

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

QANU
Catharijnesingel 56
PO Box 8035
3503 RA Utrecht
The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0) 30 230 3100
E-mail: support@qanu.nl
Internet: www.qanu.nl

Project number: Q0726
© 2019 QANU

Text and numerical material from this publication may be reproduced in print, by photocopying or by any other means with the permission of QANU if the source is mentioned.



CONTENTS

REPORT ON THE MASTER’S PROGRAMME HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM5

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME 5

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION..... 5

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL 5

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL 6

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT..... 9

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS..... 11

APPENDICES 23

APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE..... 25

APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES 27

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM 29

APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT 30

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL..... 31

This report was finalised on 30 September 2019.



REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Master's programme Human Geography

Name of the programme:	Sociale Geografie
International name of the programme:	Human Geography
CROHO number:	66620
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specializations or tracks:	- Economic Geography: Global Production Networks and Clusters - Environmental Geography: Governance for Sustainability - Political Geography: Geopolitics, Globalisation and Governance - Urban Geography: Global and Local Perspectives on Cities
Location(s):	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (Sociale Geografie en Planologie) to the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the University of Amsterdam took place on 9 and 10 April 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	University of Amsterdam
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 11 February 2019. The panel that assessed the master's programme Human Geography consisted of:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor in Development Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor in Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Dr. C.J. (Kees-Jan) van Klaveren, senior auditor and data protection officer at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;



- J. (Jim) Klooster BSc, master's student in Economic Geography at University of Groningen [student member].

The panel was supported by dr. I.M. (Irene) Conradie, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The site visit to master's programme Human Geography at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of the University of Amsterdam was part of the cluster assessment Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. In April and May 2019 the panel assessed nineteen programmes at four universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, Utrecht University, and Radboud University.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Drs. J. (Judith) Borsboom-van Beurden, senior researcher Smart Sustainable Cities at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway);
- Dr. L.B.J. (Lianne) van Duinen, project manager at the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli);
- Dr. C.J. (Kees-Jan) van Klaveren, senior auditor and data protection officer at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society at Wageningen University & Research;
- Prof. dr. F.J.A. (Frank) Witlox, professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography at Ghent University (Belgium);
- J. (Jim) Klooster BSc, master's student Economic Geography at the University of Groningen [student member];
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- N.J.F. (Niek) Zijlstra, bachelor's student Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology [referee assessment University of Groningen].

For each site visit, assessment panel members were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence.

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Irene Conradie. She acted as secretary in the site visit of the University of Amsterdam. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at all site visits. All draft reports were checked by QANU. Dr. Meg van Bogaert and drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretaries for QANU, acted as secretaries in the site visit of the University of Groningen. Dr. Meg van Bogaert also acted as secretary in the site visits of Utrecht University and Radboud University. Dr. Marijn Hollestelle, employee of QANU, was present at the site visit of Utrecht University, specifically as secretary for the ECA assessment report of quality in internationalisation of the master's programme International Development Studies. The project manager and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 18 February 2019, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role as chair, as well as the use of the assessment framework.

A preparatory panel meeting was also organised on 18 February 2019. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed the domain specific framework.

A schedule for the site visit was composed in close consultation with the programmes. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 4 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit, the programmes wrote self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the project manager. She checked these on quality and completeness, and sent them to the panel members. The panel members studied the self-evaluation reports and formulated initial questions and remarks, as well as positive aspects of the programmes.

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms for the programmes. The selection consisted of fifteen theses per programme, based on a provided list of graduates between 2017-18. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project manager and panel chair ascertained that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Amsterdam took place on 9 and 10 April 2019.

At the start of the site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Examinations Board. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 5. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Examinations Board and the Programme Committee. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

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 panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to QANU for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project manager sent the draft reports to the faculty in order to have these checked for factual irregularities. The project manager discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and University Board.

Definition of judgements standards

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:



Generic quality

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

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The master's programme Human Geography is a one-year social science programme designed for students who have an interest in the interrelationships between people, place, and the environment, and how these vary spatially and temporally across and between locations. The panel finds the master's programme Human Geography coherent and well-defined. The four specialisations represent interesting and relevant focus areas. They have a logical connection to each other but are distinctive as well. It considers the programme's focus to be justifiable and of societal value, since its graduates are trained to address contemporary issues on globalisation and urbanisation in the capacity of researcher, policy maker or advisor.

The panel appreciates the clear way the programme positioned itself within the domain-specific reference framework (DSRF) and concludes that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) properly reflect the requirements of the DSRF and the Dublin descriptors at master's level. It established that the programme's ILOs are adequate in terms of level and orientation. In addition, it ascertained that the needs of the professional field feed sufficiently into the ILOs and curriculum.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel concludes that the Human Geography curriculum is carefully designed; the four tracks each have a clear signature, yet they share the same structure. All students take part in common human geography courses on methodology, fieldwork and reflection on the field, and the skills needed as a human geographer. From the course materials the panel concluded that the content of the courses is relevant and challenging, while employing various forms of active learning. Also, course manuals give students a clear idea of the learning objectives. The courses build logically on each other, and the programme as a whole ties in well with the intended learning outcomes. The two learning trajectories on theoretical knowledge and skills give additional focus to the programme. The curriculum design also comes at a cost; it consists entirely of compulsory modules. Students can do an internship extracurricularly or opt to combine a thesis with an internship. Some thesis projects explicitly offer this opportunity but students can also develop this themselves. In this regard, the panel shares the concern expressed by students that labour market preparation needs to be sufficiently addressed. However, it accepts that this can be achieved by incorporating relevant activities and skills training into the existing courses. It appreciates and concurs with the recent efforts to boost the programme's orientation to the professional field and encourages the programme to keep paying attention to intensifying and/or pointing out the connections with the work field.

The panel noted that the students constitute a heterogenous group, in which differences in previously acquired levels of methodological skills have been notable, especially in the *Research Methods & Techniques* course. The programme management is taking measures to allow for more extensive preparation and differentiation. The panel supports these plans and is looking forward to seeing whether students feel sufficiently challenged in the future. The international classroom adds to the international comparative approach of the programme; the panel agrees that the diversity of the student population is an asset and encourages the programme to further optimise the value of its international classroom. It agrees with the motivation to adopt English as the language of instruction and to use a foreign language name for the programme.

In the panel's opinion, the teaching-learning environment of the programme is generally stimulating: it has an adequate number of contact hours, relatively small-scale teaching methods, a competent system of student guidance and good facilities. It is impressed with the programme's diligent and active stance towards continuous improvement of the programme in a way that involves both students and staff. It also established that the students' workload is generally feasible. Based on the programme's adequate handling of similar matters, it feels confident that the programme will address the students' concerns concerning variations in deadlines among the tracks. It considers it important that students experience not necessarily identical, but at least equivalent workload and assessment



conditions in all tracks. It established that the teaching staff of the HG programme is dedicated and qualified and offers students helpful supervision.

The panel therefore concludes that the curriculum, the teaching-learning environment, and the quality of staff and supervision enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel concludes that the master's programme Human Geography has developed an adequate system of assessment, which is based on the Social Sciences and UvA-wide assessment policy. There is a suitable assessment plan, and assessment strategies at the course level pay sufficient attention to the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations, for example by jointly developing and peer-reviewing tests, by using standardised assessment forms and rubrics, and by clearly communicating assessment procedures and criteria to students. On the basis of a selection of thesis samples, the panel concludes that the grading of the theses is generally correct and that the overall level of assessment is adequate. It suggests that the programme look into ways of documenting the findings of the supervisor and the second reader more transparently. Additionally, it proposes that wider calibration could contribute to further alignment of the thesis assessment process and criteria, for instance, by organising staff calibration sessions on thesis assessment. It appreciates the active and engaged manner in which the Examinations Board safeguards the quality of assessment in the programme. It is generally impressed by the way constructive alignment is put into practice, by the EB as well as by the staff.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The panel studied a selection of theses and found that their overall quality could be considered satisfactory. Notwithstanding some shortcomings with respect to theory and methodology, the work is of sufficient academic quality, not least because students show that they are able to gather data under sometimes challenging circumstances. In a few theses, the panel found the socio-spatial perspective rather implicit, and it advises bringing out this element more explicitly. The interviewed alumni were positive about their programme, and the panel established that alumni are quite successful in their careers. Overall, it concluded that they achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

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

Master's programme Human Geography

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

The chair, em. prof. dr. Leo de Haan, and the secretary, dr. Irene Conradie, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 30 September 2019



DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

Organisational structure

The master's programme Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) is part of the Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS) of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) unites all social science research at the UvA. The scientific staff of the programme is mainly employed by one department, namely the Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies (Dutch abbreviation: GPIO). Research is organised into four thematically focused groups, which are part of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research: Urban Geographies; Urban Planning; Governance and Inclusive Development; Geographies of Globalization. The bachelor's programme *Sociale Geografie en Planologie* (SGPL) and the master's programmes Human Geography (HG) and Urban and Regional Planning (URP) have one joint Examinations Board and Programme Committee. The staff members of the Programme Committee assemble separately with SGPL bachelor student members and with students representing the master's programmes HG and URP. The academic year is divided in two semesters of three blocks each. The first two periods consist of eight weeks and the third block consists of four weeks.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The panel studied the profile and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the master's programme Human Geography at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). It is a one-year social science programme designed for students who have an interest in the interrelationships between people, place, and the environment, and how these vary spatially and temporally across and between locations. The rise of inequality and uncertainty due to economic (re)structuring, changing political landscapes, climate change and a growing global interconnectedness has significantly changed social realities. As a result, our urbanised societies have developed a need for academically trained geographers who understand, address, and solve the complex problems and changes within the broad arena of socio-spatial relations and interactions.

During the site visit, the panel considered the profile of the programme and discussed it with the programme management and teaching staff. In order to showcase further specialisation and distinguish the programme more clearly from the bachelor's programme SGPL, the programme now offers multiple thematic tracks. The current programme started in 2015-16 and has as its motto 'doing geography'. It focuses on economic, environmental, political and urban aspects of geography and the socio-spatial questions relevant to these sub-disciplines. It pays specific attention to concrete issues such as urban social inequality, regional economic disparities, political and geopolitical conflicts and identities, governance, climate change and the depletion of natural resources. The HG programme offers four specialisations that examine processes of globalisation and urbanisation from their own perspective:

1. Economic Geography: Global Production Networks and Clusters;
2. Environmental Geography: Governance for Sustainability;
3. Political Geography: Geopolitics, Globalisation and Governance;
4. Urban Geography: Global and Local Perspectives on Cities.

From interviews with staff and students of the programmes, the panel learned that the added distinction of four tracks has enhanced the attractiveness of the programme. Students appreciate the individual tracks and select a track rather than the HG programme of which the tracks are part.



Though students focus on one geographical sub-discipline in their track, the HG programme covers how this disciplinary knowledge builds on concepts and methods from other geographical sub-fields and related disciplines and is enhanced by using them. To do so, the HG programme adopts a pluralistic methodological approach, teaching a range of qualitative and quantitative methods as well as spatial research techniques. In addition to methodological skills, the programme also places emphasis on acquiring and applying transferable skills that are useful in the geographical field. These include communication, debating and reflexive skills. The panel recognises the multidisciplinary and integrative approach to socio-spatial phenomena that is characteristic for human geography studies and also appreciates the four different specialisations, which have their own distinct and relevant profiles. These tie in well with the geography research profile within the department.

The aims of the programme are translated into five generic intended learning outcomes (ILOs) that are applicable to all four specialisations. The ILOs are connected both to the Dublin descriptors and to the domain-specific framework of reference for Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (2018). The panel appreciates the clear way the programme interprets the DSFR and defines its identity with respect to that. Through the linkage of the ILOs to the Dublin descriptors, it confirmed that the programme ensures that their level and orientation are suitable. The strong emphasis on scientific research in the ILOs underscores the academic character of the programme. At the same time, the ILOs reflect the competences demanded by the professional field. For example, the ability to participate in and contribute to discussions within the policy and theoretical domain of human geography in a constructive and reflective professional manner (4.d), and giving a professional oral presentation of human geographical problems and research (4.b). Exit qualification 5.c states rather broadly that the graduate has acquired the competencies to work as a fully qualified professional in the field of human geography.

After completion of the programme, graduates should be able to make independent contributions to the academic study of human geography. They are able to analyse complex social, political and governance issues and know how to apply the insights gained in consultancy, policy, and research positions within and outside the geographical field. To ensure compatibility with the demands of the professional field, the programme stays in contact with potential employers. This takes place via the professional networks of staff members as well as by consultation with the external member of the Examinations Board (see Standard 3). On the Social Sciences level, there is an Advisory Board. This board consists of external experts (many of whom are alumni) who are asked to advise the College of Social Sciences (CSS) and Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS) – upon request or upon their own initiative – regarding the quality of the programmes in relation to society and the labour market. All in all, the panel concludes that the professional field is thoroughly invested in the programme.

Considerations

The panel finds the master's programme Human Geography coherent and well-defined. The four specialisations represent interesting and relevant focus areas. They have a logical connection to each other but are distinctive as well. It considers the programme's focus to be justifiable and of societal value, since its graduates are trained to address contemporary issues on globalisation and urbanisation in the capacity of researcher, policy maker or advisor.

The panel appreciates the clear way the programme positioned itself within the DSRF and concludes that the ILOs properly reflect the requirements of the DSRF and the Dublin descriptors at the master's level. It established that the programme's ILOs are adequate in terms of level and orientation. In addition, it ascertained that the needs of the professional field feed sufficiently into the ILOs and curriculum.

Conclusion

Master's programme Human Geography: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The panel studied the curriculum described in the self-evaluation and recognised the motto 'doing geography' clearly in the programme's content. It looked at course outlines, a selection of the literature, study materials and course evaluations of several courses (see Appendix 5). It also discussed the curriculum and the teaching-learning environment with the programme management, teaching staff, students and alumni.

Curriculum

The panel established that the master's curriculum (60 EC) is well-designed, internationally oriented and coherent. It strikes a balance between shared common ground and specialisation in one of its four tracks: Economic Geography, Environmental Geography, Political Geography and Urban Geography.

The structure of the programme is the same for all four tracks. The common core of the programme consists of three compulsory courses (*Geo Skills: Research Methods & Techniques* (9 EC); *Geo Focus* (9 EC); *Thesis Seminar* (3 EC)). As part of their specialisation, students take the compulsory, track-specific Advanced Core Course (12 EC) as well as a *Literature Study* course (3 EC). The final part of the programme is the *Master Thesis Project* (24 EC). Appendix 3 shows an overview of the programme.

The programme's coherence is further strengthened by the development of two learning trajectories. On the one hand, there is a theoretical learning trajectory that provides students with advanced knowledge of theoretical and conceptual debates in human geography in general, and in one of the four track-specific themes in particular. On the other hand, the skills learning trajectory aims to cultivate the approach, attitude and expertise that characterise how a human geographer operates in a post-master setting. The panel learned from the self-study and interview with the programme management that the composition of the skills trajectory, including methodological as well as transferable skills, is based on an articulated formulation of the expectations of a master student/alumnus vis-à-vis a bachelor student/alumnus. It appreciates this well-argued approach and considers this to be a reasoned and relevant skill set at the master's level.

The panel studied material from four sample courses: the track-specific Advanced Core Courses *Advanced Economic Geography* and *Advanced Political Geography*, the compulsory research methodology course *Geo Skills: Research Methods & Techniques* and the fieldwork and excursion project *Geo Focus*. From the course materials, it concludes that the content of these courses is relevant and challenging, while employing various forms of active learning. For instance, in *Geo Focus* the students engage in student-led seminars, collaboratively design and conduct a small research project on site, and organise a one-day excursion programme for the rest of the group on site. The panel notes that the courses use a variety of teaching methods which are often student-centered, small-scale and interactive. It considers this a strong feature of the programme. The learning goals for the courses are clear and match the teaching methods that are used. The course literature is appropriate and up-to-date. Important aspects of each course are described in the programme's Course Catalogue with transparent course outlines, allowing students a clear overview of the topics covered per course. All courses have appropriate learning objectives that are connected to the programme's ILOs. A curriculum matrix indicates that the programme as a whole covers all of the ILOs. Just like the panel, the students are largely positive about the content of the curriculum.

The curriculum is fundamentally academic, and the students indicated that they felt labour market preparation could be intensified. During the site visit, the panel checked this with alumni, and they expressed a somewhat more positive view about the way and extent to which the programme had prepared them for the professional field (see Standard 4). Students can opt to combine a thesis with



an internship. Some thesis projects explicitly offer this opportunity but students can also develop this themselves. Some of the interviewed students and alumni pursued an extracurricular internship, whereas others did not see this as a viable option or did not consider it. Furthermore, the panel learned that over the last years, the programme has taken numerous steps to improve labour market preparation: by incorporating real-life cases in the course material and assignments, training professional skills and visiting relevant organisations. For instance, in 2018-19 the *Geo Skills: Research Methods & Techniques* course included an excursion to an organisation performing applied research, such as the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) or Statistics Netherlands (CBS). Another example is the renewed *Thesis Seminar* course in which students train transferable skills and critically reflect on the role of geographers in a professional context and in society at large. The panel is satisfied with these improvements and accepts that labour market preparation can be adequately achieved by incorporating relevant activities and skills training into the existing courses. Additionally, more attention could be paid to timely communication about the best way to pursue an internship combined with the thesis or extracurricularly. It agrees with the programme on the continued need to showcase more clearly to students which aspects of the programme contribute to labour market preparation and to direct them towards career events and other seminars and workshops offered inside and outside of the UvA.

The thesis (24 EC) is considered the final dedicated piece of work in the programme. The panel notes that the thesis comprises a relatively large part of the curriculum. It consists of a scientific research project, concluded with an individually written report which takes place within the framework of the student's track specialisation. The overall aim is for students to further develop their research skills and to systematically and clearly analyse and present research results. Many students take the opportunity to spend time abroad during their fieldwork. The students can choose from various broadly defined thesis projects within their own track or one of the multi-disciplinary projects. The panel studied the 16 thesis topic descriptions in 2018-19 and concluded that they offer a wide variety of academically interesting topics linked to the different tracks. In addition, there was a method-oriented project, *Quantitative Approaches*, two international projects, as well as an 'open project' for each track. The latter offers students the possibility to focus on a research topic outside the scope of existing thesis projects. The panel is pleased to see that students are given adequate freedom in choosing their thesis topic whilst also being informed of suitable topics that tie in well with the staff's own research expertise.

Intake, diversity of students and internationalisation

The self-evaluation report stated that the programme receives on average 110 applications per year, of which about 90 are accepted. This yields an average intake of about 55 students per year. These are not equally distributed between the four tracks; environmental and urban geography draw between 15 and 22 students and economic and political geography between 5 and 12 students. The panel concluded from its on-site discussions that this uneven distribution is not considered problematic by the students. The programme management informed the panel that there is some room for growth, up to approximately 25-30 students per track. The panel agrees with this estimate.

A recognised problem is to ensure that all students have the required entry level in qualitative, quantitative and GIS methods. To qualify for admission, students must have obtained a bachelor's degree in geography or a related field of study, with at least 30 EC of geography courses and 20 EC in social science research methodology. These are general entry-level requirements; there are no track-specific requirements. All applications are reviewed by the Admissions Committee. Still, it can be difficult to assess experience with data analysis software, developing a research design and empirical data collection based on course descriptions and grades. During their prior education, students have often gained more experience in one or two research methods. If students have minor deficiencies in research methods, the programme recommends that they follow a crash course during the summer. In fact, all admitted students are given the opportunity to join the crash course and are provided with links to self-teach.

From interviews with students and from the student chapter, the panel learned that the differing levels of methodological skills persist and are frustrating both to those who struggle and to those who feel insufficiently challenged. In its view, there seem to be two sets of expectations: students expect to deepen their methodological understanding in a track-specific way, while the programme offers research methods at a human geography level and expects students to pursue specific methods independently. The programme needs to address its communication regarding methodological teaching. The panel is not convinced that the optional nature of the crash course makes for an ideal situation. It was therefore pleased to learn that the lecturers of the *Research Methods & Techniques* course have developed a short refresher course for admitted students to ensure everybody reaches the required entry level. This will be implemented from the next academic year onwards (2019-20). In addition, the course will offer advanced learning opportunities, and the qualitative and GIS sections of the course will enable track-specific exercises. The panel acknowledges that the programme is working hard to address these issues, and it appreciates the course taken.

Furthermore, students come from an increasing variety of different national and cultural backgrounds. The self-evaluation report indicated that in 2017-18, 67% of the students came from the Netherlands, 29% from the EEA and 4% from outside the EEA. The programme values the international classroom because it adds diversity, and it considers an international comparative approach one of its key characteristics. In addition to international students, the HG programme also includes international comparisons, a compulsory international fieldwork experience and international literature. The interviewed students were mostly positive about the international classroom: the different international perspectives open up discussions and provide interesting opportunities to exchange different contexts and to learn from each other. At the same time, they also pointed out that the international classroom was not fully developed everywhere. Some tracks were already more diverse and interculturally engaged, while others did not have that many international students. Particularly with an unbalanced group composition, foreign students could feel somewhat left out, e.g. on occasion Dutch students would continue a group discussion in Dutch. The panel agrees that the diversity of the student population is an asset, but also encourages the programme to further optimize the value of the international classroom.

As of 2012, all courses are taught in English, the programme uses its international name in its communication, and all applicants need to meet the English language requirements as described in the Teaching and Examination Regulations. The use of English as the language of instruction not only facilitates an international classroom, it also allows the international staff to thoroughly convey their knowledge. This provides students with the opportunity to get in touch with a broad range of researchers in an international field. The programme considers its Dutch context important as well. Hence, a Dutch case is often compared to an international equivalent. Also, Dutch-speaking students can request to write their thesis in Dutch, either because they would rather write in Dutch or because the research subject makes that choice relevant. In addition, the GSSS offers an academic writing skills course for students who struggle with their English academic writing skills. The panel agrees with this motivation to adopt English as the language of instruction and to use a foreign language name for the programme. It also approves of the various measures taken to accommodate Dutch students and to structurally include the Dutch context.

Teaching-learning environment

The teaching-learning environment of the programme is generally stimulating. There is an adequate number of contact hours, and the teaching methods are relatively small scale, which the panel considers a strength of the programme. It has an adequate system of student guidance, in which the study adviser - who also fulfills the role of programme coordinator - plays a significant role. In addition to access to all UvA facilities, the department of GPIO maintains a GIS centre which includes a computer lab, the basic infrastructure required for GIS analysis, experienced GIS researchers and on-site assistance. Also, students are entitled to a subsidy of around 150 euros from the GSSS as a contribution to travel and accommodation costs that result from the mandatory international fieldtrip (*Geo Focus*). Both the student association and the alumni network organise various activities (e.g.



workshops, debates, field visits, public lectures and network events) which contribute to network building, strengthening social ties and exploring and contributing to the professional field. At the institute level, GSSS also organises career events for its students.

The panel is impressed with the programme's diligent and active stance towards continuous improvement. It actively maintains and supports the coherence and feasibility of the curriculum by means of discussions between lecturers and students, systematically checking and reviewing course guides, and annually reviewing the prescribed literature. The panel appreciates that the programme has created a quality culture that supports continuous improvement. The Programme Committee also plays an active role in this regard, giving advice on, for instance, workload and examination schedules, the redesign of the *Research Methods & Techniques* course, and identifying best practices for effective feedback. The panel appreciates that the students are taken seriously as stakeholders and that they make an important contribution to the PC.

Master's students confirmed that it is feasible to complete the programme within the designated time frame. The 2018 national student survey (NSE) reported an average workload of 33 hours a week. The student chapter mentioned that students experience differences in workload and assessment between the advanced core courses of the various tracks in the first semester. Because they also have to meet deadlines in the general courses, this is perceived as unfair. The interviewed staff confirmed that lecturers are free in designing their courses and that different deadlines can occur. Still, there are guidelines on workload and assignments, and each course meets these guidelines. As a result, each course should have the same workload if not the same deadlines. The staff reported that by informing students well in advance about the planning of courses and their assessments, they should be able to manage multiple deadlines. The programme management stated that this issue surfaced only recently and will be further discussed between lecturers and students in order to seek a mutually appreciated solution. The panel considers it important that students experience not necessarily identical, but at least equivalent conditions. Given the programme's active stance on similar matters, it feels confident this concern will be adequately addressed.

Students generally complete the programme within 13-14 months. The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that 78% of the students from the 2017-18 cohort had graduated by January 2019. General reasons for delay include combining the programme with other activities, adding an extracurricular internship, extending the thesis or experiencing personal and/or financial problems. Nonetheless, the interviewed students confirmed that those who really want to finish on time are able to do so. The self-evaluation report indicated that the programme has worked on improving the success rates. The panel was satisfied to find that the percentages of students who obtained their degree within two years have improved over the last years (2014-15: 88%; 2015-16 88%; 2016-17: 93%).

Teaching staff

The panel considers the international teaching staff of the HG programme dedicated and qualified. Almost all staff in the programme are members of the research programme groups Urban Geographies, Geographies of Globalisation, and to a lesser extent Governance and Inclusive Development of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR). Lecturers are experts in their fields, and most have international experience. The expertise of the teaching staff of the programme covers all the specific areas of the four tracks. The team seemed to lack some of the commonality that the panel witnessed in the other programmes, perhaps as a consequence of the individual tracks.

The information provided showed the panel that the 27 staff members involved in the HG programme are well qualified for teaching in the master's programme. The vast majority has a PhD (85%). Of the teaching staff, 74% has a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or equivalent, another 7% is in the process of acquiring one. Didactic skills are part of the annual appraisal process. The panel appreciates the efforts of the faculty to invest in the professionalisation of its teaching staff. In the discussions, the students and alumni indicated their satisfaction with the quality of the staff, both in terms of content and didactics. This appreciation also extended to the thesis supervision.

The panel ascertained that the level of English is sufficient: the majority of the staff has been teaching in English-taught programmes for several years and/or has been working in an English-spoken environment. In addition, course evaluations generally confirmed the lecturers' adequate use of English in class. Language courses are offered if need be. As of 2019, new staff members who are not native English speakers and/or do not have substantial experience in working in an English-speaking environment are asked to take an English language test.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the Human Geography curriculum is carefully designed; the four tracks each have a clear signature, yet they share the same structure. All students take part in common human geography courses on methodology, fieldwork and reflection on the field, and the skills needed as a human geographer. From the course materials the panel concluded that the content of the courses is relevant and challenging, while employing various forms of active learning. Also, course manuals give students a clear idea of the learning objectives. The courses build logically on each other, and the programme as a whole ties in well with the intended learning outcomes. The two learning trajectories on theoretical knowledge and skills give additional focus to the programme. The curriculum design also comes at a cost; it consists entirely of compulsory modules. Students can do an internship extracurricularly or opt to combine a thesis with an internship. Some thesis projects explicitly offer this opportunity but students can also develop this themselves. In this regard, the panel shares the concern expressed by students that labour market preparation needs to be sufficiently addressed. However, it accepts that this can be achieved by incorporating relevant activities and skills training into the existing courses. It appreciates and concurs with the recent efforts to boost the programme's orientation to the professional field and encourages the programme to keep paying attention to intensifying and/or pointing out the connections with the work field.

The panel noted that the students constitute a heterogenous group, in which differences in previously acquired levels of methodological skills have been notable, especially in the *Research Methods & Techniques* course. The programme management is taking measures to allow for more extensive preparation and differentiation. The panel supports these plans and is looking forward to seeing whether students feel sufficiently challenged in the future. The international classroom adds to the international comparative approach of the programme; the panel agrees that the diversity of the student population is an asset and encourages the programme to further optimise the value of its international classroom. It agrees with the motivation to adopt English as the language of instruction and to use a foreign language name for the programme.

In the panel's opinion, the teaching-learning environment of the programme is generally stimulating: it has an adequate number of contact hours, relatively small-scale teaching methods, a competent system of student guidance and good facilities. It is impressed with the programme's diligent and active stance towards continuous improvement of the programme in a way that involves both students and staff. It also established that the students' workload is generally feasible. Based on the programme's adequate handling of similar matters, it feels confident that the programme will address the students' concerns concerning variations in deadlines among the tracks. It considers it important that students experience not necessarily identical, but at least equivalent workload and assessment conditions in all tracks. It established that the teaching staff of the HG programme is dedicated and qualified and offers students helpful supervision.

The panel therefore concludes that the curriculum, the teaching-learning environment, and the quality of staff and supervision enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Master's programme Human Geography: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.



Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

To assess the quality, validity and transparency of assessment within the programme, the panel considered the assessment policies, the assessment of the theses and the functioning of the Examinations Board. It also discussed the student assessment with representatives of the Examinations Board, teaching staff, students and alumni.

System of student assessment

The programme adheres to an assessment plan which is based on the Social Sciences' and university's Assessment Policy. Important principles are that criteria of assessment are clear in advance to staff and students, that there is constructive alignment in assessment design (i.e. demonstrating coherence between assessment, teaching strategies and intended learning outcomes) and that frequent assessments (both formative and summative) and feedback support the students' learning process. The panel was able to review the programme's assessment matrices, which indicate how the learning goals per course match with specific forms of assessment and with the intended learning outcomes. It found that the matrices sufficiently specify how and when a learning outcome is assessed and how the final grade is determined.

The assessment matrix also indicated that in all courses, multiple examinations are combined to arrive at the final grade. Various assessment instruments are used to test the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Knowledge and the application of knowledge, for instance, are tested in exams, written assignments (papers, literature reflections) and the thesis. Assessment instruments for professional competences include lab assignments, individual and group projects, excursion grade and poster presentations. The panel was satisfied to find that the reliability, independence and transparency of assessment are ensured by the use of answer keys and standardised assessment forms, by peer-reviewed assessment design (in accordance with the 'four eyes principle') and by appointing multiple examiners for the thesis. It noted that course descriptions and additional documentation contained information on the learning outcomes and assessment instruments. As a point for improvement, it suggests consistently including the weighting of the various assessments in the course descriptions.

Thesis assessment

The thesis (24 EC) concludes the master's degree programme. All students receive a thesis manual in which the rules and procedures for thesis writing and supervision are described. The manual also includes the assessment procedures, specifying the assessment criteria in advance. The thesis is evaluated by the supervisor and an independent second reader, resulting in a consensual grade following the thesis defence. The quality of the defence discussion is included in the assessment as part of the criterion on process. The thesis coordinator assigns a second reader on the basis of guidelines stipulated by the Examinations Board. The panel appreciates that this process ensures that the thesis assessment is not done strictly within the confines of specific tracks. The supervisor and second reader record their findings and the final grade using a standardised assessment form. This form was developed by the Examinations Board and includes an explanatory note on its use. If there is a significant difference between the supervisor and second reader, a third examiner is called in. However, the panel is of the opinion that the independent assessment procedure should be clearly documented.

After studying a sample of 15 master's theses and the associated assessment forms, the panel concluded that it largely agrees with the assessments and grades given by the assessors. In some cases, these programme assessments were a little higher than the grades it would have given, but always within a reasonable margin. It noted that while the general outlines of the assessment are standardised, some of the specifics – notably the weighting of the different criteria – are delineated broadly. At the same time, it came across very specific final grades (7.3 or 8.6). It warns that the use of a rubric creates the appearance of exactness, while there is no actual and direct correlation

between the rubric scores and the final grade. As a result, a relatively low level of validity in reality appears to be the case. In practice, the final grade is determined in the discussion between the supervisor and second assessor. The grades are, however, sufficiently substantiated by qualitative comments. The panel finds the synthesis of the findings of the supervisor and the second reader somewhat lacking in transparency, yet has no major concerns regarding the quality of the assessment.

Examinations Board

There is one Examinations Board (EB) that oversees the master's programme Human Geography as well as the bachelor's programme *Sociale Geografie en Planologie* and the master's programme Urban and Regional Planning (URP). It has five members, along with an expert from the professional field as an external member. The panel appreciates that the composition of the EB reflects various ranks and positions. It is responsible for ensuring the quality of examinations and for assessing independently and expertly whether each student meets the programme requirements for obtaining a degree. It also appoints examiners, handles individual cases of fraud and individual requests from students, issues certificates, grants exemptions, and takes care of the handling of appeals and/or complaints about exams.

From the written materials and its interview with the EB, the panel ascertained that the EB adequately carries out its formal tasks and responsibilities. It also confirmed that the EB has undertaken various initiatives to ensure the quality of tests and final projects. For instance, it has issued guidelines on assigning second readers and on when and how to involve a third reader. It screens the abovementioned assessment plan every year as a quality assurance measure of the programme as a whole. Every other year, the EB organises audit checks on the assessment of theses. It also looks at the distribution of grades of all courses. If there are any deviations in the outcomes, a meeting is arranged with the programme management, and subsequent actions are taken when necessary.

The EB delegates some of its tasks. One EB member meets weekly with the EB secretary, often in the presence of the study adviser, to discuss students' requests. The testing of individual courses is evaluated in annual test assessment days by a rotating committee consisting of two EB members (including the external member), one lecturer, and one external assessment expert.

The panel deems that the EB is careful in delegating its tasks and is in control of its responsibilities. It appreciated all the initiatives and considers the Examinations Board a hard-working and engaged board. The EB keeps an eye on the quality of assessment on both the course and programme level and draws attention to relevant developments and helps to define improvements. The panel is generally impressed by the way constructive alignment is put into practice, by the EB as well as by the staff. It feels that wider calibration could contribute to further alignment of the thesis assessment process and criteria, for instance, by organising staff calibration sessions on thesis assessment.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the master's programme Human Geography has developed an adequate system of assessment, which is based on the Social Sciences' and UvA-wide assessment policy. There is a suitable assessment plan, and assessment strategies at the course level pay sufficient attention to the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations, for example by jointly developing and peer-reviewing tests, by using standardised assessment forms and rubrics, and by clearly communicating assessment procedures and criteria to students. On the basis of a selection of thesis samples, the panel concludes that the grading of the theses is generally correct and that the overall level of assessment is adequate. It suggests that the programme look into ways of documenting the findings of the supervisor and the second reader more transparently. Additionally, it proposes that wider calibration could contribute to further alignment of the thesis assessment process and criteria, for instance, by organising staff calibration sessions on thesis assessment. It appreciates the active and engaged manner in which the Examinations Board safeguards the quality of assessment in the programme. It is generally impressed by the way constructive alignment is put into practice, by the EB as well as by the staff.



Conclusion

Master's programme Human Geography: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel studied a sample of 15 theses and their assessment forms and had an interview with a number of alumni during the site visit, to determine whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

Theses

The panel found the level and content of the theses in its sample to be satisfactory. Most theses used qualitative research methods and demonstrated that the students are able to gather data under sometimes challenging circumstances. Good theses asked relevant questions, based on meaningful fieldwork, and connected a theoretical approach to the appropriate methodology. Lesser aspects of some theses were the limited identification of a knowledge gap, especially in the case of topics less connected to the curriculum. The theses that got lower grades often lacked framing and methodological reflection, placing more emphasis on the type of research rather than considering the chosen methodological strategy and its consequences for the knowledge produced.

The panel noted that the subject choice in the theses matched the broad focus and multi/interdisciplinarity of the domain of human geography. In a few cases, this breadth blurred the distinction between HG and URP theses or made it hard to discern a socio-spatial perspective. Although the panel acknowledges and values the pluriformity of the human geography domain, it feels that a socio-spatial perspective could have been addressed more prominently in some of the theses.

Position of graduates

On the basis of information on the first and current positions of alumni in the self-study, the panel established that HG graduates are employable, on par with the other social sciences. They usually find employment at an appropriate level within six months after graduation, often in the private sector (48%) or public sector (35%), some in not-for-profit organisations (11%) and as PhD candidates (3%). Alumni find positions mostly related to the broad field of human geography, including work as housing policy advisors for municipalities, as project leaders (junior and senior) in consultancy, and in advisory roles in the field of the built environment. From the interview with the alumni, the panel concluded that they appeared to be doing well in the job market. These alumni were generally satisfied with the education offered in their programme and felt it provided them with a solid basis.

Considerations

The panel studied a selection of theses and found that their overall quality could be considered satisfactory. Notwithstanding some shortcomings with respect to theory and methodology, the work is of sufficient academic quality, not least because students show that they are able to gather data under sometimes challenging circumstances. In a few theses, the panel found the socio-spatial perspective rather implicit, and it advises bringing out this element more explicitly. The interviewed alumni were positive about their programme, and the panel established that alumni are quite successful in their careers. Overall, it concluded that they achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Master's programme Human Geography: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assesses Standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 as 'meets the standard'.

According to the decision rules of NVAO's Framework for limited programme assessments, the panel assesses the master's programme Human Geography as 'positive'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *master's programme Human Geography* as 'positive'.



APPENDICES





APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain in the Netherlands

The current domain-specific reference framework confines itself to a substantive description of the two core disciplines, in combination with the general expectations regarding the competencies of graduates. Therefore, it is a more concise document than the previous (2012) one. The exit qualifications for bachelor and master programmes are no longer included, partly because the Dublin descriptors already provide an adequate general description of the desired scientific level, but also to give the programmes taking part in the reaccreditation ample opportunity to demonstrate their own specific profile in their self-studies.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain is very broad and diverse, and the different academic programmes within the Netherlands highlight different elements. They vary, for example, in the balance between scientific and professional training, degree of research intensity, degree of integration between the two core disciplines, opportunities to specialize, and types of specialization offered. This domain-specific reference framework emphasizes the common features applying to all programmes.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain revolves around the complex relationship between people (society) and their environment (space). There are five qualities that determine the mind set of geographers and planners. First of all, the ability to think from a time-space perspective, these being the two dimensions within which human action unfolds. Secondly, the ability to study the relation between people and environment in the context of intertwined spatial scale levels (local, regional, national, global). Insight into socio-spatial transformations is gained by studying the interaction between these scale levels (the multi-scalar perspective), without making prior assumptions about the dominance of any one level (e.g. the global level) over another (e.g. the local level). Thirdly, the mind set of geographers and planners is based on the idea that space and society closely interact and shape each other. Human actions, and the behavioural patterns that develop in the course of time (institutions), crystallize in space, while conversely, spatial structures and place-related features trigger and shape human actions. A fourth quality relates to the strong multidisciplinary orientation in the work of geographers and planners; relationships between humans and their environment are studied from a range of mutually supplementary disciplinary perspectives. The precise combinations chosen depend on the nature of the socio-spatial problems being studied and will vary per programme within the domain. Finally, the fifth quality is closely linked with all the above: the integrative character of the geographical and planning approach. This crux is an ambition to understand the mutual cohesion between economic, social, cultural and political phenomena and processes within their specific spatial contexts.

Key terms in the domain are space, place, location, scale, networks, linkages, spatial behaviour, place attachment, spatial quality, spatial design and spatial interventions. Within the domain socio-spatial problems are taken as starting points of scientific inquiry. These issues include spatial inequality, globalization, migration, segregation, diversity and identity, environmental burden, sustainable area development, mobility and governance. The aim is not only to make critical analyses of the issues concerned, but also to design plans and interventions that may solve or reduce socio-spatial dilemmas.

The international and comparative character of studying the relation between people and environment is inherent to the Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning disciplines. Socio-spatial problems, and planned actions to deal with them, are marked by the specific national, regional and local context in which they arise. The significance of the embeddedness of socio-spatial phenomena is the key to Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. However, awareness of the importance of context does not imply that the disciplines are merely the sum of an endless series of case-studies. The ambition is to identify the international similarities and differences of socio-spatial processes and developments, in order to unravel both their unique and generic aspects. Both facets are typical of the quest of Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning to



formulate theories (explanation in context). To emphasize this international, comparative character, teaching does not focus solely on the Netherlands. And when studying Dutch cases, the international importance and international suitability of the theoretical perspectives and research angles developed will always be considered. Continuing on from this, the composition of staff and students in all the Dutch programmes in the domain is becoming increasingly diverse (in many ways). The 'international classroom' being introduced in more and more programmes, facilitates and reinforces the international-comparative orientation of both disciplines.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain has evolved in close cohesion with the other social sciences. While it shares important qualities with the latter - such as attention for formulating theory and the need for rigid methodology - it is also distinct by emphasizing particular qualities. The strong empirical orientation, apparent in the importance attached to primary data collection and fieldwork, is a typical feature of our domain. Furthermore, 'learning by doing' has become an important part of all programmes, partly because it enhances sensitivity to the time and place (context)-bound character of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena and developments. Geographers and planners are constantly challenged to step outside the comfort zone of their own field. Finally, research within the domain has increasingly opened up for a wide spectrum of methods and techniques. This methodological pluralism corresponds with the choice to study socio-spatial problems at various scale levels, which precludes a standard method of analysis.

Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning graduates are able to identify, analyse and explain socio-spatial problems, based on and contributing to the 'body of knowledge' adhering to the discipline. They are also fully conversant with general social-scientific methods and techniques, as well as more domain-specific research methods, such as GIS and spatial impact analysis. The Bachelor's programmes do this, in line with the basic level of the Dublin descriptors, by laying a broad scientific foundation in the two core disciplines, while the Master's programmes train students, again following the Dublin framework, at a theoretically and methodologically more advanced and specialist level.

The programmes under consideration prepare students for a variety of professions and sectors. Typical jobs include researcher, teacher/lecturer, consultant, policy official and project manager. A common characteristic of staff qualified in Human Geography and/or Urban and Regional Planning is their inclination for a comprehensive approach to problems, and their ability to create awareness on the spatial diversity of societal problems. Students with a specialist Master's degree often find themselves in professions directly connected with their specialism, such as spatial planning, area development, urban policy, construction and housing, regional policy, traffic and transport management or environmental policy. The self-studies of the individual degree programmes will inform more specifically on the professions and sectors in which graduates work.

The domain-specific framework of reference (DSFR) has been formulated by the national disciplinary meeting (Disciplineoverleg Geografie en Planologie). The former DSFR has been adjusted, i.e. updated and shortened by omitting the concrete exit qualifications for bachelor and master. The participating programmes have been able to comment on the draft. It has been laid down during the meeting on 6 September 2018.

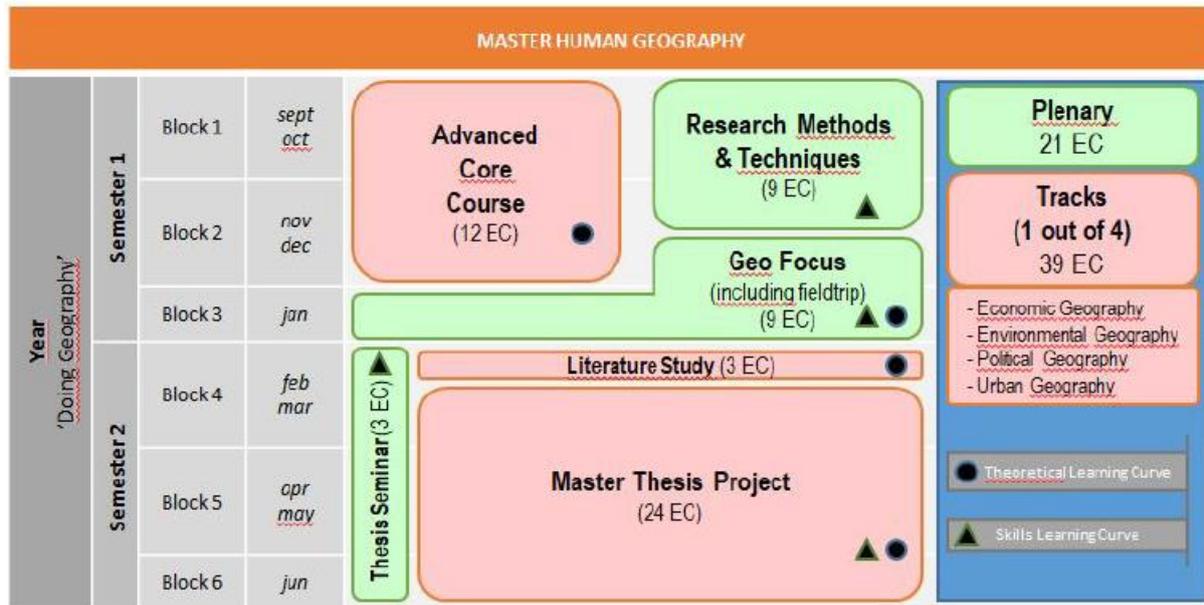
APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Dublin Descriptors	Exit Qualifications UvA Master Human Geography as stated in the Teaching and Exam Regulations (OER) 2018-2019
<p>1. Knowledge and understanding (DD1) Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;</p>	<p>1. The graduate has acquired knowledge and understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) of scientific and epistemological foundations of a human-geographical science. b) of advanced qualitative, quantitative and spatial research methods that are relevant to human geographical research. c) of theoretical knowledge in Human geography at a level that properly reflects the current state of the art in theory and policy.
<p>2. Cognitive and/or professional abilities (DD2) Can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;</p>	<p>2. The acquired cognitive and/or professional abilities enable the graduate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approach, identify and deal with geographical problems from a scientific habitus in a systematic, analytical, reflective, critical and creative manner. b) thoroughly analyse human geographical issues, using current theoretical and empirical insights as they pertain to these issues. c) Trace, collect and analyse primary and secondary data as they pertain to such issues in the field of human geography. d) independently design and execute human geographical research to report systematically on this research and draw scientifically appropriate conclusions. e) link the results of Human Geography research to the theoretical and societal debates on the subject f) make a calculated, well-reasoned choice for research methods and techniques, taking into account the nature of the subject of the human geography research and taking into account ethical considerations of this research. g) translate results of human geographical research in a constructive and prospective manner into scientific and societal discussions about the issue in question and to translate this into policy proposals.
<p>3. Formulating judgement (DD3) Have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;</p>	<p>3. Concerning the ability of formulating judgements, the graduate should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) critically assess different theoretical and policy-based sources and analyses on human geographical issues within the chosen specialization, as well as their use in theory building and policy analysis. b) bring to the foreground any (hidden) presuppositions and normative positions in theoretical and policy views on human geographical issues. c) formulate and reflect on an independent opinion about the nature of, and approach to human geographical issues.



Dublin Descriptors	Exit Qualifications UvA Master Human Geography as stated in the Teaching and Exam Regulations (OER) 2018-2019
<p>4. Communicative skills (DD4) Can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously</p>	<p>4. The graduate should be able to use the following communicative skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The ability to deliver a structured and correctly written presentation at academic level of human geographical problems and research. b) The ability to give a professional oral presentation of human geographical problems and research using modern presentation techniques in English. c) The ability to (re)formulate and present arguments, both verbally as well as in written form, to defend these arguments and critically reflect on them. d) The ability to participate in and contribute to discussions within the policy and theoretical domain of human geography in a constructive and reflective professional manner.
<p>5. Competencies/ learning skills (DD5) Have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</p>	<p>5. The graduate has acquired the following competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Can independently follow and comprehend developments within the discipline of human geography. b) Can identify societal problems and develop solutions that are based on scientific analysis and reflection. c) Can work as a fully qualified professional in the field of human geography. d) Can continue studying at post-master level, including PhD training.

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM



APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

DAY 0		
Monday - 8 April 2019		
16.30	19.00	Arrival of panel at the hotel, internal panel meeting
19.00	21.00	Dinner

DAY 1		
Tuesday - 9 April 2019		
8.30	9.00	Arrival / Welcome
9.00	9.45	Meeting with management (all programmes - NL)
9.45	10.15	Internal panel meeting and documentation review
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students and alumni BSc <i>Sociale Geografie en Planologie</i> (NL)
11.00	11.15	Internal panel meeting
11.15	12.00	Meeting with teaching staff BSc Sociale Geografie en Planologie (NL)
12.00	13.15	Internal panel meeting (incl. lunch)
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students and alumni MSc Human Geography (EN)
14.00	14.15	Internal panel meeting
14.15	15.00	Meeting with teaching staff MSc Human Geography (EN)
15.00	17.00	Internal panel meeting: preliminary findings / consultation hour (16.30-17.00)
18.30	21.00	Dinner

DAY 2		
Wednesday - 10 April 2019		
8.45	9.00	Arrival and preparation
9.00	9.45	Meeting with students and alumni MSc Urban and Regional Planning (EN)
9.45	10.30	Meeting with teaching staff MSc Urban and Regional Planning (EN)
10.30	11.00	Internal panel meeting
11.00	11.45	Meeting with Examinations Board (EB) (all programmes - NL)
11.45	13.00	Internal meeting (incl. lunch)
13.00	13.45	Final interview with management (NL)
13.45	15.30	Deliberations panel, formulating preliminary findings and conclusions
15.30	15.45	Feedback of preliminary findings and conclusions (NL)
15.45	16.00	Break
16.00	16.45	Development dialogue (NL)
16.45	17.00	Departure

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

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

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

Course selection of complete course files:

- Advanced Economic Geography
- Advanced Political Geography
- GeoFocus
- GeoSkills: Research Methods & Techniques

The course files included course manuals, sample assignments and answers, a grade overview report for the course and course evaluations (if available).

Additional documents:

- Examinations Board: annual reports and minutes (2016-2017; 2017-2018)
- Programme Committee: annual reports and minutes (2016-2017; 2017-2018)
- List of improvements based on the previous accreditation
- Domain-specific framework of reference for the Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain in the Netherlands (2018)
- Exit qualifications
- Curriculum matrix (representing the alignment between the exit qualifications and the curriculum/course learning outcomes)
- Assessment matrix (representing the alignment between the assessment formats and learning outcomes)
- Curriculum overview
- Course descriptions
- List of thesis topic descriptions (2018-2019)
- Teaching and Examination Regulations 2018-2019 (OER)
- Staff overview
- Data on student intake, population and success rates, contact hours
- Lecturer-Student ratio & staff composition
- Linked-In career inventarisation
- Benchmark Master Human Geography
- Thesis assessment form Master Human Geography

