current revisions of the bachelor curricula). The panel recommends the programmes to install a professional advisory board, including alumni of the programmes. This board should be regularly consulted about the ILOs and the curricula, so as to continually keep the programmes aligned with (developments in) the professional field. For the bachelor IS and the master track IS specifically, the professional advisory board may also play a role in strengthening the visibility and branding of the programme/track, as well as contribute to the recruitment of students.

Considerations

The panel is positive about all three programmes' profiles, which are well aligned with the developments in the professional and academic field of communication and information studies. The broad, interdisciplinary profile of the bachelor CIS is distinctive. The panel also appreciates the programme's strongly research-driven and international orientation. The strength of the profile of the bachelor IS lies in its integration of various disciplines and the combination of theory and practical skills. The bachelor IS has a unique position as an Information Science programme in a humanities faculty. This position benefits the programme in the sense that information science is studied from the perspective of language technology, including the much needed critical and ethical reflections. At the same time, the position creates challenges regarding

recruitment of students and possibly lecturers as well. The panel sees opportunities in more collaboration with other faculties, in order to strengthen the programme's visibility, brand, and reputation. The 'AI hub' initiative may play a role in this respect. Strong aspects of the master CIS's profile are its interdisciplinary approach and international focus. The panel agrees with the planned reduction of five to three tracks (as of academic year 2025-2026), which is expected to lead to a more coherent programme. The panel much appreciates the IS track as part of this master, as it allows the computational aspects to be enriched with perspectives from linguistics and humanities. Similar to the bachelor IS, however, this track would benefit from more collaboration with other related programmes and faculties, to strengthen its position.

The panel considers the ILOs of the three programmes to be well formulated and well aligned to the bachelor's and master's level as described in the Dublin descriptors and the NLQF framework. They cover all relevant topics and skills and match with the international academic field as well as the professional field. Although the programmes have good (mostly ad hoc and/or informal) connections with the professional field, the panel thinks that the systematic alignment with the professional field needs to be improved. The panel recommends the programmes to install a professional advisory board, including alumni of the programmes, and regularly consult it about the ILOs and the curricula.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 1.

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

Bachelor CIS

The bachelor CIS consists of 180 EC and is offered as a three-year fulltime programme (see appendix 2 for an overview of the curriculum). The curriculum's design is based on six learning trajectories: analysing communication, research methods, academic skills, communication design, corporate and marketing communication, and digital communication. All learning trajectories are introduced in the first year, with the main focus on the learning trajectory 'analysing communication'. In the subsequent years, the six learning trajectories are continued and increasingly intertwined in courses. The curricula for the Dutch and international track offer the same courses for the most part. The difference lies in the language of instruction, with about a third of the courses (including the thesis) being taught in Dutch in the Dutch track. Also, in the Dutch track, the class assignments and cases used are more geared towards the Dutch language and context. In both tracks, the first year consists of twelve mandatory 5 EC courses. The first semester of the second year offers six mandatory 5 EC courses, while the second semester includes three (for the international track) or four (for the Dutch track) mandatory 5 EC courses and 10-15 EC of restricted electives. In the first semester of the third year, students follow a minor within the university or at another university (abroad). The final semester includes the 10 EC course 'Case study CIS', two 5 EC electives, and the 10 EC bachelor thesis in which students carry out a research project individually. For the thesis, the programme offers a variety of topics, based on the expertise of staff, that students can subscribe to.

The panel considers the bachelor CIS's curriculum to be well designed. The six learning trajectories provide a coherent structure, allowing students to progress from a basic to advanced level. The curriculum covers all relevant topics and skills related to the ILOs. The interdisciplinary approach evident in the curriculum, is a strength of the programme. Besides this, the curriculum has a strongly international focus while also allowing Dutch students to connect with the Dutch context and language in the Dutch track. In the interview, the students indicated they are content with the curriculum. They appreciate the elective space that allows them to follow their own interests and develop specific expertise. They also mentioned that they are enabled to connect with the professional world, for example through the company visits organized in the first year. The study association plays an active role in organizing career preparation activities. The panel recognizes the programme's strong link with the professional practice.

Bachelor IS

The bachelor IS consists of 180 EC and is offered as a three-year fulltime programme (see appendix 2 for an overview of the curriculum). The curriculum is structured along five thematic learning lines: scientific skills and reflection, programming and quantitative methods, language and communication, language technology, and web technology and databases. The first year is focused on introductory courses and skills courses, while the second and third year offer more advanced courses. The first and second year both consist of twelve mandatory 5 EC courses from all five learning lines. The first semester of the third year is dedicated to the minor (within the university or at another university (abroad)). In the final semester, students take four mandatory 5 EC courses and write their 10 EC bachelor thesis. In the thesis project, students start with a thesis seminar in groups of 7-10 students supervised by a staff member. Each group focuses on a specific research topic. Students first carry out literature research and then formulate a research question. In the second part of the thesis project, students work on their thesis, which involves (collaborative) data collection and annotation.

According to the panel, the curriculum is well structured along the learning lines, providing a clear progression of various elements of the programme. It represents a valuable integration of computational techniques, linguistics, and communication, which matches well with the programme's profile and ILOs. The curriculum reflects a strong link with the professional practice and devotes ample attention to professional skills. The panel also appreciates the attention for the ethical aspects of language technology, as is evident in the course 'Ethical Aspects of Natural Language Processing' for example. Furthermore, from the interviews it became clear how evolutions in technology are immediately integrated into the curriculum.

Students mentioned that some courses in the first year are not sufficiently challenging in terms of level. The interviews clarified that this is related to the diverse inflow, as some students already have programming skills while others do not. Since there is no admission requirement regarding programming skills, the programme needs to start at the most basic level. In the interview, students explained that there is quite a difference in level between students, especially in the first year. Courses on programming skills are repetition for some students, while others have to work hard to keep up. Nevertheless, the students understand that the basic skills need to be taught to enable all students to learn programming skills. They also explained that the majority of lecturers makes sure to differentiate in order to provide more skilled students with sufficient challenge. In the second year, the differences have mostly levelled out. The panel understands the challenge regarding the diverse inflow and thinks that the programme handles it appropriately.

Master CIS

The master CIS consists of 60 EC and is offered as a one-year fulltime programme (see appendix 2 for an overview of the curriculum). The DH, IS, and CC tracks are fully taught in English, while the CE track is taught in Dutch and the CS track in a combination of Dutch and English. The tracks each have their own curriculum,

with some shared courses across multiple tracks. All tracks result in a master thesis. The master thesis comprises 20 EC, except for the DH track which has a 15 EC master thesis preceded by the 5 EC course 'Thesis Lab' in which students are guided in developing a solid research proposal. In all tracks, the thesis is an individual and independent research project on a relevant topic, including quantitative and/or qualitative data collection.

In the CS track, the master thesis is the only mandatory course. For the remaining 40 EC, students choose from a list of sixteen 5-10 EC courses. The CE track consists of the master thesis and four mandatory 10 EC courses, including a professional internship. In the CC track, students take one mandatory 5 EC course ('Conversational Interfaces: Theory') besides the master thesis. For the remaining 35 EC, students choose from a list of seven 5-10 EC courses. The IS track includes two mandatory 5 EC courses ('Research Seminar' and 'Shared Task Information Science') besides the master thesis. The remaining 30 EC is chosen from a list of eleven 5-10 EC courses. In the DH track, all courses are mandatory. Besides the 15 EC master thesis, the track offers nine 5 EC courses. All tracks except the DH track offer the possibility to do a 10 EC professional internship.

In the opinion of the panel, the curricula of all tracks are well designed and well aligned with the programme's profile and ILOs. A variety of topics and skills is addressed in the curriculum, covering all relevant aspects. The panel notes that the tracks' curricula are quite separate, with limited overlap between the tracks. All tracks do, however, match well with the overall programme profile and the field of communication and information science. The panel appreciates the combination of theory and practice evident in the curriculum, for example in the course 'Living Lab' (from the CS track) in which students create and evaluate communication products to address environmental challenges in collaboration with stakeholders from the university's Green Office, and the course 'Computer-mediated Communication' (from the CC track) in which students apply their theoretical knowledge to a real-world problem provided by an ICT company. The fact that most tracks offer a professional internship further adds to this strength.

As is the case with the bachelor IS, the DH track in the master CIS has quite a diverse inflow resulting in big differences in entry level regarding programming skills, since the admission requirements do not include prior knowledge on programming/coding. The interviews made clear to the panel that the programme provides sufficient support for students of all levels to develop these skills, for instance through lab sessions supervised by lecturers and/or student assistants (which are often connected to information science or computational language technology).

<u>All programmes</u>
According to the panel, the curricula of the three programmes all reflect a strong link between research and education. The curricula are well embedded in the department's research groups. The panel also concludes that the programmes succeed at finding the right balance between offering solid foundational knowledge and incorporating state-of-the-art knowledge and current societal developments. The panel was also pleased to hear how the programmes train students to use artificial intelligence (AI) in a responsible way. There are assignments in which the use of AI is not allowed, for example when students need to develop language skills. In other courses, however, students are trained to use AI in an ethical and accountable way.

According to the panel, attention for professional skills and the link to the professional field are strengths of the programmes. However, students mentioned that they felt that the attention for professional skills and career preparation could be improved. Since the panel thinks that the programmes provide students with a lot of opportunities for developing professional skills and getting acquainted with the labour market, it wondered whether this complaint is partly an issue of expectation management. In the interviews, the

programmes indicated that they agree with the panel: the programmes do include professional skills and career orientation but students can feel ill-prepared for the labour market nevertheless. This may partly be caused by the fact that the programmes do not necessarily prepare for very specific job profiles, which may cause some anxiety among students. The programmes explained they are reflecting on how to better highlight the professional skills in the curricula for students and how to better inform them about career options, e.g. by inviting alumni to share career stories. Also, academic skills are transferable skills, much like professional skills. This can be explained more explicitly to students, so that they become more aware of the relevance of academic skills in the labour market. The panel agrees with the programmes and encourages them to continue to communicate with students about this.

At the moment of the site visit, the bachelor programmes were in the process of curriculum revision, in response to faculty-wide policy regarding all bachelor's programmes. This new policy is related to budget cuts and entails that a maximum of eight assessment moments per year is allowed (which means that some courses need to be converted into 10 EC courses) and that two 10 EC faculty-wide courses have to be incorporated in the curriculum. According to the panel, the interviews demonstrate that the new policy has been well communicated by the faculty. Also, lecturers were invited to actively participate in the development of the faculty-wide courses. The panel is impressed with how the staff has embraced the revision with an open attitude. Even though the revision undoubtedly requires some difficult and painful decisions, the staff mostly sees it as an opportunity for a redesign and improvement of the curriculum. The panel commends the staff for this mindset. It is confident that the process of redesign will be properly executed.

Learning environment
In line with the university-wide teaching philosophy, the didactics in all three programmes centre on active learning. Teaching typically takes place in small-scale settings with a lot of opportunities for interaction and collaboration between students and staff. Students are stimulated to take ownership of their learning process. The panel is impressed with the activating learning and teaching methods applied in the programmes, such as case-based teaching and the incorporation of fieldwork assignments (in the bachelor CIS), the frequent lab sessions (in the bachelor IS as well as the IS and DH tracks in the master CIS) in which students work on practical (programming) assignments, and real-life assignments for clients (in the master CIS). Students indicated that they are content with the small-scale and interactive learning environment which allows them to take on an active role and develop critical thinking skills. The panel hopes that the small-scale and activating learning environment can be maintained in spite of budget cuts. Students also appreciate the open atmosphere. They indicated that lecturers and the programme management are open to their feedback and that improvement points are taken seriously, creating an environment in which they feel heard.

Both the bachelor and master CIS are characterized by an international environment. On average, around half of the CIS bachelor's student population is international. The percentage of international students in the master CIS fluctuated between 12 and 62% in the past few years. The panel considers the international nature of the programmes to be a very strong aspect, allowing for a culturally diverse classroom. From the interviews, it is clear that this intercultural and inclusive environment is perceived as a very valuable aspect of the programmes by both staff and students. The diversity in the student group clearly enriches the learning process of students as they benefit from getting acquainted with diverse perspectives and examples. The students also mentioned that they appreciate the international composition of the teaching team.

Language of instruction

Both the bachelor and the master CIS are (partly) taught in English and have an English programme title. According to the panel, the choice for English as the language of instruction is justified as it follows logically from the inherent international nature of the field of communication and information studies. Students are educated for professional environments that are international and in which English is the common language. For students who want to focus on the Dutch context and language, the Dutch bachelor track, which focuses more on the Dutch context and in which a third of the courses is taught in Dutch, is available. In the master, the CS and CE track are (partly) taught in Dutch.

Guidance

In terms of individual courses, students are guided by the lecturers. During the thesis project in the bachelors CIS and IS, students are individually supervised. To further support the students, weekly plenary seminars are scheduled during the first part of the thesis project, supervised by a staff member, in which students discuss literature and develop their research questions and designs. Students write a research proposal, which needs to be approved before the research project is carried out. The thesis project is structured by firm deadlines. In the master, students also have an individual thesis supervisor, with whom they have (bi-)weekly meetings. During the internships in the master, students receive guidance from an internal supervisor (from the programme) and an external supervisor (from the host organization).

At programme level, student guidance is provided by study advisors. The study advisors provide information about the curriculum and advise students about the choices they can make. They are also the central point of contact for questions about study delay or personal issues. When needed, study advisors can refer students to extra support offered by the Student Service Centre, such as student psychologists and counsellors, or courses and support groups related to study skills. The study advisors also provide information about studying with a disability and assist students in the application process for special arrangements. The Board of Examiners (BoE) decides on special arrangements, based on the university-wide policy plan about studying with a disability.

Besides support from the study advisors, guidance for first- and second-year bachelor students is also provided through the mentoring programme. Students are linked to a lecturer-mentor as well as one or two student-mentors. The mentors provide guidance with regard to wellbeing, study progress, etc.

The panel is very positive about student guidance in the programmes. This was confirmed by the students, who indicated that they are satisfied with the guidance from supervisors, study advisors, and mentors. Supervision during the thesis project is well organized. Overall guidance is provided by the study advisors, and extra support is available through the Student Service Centre. The panel considers the facilities for students with a disability to be appropriate and sufficient.

Intake and feasibility

The admission criteria are laid down in the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER). The Admissions Board assesses applications and decides on admission. To be admitted to the bachelor CIW or IS, applicants need to have a VWO-diploma or a propaedeutic certificate from an HBO-programme (university of applied science). Applicants who are 21+ years old, can take an entrance examination (colloquium doctum) to be admitted. For the bachelor IS, there is an additional requirement regarding mathematics. For the master CIS, a relevant academic bachelor's degree is required including course content related to communication and information studies. More specific requirements regarding prior education apply for the different tracks. There are also language requirements for Dutch or English, depending on the chosen track. For students with a professional bachelor's degree (HBO), a 60 EC premaster is required. The panel agrees with the admission criteria for all three programmes and considers them appropriate.

With respect to the bachelor CIS, study success has fluctuated in the past years. The proportion of students graduating within three years decreased around 2017-2018, which, according to the programme, is probably related to the Covid pandemic. In the past few years, starting in 2019, this number increased again to nearly half of the students. About three-quarters of the students graduated within four years. For the bachelor IS, around a third of the students graduated within three years in the past period of time, and between two-thirds and three-quarters of the students graduated within four years. For the master CIS, between a third and half of the students graduated within one year since 2019, and between two-thirds and three-quarters within two years. The panel considers the programmes to be feasible within the time allocated. No major obstacles to study progress were identified in the curricula or teaching-learning environment. In the interviews, students confirmed the feasibility of the programmes.

Teaching staff
The bachelor CIS is taught by a team of over 30 lecturers who are connected to various research groups, most notably 'CIW in Particular Language and Social Interaction', 'Communication and Cognition', and 'Discourse Studies'. The teaching team of the master CIS partly overlaps with the staff involved in the bachelor IS and the bachelor CIS, and consists of over 40 lecturers, representing both communication-focused and computational-focused research groups. The panel is positive about the teaching teams of the bachelor and master CIS, and appreciates the international composition of the teams, which contributes to the intercultural learning environment. The lecturers are clearly research-driven and experts in their field.

The bachelor IS is taught by a team of 18 lecturers associated with the research group Computational Linguistics. According to the panel, the teaching team represents high quality and expertise in all relevant areas. The lecturers are firmly embedded in a well-respected research group, which strengthens the connection between research and education.

Nearly all lecturers from the three programmes have a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). No registration of English proficiency from the bachelor and master CIS lecturers was available in the documentation. However, based on the documentation and the interviews, the panel has no reason to suspect any problems in this area and considers the English proficiency of lecturers who teach in English to be sufficient. With regard to all three programmes, the panel notes that the lecturers function as a true team. The interviews made clear that there is good communication, collaboration, and alignment within the teams. Furthermore, students are very positive about the lecturers. According to the students, lecturers are competent and very responsive. They have a personal approach, are easily accessible and are willing to offer extra help.

With regard to the teaching staff of the bachelor and master CIS, the programmes indicated that the current staff composition is not balanced in terms of seniority. In recent years there have been many changes, including the retirement of several full professors. At the moment, the CIS team includes only one full professor. The programme management indicated that the team should have at least four full professors and four associate professors, according to the faculty's criteria. The panel recognizes this challenge and recommends the faculty to make sure that a more balanced staff composition is realized. The current composition is out of balance, and more full professors are needed, especially given the size of the departments and the number of students in these programmes. Therefore, the panel recommends filling the vacancies for the full professors as quickly as possible. This is important to maintain the educational quality and to ensure the robustness and resilience of the programmes. Furthermore, the lack of full professors negatively impacts how these programmes and departments are represented towards the Faculty Board, and in various policy processes and committees.

Facilities and information

For the online learning environment, the programmes make use of Brightspace. On Brightspace, students can find course syllabi and other information on course details. Students indicated that they are positive about the information provision. The panel thinks that the Brightspace environment is well designed. All relevant information is available to students in a structured way.

The panel is also content with the facilities available to students, such as free software needed for the programmes. For the bachelor IS and the IS and DH master tracks, adequate computers and software are available for the lab sessions and other classes. Students can also access the university's Linux servers for time-consuming computational tasks, request access to the university's High Performance Cluster, and use the university's Virtual Reality facilities. Students from the DH track can make use of the DH-lab, a dedicated space where students can work and consult data scientists.

Considerations

According to the panel, the curricula of all three programmes are well designed and aligned with the programmes' ILOs and profile, covering all relevant topics. Strong aspects include the integration of various disciplines, the strong link between research and education, a good balance between solid foundational knowledge and state-of-the-art insights and societal developments, the way in which students are trained to use AI in a responsible way, and attention for the professional skills and context. The bachelor programmes are in the process of a curriculum revision, in response to a faculty-wide policy change. The panel is impressed with how the staff has embraced the required revision with an open attitude, seeing it as an opportunity for a redesign and improvement of the curriculum. The bachelor IS and the DH track in the master CIS are both dealing with diverse entrance levels of students regarding programming/coding skills, since no prior knowledge in this area is required for admission. The panel understands the challenges this situation creates and thinks that the programmes handle these adequately, by offering extra support and extra challenges where possible and appropriate.

The bachelor and master CIS are partly taught in English, which, according to the panel, follows logically from the inherent international nature of the field of communication and information studies. For students who want to focus on the Dutch context and language, tracks taught (partly) in Dutch are available. The learning environment of the three programmes is characterized by a focus on active learning in small-scale teaching settings allowing for interaction and collaboration between students and staff. Students appreciate the activating environment and teaching methods. They also value the open atmosphere, which makes them feel heard. The bachelor and master CIS are strongly internationally focused, allowing for a culturally diverse classroom. The panel considers this intercultural and inclusive environment to be a strength of the programmes, enriching the learning process.

According to the panel, the admission criteria are appropriate. The panel also considers the programmes to be feasible within the allocated time. The panel is very positive about the overall student guidance in the programmes, provided by study advisors and mentors. Thesis supervision is also well structured. Facilities for students with a disability are appropriate and sufficient. Students have easy access to all relevant information through the well-structured Brightspace environment. The study facilities are appropriate. For students of the bachelor IS and the DH and IS master tracks, extra facilities in terms of computers/servers and software are available.

The teaching staff of the three programmes represents high quality and expertise in all relevant areas. Lecturers are firmly embedded in research groups, which strengthens the connection between research and

education. The panel appreciates the international composition of the bachelor and master CIS's teaching team which clearly contributes to the intercultural learning environment. According to the panel, lecturers involved in the three programmes are didactically qualified. Furthermore, they are responsive and accessible towards students. There is good collaboration and alignment within the teaching teams. With regard to the teaching teams involved in the bachelor and master CIS, the panel recommends making sure that a more balanced staff composition is realized and filling the vacancies for the full professors as quickly as possible. This is essential for maintaining the educational quality, ensuring the robustness and resilience of the programmes, and ensuring balanced representation of the programmes and departments towards the Faculty Board, and in various policy processes and committees.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment system

Assessment in the programmes is based on their vision on teaching and assessment, as described in the assessment plans. The programmes' vision emphasizes a combination of formative and summative assessment in each course, in order to provide students with sufficient feedback to learn and grow. The documentation includes a matrix for each programme that demonstrates in which courses the ILOs are assessed. The matrices show that each ILO is assessed in multiple courses, enabling students to gradually achieve the final exit level in all areas.

The panel considers the assessment in the three programmes to be well designed. In the bachelor CIS, a wide variety of appropriate assessment methods is applied, including exams, (weekly) assignments, (poster) presentations, papers, literature reviews, portfolios, (research) reports, and participation. The bachelor IS also makes use of diverse and appropriate assessment methods, such as (written) exams, (project) reports, essays, (weekly) assignments, presentations, and (group) projects. The assignments mostly concern tasks related to programming, data collection, statistics, or evaluation. In the master CIS, the assessment methods are predominantly assignments, such as literature reviews, essays, lab assignments, (group) projects, and presentations. Besides this, written exams are sometimes used, for instance for assessing coding skills in the DH track. According to the panel, the mix of formative and summative assessment is well balanced in all three programmes. Furthermore, the panel appreciates the fine mix of theoretical and practical assessment. Assessment is also transparent and clearly communicated to students of the programmes. Students are informed about the details of assessment in the course syllabi.

The university's assessment policy requires that assessments are peer-reviewed before they are administered. Assessment forms with criteria are used for grading assignments and presentations. The interviews made clear that when courses are taught by a team of lecturers, the lecturers discuss the assessment in order to calibrate. The panel concludes that appropriate measures are taken to improve and assure the quality of assessment in the programmes.

In the interviews, the panel was informed about how the programmes deal with AI with respect to assessment. There is a university-wide policy on AI, which allows individual courses to determine if and how

AI can be used. The programmes explained that in some courses, students are not allowed to use AI, especially when the assessment concerns language or coding skills. For the assessment of coding skills, the programmes typically use handwritten exams to prevent the use of AI. In other courses, students are allowed to use AI responsibly when appropriate, which means that they have to be transparent about what they have done. In yet other courses, students have to work with AI as critical users. The panel sees that the programmes are well aware of AI-related issues and are quite up-to-date and proactive in handling these. It thinks that there are some good practices (such as the handwritten exams for coding) that may benefit other programmes.

Thesis assessment
For all three programmes, the thesis is considered to be the final student project in which students demonstrate that they have achieved the ILOs. Thesis assessment is always done by two independent assessors (one of which is the thesis supervisor). Assessment of the thesis is based on the content (quality of the research), the report, and the process. The first two aspects are assessed by the supervisor and the second assessor. The third aspect is assessed by the supervisor only. The two assessors first grade the thesis independently, on the basis of an assessment form, and then decide on a final grade together. In case the two assessors cannot agree on the grade or when there is a large difference between their individual grades, the BoE can appoint a third reader.

According to the panel, the thesis assessment procedure is well set up. The panel is pleased to see that the four eyes principle is applied. The panel is also positive about the thesis assessment forms. As part of the preparation for the site visit, the panel reviewed a sample of 15 theses from each of the three programmes, including the filled-in assessment forms. The panel generally agrees with the grades awarded to the theses included in the sample. It is also positive about the assessment process demonstrated in the forms. The procedure is transparent and scores are substantiated with written feedback.

The panel did notice that there are differences between programmes and tracks with regard to the followed procedure and assessment forms used. The panel also noticed differences in the quantity and quality of the written feedback on the assessment forms. In the interviews, the programmes explained that a new digital system (‘On the go’) was recently implemented in the faculty. Some programmes/tracks however, in this case most notably the bachelor IS and the master track IS, are still using the ‘old’ forms, which provide less information on the entire procedure followed by the two assessors. The panel recommends improving consistency across programmes and tracks regarding the thesis assessment procedures, assessment forms and written feedback.

The panel also recommends organizing regular calibration sessions for thesis assessors. The interviews made clear that, although the programmes considered it multiple times, this was not implemented so far. In light of consistency across assessors, the panel considers it important that they regularly calibrate, by examining a sample of theses and discussing their grading together.

Board of Examiners
The programmes fall under the responsibility of the faculty-wide BoE. For each cluster of programmes, there is an expert team that handles most of the programme-specific tasks. The chair of each expert team is a member of the BoE. Besides appointing examiners and handling requests and complaints, the BoE and the expert teams perform several activities to safeguard the quality of assessment in the programmes. One of these activities is the yearly examination of a sample of assessment dossiers. In this process, the assessment in a course is checked with regard to alignment, assessment criteria, quality of the exam, consistency between assessors, quality of the feedback, and whether the procedures were followed correctly. Each

course is evaluated by the expert team once every five years. Another activity is the examination of a sample of theses and their assessments. In the interview, the BoE and expert team indicated that no major issues were identified with regarding the bachelor en master CIS and the bachelor IS in the past few years.

The panel is very positive about the BoE and the expert team. It considers the BoE to be independent, competent, in control, and proactive with regard to safeguarding the assessment quality in the programmes. The BoE has a firm position in the faculty and collaborates well with the programmes and Faculty Board. The panel is pleased to see that the BoE is proactive with regard to AI policies, and is closely involved in the development of faculty- and university-wide policy on AI. It is clear that valuable discussions take place about how AI may be used by students in an ethical and responsible way.

Considerations

The panel considers the assessment in all three programmes to be well designed, allowing students to achieve the final exit level for all ILOs. In all programmes, a wide variety of appropriate assessment methods is applied, reflecting a good mix of formative and summative assessment as well as theoretical and practical assessment. Appropriate measures are taken by the programmes to improve and assure the quality of assessment, such as the peer-review of assessments and the use of assessment forms. The panel appreciates how the programmes handle AI-related issues in a proactive way. The thesis assessment procedure is well structured. Theses are assessed by two assessors, based on an assessment form, including written feedback. The panel did notice differences between programmes and tracks with regard to the followed procedure and assessment forms used. It recommends improving consistency across programmes and tracks regarding the thesis assessment procedures, assessment forms and written feedback. Additionally, the panel recommends organizing regular calibration sessions for thesis assessors, to further improve consistency across assessors. The panel considers the BoE to be independent, competent, in control, and proactive with regard to safeguarding the assessment quality in the programmes.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Theses

As mentioned earlier, all three programmes regard the thesis as the final student project, demonstrating the level that students have achieved. The panel reviewed a sample of 15 theses per programme. The panel concludes that the theses from all programmes are of high quality, reflecting a level that is appropriate for an academic bachelor's/master's programme. Regarding the theses of the bachelor CIS, the panel appreciates how the theses reflect a thorough understanding of both theory and methods. The panel is also positive about the broad range of topics addressed in the theses. With respect to the bachelor IS, the panel was pleased to hear that some theses even result in scientific publications. The same applies to the master CIS, where some theses lead to publications. The master theses address diverse topics and are well structured.

Alumni

According to the panel, it is evident from the documentation and the interviews that graduates from the bachelor CIS and IS are well equipped to continue in a master's programme or to enter the labour market.

Most students choose to pursue a master's programme, while only a small proportion of alumni starts working immediately.

Based on the documentation and the interviews, the panel is positive about how graduates of the master CIS perform in the professional field. Alumni indicated that they generally felt well prepared for the labour market and found a job relatively easily. The available data on alumni confirm this perception. Many alumni work in positions such as communications officer/consultant, manager, marketeer, digital communications/application consultant, or teacher/trainer. Additionally, some graduates continue with a PhD trajectory.

Considerations

Based on the review of a sample of 15 theses per programme, the panel concludes that the level demonstrated in the theses is appropriate for an academic bachelor's/master's programme. The documentation and the interviews indicate that graduates of the bachelors CIS and IS are well prepared to follow a master's programme. Graduates of the master CIS are well prepared for and prove to be successful in the professional field.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel's assessment of the programmes is positive.

Recommendations

1. All programmes: install a professional advisory board, including alumni of the programmes, and consult it regularly about the ILOs and the curricula, so as to continually keep the programmes aligned with (developments in) the professional field.
2. CIS programmes: make sure that a more balanced staff composition is realized. Fill the vacancies for full professors as quickly as possible in order to maintain the educational quality, ensure the robustness and resilience of the programmes, and ensure balanced representation of the programmes and departments towards the Faculty Board, as well as in various policy processes and committees.
3. All programmes: improve consistency across programmes and tracks regarding the thesis assessment procedures, assessment forms and written feedback.
4. All programmes: organize regular calibration sessions for thesis assessors.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies
Graduates must demonstrate:
1. Knowledge and understanding:
Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and exceeds the level achieved in secondary education, and is typically at a level which, whilst supported by specialist textbooks, includes some aspects that require knowledge of the latest developments in the field.
1. knowledge of theories and research methods that form the basis for an academic approach to the use of language, text, and images in institutional communication contexts
2. the ability to understand the structure of the field and the relationship between the various subfields, and to reproduce and explain their basic knowledge of CIS in a coherent way
3. the ability to put new data and interpretations into context
4. knowledge and understanding of an additional (different) field, acquired by following a Minor in order to either broaden or deepen the Major programme

2. Applying knowledge and understanding:
Graduates are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that demonstrates a professional approach to their job or profession, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field.
1. the ability to apply the acquired knowledge, understanding, and skills to the systematic and critical evaluation of a wide variety of concepts, ideas, and data (which may be incomplete) and to the identification and analysis of complex/complicated problems and issues
2. the ability to understand and apply the main principles of methodology and theory formulation in the field, particularly in a research project that meets the professional demands of the field, but where the boundaries of the subject do not yet have to be tested
3. the ability to relate relevant concepts from the field to data in an analytically appropriate manner by using both qualitative and quantitative research methods
4. the ability to independently set up and carry out a research project of limited scope
5. skills related to the field studied in situations and contexts of a professional or similar nature, which require personal responsibility, self-discipline, initiative, and the necessary leadership to be demonstrated, where decisions are taken in complex and unpredictable situations, where people must think and write under time pressure and cope with deadlines, and where further developments in the professional field are facilitated
6. IT skills, i.e. word processing, file management, the use of spreadsheets and databases, creating presentations, mastery of techniques in the field of digital information provision and communication

3. Opinion forming:
Graduates are able to
collect and interpret relevant data (usually in the field of study) to form an opinion that is also based on the consideration of relevant social, academic, or ethical aspects.
1. the ability to assess the value of research within the field and to interpret its results in terms of practical implications, for example in the form of recommendations or practical measures
2. the ability to apply knowledge, understanding, and skills to the identification and analysis of complex problems and questions.

4. Communication

Graduates are able to communicate information, ideas, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
1. the ability to reliably and accurately communicate the results of their specific study and other work, thereby making use of the most important concepts, attitudes, and techniques in the subject
2. the ability to apply strategies to prepare and present oral and written presentations efficiently and purposefully with an eye to quality, both individually and as part of a team

5. Learning skills:
Graduates have the learning skills required to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.
5.1 the ability to systematically identify and address their own learning needs in relation to current and emerging issues, making use of relevant research, developments, and subject-specific material, including the most recent developments in the field.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies
Graduates of the Master's degree programme in Communication and Information Studies have:
1. Knowledge and understanding:
Graduates have demonstrable knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances what is typically associated with the Bachelor's level and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and /or applying ideas within a research context.
1.1 knowledge of at least one area at the cutting edge of Communication and Information Studies; in other words, are familiar with the latest theories, interpretations, methods and techniques
[CK] a. knowledge and understanding of the forms, functions and effects of the use of language, text and image in institutional communication
[CK] b. knowledge and understanding of theories and research methodologies in the field of communication studies
[CK] c. knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories in the field of linguistic communication skills and the development of those skills
[CK] d. knowledge and understanding of various aspects and approaches of digital, multimodal, and AI communication
[CK] e. knowledge and understanding of theories and research methodologies current within the fields of digital, multimodal, and AI communication and of recent developments in research in these fields
[IS] a. knowledge and understanding of computational and statistical methods and techniques relevant to information science/humanities computing
[IS] b. knowledge and understanding of recent developments in research in the field of language and web technology, and computer communication
[DH] a. knowledge and understanding of the theories and research methodologies in the field of digital humanities
[DH] b. knowledge and understanding of the influence of digitization and digital methodologies on society and the humanities
1.2 understanding of the structure of the discipline and the relationship between its various branches
1.3 the ability to make an original contribution to one or several branches of the field of Communication and Information Studies

2. Applying knowledge and understanding:
Graduates have the ability to apply their knowledge and understanding and problem-solving abilities in new and unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their domains of study, and to integrate knowledge and handle complexity.
2.1 knowledge of and skills in the methodologies and techniques related to the field

2.2 the ability to apply methodologies and techniques to the independent design and implementation of a research project
[CK] a. the ability to research complex academic or practice-related problems and issues based on the acquired knowledge and understanding and using qualitative and quantitative methods
[CK] b. the ability to analyse problems in the fields of digital, multimodal, and AI communication from a theoretical perspective and come up with well-founded and target group-oriented solutions
[IS] the ability to apply computational and statistical methodologies and techniques when analysing and resolving practice-related and academic language and communication issues
[DH] the ability to use their knowledge and understanding to select suitable digital methodologies and technologies and apply them to research on interdisciplinary humanities or practice-related problems and issues
2.3 the ability to use the results of research for further theory formation or to develop practical applications
2.4 the ability to demonstrate originality and creativity in handling the subject area
2.5 the ability to independently tackle and solve problems and independently plan and execute tasks at a professional or similar level

3. Making judgements:
Graduates have the ability to formulate judgements based on incomplete or limited information, bearing in mind social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements.
3.1 the ability to grasp, interpret, and evaluate the changing state of theory formation and the search for truth
3.2 the ability to systematically and creatively deal with complex issues and to form a reasoned judgement
3.3 the ability to demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility
3.4 the ability to take well-founded decisions in complex and unpredictable situations

4. Communication:
Graduates have the ability to communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously.
4.1 the ability to clearly impart conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences
4.2 communication competences that are widely applicable in society: graduates are sensitive to context and have the ability to present products and services to the target audience, both independently and as part of a team

5. Learning skills:
Graduates have the learning skills to enable them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.
5.1 the ability to study independently with a view to ongoing professional development at an academic level
5.2 the ability to follow developments within the discipline and constantly revise their knowledge and understanding and develop new skills accordingly

CK = Communicatiekunde = Communication Studies; IS = Information Science; DH = Digital Humanities

Bachelor's programme Information Science
Een afgestudeerde Bachelor Informatiekunde heeft:
Kennis en inzicht
1. Student heeft aantoonbare kennis en inzicht van het vakgebied, waarbij wordt voortgebouwd op het niveau bereikt in het voortgezet onderwijs en dit wordt overtroffen; functioneert doorgaans op een niveau

waarop met ondersteuning van gespecialiseerde handboeken, enige aspecten voorkomen waarvoor kennis van de laatste ontwikkelingen in het vakgebied vereist is.
1.1 kennis van resp. inzicht in (i) communicatieprocessen en de rol die taal, tekst, beeld en geluid hierbij spelen, (ii) relevante informatiewetenschappelijke theorieën, en (iii) relevante en actuele taal- en webtechnologische benaderingen;
1.2 het vermogen om het vakgebied Informatiekunde, de samenhang tussen deelgebieden, en haar bijdrage aan de humaniora te begrijpen, en de basiskennis op het gebied van de Informatiekunde te kunnen reproduceren en toelichten op een samenhangende wijze;
1.3 Kennis en begrip van algemene programmeerbegrippen en –technieken;
1.4 Kennis en begrip van onderzoeksmethoden in de computationele taalkunde, van statistische methoden en technieken binnen de humaniora, en van evaluatiemethoden van informatiesystemen en interfaces;
1.5 het vermogen om taal- en webtechnologie toe te passen in nieuwe contexten, en onderzoeksmethoden toe te passen op nieuwe gegevens;
1.6 Kennis en inzicht in een aanvullend (ander) disciplinegebied, ter verbreding cq. verdieping van het hoofdvak-programma.

Toepassen kennis en inzicht
2. Student is in staat om zijn/haar kennis en inzicht op dusdanige wijze toe te passen, dat dit een professionele benadering van zijn/haar werk of beroep laat zien, en beschikt verder over competenties voor het opstellen en verdiepen van argumentaties en voor het oplossen van problemen op het vakgebied.
2.1 Vermogen om verworven kennis, begrip en vaardigheden toe te passen bij (i) het systematisch en kritisch analyseren en evalueren van bestaande informatiesystemen, en (ii) het zelfstandig of in een groep ontwikkelen van nieuwe, binnen de geesteswetenschappen relevante, databases, software en (interactieve) websites, met gebruikmaking van zelf geprogrammeerde of geschikt bevonden bestaande softwaremodules;
2.2 Vermogen om computationeel taalkundige onderzoeksmethoden, statistische methoden en technieken, en evaluatietechnieken te begrijpen en toe te passen op informatiekundige vraagstukken van beperkte omvang;
2.3 Vermogen om een beperkt experimenteel onderzoek op te zetten en uit te voeren, en hiervan verslag te doen in een vorm die voldoet aan de kwalitatieve criteria van wetenschappelijke literatuur;
2.4 Vermogen om voor het vakgebied relevante wetenschappelijke literatuur in het Nederlands en in het Engels te bestuderen, te begrijpen, en kritisch te beoordelen;
2.5 Vaardigheden om effectief gebruik te maken van algemene ICT-applicaties en statistische softwarepakketten;
2.6 Vaardigheden die verband houden met het bestudeerde vak in situaties en contexten van professionele of vergelijkbare aard, waar het een vereiste is dat persoonlijke verantwoordelijkheid, zelfdiscipline, initiatief en zo nodig leiderschap aan de dag worden gelegd; beslissingen worden genomen in complexe en onvoorspelbare situaties; gedacht en geschreven wordt onder tijdsdruk en omgegaan wordt met deadlines; verdere ontwikkeling op het professionele vlak tot stand gebracht kan worden.

Oordeelsvorming
3. Student is in staat om relevante gegevens te verzamelen en interpreteren (meestal op het vakgebied) met het doel een oordeel te vormen dat mede gebaseerd is op het afwegen van relevante sociaalmaatschappelijke, wetenschappelijke of ethische aspecten.
3.1 Vermogen kritisch te reflecteren op computationele en statistische benaderingen van taal, tekst en communicatie;
3.2 Vermogen onderzoek binnen het vakgebied op waarde te schatten en de resultaten ervan te interpreteren wat betreft hun praktische implicaties, bijv. in termen van aanbevelingen of praktijkmaatregelen;

3.3 Vermogen om kennis, begrip en vaardigheden toe te passen bij (i) het identificeren en analyseren van complexe informatiekundige problemen en vraagstukken, en (ii) het beoordelen van de bijdrage van taal- en webtechnologische oplossingen.
3.4 Vermogen om de gevolgen van ontwikkelingen op het gebied van de Informatiekunde en de impact daarvan op de maatschappij te overzien.

Communicatie
4. Student is in staat om informatie, ideeën en oplossingen over te brengen op publiek bestaande uit specialisten of niet-specialisten.
4.1 Vermogen om, individueel of in groepsverband, mondeling of schriftelijk, te communiceren over (i) belangrijke benaderingen en onderzoeksresultaten binnen het vakgebied, en (ii) voor het vakgebied relevante software en de daarvoor ingezette technologie(ën), waar nodig met efficiënte inzet van audiovisuele hulpmiddelen.
4.2 Vermogen om zowel mondeling als schriftelijk commentaar te geven bij zelf ontwikkelde softwaremodules, en schriftelijke of grafische documentatie te leveren bij complexe software en informatiesystemen;
4.3 Vermogen om op betrouwbare en accurate wijze, schriftelijk of mondeling, te rapporteren over een zelf ontwikkeld en uitgevoerd onderzoek op een deelgebied van het vakgebied.

Leervaardigheid
5. Student bezit de leervaardigheden die noodzakelijk zijn om een vervolgstudie die een hoog niveau van autonomie veronderstelt aan te gaan.
5.1 Vermogen om zich zelfstandig nieuwe programmeertalen en technieken eigen te maken;
5.2 Vermogen om zich zelfstandig verder te verdiepen in een deelgebied van de Informatiekunde;
5.3 Vermogen om een (Research)masterstudie op een deelgebied of een aanpalend gebied van de Informatiekunde te volgen.

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

Bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies

Year 1 Semester 1	Nr of ECTs	Language	Year 1 Semester 2	Nr of ECTs	Language
Corporate and Organisational Communication 1: Introduction	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Methodology for CIS: Qualitative	**5 ECTs**	**English**
Academic Skills 1	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Text Analysis 1/ Tekstanalyse 1	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**
Persuasive Communication	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Digital Communication	**5 ECTs**	**English**
Academic Skills 2	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Conversation Analysis 1/ Gespreksanalyse 1	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**
Intercultural Communication	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Methodology for CIS: Quantitative	**5 ECTs**	**English**
Language optimization/ Taaloptimalisatie	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**	Methodology for CIS: Quantitative	**5 ECTs**	**English**

Year 2 Semester 1	Nr of ECTs	Language	Year 2 Semester 2	Nr of ECTs	Language
Pictures in Professional Communication	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Design & Evaluation	**5 ECTs**	**English**
Statistics	**5 ECTs**	**English**	Text Analysis 2/ Tekstanalyse 2	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**
Pragmatics/ Pragmatiek	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**	Social Media	**5 ECTs**	**English**
Questionnaire and Interview Design	**5 ECTs**	**English**	ASP voor NL Track	**5 ECTs**	**Dutch**
Corporate and Organisational Communication 2: Marketing and Branding	**5 ECTs**	**English**	ELECTIVES: - Regular track: 15 ECTs (i.e. three out of the following 8 elective courses) - Dutch track: 10 ECTs (i.e. two out of the following 8 elective courses)		
Conversation Analysis 2/ Gespreksanalyse 2	**5 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**	Web design	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			Health Communication	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			Statistics 2	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			Usability	**5 ECTs**	**English**

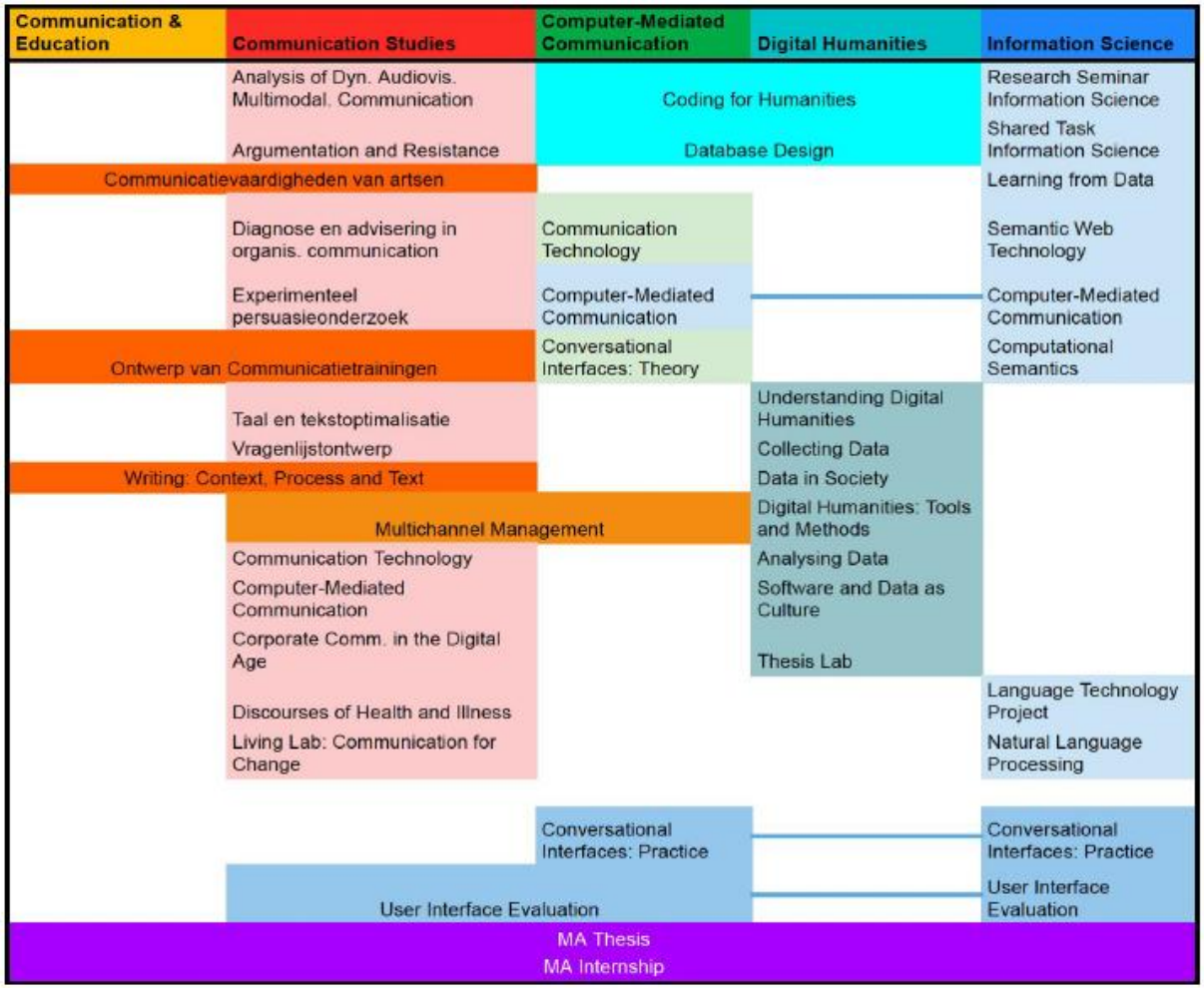
			CIS Diversity Management I: Cultural Diversity	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			L&S B: Intro Socio/Applied Linguistics	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			L&S+4: Language and Power	**5 ECTs**	**English**
			CIS Diversity management 2 Linguistic Diversity	**5 ECTs**	**English**

Year 3 Semester 1	**Nr of ECTs**	**Language**	**Year 3 Semester 2**	**Nr of ECTs**	**Language**
Minor	-	**The language depends on the chosen Minor**	Case study CIS	**10 ECTs**	**English**
			BA Thesis	**10 ECTs**	**English/ Dutch**
			ELECTIVES: - Regular & Dutch track: 10 ECTs (i.e. two out of the 8 elective courses indicated for year 2, or the following 9th elective course that is available to third year students)		
			Corporate and Organisational Communication 3	**5 ECTs**	**English**

The Dutch Track consists of 8 course modules (45 ECTS, including the BA thesis). Dutch Track students share the lectures and course materials (course readings) with the students in the International Track.

Master's programme Communication and Information Studies

Courses taught in this programme run for blocks or full semesters. One teaching block of ten weeks consists of seven weeks for teaching plus three weeks for assessment while students take three parallel courses each block. 5 ECTS courses are confined to a single block; 10 ECTS courses span two blocks. The thesis is 20 ECTS for the tracks Communication Studies, Communication and Education, Computer-mediated Communication and Information Science. In the track Digital Humanities, the learning pathways culminate in the Thesis Lab course (5 ECTS) which will function as a preparation for the Master thesis (15 ECTS).



Bachelor's programme Information Science

The programme is organized around the following five broad thematic learning lines:

1. ***Scientific skills and reflection on the field.*** This track provides students with a broad overview of the field of Information Science, familiarizes them with methods for creating an experiment and reporting on it, as well as critically assessing implications of the use of language technology in everyday life.
2. ***Programming and Quantitative Methods*** teaches students technical and statistical concepts and how to apply these in programming tasks and research assignments.
3. ***Language and Communication*** introduces students to concepts and theories from linguistics and communication science that are relevant in language technology and digital communication.
4. ***Language Technology*** provides specialized knowledge about Natural Language Processing and introduces students to applications in the field.
5. ***Webtechnology and Databases*** introduces the basic concepts of web design, database-driven websites, and search engines.

Year 1			
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Introduction to Information Science	Text Manipulation	Web Technology	Web Programming
Introduction to Programming I	Introduction to Programming II	Advanced Programming	Project Textanalysis
Linguistics for Language Technology	Introduction to Research Methods	Digital Communication*	Annotation for Machine Learning

Year 2			
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Databases	Database-driven Webtechnology	Statistics I**	Statistics II***
Search engines	Logic Programming****	Computational Grammar****	Kaleidoscope Information Science
Introduction to Neural Networks	Conversational Interfaces	Human-Computer Interaction	Social Media*

Year 3			
Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
Minor		Bachelor thesis with research group	
		Information Retrieval	Language Technology****
		Machine Translation	Ethical Aspects of Natural Language processing

* Course shared with Communication Science

** Course shared with Linguistics

*** Course shared with Communication Science and Linguistics

**** Course shared with Artificial Intelligence

The first semester of the 3rd year is reserved for a minor (30 ECTS). The second semester of the third year includes the Bachelor thesis course (10 ECTS).

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Monday 2 June 2025

09.00	09.15	Arrival and welcome
09.15	09.45	Internal panel meeting
09.45	10.15	Interview faculty management
10.15	11.00	Interview programme management Media Studies B and M
11.00	11.30	Internal panel meeting
11.30	12.15	Interview students B Media and Culture
12.15	13.00	Interview students M Media Studies
13.00	14.00	Lunch
14.00	14.45	Tour
14.45	15.45	Interview teaching staff Media Studies B and M
15.45	16.30	Interview representatives professional field and alumni
16.30	18.00	Internal panel meeting; establishing findings

Tuesday 3 June 2025

09.00	09.30	Arrival
09.30	10.15	Interview programme management CIW
10.15	10.45	Internal panel meeting
10.45	11.30	Interview students B Communication and Information Studies
11.30	12.15	Interview teaching staff B Communication and Information Studies
12.15	13.15	Lunch
13.15	14.00	Interview teaching staff M Communication and Information Studies
14.00	14.45	Interview students B Information Science
14.45	15.30	Interview teaching staff B Information Science
15.30	16.00	Internal panel meeting
16.00	16.45	Interview students and alumni M Communication and Information Studies
16.45	17.45	Internal panel meeting; establishing findings

Wednesday 4 June 2025

09.00	09.15	Arrival
09.15	10.00	Interview exam board
10.00	12.30	Internal panel meeting / establishing findings
12.30	13.15	Lunch
13.15	13:45	Closing interview management Media Studies
13.45	14.15	Closing interview management CIW
14.15	14.45	Internal panel meeting / establishing findings
14.45	15.30	Development dialogue Media Studies
15.30	16.15	Development dialogue CIW
16.15	16:45	Oral feedback

Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Communication and Information Studies, 15 theses of the master's programme Communication and Information Studies and 15 theses from the bachelor's programme Information Science. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request.

The panel also studied other materials, which included:

- Faculty introduction self-evaluation
- Appendices:
  - Strategic Plan RUG 2021-2026
  - Strategic Plan Faculteit der Letteren 2021-2026
  - Assessment policy RUG 2021-2026
  - Rules and regulations faculty Board of Examiners
  - Annuals reports Board of Examiners
  - Policy plan studying with a disability
  - UG policy on AI in teaching

- Self-evaluation B Communication and Information Studies
- Appendices:
  - Summary visitation 2020
  - Alumni CIW 2024
  - Onderwijs- en Examenreglementen (OER) / Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER)
  - Assessment Plan
  - Table visualising learning trajectories (X), BA yeas 1-3 (Y) and programme modules (cells)
  - CIW NSE 2023
  - Staff overview
  - Thesis evaluation form
  - Overview of topics for BA Theses in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, lecturers and number of students in the international track (IT) and Dutch track (DT)
  - Thesis evaluation Rubric
  - Thesis syllabus 2024-2025
  - Annual reports Programme Committee 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
  - Materials from a selection of courses

- Self-evaluation M Communication and Information Studies
- Appendices:
  - Programme Learning outcomes (TER 2023-2024)
  - New learning outcomes (TER 2025-2026)
  - Admission procedure for the MA CIS
  - Onderwijskaart
  - Overview staff MA CIS
  - NSE (Nationale Studenten Enquête)
  - Career overview of CIS alumni
  - NAE (Nationale Alumni Enquête)
  - Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER)

    - Assessment plans and regulations
    - Thesis syllabus 2024-2025
    - Annual reports Programme Committee 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
    - Materials from a selection of courses

- Self-evaluation B Information Science
- Appendices:
    - Onderwijs- en Examenreglementen (OER) / Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER)
    - Onderwijskaart 2024
    - NSE (Nationale Studenten Enquête) 2024
    - Thesis syllabus 2024-2025
    - Annual reports Programme Committee 2022-2023 and 2023-2024
    - Materials from a selection of courses