

## Besluit **Besluit strekkende tot het verlenen van accreditatie (na herstel) aan de opleiding wo-bachelor Europese Studies van de Universiteit Maastricht**

### Gegevens

datum	Naam instelling	: Universiteit Maastricht
29 april 2016	Naam opleiding	: wo-bachelor Europese Studies (180 EC)
onderwerp	Variant opleiding	: voltijd
Besluit	Locatie opleiding	: Maastricht
accreditatie wo-bachelor		
Europese Studies van de		
Universiteit Maastricht	Datum aanvraag 1	: 30 december 2013
(004405)	Datum goedkeuren	
ons kenmerk	Panel 1	: 23 oktober 2012
NVAO/20160938/LL	Datum eerste locatiebezoek	: 5 en 6 maart 2013
bijlagen	Datum eerste visitatierapport	: 15 januari 2014
2	Datum herstelplan	: 31 januari 2014, aangevuld in april 2014
	Datum herstelbesluit NVAO	: 30 juni 2014
	Datum tweede locatiebezoek	: 14 oktober 2015
	Datum tweede visitatierapport	: 9 december 2015
	Datum aanvraag 2 (na herstel)	: 18 december 2015
	Instellingstoets kwaliteitszorg	: ja, positief besluit van 16 mei 2013

### Voorgeschiedenis

Op 30 december 2013 ontving de NVAO van Universiteit Maastricht een accreditatieaanvraag voor de opleiding wo-bachelor Europese Studies vergezeld van een paneladvies waarin de standaard 3 (toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties) en daarmee het eindoordeel als onvoldoende zijn beoordeeld. De NVAO nam vervolgens op 30 juni 2014 een besluit tot het verlengen van de accreditatietermijn (zogenoemd herstelbesluit) van de opleiding met een periode van twee jaar, derhalve tot en met 29 juni 2016, op basis van een door het panel positief geadviseerd herstelplan en addendum.

Op 18 december 2015 ontving de NVAO een nieuwe accreditatieaanvraag vergezeld van een rapport van een tweede panel, waarin de desbetreffende standaard nu positief is beoordeeld. Twee leden uit het oorspronkelijke panel maakten deel uit van het tweede panel. De opleiding heeft naar het oordeel van het tweede panel binnen de herstelperiode van twee jaar de nodige verbeteringen doorgevoerd voor de standaard 3. Het is van mening dat de opleiding na het doorvoeren van de verbeteringen voor deze standaard thans het vereiste niveau heeft bereikt.

- Artikel 5a. 12a. van de Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek (Stb. 2010, 293);
- Accreditatiebesluit WHW (Stb. 2011, 536);
- Beoordelingskader voor de beperkte opleidingsbeoordeling van de NVAO (Stcrt. 2010, nr 21523)

### **Bevindingen**

De NVAO stelt vast dat in beide visitatierapport te samen deugdelijk en kenbaar is gemotiveerd op welke gronden de kwaliteit van de opleiding (na herstel) voldoende is bevonden.

### **Advies van het eerste visitatiepanel (eerste beoordeling)**

Samenvatting bevindingen en overwegingen van het panel (hierna ook: the committee).

#### *Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes*

The committee assesses Standard 1 as satisfactory.

According to the critical reflection, the bachelor's programme European Studies is an interdisciplinary and international programme that focuses on the analysis of cultural, economic, legal, political and social issues related to Europe in its widest sense, including the European integration process. The starting point of the programme is the notion that general societal and political challenges can only be understood when attention is paid to their broader socio-cultural contexts. The committee has discussed the programme's profile with several stakeholders and concludes that the programme currently focusses primarily on Western Europe despite the programme's commendable efforts to approach Europe in its broadest sense. The committee suggests that the programme could express its main focus to potential students. Furthermore, it suggests that the programme could define its profile more clearly in terms of a globalised world.

The committee compared the intended learning outcomes of the programme to the requirements for bachelor's programmes European Studies stated in the domain-specific reference framework. It concludes that the intended learning outcomes meet the criteria set in this framework. It also verifies that the intended learning outcomes of the programme indeed reflect a level and orientation appropriate for an academic bachelor's programme. Students who have successfully completed the bachelor's programme have acquired knowledge and understanding of ideas, concepts, theoretical debates and methods related to the history and development of Europe. They have also learned about nineteenth-century state- and nationbuilding. The interdisciplinary character that is reflected in the framework is evident in the intended learning outcomes.

#### *Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment*

The committee assesses Standard 2 as satisfactory.

The three-year bachelor's programme comprises 180 EC. In the first year the main focus of the bachelor's programme lies on European diversity, emphasising historical, social and cultural issues. It also introduces students to the disciplines of economics, history, international relations, philosophy and political science. In the second year students deepen their knowledge of European integration, and attend their first law course. They can also choose to specialise in a particular policy domain or country. In the third and final year

Pagina 3 van 8 students follow electives covering cultural and political issues associated with Europe's place in the wider world. The courses form learning trajectories on EU external affairs, culture and identity, and law and democracy. Students may dedicate the fifth semester to a semester abroad, an internship or courses. They complete the programme with Bachelor Papers I and II.

The committee has studied the content of the courses and concludes that they guarantee that students indeed gain the required knowledge. It also concludes that the academic orientation is translated sufficiently into the programme. The programme supports students to acquire the subject-specific learning outcomes as well as the skills formulated in the intended learning outcomes. The committee finds that interdisciplinarity is a recognisable theme in the programme. The committee suggests that the programme could benefit from incorporating a more explicit comparison of Europe as a whole to power blocks outside of Europe. The Maastricht European Studies bachelor's programme uses Problem-Based Learning (PBL), an (inter)active student-centred teaching approach that aims to solve abstract and practical problems. Key to a successful learning process is that students are well prepared for sessions and meetings by taking responsibility for formulating learning goals per session, organising their meetings, and fulfilling several roles, such as chair, secretary and whiteboard scribe. The committee studied the connection between PBL and the design of the bachelor's curriculum. All courses are set up according to the main characteristics of PBL, apart from the skills trainings. The learning process is indeed interactive and it teaches students solid communicational and argumentation skills, as well as how to work in teams and how to apply abstract concepts. The committee concludes that PBL works adequately in the bachelor's programme but that a continued reflection on the value of the PBL system remains necessary.

The committee was not convinced that the programme structurally acts upon students who do not prepare for a class, or students who do not get involved in discussions. The committee therefore strongly advises the programme to reflect upon the development of academic skills of each individual student in the PBL system, the guidance process for the bachelor paper, and any other factor which might influence the final results of individual student. The committee concluded that the interdisciplinary and international profile of the programme is sufficiently reflected in the composition of the staff. Lecturers come from a wide variety of countries and represent different departments, such as the History, Politics, Philosophy and International Relations Departments. The student-staff ratio of the bachelor's programme is 29:1 which is sufficient to execute the programme. The didactic quality of the staff is guaranteed by training in PBL and the Basiskwalificatie onderwijs. The committee concluded that the programme specific quality assurance is guaranteed by the active approach of the Programme Committee (PC), and the programme's management which takes the PC's evaluations seriously.

The committee assesses Standard 3 as unsatisfactory.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has one Board of Examiners that monitors the quality of the achieved learning outcomes by checking the examinations of individual students. At the time of the site visit this check had an incidental and procedural character, focussing – for example - on plagiarism and a filled-out assessment form. As of September 2013, the Board will start monitoring the achieved learning outcomes by examining random samples of Bachelor Papers. During the site visit the Board explained that the programme organises assessment meetings for lecturers twice a year to evaluate the assessments and the related processes. The committee applauds this.

The committee observes that the bachelor's programme uses a broad variety of assessment methods that appropriately suit the intended learning outcomes. The committee verified that the level as well as the transparency of the examinations and grading of courses are sufficient. Also, the committee appreciates the frequent cooperation between students in groups, which is inherent to and important for PBL. However, it worries that the amount of group work affects (or could affect) the development of independent and individual research and writing skills.

The intended learning outcomes are assessed in Bachelor Papers I and II. The first Bachelor Paper serves as an exercise in writing a longer and individual paper, while Bachelor Paper II shows students' ability to develop a conceptual/theoretical and methodological framework.

During the site visit the programme described its plans to replace Bachelor Paper I with a short preparation course, in which students learn how to write a paper through writing exercises, and learn how to set up a small research project. Bachelor Paper II would then become the only concluding assessment. The committee supports this plan and the decision to introduce a second reader (examiner) for Bachelor Paper II.

To assess the achieved learning outcomes of the bachelor's programme, the committee studied 25 Bachelor's Papers II. It assessed 6 of these papers as inadequate. The reasons included a lack of reflection or discussion about the research question. In some other cases, the committee found that the research method was not justified properly. The committee strongly recommends that the programme reflects on the assessment procedure of the Bachelor Papers. The current personal and informal atmosphere in which assessment processes are completed, could lead to a reluctance to give students an unsatisfactory mark. Another crucial point in the procedure is the role of (future) second readers. The committee stresses that they must be free to grade theses independently, and that their critique and suggestions should be distinguishable, either on the same assessment form, or (preferably) on a separate form. The committee notes that the comments of supervisors on the assessment forms is generally thoroughly motivated but that these remarks are not always reflected in the grades that were assigned to the papers.

#### **Advies van het tweede visitatiepanel (beoordeling gerealiseerd herstel)**

On 5 and 6 March 2013, a second assessment panel (hereafter panel) assessed the bachelor's programme European Studies. It assessed Standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) and Standard 2 (Teaching- learning environment) as 'satisfactory'. Standard 3 (Assessment and achieved learning outcomes), however, was assessed as 'unsatisfactory'. Consequently, in line with the framework's decision rules, the panel assessed the programme as a whole as 'unsatisfactory'. The most important reason for this outcome was

Pagina 5 van 8 that the panel was not convinced that all graduates of the programme had achieved the intended learning outcomes; too many theses revealed a lack of research and writing skills. In response to these findings, the programme developed an improvement plan, and later an addendum to this plan. On 30 June 2014, the NVAO approved of the improvement plan plus addendum and decided to extend the accreditation of the programme and to grant the programme an improvement period of two years (until 29 June 2016), during which it had to implement the improvement measures. The NVAO added the request to its decision that the bachelor's programme should also take measures to improve the academic skills training of students already in the programme.

On 14 October 2015, an assessment panel again assessed Standard 3 of the programme in order to find out whether the improvement measures had been implemented successfully and had been effective.

The panel found that the programme management took the advice of the previous assessment panel seriously and carried out the required improvement measures in a professional manner. It not only implemented measures from the improvement plan plus addendum, it also took measures based on progressive insight and paid attention to the sustainability of the improvements. During the improvement period, the programme replaced the two bachelor papers by one bachelor thesis, and took several measures to respond to the critical remarks of the previous assessment panel about the quality of the achieved learning outcomes. They included the implementation of two individual research papers in year 2, the introduction of starting requirements for the bachelor thesis, the revision of the 'BA ES Skills Track Manual', and the implementation of the requirement that all final paper topics be approved by a supervisor. The cohort 2015-2016 will be the first cohort to follow a completely revised skills track. The first results of the improvements to the skills track will not be noticeable until 2016-2017, and their impact on the achieved learning outcomes will only become clear in the BA theses of the academic year 2017-2018. As required by the NVAO, the programme also implemented additional measures to improve the research and writing skills training of students in the cohorts 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. These measures relate to additional guidance during the BA paper via a lecture series, more structured and earlier supervision, and more feedback opportunities. The panel applauds the measures that have been taken to improve the quality of the work and the training in research and writing skills for students in the above-mentioned cohorts.

The programme also reconsidered the practice of PBL in the programme. The panel observed that PBL is still an important aspect of the programme, but that students and staff now receive more information about the expectations and requirements regarding PBL, and that the development of knowledge and skills by individual students is better ensured. Finally, the programme improved the quality assurance and assessment procedure of the final work. The panel is particularly positive about the measures taken to strengthen the independence of the second reader, the introduction of thesis calibration workshops for thesis assessors, and the definitions of criteria developed for grading (and passing) a thesis.

The panel read 9 bachelor theses that were finalised in June 2015 and determined that they were of satisfactory academic quality. It concluded that the improvement measures that have been developed and implemented up until now have been effective. Since European Studies is a three-year programme, the theses studied by the panel do not reveal the overall effect of all interrelated improvement measures. This will only be noticeable in the longer term. The first cohort to follow a completely revised programme will write their bachelor

Pagina 6 van 8 thesis in 2018. However, the panel is positive about the total package of improvement measures, and believes that it will also result in better theses in the future.

### **Besluit**

Ingevolge het bepaalde in artikel 5a.10, derde lid, van de WHW heeft de NVAO het college van bestuur van de Universiteit Maastricht te Maastricht in de gelegenheid gesteld zijn zienswijze op het voornemen tot besluit van 21 maart 2016 naar voren te brengen. Van deze gelegenheid heeft het college van bestuur geen gebruik gemaakt.

De NVAO besluit accreditatie te verlenen aan de wo-bachelor Europese Studies (180 EC; variant: voltijd; locatie: Maastricht) van de Universiteit Maastricht te Maastricht. De NVAO beoordeelt de kwaliteit van de opleiding als voldoende.

Dit besluit treedt in werking op 30 juni 2014 en is van kracht tot en met 29 juni 2020.

Den Haag, 29 april 2016

De NVAO  
Voor deze

  
Dr. A.H. Flierman  
(voorzitter)

Tegen dit besluit kan op grond van het bepaalde in de Algemene wet bestuursrecht door een belanghebbende bezwaar worden gemaakt bij de NVAO. De termijn voor het indienen van bezwaar bedraagt zes weken.

Uit besluit van 30 juni 2014

Onderwerp	Standaard	Beoordeling door het panel
<b>1. Beoogde eindkwalificaties</b>	De beoogde eindkwalificaties van de opleiding zijn wat betreft inhoud, niveau en oriëntatie geconcretiseerd en voldoen aan internationale eisen	<b>Voldoende</b>
<b>2. Onderwijsleeromgeving</b>	Het programma, het personeel en de opleidingsspecifieke voorzieningen maken het voor de instromende studenten mogelijk de beoogde eindkwalificaties te realiseren	<b>Voldoende</b>
<b>3. Toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties</b>	De opleiding beschikt over een adequaat systeem van toetsing en toont aan dat de beoogde eindkwalificaties worden gerealiseerd	<b>Onvoldoende</b>
<b>Eindoordeel</b>		<b>Onvoldoende</b>

Beoordeling na herstel

Standaard	Standaard	Beoordeling door het panel
<b>3. Toetsing en gerealiseerde eindkwalificaties</b>	De opleiding beschikt over een adequaat systeem van toetsing en toont aan dat de beoogde eindkwalificaties worden gerealiseerd	<b>Voldoende</b>
<b>Eindoordeel</b>		<b>Voldoende</b>

De standaarden krijgen het oordeel onvoldoende, voldoende, goed of excellent. Het eindoordeel over de opleiding als geheel wordt op dezelfde schaal gegeven.

#### **Panel eerste beoordeling en beoordeling herstelplan**

- Prof. Marjan Schwegman (chair), professor of Politics and Culture in the long twentieth century, University of Utrecht, and director of NIOD;
- Prof. Luc François, professor of Contemporary History and former director of Educational Matters, University of Ghent;
- Prof. Jan Orbie, university senior lecturer on EU External Relations, University of Ghent;
- Dr. Ulrich Tiedau, senior lecturer on Modern Low Countries History and Society, University College London;
- Prof. Ingeborg Tömmel, emeritus professor of International and European Politics, University of Osnabrück.
- Anne Stickers, bachelor student of International Relations, University of Groningen.

During the site visit, the committee was supported by M. Jansen (certified), who acted as secretary. M. Frederik (certified), overall project co-ordinator, took over as secretary after the site visit. In the final stages, L. te Marvelde (certified) acted as liaison for the committee and the institution.

#### **Panel beoordeling gerealiseerd herstel**

- Luc François (chair), professor emeritus of Contemporary History at Ghent University, Belgium;
- Jan Orbie, university senior lecturer on EU External Relations at the Department of Political Science and co-director of the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University, Belgium;
- Sebastian Oberthür, professor for Environment and Sustainable Development at the Institute for European Studies (IES) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium.

Het panel werd ondersteund door Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer, secretaris (gecertificeerd).