

**MASTER**  
**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURIAL SCIENCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

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This report was finalised on 15 June 2017.



# REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME POLITICAL SCIENCE OF UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point (19 December 2014).

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

### Master's programme Political Science

Name of the programme:	Politologie / Political Science
CROHO number:	66606
Level of the programme:	Master
Orientation of the programme:	academic (WO)
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	European Politics and External Relations, International Relations, Political Economy, Political Theory, Public Policy and Governance.
Location(s):	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Expiration of accreditation:	3 July 2018

The visit of the assessment panel Political Science to the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of **Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.** took place on 18-19 April 2017.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	University of Amsterdam
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded
Result institutional quality assurance assessment	Positive

## COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on Political Science. The panel that assessed the master's programme Political Science consisted of:

- Prof. dr. Marijke Breuning, Professor of Political Sciences, Department of Political Science, University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, USA [chair];
- Dr. Renske Doorenspleet, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warwick, UK;
- Dr. Christien Van den Anker, Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences, University of the West of England in Bristol, UK;
- Prof. dr. Ferdi De Ville, co-director of the Centre for EU Studies, Ghent University, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Peter Vermeersch, Professor of Political Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, KU Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Dirk De Bièvre, Professor of International Politics, Department Political Sciences, Antwerp University, Belgium;
- Kaisa de Bel, third-year bachelor student Political sciences and second-year bachelor student Law, Leiden University, the Netherlands [student-member].



The panel was supported by dr. Marianne van der Weiden, who acted as secretary.

Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

### *Preparation*

QANU received the critical reflection of the master's programme Political Science on 2 March 2017 and forwarded copies by mail and e-mail to the panel members. They read the report and prepared questions, comments and remarks prior to the site visit. The secretary collected these questions and arranged them according to subject matter.

In addition, all panel members read recent theses from the master's programme. In consultation with the chair of the panel, fifteen theses were selected, covering the full range of marks given: five with grades in the range 6.0-6.9, five with an intermediate grade (7.0-8.4) and five with a high mark (8.5-9.9). Theses were selected from all specialisations and from the academic years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The panel members also received the grades and the assessment forms filled out by the examiners and supervisors. An overview of all documents and theses reviewed by the panel is included in Appendix 6.

The secretary drafted a programme for the site visit. This was discussed with the chair of the panel and the coordinator of the programme. As requested by QANU, the coordinator of the programme carefully selected discussion partners. The panel agreed with the selection. A schedule of the programme with all partners is included in Appendix 5.

### *Site visit*

The site visit took place on 18 and 19 April 2017 at the University of Amsterdam. In a preparatory meeting on 17 April 2017 the panel members discussed their findings based on the critical reflection. Furthermore, the panel discussed its findings with regard to the theses and the questions and issues to be raised in the interviews with representatives of the programme and other stakeholders.

During the site visit, the panel studied documents provided by the coordinator of the site visit. They included minutes of the Programme Committee and the Examinations Board, course descriptions, course materials, written exams, assignments and other assessments.

Furthermore, the panel interviewed the programme management, students, alumni, staff members, members of the Programme Committee and members of the Examinations Board. Prior to the site visit, both staff members and students were informed about the opportunity to speak to the panel confidentially during the 'consultation hour'. No requests were received for the consultation hour.

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

### *Report*

After the visit, the secretary produced a draft version of the report. She submitted the report to the panel members for comments. The secretary processed corrections, remarks and suggestions for improvement provided by the panel members to produce the revised draft report. This was then sent to University of Amsterdam to check for factual errors.

The comments and suggestions provided by the university were discussed with the chair of the assessment panel and, where necessary, with the other panel members. Based on the panel's



decisions to incorporate or ignore comments and suggestions, the secretary compiled the final version of the programme report.

#### *Decision rules*

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

#### **Generic quality**

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education master's programme.

#### **Unsatisfactory**

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

#### **Satisfactory**

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

#### **Good**

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standard.

#### **Excellent**

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

## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

### *Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes*

Graduates from the master's programme Political Science have acquired the knowledge that is needed to understand political science theories and their application, and the skills to conduct research in political science. The programme presents itself as 'broad political science', distinguishing itself from other programmes by its focus on transnational politics and the broad and comprehensive combination of themes in five different tracks: 'European Politics and External Relations', 'International Relations', 'Political Economy', 'Political Theory' and 'Public Policy and Governance'. The learning objectives for the programme and the five tracks are based on the domain-specific framework of reference and are formulated in terms of the Dublin descriptors at master's level. The common basis provided by transnational politics is grounded in the department's research and this focus ensures that the tracks are bound together into a coherent whole. The programme has explicitly chosen for a research oriented profile, without losing sight of other career options students need to be prepared for. The pluralism and critical approach are recognisable in the programme's profile. Taken together, the intended learning outcomes are more than satisfactory. The panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good'.

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

The one-year master programme consists of two semesters. As from the academic year 2016-2017, the curriculum opens with the common course 'Transnational Politics' (6 EC) and a specialisation module for each track (6 EC), followed by two track master's electives of 9 EC each. The second semester consists of the 'Thesis Seminar' (9 EC), focusing on methodological issues. The seminar prepares students for the 'Research Project' (21 EC).

The panel feels the programme structure is solid and well-considered. The level of the programme is good. The idea to start with a course on transnational politics is very good, although its practical implementation is not yet perfect. The panel appreciates the open and reflective approach, not only by the titulary of this core course, but also by other key staff, which will ensure the further integration within the overall curriculum. The course is important as a common basis at the start of the programme, from which the strands in the different tracks can grow. The themes and the debate format are well-chosen. The staff has found a useful way to accommodate the differences in knowledge between incoming students, by providing a reading list before the start of the programme, testing the students' knowledge and adjusting the assessment method in the course depending on the outcomes of this test. The panel similarly applauds the search for innovative teaching methods. Group work is seen as an essential part of the learning experience, but, apparently, students need to be better prepared for this. The specialisation modules per track are sufficiently advanced. The range of electives is broad and is open to students from different tracks. This stimulates interaction and an interdisciplinary perspective.

The second semester is entirely devoted to research. Students sign up for a research project in line with their chosen track, from an annual offering of approximately twenty projects. In the thesis seminars students study key literature about their research topic area. They are also (re)familiarised, in a way tailored to their specific needs, with the requisite advanced knowledge of research design and methods of data collection and analysis, as well as academic writing. The final part of the programme is dedicated to data collection and the actual writing of the thesis. The research project group continues to meet on a regular basis, but less frequently than during the thesis seminar. The group provides a forum for discussion, feedback and mutual support. In addition, the students meet on an individual basis with the group's instructor, who is also their thesis supervisor.

The programme is selective. All applicants must have a solid basis in the field of political science and in both qualitative and quantitative social science research methodology. They must also have an adequate level of English language proficiency.

Each year 35 students are admitted to the four smaller tracks ('European Politics and External Relations', 'Political Economy', 'Political Theory' and 'Public Policy and Governance') and 150 students



to the track 'International Relations'. A third of the student body is international. The programme contains no structural impediments to study progress.

The staff is well-qualified substantively, didactically and in research. They show a strong willingness to try out new things and respond to students' feedback. The panel was informed that the research activities of staff members regularly interfered with teaching. This affected the continuity of the teaching programme. The panel was reassured by the information that a number of decisions has been taken to address this issue, but feels that the appointment of staff exclusively devoted to teaching tasks (although clearly eminently well-qualified), does entail a weakening of research driven teaching, and should remain limited. Student support services are in place, but the guidance of international students at the start of the programme could be intensified to help them feel at home more quickly.

Summing up, the panel concludes that the curriculum, staff and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students, which enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel assesses Standard 2 as 'satisfactory'.

#### *Standard 3. Assessment*

Assessment is based on a sound assessment plan and fulfils the required quality criteria of validity, reliability and transparency. The Examinations Board is actively engaged in monitoring and guaranteeing the assessment quality. In 2015-2016 an evaluation was carried out of the quality of master theses. As a result, the assessment form was adapted, clarifying the crucial differences between a fail (5.0) and a pass (6.0) and between a pass and a pass with distinction. The shortcomings of the assessment forms used until 2015-2016 were also noted by the panel, when it assessed a sample of master theses. The panel noticed inconsistencies in the grading procedure and provision of feedback. The new form and criteria will be an improvement. Further improvements are possible, for example by separating the grades for thesis seminar and master's thesis, and providing more guidance on the weight of sub criteria per aspect. Two other points of improvement are the appointment procedure of the second thesis examiner (preferably not by the supervisor, but by the programme director or Examinations Board) and the issue of timely feedback, a matter on which students commented during the site visit. These points are not so serious, however, that they outweigh the positive aspects. The panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

#### *Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes*

In the master thesis the student can demonstrate his/her ability to undertake independent academic research. The learning outcomes of the master thesis reflect all the exit qualifications of the programme. In general, the theses are of the appropriate master level. In one case, the panel found the substantive level passable, but it considered the thesis not acceptable for assessment due to its many formal flaws. The quality of all other theses is at least satisfactory and in some cases even outstanding. The grades are generally in line with the panel's judgements.

From the interview with alumni and a recent alumni survey the panel concludes that they look back on the programme with appreciation and feel well-prepared for their career. Alumni have found employment in a wide variety of relevant positions and mostly got their first job within six months of graduating. Based on the sample of theses and the alumni information, the panel concludes that graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

Based on its international experience (Belgium, USA, UK), the panel notes with appreciation that the programmes in Political Science in the Netherlands are comparatively better structured and well-considered than elsewhere. For further improvement of the programme, the panel recommends making the programme more inclusive and providing more guidance to international students at the start of the programme, to make them feel at home more quickly. Feedback on assignments and exams should be delivered within the designated limit of fifteen working days at the latest. To fully guarantee the independence of the second thesis examiner, the panel advises that he/she be appointed by the programme director or Examinations Board, rather than by the supervisor. The



panel believes that the new standardised thesis assessment form is a major improvement, but advises developing it further by clarifying the relative weight of items per category and separating the grades for the thesis seminar and the thesis itself.

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

*Master's programme Political Science*

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment	satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	satisfactory
General conclusion	satisfactory

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

Date: 15 June 2017



Prof. dr. Marijke Breuning



Marianne van der Weiden





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

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

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

### **Explanation:**

As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

## **Findings**

Upon graduation from the master's programme Political Science, students have acquired the knowledge that is needed to understand political science theories and their application, and the skills to conduct research in political science, interpret the results and communicate the findings to academic and non-academic audiences. Graduates are able to critically and independently analyse the power structures underlying political processes in contemporary transnational societies. The programme also aims to stimulate the students' political awareness and social engagement to the extent that they will continue to play an active role in resolving the political and social problems of our time. The general learning objectives are based on the domain-specific framework of reference (see Appendix 2). In addition, the programme has formulated more specific exit qualifications for the programme and its constituent tracks (see Appendix 3). The exit qualifications are described in terms of the Dublin descriptors at master's level. The panel agrees that they amply reflect the intended learning outcomes of an academic master's programme in political science.

The programme presents itself as 'broad political science', distinguishing itself from other programmes by its focus on transnational politics and the broad and comprehensive combination of themes in five different tracks: 'European Politics and External Relations', 'International Relations', 'Political Economy', 'Political Theory' and 'Public Policy and Governance'. The programme has an international orientation, is research-oriented and characterised by its theoretical and methodological pluralism. The panel was informed that the focus on transnational politics is derived from the department's research agenda. It provides a common basis for the five tracks and is recognised as such by the students (see Standard 2). The panel feels that the research-oriented ambition of the programme stands out beyond what is required and aims higher than the Dublin descriptors require. Students told the panel that they were attracted to the programme by its broad programme, the combination of political science and economics and its progressive thinking. More general factors are the reputation of the university and the city of Amsterdam.

The one-year duration of the programme limits the number of courses that students can choose. The programme management described this as a balancing act between skills and research, especially since the majority of graduates will not opt for an academic career, but try to find another position on the labour market. The programme tries to solve the dilemma by clarifying to students the transferability of research skills and by explaining how research concerns actual political processes. Alumni are invited to inform students about the various career possibilities. The panel recognises the dilemma and supports the programme's response to address it.

## **Considerations**

The panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes are appropriate for an academic master's programme Political Science. They amply reflect the requirements of the domain-specific reference framework and the Dublin descriptors at master's level.



The general exit qualifications clarify what is expected from the programme's graduates in terms of knowledge and skills. On top of that, they also show the broad range of sub-disciplines covered in the five tracks and the learning objectives for each of them. The common basis provided by transnational politics is grounded in the department's research and ensures that the tracks are bound together into a coherent whole. The programme has explicitly chosen for a research-oriented profile, without losing sight of other career options students need to be prepared for. The pluralism and critical approach are recognisable in the programme's profile. Taken together, the intended learning outcomes are more than satisfactory.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good'.

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

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

#### **Explanation:**

The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

### **Findings**

#### *Programme: content and design*

The one-year master programme consists of two semesters. As from the academic year 2016-2017, the curriculum opens with the common course 'Transnational Politics' (6 EC) and a specialisation module for each track (6 EC), followed by two track master's electives of 9 EC each. The second semester consists of the 'Thesis Seminar' (9 EC), focusing on methodological issues. The seminar prepares students for the 'Research Project' (21 EC). For a schematic overview see Appendix 4.

All incoming students have to take the 'Transnational Politics' course, running in September and October. It is intended to provide a common perspective on political science and bring to the fore what is common to, and distinctive about, the master's programme at the UvA and its tracks. A number of topical issues is selected, such as migration, the role of transnational corporations and civil society organisations in international trade agreements, terrorism, etc. In addition to its substantive role, the course has an additional purpose as a refresher course, i.e. to provide an equal base line of knowledge for all students. Before the first week, every student receives a starter package of six texts. Knowledge of this literature is tested in a multiple choice exam at the start of the course. The test is diagnostic: it identifies the weaker students who are then referred to the study advisor to discuss remedial actions. At the end of the course, the students who passed the entrance test, write an essay as their final assignment, while those who failed must do an exam on all course texts. This ensures that they engage with the basic literature that is needed for the rest of the programme. The course consists of lectures and discussions, group assignments and individual coursework. Most lectures are co-taught by teachers from different corners of the department. A preparatory committee has selected a number of opposite theses on which lecturers take a position and a debate is organised. The teaching staff tried to get away from the traditional lecture theatres, but this was not yet successful. A new venue needs to be found next year. Student feedback was mixed about the group portfolio. The staff apparently underestimated the dislike and distrust of students of group work, but they maintain that it is essential for students to learn to deal with this type of work. The staff members concluded that more guidance is needed and will provide more information next year on what is expected for each assignment. The overall feeling of the staff is that the course is worthwhile and works well for all tracks.

The panel agrees that this course is an important starting point for the master's programme and expects that it will work out as envisaged when practical improvements have been implemented.



Alongside, but in close interaction with the 'Transnational Politics' course, students follow a specialisation module, the core course of their selected track. It introduces the students to their chosen specialisation at an advanced level. Since the titles of these modules are often the same as some bachelor courses, the panel wondered if they would not be too basic. The staff ensured the panel, however, that these courses go over some of the same materials, but at a more advanced level. The staff uses this approach in order to deal with the diversity of students' backgrounds. Additional reading lists are provided as well. The panel checked the relevant course outlines and agrees that this is a suitable approach to start the programme with.

Next, students select two electives from an offering of more than twenty courses. This period runs from November to the end of January. These courses are more specialised and give students the chance to deepen their research interests and practice their research and communicative skills. The thematic overlap between the courses, coordinated by the programme director, ensures that students from the smaller tracks have a choice of two out of four, while those in the larger track ('International Relations') can choose from a wider offering. Some of these electives are also followed by students of the other master's programme of the department, Conflict Resolution and Governance. The students told the panel that they much appreciate what they called the 'amazing variety' of choice of electives, also from other tracks than the one they enrolled in. They feel it helps to develop an interdisciplinary perspective by meeting students from other tracks.

The second semester is entirely devoted to research. Students sign up for a research project in line with their chosen track, from an annual offering of approximately twenty projects. It is possible to do an individual research project, but this is not common. This year around five students applied for this option. A group consists of around ten students who work together during the second semester in a seminar setting. The panel was given an explanation of the procedure to match students as much as possible to the project of their first choice, including a research project market where students can talk with potential supervisors about the research question they have in mind. This elaborate procedure, executed by the study advisor, works out very well: in 2016-2017 almost ninety per cent of the students were assigned to the group of their first choice, around ten per cent got their second choice and less than two per cent had to be content with their third choice. The panel agrees with the study advisor's observation that the procedure is worth the effort, not only because of the favourable outcome, but also because it shows the students that the programme staff realises how important the choice of a research topic is for a student.

In the thesis seminars (February-March) students study key literature about their research topic. Students do not attend lectures, but are to actively engage with the literature in the seminars. They are also (re)familiarised, in a way tailored to their specific needs, with the requisite advanced knowledge of research design and methods of data collection and analysis, as well as academic writing. Nine lectures on different qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis are offered. Students have to attend at least three of these and make a choice dependent on their research design. The lecturers are available for more detailed questions after class. By the end of the seminar, students have to submit a satisfactory research proposal in order to complete the thesis seminar and move on to the research project. This go/no go moment is meant to identify students who are potentially at risk of failing the research project. Depending on the shortcomings, students may get the chance to repair their proposal within two weeks or so.

The final part of the programme (April-June) is dedicated to data collection and the actual writing of the thesis. The research project group continues to meet on a regular basis, be it less frequently than during the thesis seminar. The group provides a forum for discussion, feedback and mutual support. In addition, the students meet on an individual basis with the group's instructor, who is also their thesis supervisor. The last week of the programme, after submission of the thesis, is used for final presentations and a formal closure of the programme.



The panel heard from the students that they find the seminars very helpful for their project. The panel appreciates the combination of different disciplines in the group, the peer reviewing and the structure and support of the group while working on their individual projects. The panel noted from the evaluations that the student feedback on thesis supervision was less positive. The staff admitted that this was caused partly by the differences between supervisors in time spent with the students. This year, a new set of guidelines was agreed upon, in order to ensure that individual supervision is continued between April and June.

The panel concludes that the format of the curriculum, both the modules of the first semester and the research phase in the second semester, is well-considered. The panel also appreciates its responsivity, allowing for adjustments when students' feedback indicates points of improvement.

Due to the one-year duration of the programme, it is not possible to include an internship. All students agreed that an internship is difficult to combine with the research project, but especially the foreign students told the panel that they had expected more opportunities to connect to other research institutes, NGOs or other institutions, or at least a list of them with contact names. Some would like to be better prepared for possible positions in the labour market, while others think it is best to keep this preparation more general, gaining insight in the applicability of political science in various contexts. The programme tries to accommodate the need for more guidance by offering career events with the input from alumni. These events are well-received. The panel thinks that this method is the best option available. Some students extend their university registration for another year to do an internship after completion of their thesis. This does not work out well for the programme's output rates, but staff members cannot and do not want to discourage this option. The panel agrees with this approach.

#### *Didactical approach*

The research orientation of the programme is evident. Research-led teaching takes place in the electives and the first part of the seminars, when lecturers teach on the basis of their own research experience. Research-oriented and -based teaching is concentrated in the research projects, where students are active participants and peer review each other's work. Research-tutored teaching is about the final quality assessment of the master's thesis.

Most teaching takes place in groups with a maximum of 35, but usually of ten to fifteen students. This allows for an interactive type of teaching with ample room for discussion. The panel notes that the number of contact hours is relatively low, especially during the research project (three hours per week per group), but this is complemented by the individual supervision sessions. In the first semester, students have two modules with two weekly sessions each, plus extra individual sessions after class for feedback and support, if needed. For the course 'Transnational Politics' students will be given more information about where to go in case of problems or questions. Office hours will be scheduled by the course coordinator, for further reassurance during this first part of the programme, which is a good step.

#### *Admission and study progress*

The master's programme is selective. The admissions committee, mandated by the Examinations Board, evaluates the applications and admits 35 students per year for the four smaller tracks ('European Politics and External Relations', 'Political Economy', 'Political Theory' and 'Public Policy and Governance') and 150 students for the track 'International Relations'. If more qualified students apply than there are places available, candidates with the most convincing academic standing are selected. Approximately a third of the student body is international.

All applicants are expected to have a solid basis in the field of political science (at least 60 EC at academic bachelor's level), a solid basis in both qualitative and quantitative social science research methodology (at least 20 EC during their previous study) and an adequate level of English language proficiency.

The actual knowledge of political science is assessed prior to the start of the 'Transnational Politics' course, as mentioned above. If necessary, students are given additional readings and an extra exam at the end of the course. Promising students with slightly less than 20 EC in methodological background may be admitted on condition that they complete an intensive research methodology module in the four weeks prior to the start of the programme. Dutch students do not have to submit an English test score but are strongly advised to prepare themselves optimally, e.g. by completing the course on academic English, offered by the College of Social Sciences of the UvA. This combination of formal requirements and remedial offerings is a very suitable approach, in the eyes of the panel. The small-scale type of teaching and individual teacher-student interaction during the programme make it possible to address any remaining gaps in knowledge or skills.

Students without an academic political science bachelor (from a university of applied sciences or with a different disciplinary background) have to take a transfer year, providing basic courses in political science and methodological courses such as statistics. Most students take the transfer year after their bachelor, but it is also possible to take it during the bachelor, spread over two years. This works well, the panel heard from the students.

The programme contains no structural impediments to study progress. Some international students felt lost at the beginning, they told the panel, due to the individual culture without bonding, where students are expected to find out everything for themselves. The students feel the programme could be more inclusive, with more intercultural sensibilities on the part of the lecturers and more attention for systems outside the Netherlands, UK or USA. The panel encourages the staff to take this issue further.

#### *Staff*

The Department of Political Science has more than 130 staff members. Fifty-six of them are involved in the master's programme Political Science. The staff-student ratio is 1:30 (October 2016). The staff is well-qualified: all have a PhD degree and are active researchers. The quality of research in the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, in which most staff members conduct their research, was rated 4.5 out of 5 in the most recent research assessment (2014). Many members have been very successful in obtaining large and prestigious research grants and were, therefore, less available for teaching. A relatively large number of temporary staff members has been attracted to fill the gaps, but this did not help the continuity of the teaching programme. The panel was reassured by the information that a number of decisions has been taken to address this issue. Staff members with a regular appointment and a large research grant must spend a significant percentage (twenty to thirty per cent) of their working hours on teaching. Four permanent lecturers with doctorates and several assistant professors with contracts of three to four years have been appointed as well. The panel feels that this should remain carefully limited as a remedy because, despite their clearly very good qualifications upon appointment, these lecturers cannot ensure the same intensity of research-based teaching as the permanent staff with both a teaching and a research task.

All staff members either have achieved a university teaching qualification (seventy per cent), have started the procedure to get it (23 per cent), or have just recently arrived and will start as soon as possible (seven per cent). The international composition of staff, recently expanded by new appointments, contributes to the programme's international orientation. To introduce new staff members to the master's programme and the university system in the Netherlands (including the grading system), special events are organised per semester and experienced staff members are assigned as coaches and buddies to the new arrivals.

The students expressed appreciation for their teachers. They find them inspiring, approachable and honest, providing open feedback on assignments. Lectures are usually interactive and responsive to students' questions. The panel concludes that the staff is well-qualified in all respects.

#### *Facilities*



The information and guidance for students are generally well-organised. A kick-off meeting is organised at the start of the programme and career events take place twice a year. Students can approach the information desk with their questions or schedule an appointment with the study advisor. Most written information is provided through websites and e-mail. All courses use Blackboard as a digital learning environment.

Students can join the disciplinary student association Machiavelli, which operates in Dutch, or the faculty-wide association SBS International. The programme works closely together with two debate centres, the Amsterdam Centre for Contemporary European Studies (ACCESS) and Spui 25. Students have access to debates, lectures and events organised by these two centres. The panel is impressed by the dedication of the study advisor to help students in finding the best possible research project group. The panel advises paying more attention to new students, especially from abroad, to make them feel at home as soon as possible.

### **Considerations**

The panel feels the programme structure is solid and well-considered. The level of the programme is right. The idea to start with a course on transnational politics is very good, although its practical implementation is not yet perfect. The panel applauds the search for innovative teaching methods by the course staff and is surprised that it is difficult to find a suitable venue in one of the university's buildings. This course is important as a common basis at the start of the programme, from which the strands in the different tracks can grow. The themes and the debate format are well-chosen. The staff has found a useful way to accommodate the differences in knowledge between incoming students. Apparently students need to be better prepared for the group work required. As for the other courses, the specialisation modules per track are sufficiently advanced. The range of electives is broad and stimulates interaction between students of different tracks. The research seminar and project groups provide good support for students in the research phase of the programme, although students noted differences in feedback and guidance between the groups. The staff is well-qualified substantively, didactically and in research. They show a strong willingness to try out new things and respond to students' feedback. Student support services are in place, but the guidance of international students at the start of the programme could be intensified. Taken together, however, the panel finds the positive features to certainly outweigh the slightly critical comments. The panel concludes, therefore, that the curriculum and staff constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students, which enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses Standard 2 as 'satisfactory'.

#### **Standard 3: Assessment**

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

#### **Explanation:**

The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The programme's examining board safeguards the quality of the interim and final tests administered.

### **Findings**

The examination policy is described in the critical self-reflection as a combination of confidence in the lecturers' professional qualifications and periodic evaluation of the way in which students are assessed. The UvA Assessment Policy Framework is the basis for the assessment policy at faculty and programme level.

The panel has looked into the assessment methods and concludes that they are appropriate for the learning objectives. Students are assessed on the basis of a mix of assignments, papers, presentations, examinations and participation. Written papers are the main method in the first semester and the only method in the second semester.



All lecturers who are authorised by the Examinations Board as examiners, must be members of the permanent staff and have obtained the university teaching qualification. Lecturers without this qualification can be appointed as an examiner upon the motivated request of the programme director to the Examinations Board.

Tests and the associated answer or assessment keys are prepared by the authorised examiners and peer reviewed by a colleague with examiner status. The tests, answer/assessment keys and information on the peer review make up part of the course file maintained by the examiner and may be consulted by the Examinations Board at any time. The assessments are transparent: the format, weighting and content of all tests are described in the course guide and, where possible, students are granted insight into the form and content of the tests by means of examples from previous tests and practice tests. In their meeting with the panel, students indicated their satisfaction with the feedback they receive, but they do not always receive it within the fifteen days laid out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations. The panel concludes that the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments are sufficiently guaranteed.

A separate guide is available for the final thesis, along with an assessment form laid down by the Examinations Board. The programme director submits these documents, as well as a lecturer's guide, to supervisors. The programme director also oversees the process of thesis assessment, which is done by two lecturers: the supervisor and a colleague who has not been directly involved in the writing process. The second reader is invited by the supervisor and becomes involved when the supervisor judges the thesis to be passable. They assess the thesis independently of each other, and then decide on a common judgement through deliberation. In case they cannot reach an agreement, the Examinations Board appoints a third reader, whose independent judgement provides additional input in a second round of deliberation. The panel finds that this does work in an acceptable manner in practice, yet feels that the independence of the second reader can be better guaranteed if he/she is appointed by the programme director or Examinations Board, rather than by the supervisor.

In 2015-2016 the Examinations Board conducted a study on the assessment of (the quality of) the theses. As a result, the assessment form was adapted, clarifying the crucial differences between a fail (5.0) and a pass (6.0) and between a pass and a pass with distinction. Marks between 5.1 and 5.9 cannot be awarded. The panel strongly supports this step, because it noted a serious lack of consistency in the level of feedback among examiners: some just gave a grade, or only used words as 'excellent' and 'very good', while others provided extensive feedback to explain the proposed grade. Some gave a grade for the thesis as a whole, while others also assessed the sub criteria. Different forms were used, which caused further confusion when the panel members read the sample of theses (see Standard 4). During the site visit, the panel studied the new assessment form and concludes that it is definitely an improvement. The assessment is now on a larger number of distinct aspects, for each of which a score must be provided, ranging from insufficient to excellent. An annex explains what is expected per aspect for a score of insufficient, sufficient, satisfactory, good, very good and excellent. Written comments must be added to substantiate the score, and an extra box needs to be filled in to motivate a distinction, if proposed. The panel advises a few further improvements, e.g. in clarifying the relative weight of items per category. It also seems strange that an assessment of the student's participation during the thesis seminar is included in the assessment of the thesis process.

The panel agrees that a grade for the independence of work is a suitable criterion for a thesis, but believes that the seminar should be assessed and graded separately. In any case, participation should be operationalised clearly. A suggestion could be to assess the quality of peer feedback on the basis of short written texts.

The Examinations Board is a joint board for all three programmes in the political science domain at the UvA: the bachelor's and master's programmes Political Science and the master's programme Conflict Resolution and Governance. The members are independent of the management. The board includes an external member, working at another university, who joins the meeting once a year and



advises on the work of the Examinations Board. The panel appreciates this open attitude. The board is supported by a professional secretariat. Hours are allotted to the members so that they can carry out their tasks properly. As mentioned above, the Examinations Board appoints authorised examiners and third readers for a thesis. It is also the board's duty to prevent and, if necessary, verify and sanction cases of fraud and plagiarism. The panel finds these procedures to be adequate. In addition, the Examinations Board organises periodic evaluations of tests and assignments. The evaluation of the thesis assessments in 2015-2016 was mentioned above. In 2018, tests and assignments for all master's courses will be evaluated. Reports of these evaluations are submitted to the programme director and the conclusions are discussed with all lecturers during education meetings that are organised twice a year. The Examinations Board also provides feedback and recommendations to individual lecturers whose tests have been evaluated. The panel concludes that the Examinations Board fulfils its legal tasks systematically and actively.

### **Considerations**

Based on the written documentation and additional information provided during the site visit, the panel concludes that the assessment is based on a sound assessment plan and fulfils the required quality criteria. The Examinations Board is actively engaged in monitoring and guaranteeing the assessment quality. The new standardised thesis assessment form is a good example of its effects. Further improvements are possible through separating the grades for thesis seminar and master's thesis, and providing more guidance on the weight of sub criteria per aspect. Two other points of improvement are the appointment procedure of the second thesis examiner and the issue of timely feedback. These points are not so serious, however, that they outweigh the positive aspects. The quality of assessment is satisfactory.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

#### **Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

#### **Explanation:**

The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

### **Findings**

The panel read a sample of fifteen theses and their assessment forms and had an interview with a number of alumni during the site visit, to determine if the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

In the master thesis the student demonstrates his/her ability to undertake independent academic research. The learning outcomes of the master thesis reflect all the exit qualifications of the programme. In general, the theses were of the appropriate master level. In one case, the panel found the substantive level passable, but it considered the thesis not acceptable for assessment due to its many formal flaws. The minimum standards of a well drafted English text are not met, the list of definitions in the beginning is strange and the reporting of SPSS results is insufficient. The panel is surprised to note that this thesis was graded with a 6.8.

The quality of all other theses is at least satisfactory and in some cases even outstanding. The grades are generally in line with the panel's judgements. In a few cases the panel would have given a slightly lower grade, but in other cases it would have been a little higher. As mentioned above, the panel was not very satisfied with the set-up and use of the assessment forms, because it led to inconsistency in the grading procedure and provision of feedback. The new form and criteria will be an improvement. Further development of this form is recommended (see Standard 3).

From the interview with three alumni the panel concludes that they look back on the programme with appreciation. They feel well-prepared for their future career, either as a PhD candidate or in

another position. The student counsellor, alumni events and individual staff members are all helpful sources of information in career guidance.

An alumni survey was held in December 2015. The responses show that the alumni have found employment in a wide variety of relevant positions and that most got their first paid job within six months of graduating. The research project was identified as the most useful part of the programme for their current employment. The panel considers these outcomes to be favourable for the programme and concludes that the graduates are sufficiently prepared for their future career, even though students would welcome more attention to professional skills in the programme (see Standard 2).

### **Considerations**

Based on the sample of theses and the information from alumni, the panel concludes that graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes. The theses show that students are able to conduct an independent research project with the appropriate methodology. The grades are fair and reflect the differences in quality between theses. The alumni are satisfied with the programme as a preparation for their further career. The panel, therefore, assesses this standard as 'satisfactory'.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The intended learning outcomes express clearly what is expected from graduates of the master's programme Political Science and are in line with the domain-specific framework and the Dublin descriptors at master's level. On top of the general exit qualifications, they also show the broad range of sub-disciplines covered in the five tracks and the learning objectives for each of them. The programme has explicitly chosen for a research-oriented profile, without losing sight of other career options students need to be prepared for. The pluralism and critical approach are recognisable in the programme's profile. The one-year programme is well-structured and guides students to the required advanced knowledge level and research skills. The course 'Transnational Politics' plays a central role in providing a common basis for the five tracks. Admission to the programme is selective. Approximately a third of the student body is international. The staff is well-qualified in research and teaching. They are easily accessible for students and always willing to answer questions and provide feedback. The curriculum and staff provide a coherent teaching-learning environment. An assessment policy has been developed to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of assessments. The Examinations Board is actively monitoring and evaluating the quality of assessments. This led to a revised and standardised thesis assessment form in 2016-2017. The master theses and the alumni feedback prove that graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes. Summing up, the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good' and Standards 2, 3 and 4 as 'satisfactory'. The final assessment is 'satisfactory'.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses the *master's programme Political Science* as 'satisfactory'.



## MEASURES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Based on its international experience (Belgium, USA, UK), the panel notes with appreciation that the programmes in Political Science in the Netherlands are comparatively better structured and well-considered than elsewhere. For further improvement of the programme, the panel recommends making the programme more inclusive and providing more guidance to international students at the start of the programme, to make them feel at home more quickly. The implementation of the course on transnational politics needs further improvement. Feedback on assignments and exams should be delivered within the designated limit of fifteen working days at the latest. To fully guarantee the independence of the second thesis examiner, the panel advises that he/she be appointed by the programme director or Examinations Board, rather than by the supervisor. The panel believes that the new standardised thesis assessment form is a major improvement, but advises developing it further by clarifying the relative weight of items per category and separating the grades for the thesis seminar and the thesis itself.



## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: CURRICULA VITAE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

**Dr. C. (Christien) van den Anker** is Associate Professor of Politics and International Relations at the Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences at the University of the West of England in Bristol (UK) since 2006. Between 2001-20016, she worked as a Lecturer in Global Ethics and as Deputy Director at the Centre for Global Ethics at the University of Birmingham, UK. Christien is an internationally established specialist in human rights and contemporary slavery. In her work, she refocused the narrow human trafficking debate to encompass all forms of slavery, clarified the migration-slavery nexus, and pioneered partnerships working for research-based advocacy.

**Prof. dr. M. (Marijke) Breuning [chair]** is Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas, USA. She specialises in foreign policy decision making, with a specific interest in development cooperation and small states, as well as the politics of international children's rights (and especially intercountry adoption), women/gender and politics, and the sociology of the profession. Marijke has published numerous refereed journal articles and book chapters, as well as three books. She has served as an editor of the *American Political Science Review* (2012-2016), and previously served as a member of the inaugural editorial team of *Foreign Policy Analysis*, a journal of the *International Studies Association*, an editor of the *Journal of Political Science Education*, and book review editor of *International Politics*. She serves – or has served – on several editorial boards and in various leadership positions in the International Studies Association and American Political Science Association.

**K.J.M. (Kaisa) de Bel** started her studies in Political Science in 2013 at Leiden University, specialising in International Relations. In 2015, she decided to read Law next to her Political Science studies at the same university. Kaisa is an active member of various committees of study association SPIL, and was in 2014-2015 a member of the board. Currently, she is a member of the advisory board of SPIL. Between 2014-2016, she offered secondary school pupils advice on studying Political Science.

**Prof. dr. D. (Dirk) De Bièvre** is Associate Professor of International Politics and International Political Economy at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. He studied in Leuven (Belgium), Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), Konstanz (Germany), and Firenze (Italy), where he obtained his PhD at the European University Institute (EUI) in 2002. He specialises in European trade policy, the World Trade Organisation, and interest group mobilisation. Before joining the Antwerp Faculty in 2006, Dirk was a post-doctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods in Bonn (Germany), and an EU and Volkswagen Foundation research fellow at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES). He has taught at the universities of Brussels, Mannheim, Dresden, Leuven, and was a visiting fellow at the Department of Government of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) during the academic year 2014-15.

**Prof. dr. F. (Ferdinand) De Ville** is Associate Professor at the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University, Belgium. He received a master degree (2007) and a PhD (2011) in Political Science at Ghent University. In his dissertation he analysed the relationship between the international trade regime and European social, environmental and consumer protection. Ferdi has also done policy advisory research on European trade policy for the Flemish government.

**Dr. R. (Renske) Doorenspleet** is Associate Professor at the University of Warwick, UK. She is a graduate of the University of Leiden; after a postdoctoral fellowship at Harvard University (USA) in 2002/2003, she started a research project on democracy in divided countries, funded by NWO. She has taught courses on comparative politics, democratisation and development, statistics and research methods. During the academic year 2011-2012, she got an academic fellowship and grant of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning, in order to innovate teaching in politics,



combining film and theatre projects with academic research and teaching around the theme of democracy. During 2012-2014, Renske was the political science coordinator of Warwick's interdisciplinary Q-step Centre, and developed new politics degrees offering quantitative social science training. Her research focuses on democratic transitions and consolidation in comparative perspective. Her articles have been published in academic journals such as *World Politics*, *Democratization*, *Acta Politica*, *the International Political Science Review*, *Ethnopolitics*, *Government and Opposition* and *the European Journal of Political Research*. She is also the author of *Democratic Transitions* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005), co-editor of *One-Party Dominance in African Democracies* (Lynne Rienner, 2013) and of *Political Parties, Party Systems and Democracy in Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). At the moment, she is working on a new book, which will explore the value of democracy in comparative perspective (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

**Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Vermeersch** is Professor of Politics at the KU Leuven, Belgium. He is currently director of the LINES Institute (Leuven International and European Studies) and affiliated as senior researcher with the Centre for Research on Peace and Development – both at KU Leuven. In 2007 and 2008, he was a visiting scholar at the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, Harvard University. Peter is a graduate of the University of Leuven, but he also studied, lived and conducted research in Central Europe and the Balkans. His research focuses on minorities and migration, democratisation, reconciliation and nationalism. His articles have appeared in academic journals such as *The European Journal of Sociology*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *The Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, and *East European Politics and Societies*. Peter is also the author and editor of several academic books. In addition, he is an associate editor of *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Ethnicity and Nationalism* and a board member of PEN Flanders, and he serves on the editorial board of *Karakter*, a Dutch-language journal that publishes essays about all aspects of science. In 2011 and 2012 Peter Vermeersch was part of the organising team of the G1000, a largescale deliberative citizens' initiative held in Belgium.



## APPENDIX 2: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

Note: As formulated on 22-01-2016 by LOOP (Landelijk Overleg Opleidingen Politicologie) the political science cluster in the framework of re-accreditation of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, Radboud University Nijmegen and Leiden University. This text is a translation.

The Political Science degree programme provides training in the independent practise of political science and the professional application of the scientific knowledge and skills acquired in the programme. The political scientist is specialised in identifying and analysing conflicts between and collective decision-making processes by groups and organisations, tangible and intangible interests, institutions and processes of power that influence these conflicts and decision-making, and the resulting societal effects. The political scientist is able, by virtue of their specialisation, to analyse the occurrence, causes and effects of contemporary societal trends such as globalisation and regionalisation, technological developments such as the ICT revolution and knowledge society, and the functions of diversity.

In line with agreements made at the European level with regard to political science (European Conference of National Political Science Associations, 1 September 2003) and with descriptions of the field of study worldwide, the following components of Political Science are regarded as fundamental to an effectual practise of the profession and should in any case be included in the course of study: political theory/history of political ideas/political philosophy, research methods (qualitative and quantitative), the national and EU political system, comparative political science, and international relations. These European agreements pertain to Bachelor's programmes. The emphasis placed on other components, as follows, may vary between institutions: management science and policy analysis, conflict studies, political decision-making, political economics, political conduct, political history, political sociology, and political psychology. Most Master's programmes do not cover the entire spectrum of political science, and instead focus on specific facets.

The Bachelor's programme trains students to practise a wide range of professions in the policy environment as well as to pursue advanced study that requires greater autonomy; the Master's in Political Science refines and deepens knowledge and skills, including research skills, in the field of political science and provides training for the independent practise of professions at the academic level. The programmes do not aim to train for any single specific professional profile apart from that of scientific researcher. Rather, the needs of the modern knowledge society call for broad professional expertise with sufficient mobility and flexibility to work in public, non-profit and hybrid organisations and the private sector alike. The current requirements on a sound academic degree programme that trains for work in the knowledge society furthermore entails that a Political Science programme educates students to be open to and possess an understanding of other disciplines, to be capable of communicating specialist political scientific knowledge to non-specialist audiences in a coherent manner, to be able to integrate a mass of information in a targeted and effective manner, to apply their knowledge to formulate decisions (also in collective contexts), to be active and critical participants in public debates on political scientific problems, and to keep up with the latest knowledge independently.

On the basis of the above description and the Dublin descriptors, the following distinctions can be made between the competences demonstrated by Bachelor's graduates of Political Science and Master's graduates of Political Science:

Dublin Descriptors	Bachelor's	Master's
Knowledge and understanding in the field of study	Sufficient knowledge of recent developments in the field of study to formulate scientifically founded judgements.	Capacity to integrate knowledge and handle complex subject matter.
		Insight into the specific position that political science occupies relative to other fields of scientific study.
Applying knowledge and understanding	Ability to incorporate knowledge and to apply knowledge to phenomena addressed during the Bachelor's study	Ability to incorporate knowledge from disciplines relevant to political science and apply it to the analysis of political scientific problems, as well as to apply knowledge to phenomena that were not explicitly addressed during the course of study.
	Ability to recognise and analyse societal problems based on an understanding of political science	Ability to recognise and analyse complex societal problems and to evaluate solutions based on an understanding of political science.
	Competences to devise and sustain arguments in general and solve problems within the field of study.	Ability to contribute original ideas to solve societal problems.
Research skills	Knowledge of the empirical cycle of research through supervised participation in all phases of scientific research.	Ability to independently formulate, carry out and report on scientific research.
Formulating judgements and reflecting on the field of study and societal phenomena	Ability to evaluate the structure and outcomes of empirical scientific research.	Ability to evaluate the structure and outcomes of empirical scientific research, including its methodological and methodical-technical aspects.
	Sufficient knowledge of normative theories to recognise the value loading of both scientific theories and policy intentions	In-depth knowledge of normative theories in order to take a substantiated position in debates on the value loading of both scientific theories and policy intentions.
Communication skills	Ability to communicate information, ideas and solutions.	Ability to communicate scientific knowledge, including the structure of research and the rationale and considerations underpinning it clearly and unambiguously. Participation in the scientific and public debate.



# APPENDIX 3: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

## *Master's programme Political Science*

### Exit qualifications (Dublin Descriptors)

#### 1. Knowledge and understanding (DD1)

The Graduate has acquired knowledge and understanding:

- a) of the key theories and research results on politics in contemporary transnational society from the various subfields of political science,
- b) of the relevant literature, including theories and research results, of the chosen track.

#### 2. Cognitive and/or professional abilities (DD2)

The acquired cognitive and/or professional abilities enable the graduate to:

- a) analyse the questions raised by this literature in a critical and action-oriented manner, rapidly familiarise him/herself with new subjects and conduct synthetic analyses (bridging the gaps between multiple disciplines and analytical concepts),
- b) work in a team to develop political and policy-oriented solutions to these questions in the context of the relevant political and societal developments.

#### 3. Formulating Judgements (DD3)

Concerning the ability of formulating judgements, the graduate should be able to:

- a) analyse and interpret current societal and political developments on the basis of theoretical knowledge, and report on the resulting findings in a clearly understandable and coherent manner in both written and oral form,
- b) take stock of the various literatures and empirical materials relevant to the Master's programme and relevant track - given constraints in time, information and other resources - and subject these to critical analysis.

#### 4. Communicative skills (DD4)

The graduate has acquired the following communicative skills:

- a) to use theoretical knowledge and understanding to analyse and interpret current societal and political phenomena and to make a clear report of the findings, both verbally and in writing,
- b) to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences,
- c) to demonstrate English language skills at academic level.

#### 5. Competencies / learning skills (DD5)

The graduate has acquired the following competencies:

- a) the capacity to apply at least one empirical research method within a specific area of the relevant Master's programme, and the capacity to interpret the results of such research in a scientifically sound manner,
- b) the ability to conduct independent scientific research,
- c) the ability to analyse complex political problems in a largely self-directed and autonomous manner.

### European Politics and External Relations

Without prejudice to the provisions above, the graduate with a track in European Politics and External Relations has acquired:

- a) knowledge of and insight into the (history of) development of European political and economic integration theory, including as regards the rise and development of the external relations of the European Union (EU);
- b) knowledge of and insight into the relationship between political, socio-economic and legal processes concerning European integration, including as regards the consequences for the external relations of the EU;

- c) knowledge of and insight into the evolution of modes of governance within the EU, and changing relations between European and national institutions, including as regards the consequences for external relations of the EU;
- d) knowledge of and insight into the dynamic relationship between state and non-state actors within the EU - at sub-national, national and transnational level - including as regards the external relations of the EU;
- e) the ability to formulate original theoretical ideas and the skill to design and perform empirical research independently (theory development and assessment) in the field of the track;
- f) the ability to present conceptual and empirical insights into European politics and external relations in academic English.

#### International Relations

Without prejudice to the provisions above, the graduate with a track in International Relations has acquired:

- a) knowledge of and insight into the history of the sub-discipline, the development of international relations theory, including realist and neo-realist, liberal and neo-liberal, Marxist and neo-Marxist, constructivist and critical approaches and has the ability to analyse and critique the contributions and limitations of these different perspectives;
- b) knowledge of and insight into the substantive debates within international relations, including examining conflict and security, international political economy and the role of non-state actors in international politics, in particular;
- c) knowledge of and insight into the consequences of global change processes, globalisation and transnationalisation on the relationship between state and nonstate actors;
- d) the capacity to formulate original theoretical ideas, and the ability to design and carry out independent empirical studies to make both conceptual and empirical contributions to the field of International Relations;
- e) the ability to present conceptual and empirical insights into International Relations in academic English.

#### Political Economy

Without prejudice to the provisions above, the graduate with a track in Political Economy has acquired:

- a) knowledge of and insight into political economy as a way of thinking and the substantive debates concerning the mutual interaction of economic dynamics and patterns of governance, including those pertaining to the relationship between various types of political behaviour (e.g. voting, lobbying, protesting, media campaign, party politics) and economic change (e.g. globalization, (financial) market integration, labour market integration through migration, economic development);
- b) knowledge of and insight into the political and economic concepts relevant to the governance of the economy (e.g. macroeconomic imbalances and adjustment ; trade and investment flows, technological change and competitiveness , inequality, welfare state reform);
- c) knowledge of and insight into how global and local economic forces generate political conflicts and how in turn political contestation across different forms of governance (e.g. democracy, authoritarianism) shapes the economic 'rules of the game' across sectors, across levels of development, and across regions in the global economy;
- d) the capacity to independently formulate relevant research questions related to empirical and theoretical enquiry, and to carry out independent empirical analysis resulting in conceptual and empirical contributions to the development and testing of theories in the field of the track;
- e) the ability to present conceptual and empirical insights into Political Economy in academic English.

#### Political Theory

Without prejudice to the provisions above, the graduate with a track in Political Theory has acquired:



- a) knowledge and understanding of the development of political theory and its main contemporary approaches;
- b) knowledge and understanding of the development of normative and realist theory in at least one of the following sub-areas: democracy, justice, political economy, gender, migration, the politics of expertise and experts;
- c) capacity to apply the ideas about - and of - classical and contemporary political thinkers to current political issues and ideological movements;
- d) the ability to formulate original theoretical ideas and the skill to design and perform empirical research independently (theory development and assessment) in the field of the track;
- e) the ability to present conceptual and empirical insights into Political Theory in academic English.

#### Public Policy and Governance

Without prejudice to the provisions above, the graduate with a track in Public Policy and Governance has acquired:

- a) knowledge and understanding of diverse theories (especially rational choice, neo-institutionalist and interpretivist theories) and research results regarding the changing role of the national state, under influence of globalisation and Europeanisation as well as local changes in society and in policy;
- b) knowledge and understanding of diverse theories and research results regarding old and new administrative arrangements and problems typical of 21st-century society, such as those pertaining to migration and social integration, technological innovation and (food) safety, and climate change;
- c) knowledge and understanding of diverse theories and research results regarding the management of policy processes and organisations, and methods for the scientific analysis of politics, policy and management;
- d) knowledge and understanding of how to learn methods for designing policy, organisations and arrangements in response to such challenges;
- e) the ability to formulate original theoretical ideas and the skill to design and perform empirical research independently (theory development and assessment) in the field of the track;
- f) the ability to present conceptual and empirical insights into Public Policy and Governance in academic English.

## APPENDIX 4: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

*Master's programme Political Science*

Semester 1			
<i>Politics at the UN</i>	Block 1	Transnational Politics (6 EC)	Track Specialization Module (6 EC)
<i>Track Specialisation</i>	Block 2	Track Master Elective (9 EC)	Track Master Elective (9 EC)
	Block 3		

Semester 2			
<i>Research Methods &amp; Design</i>	Block 4	Thesis Seminar (9 EC)	
<i>Research</i>	Block 5	Research Project (21 EC)	
	Block 6		

Go / No Go

**Tracks:**

European Politics and External Relations
International Relations
Political Economy
Political Theory
Public Policy and Governance







## APPENDIX 5: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

<b>18 april</b>		
8.30	8.45	Aankomst panel
8.45	9.15	Vorbereidend overleg en inzien documenten
9.15	10.15	Gesprek met management (NL, David Laws antwoordt mogelijk in het Engels): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hans Brug (decaan faculteit),</li> <li>- Floris Vermeulen (afdelingsvoorzitter Politicologie),</li> <li>- Annette Freyberg-Inan (directeur Graduate School),</li> <li>- Richard vd Wurff (directeur College),</li> <li>- Marcel Maussen (dir Bachelor Politicologie),</li> <li>- Otto Holman (directeur Master Political Science &amp; Conflict Resolution and Governance),</li> <li>- David Laws (wetenschappelijk coördinator MSc)</li> </ul>
10.15	10.30	Overleg panel
10.30	10.45	Pauze
10.45	11.30	Gesprek met studenten BSc Politicologie (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boje Boogaardt,</li> <li>- Bob Hamelers,</li> <li>- Gustav Eggers,</li> <li>- Lisa van den Boogaard,</li> <li>- Dirk Ritter,</li> <li>- Julia de Weijer</li> </ul>
11.30	11.45	Overleg panel
11.45	12.30	Gesprek met docenten BSc Politicologie (inclusief mentoren) (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wouter van der Brug,</li> <li>- Judith Huigens (ook mentor),</li> <li>- Larissa Versloot (ook mentor),</li> <li>- Luc Fransen,</li> <li>- Robin Pistorius</li> </ul>
12.30	13.00	Lunch (=pauze)
13.00	13.30	Overleg panel
13.30	14.15	Gesprek met studenten MSc Politicologie (ENG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barbara Koole (PPG),</li> <li>- Filip von Ubisch (EPER),</li> <li>- Jarno Hazekamp (PT),</li> <li>- Gustaaf van Oosterom (PE),</li> <li>- Annemiek Krans (IR)</li> <li>- Simon Graf (IR)</li> </ul>
14.15	14.30	Overleg panel
14.30	14.45	Pauze
14.45	15.30	Gesprek met docenten MSc Politicologie (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joost Berkhout,</li> <li>- Marlies Glasius,</li> <li>- Eric Schliesser,</li> <li>- Imrat Verhoeven,</li> <li>- Ursula Daxecker,</li> <li>- Darshan Vigneswaran</li> </ul>
15.30	15.45	Overleg panel
15.45	16.15	Gesprek met Opleidingscommissies (OLC) (en studieadviseur masters) (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anne Loeber (vz OC),</li> <li>- Conny Roggeband (docentlid),</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isaya Wullings (Bpol studentlid),</li> <li>- Joeri vd Ende (Mpol studentlid),</li> <li>- Geertje Haverkamp (studieadviseur Mpol en CRG).</li> </ul> NB: studentlid CRG is helaas met veldwerk.
16.15	17.00	Overleg panel
17.00	17.45	Alumni BSc en MSc Politicologie (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charlotte Renckens (bPol),</li> <li>- Tessa van Houtrijve (bPol),</li> <li>- Isabella Schulz (bPol),</li> <li>- Mila de Graaf (bPol),</li> <li>- Esmé Bosma (Mpol),</li> <li>- Giel van der Heijden (Mpol),</li> <li>- Danna Harmsen (Mpol)</li> </ul>
17.45	18.15	Korte nabespreking dag 1/benoemen aandachtspunten dag 2
19.15	21.30	Diner panel
<b>19 april</b>		
8.30	8.45	Aankomst panel
8.45	9.15	Inzien documenten, voorbereiding gesprekken, inloopsprek
9.15	9.45	Gesprek met studenten MSc Conflict Resolution and Governance (ENG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natacha Vallette d'Osia,</li> <li>- Josh Walmsley,</li> <li>- Vikki de Jong,</li> <li>- Ibrahim Hamad</li> </ul>
9.45	10.00	Overleg panel
10.00	10.15	Pauze
10.15	10.45	Gesprek met docenten MSc Conflict Resolution and Governance (ENG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- David Laws,</li> <li>- Anja van Heelsum,</li> <li>- Polly Pallister-Wilkins,</li> <li>- Martijn Dekker</li> </ul>
10.45	11.00	Overleg panel
11.00	11.30	Alumni MSc Conflict Resolution and Governance (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hester de Gooijer,</li> <li>- Babet Vente,</li> <li>- Piet Vriend,</li> <li>- Swaan van Iterson</li> </ul>
11.30	11.45	Overleg panel
11.45	12.00	Pauze
12.00	12.45	Gesprek met Examencommissie incl. studieadviseur bPol (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- John Grin (vz masters),</li> <li>- Sarah de Lange (vz bachelor),</li> <li>- Franca van Hooren,</li> <li>- Grace Coert (studieadviseur Bpol)</li> </ul>
12.45	13.15	Lunch (= pauze)
13.15	14.00	Vorbereiden eindgesprek
14.00	14.45	Eindgesprek management (NL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hans Brug (decaan faculteit),</li> <li>- Floris Vermeulen (afdelingsvoorzitter Politicologie),</li> <li>- Annette Freyberg-Inan (directeur Graduate School),</li> <li>- Richard vd Wurff (directeur College),</li> <li>- Marcel Maussen (dir Bachelor Politicologie),</li> <li>- Otto Holman (directeur Master Political Science &amp; Conflict Resolution and Governance),</li> </ul>

		- David Laws (wetenschappelijk coördinator MSc)
14.45	15.00	Pauze
15.00	16.45	Opstellen voorlopige bevindingen
16.45	17.00	Mondelinge rapportage voorlopige bevindingen





## APPENDIX 6: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied the theses of the students with the following student numbers:

11137215	10104917	6165842
10114173	11129190	10105611
6037070	10691510	10830111
10443827	10830723	11160233
11125144	10469737	11125632

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 materials and exams of two courses:
  - o Transnational Politics
  - o Specialisation course in Political Theory
- Thesis assessment form 2017
- Ethical guidelines
- Minutes and annual reports programme committee 2014-2015 and 2015-2016
- Minutes and annual reports Examinations Board 2014-2015 and 2015-2016

