

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

EUROPEAN LAW

FACULTY OF LAW

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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Project number: Q0659

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This report was finalized on 10/10/2018.

REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME EUROPEAN LAW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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 European Law

Name of the programme:	European Law
CROHO number:	60602
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specializations or tracks:	European Economic Law
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Expiration of accreditation:	03/07/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Law to the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen took place on 22-25 January 2018.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

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

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO approved the composition of the panel on 7 August 2017. The panel that assessed the master's programme European Law consisted of:

- Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn, emeritus professor of Transnational Aspects of Corporate Law at Utrecht University [chair];
- Prof. mr. E. (Elies) van Sliedregt, professor of International and Comparative Criminal Law at Leeds University (United Kingdom) [vice-chair];
- Prof. dr. R.A. (Ramses) Wessel, professor of International and European Law and Governance at the University of Twente;
- Prof. mr. dr. A.J.C. (Adrienne) de Moor-van Vugt, professor of Constitutional and Administrative Law at the University of Amsterdam;
- Em. prof. mr. L.C. (Laurens) Winkel, emeritus professor in Legal History at Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Em. prof. mr. drs. H.P.A.M. (Henk) van Arendonk, emeritus professor in Tax Law at Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde, master student of Dutch Law, specialisation Constitutional and Administrative Law, at Maastricht University [student member].

The panel was supported by drs. R.L. (Renate) Prenen, who acted as secretary.

Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The Law Assessment

The master's programme European Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen was assessed as part of the Law cluster assessment. Between October of 2017 and March of 2018, three panels assessed a total of 92 programmes at eleven universities. Upon consultation with the NVAO, it was decided that for the assessment within the umbrella group Domain of Law, three subclusters (henceforth: clusters) of institutions would be created:

Cluster I	University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Nyenrode Business Universiteit;
Cluster II	Leiden University, Tilburg University, Utrecht University;
Cluster III	Maastricht University, Open University, Radboud University, University of Groningen.

Each cluster was assessed by a separate panel. The panels consisted of the following members:

Cluster I

- Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker [chair]
- Prof. dr. mr. P.P.T. (Paul) Bovend'eert [vice-chair]
- Em. prof. dr. mr. T.A. (Theo) de Roos
- Prof. dr. P.H.J. (Peter) Essers
- Prof. dr. mr. A.L.B (Aurelia) Colombi Ciacchi
- Dr. mr. W.H.F.M. (Wouter) Cortenraad LLM
- Prof. dr. mr. G.E. (Gerrit) van Maanen
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. mr. dr. P. (Peggy) Valcke
- Prof. dr. L.J. (Larissa) van den Herik

Cluster II

- Em. prof. dr. R. (Roel) Fernhout [chair]
- Prof. dr. J. (Jan) Struiksma [vice-chair]
- Em. prof. dr. G.P.M.F. (Gerard) Mols
- Prof. dr. B.E. (Barbara) Reinhartz
- Prof. dr. M.G. (Michael) Faure
- Prof. dr. R.G. (Rainer) Prokisch
- Prof. dr. A.A.H. (Aukje) van Hoek
- Prof. dr. M.B.M. (Marco) Loos
- Prof. dr. J.B. (Hanneke) Spath
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. dr. A.A. (Antoon) Quaadvlieg

Cluster III

- Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn [chair]
- Prof. mr. E. (Elies) van Sliedregt [vice-chair]
- Prof. dr. R.A. (Ramses) Wessel
- Prof. mr. dr. A.J.C. (Adrienne) de Moor-van Vugt
- Em. prof. mr. L.C. (Laurens) Winkel

- Em. prof. mr. drs. H.P.A.M. (Henk) van Arendonk
- Dr. D. (Dominique) Sluijsmans
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. M. (Manuel) Desantes Real
- Prof. dr. A.A. (Antoon) Quaadvlieg
- Prof. dr. Y. (Yves) Jorens
- Dr. mr. S.A. (Sonja) Kruisinga
- Prof. mr. H.N. (Harriët) Schelhaas

A subpanel was composed for every site visit in a cluster, based on expertise, availability and independence of the panel members. The panel assessing the Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn [chair]
- Prof. mr. E. (Elies) van Sliedregt [vice-chair]
- Prof. dr. R.A. (Ramses) Wessel
- Prof. mr. dr. A.J.C. (Adrienne) de Moor-van Vugt
- Em. prof. mr. L.C. (Laurens) Winkel
- Em. prof. mr. drs. H.P.A.M. (Henk) van Arendonk
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB [student member]
- Prof. dr. A.A. (Antoon) Quaadvlieg [referent]
- Prof. mr. H.N. (Harriët) Schelhaas [referent]

Coordination and secretaries

Dr. Fiona Schouten acted as executive coordinator of the Law assessment, drs. Linda te Marvelde as supervisor and Marcella van Schie MA as project assistant. Drs. José van Zwieten (University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and dr. Marianne van der Weiden (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Nyenrode Business Universiteit) acted as secretaries in cluster I; Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer MA (Leiden University) and dr. Floor Meijer (Tilburg University, Utrecht University) in cluster II; and drs. Renate Prenen (Maastricht University, Open University, Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Groningen) in cluster III. Due to parallel sessions in the site visit schedules, Fiona Schouten acted as additional secretary during the visits to Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Amsterdam, Maastricht University and Radboud University Nijmegen. She also acted as additional secretary during the visit to the University of Groningen due to planned name changes of various programmes.

Consistency and calibration

In order to assure the assessments took place consistently within and between clusters, various measures were taken:

1. The QANU coordinator was present at the start of all site visits as well as at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at every site visit;
2. The coordinator was present at the first site visit of every cluster;
3. Calibration meetings took place on 8 December 2017 and 6 April 2018. During these meetings, the panel chairs, vice chairs, student members and QANU coordinator discussed the working method and the assessments;
4. The chairs attended at least one site visit outside their own cluster as a spectator;
5. The student members of the panels rotated: they took part in at least one site visit per cluster;
6. Prior to the site visits, on 29 August 2017, coordinator and secretaries held a meeting to discuss their working method.

Preparation

On 23 March 2017, the panel chairs were briefed by QANU on the working method, assessment frameworks and planning of the Law assessment. They also discussed mutual coordination and communication. This led to a shared directive on the selection of theses and to a description of the nature and number of courses to be selected as study material during each site visit.

A preparatory meeting was organised on 19 June 2017 for the members of the three panels. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the assessment frameworks and the planning of the site visits. They reflected upon the content and use of the domain-specific framework of reference (see appendix 2).

In preparing the site visit to the University of Groningen, the coordinator and the panel chair made a selection of theses of the programmes under assessment. These were chosen from a list of graduates between 01/09/2015 and 31/08/2017. The selection followed the NVAO guideline for the assessment of theses and took the range of thesis subjects, tracks, supervisors and grades into account. The panel studied the selected theses and the assessment forms.

In consultation with the contact persons from the Faculty of Law, the coordinator drafted a programme for the site visit (see appendix 5). The Faculty of Law selected representative discussion partners for the interviews. The panel and coordinator agreed with this selection.

Upon receiving the critical reflections, the coordinator checked their quality and content before sending them to the panel. The panel members studied the documents and formulated questions and preliminary findings. These were collected by the secretary, who arranged them according to subject matter.

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place from 22 – 25 January 2018. During the visit, the panel studied documents provided by the contact person of the University of Groningen (cf. appendix 6). The panel interviewed programme management, students, staff members, alumni and representatives of the programme committee and the board of examiners. The panel also offered staff members and students the opportunity to speak to the panel confidentially upon prior request. No requests were received for this consultation hour.

At the end of the site visit, the panel held an internal meeting to formulate its preliminary findings. The panel chair concluded the site visit with a public presentation of the panel's findings.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary produced a draft version of the report based on the panel's findings. The coordinator sent this to the panel members. After their commentary was processed, the coordinator sent the report to the University of Groningen to check for factual errors. The response of the university was discussed with the panel chair; changes to the report were made based on his request. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Law and the University of Groningen.

Definition of judgements standards

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

Generic quality

The quality that, from an international point of view, can reasonably be expected from a higher education bachelor's or 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

Intended learning outcomes

The panel agrees with the distinctive profile of the master's programme European Law (EL), with its focus on European economic law. According to the panel, the small scale as well as the competition from other programmes make EL somewhat vulnerable in terms of viability. It advises the faculty to re-evaluate EL's position and profile in this context, particularly with regard to the other English-language master's programmes. It concludes that the intended learning outcomes of EL are in line with the subject-specific reference framework as well as the international Dublin descriptors, but they are rather generic. It advises capturing the programme's specific focus on European economic law better in the intended learning outcomes.

Teaching-learning environment

The panel established that the master's programme EL is adequately designed and enables the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The programme is fixed, with the exception of one elective (students choose among three courses), which safeguards the programme's coherence. In terms of content, it is advisable to reverse the order of the courses Competition Law in the first block and Market Regulation in the second block. The programme suits a master's level and shows an adequate balance between academic and professional knowledge and skills. Students have ample opportunities to apply their knowledge and insights and to train their legal, academic and professional skills. The link to the professional field is established through the use of real-life or practice-oriented cases and assignments and the contribution of lecturers and guest lecturers with practical experience. It is enhanced by the extracurricular Law in Practice course unit and the various career orientation activities in collaboration with the study association.

The design of the individual courses is based on a lecturer-oriented didactic model with an emphasis on non-compulsory lectures. The panel feels that this allows students to adopt a less active attitude towards their studies and delay much of the course work until just before exams. It advises exploring ways to activate students. Since EL has an international student population with very eager and active students, it also recommends exploring how the students' learning process could benefit more from this international environment.

The programme is feasible and the success rates are quite positive. Students are satisfied with the teaching and guidance they receive and appreciate the large amount of guidance and support from the faculty's International Office. The panel recommends looking into ways to facilitate international students looking for (extracurricular) internships. It advises the programme to consider introducing a more regulated thesis process. With respect to the size of the master's thesis, the panel advises reducing the currently large number of credits (18 EC), for example to 12 EC. A further point of concern is that some foreign students have had fewer opportunities to acquire and practice skills in their previous education and experience difficulty writing their thesis and/or other papers and assignments. The panel advises considering how the students in question could be better guided and supervised.

The panel values the professional, scientific and didactic qualities of the staff members and the attention paid to their professionalization. It appreciates the flat organisation structure with a pleasant and collegial work climate in which many matters are discussed informally. It considers the staff-student ratio to be a cause for concern and recommends monitoring the workload of the staff and acting promptly to correct any problems.

Assessment

The panel confirmed that the assessment and evaluation system of the master's programme European Law functions adequately. The content of the exams demonstrates an adequate academic master's level. The panel approves the types of assessment used. They are sufficiently varied and suit the content and design of the programme. A point of attention is the feedback to students on papers and written assignments. The evaluation of the theses is done properly, although the

assessment form used could be made more transparent by clarifying the relation between the assessment of individual criteria and the overall score and by including space for qualitative remarks. The panel advises considering the introduction of a public oral thesis defense. It found some differences in the grading of written exams, papers and theses among the international master's programmes, including EL. It advises organising a better calibration of the grading.

The quality control of assessment and evaluation is good. The panel approves the programme dossier, which reveals the relationship between the intended learning outcomes of the programme as a whole and the learning objectives, content and assessment of the individual courses. It also appreciates the various measures implemented to promote the reliability, validity and clarity of assessment, such as the four-eyes principle. It is positive about the functioning of the Board of Examiners, which is clearly in control.

Achieved learning outcomes

The panel studied a selection of theses and found that the awarded grades generally matched its own evaluations. It concluded that the level achieved in the theses is satisfactory. They demonstrate a sufficiently academic attitude and understanding. They also testify to sufficient skill in executing research and reporting on it. Data on alumni suggest that EL delivers researchers who can apply their knowledge and skills as academics or practitioners in a domestic, European or international context. The interviewed alumni were very positive about the programme, which prepared them well for their future careers.

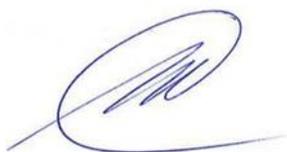
The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Master's programme European Law

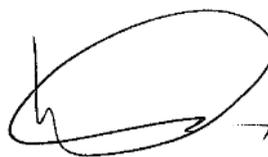
Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment	satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	satisfactory
General conclusion	satisfactory

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: 10/10/2018



Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn



Drs. R.L. (Renate) Prenen



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

Organisation

The Faculty of Law of the University of Groningen offers two bachelor's programmes and eleven master's programmes, which were assessed in the Law cluster assessment (2017-2018). The Faculty Board consists of the Dean, the Vice-Dean Academic, the Vice-Dean Administrative, the Faculty Secretary, and a student member. The Director of Education is accountable to the Faculty Board. He is responsible for the further development (innovation) and execution of the educational programmes of the Faculty. The academic staff of the faculty is organised in the following departments: General Law Studies and History of Law; Business Law and European Law; Private Law and Notarial Law; Legal Theory; International Law; Constitutional Law, Administrative Law and Public Administration; Criminal Law and Criminology; and Transboundary Legal Studies. The programmes use Faculty services such as the Student Administration and Student Affairs Office (which includes the information desk, the International Office, the study progress administration, the study advisers, the Official Secretariat of the Board of Examiners, and the course and examination enrolment administration). Each programme has its own Programme Committee, Admission Committee and Advisory Board. There is a single Board of Examiners serving all degree programmes.

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

The master's programme European Law (EL) is a one-year, English-language master's programme (60 EC) leading to an LLM degree. According to the critical reflection, it offers students the opportunity to specialise in European law, in particular European economic law. It builds on the bachelor's degree programmes offered in English and in Dutch in the Faculty of Law at Groningen and on bachelor's degree programmes offered in law faculties elsewhere. It also builds on programmes in related disciplines, such as International Relations and International Organisations or European Studies. The programme aims to produce highly qualified graduates who have a thorough knowledge and critical understanding of the core areas of European law, in particular as it relates to the marketplace. It embraces the core aspects of substantive European Union law (internal market, competition, market regulation, and external trade law) and offers students the opportunity to extend and develop their understanding of the broader context of these subjects through studying European sustainability law, the constitutional aspects of the internal market, judicial protection and European human rights law. Graduates are able to work as lawyers in independent practice (if they also have or subsequently gain the necessary qualifications required by the relevant professional body), in public sector or private sector positions as in-house lawyers, or in an academic career.

Initially, the LLM in European Law was developed as a broad programme. In response to a perceived shift in market demand away from general to more specialised LLM programmes, the decision was taken to refocus the programme on European economic law, i.e. the substantive law of the European marketplace. A request for approval of the new title 'European Economic Law' has been submitted to the NVAO. The panel agrees with the profile shift, which provides the programme with a clear focus and a distinctive and recognizable profile. However, student numbers remain low (see Standard 2),

and the programme is facing increased competition both from programmes offered by other universities and from the ten other master's programmes offered at the University of Groningen's Faculty of Law. According to the panel, the small scale as well as the competition from other programmes make EL somewhat vulnerable in terms of viability. It advises the faculty to re-evaluate EL's position and profile in this context, particularly with regard to the other English-language master's programmes.

The learning outcomes have been adjusted to reflect the focus on European economic law (cf. appendix 3). The panel studied these redrafted learning outcomes and ascertained they are in agreement with the subject-specific reference framework (cf. appendix 2) and can be linked to the international Dublin descriptors for the master's level. The outcomes are therefore in accordance with national as well as international standards. However, the panel points out that the learning outcomes are rather generic and, though adjusted, do not clearly express the distinct profile of the programme. It recommends revising the outcomes so that they reflect the programme's focus on European economic law.

Considerations

The panel agrees with the distinctive profile of the master's programme European Law, with its focus on European economic law. According to the panel, the small scale as well as the competition from other programmes make EL somewhat vulnerable in terms of viability. It advises the faculty to re-evaluate EL's position and profile in this context, particularly with regard to the other English-language master's programmes. It concludes that the intended learning outcomes of EL are in line with the subject-specific reference framework as well as the international Dublin descriptors, but they are rather generic. It advises capturing the programme's specific focus on European economic law better in the intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Master's programme European Law: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.

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

Curriculum content and design

EL is a full-time and selective master's programme (60 EC). To be admitted to the programme, students must have completed a law-based undergraduate degree or an undergraduate degree in a related discipline. Successful candidates must have a minimum GPA of 7/10 or equivalent. Proven command of the English language is also required for admission. Over the past few years, the number of incoming students varied between 8 and 14. Most participants are foreign students.

The programme consists of five compulsory courses, one elective (students choose among three courses: European Human Rights Law, European Judicial Protection, European Sustainability Law), a compulsory European Market Law seminar and the master's thesis. All courses, including the seminar, are worth 6 EC. The master's thesis is 18 EC. The compulsory courses provide the knowledge and understanding necessary in key areas of EU economic law. The courses on European Internal Market Law, Competition Law, Constitutional Principles of the EU Market, Market Regulation



and the elective offers students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of and critically reflect on the interaction between European law and its application, and different national legal systems. The compulsory seminar on European Market Law encourages students to apply their acquired knowledge and understanding to concrete problems. It is a practical in which students have to write papers/assignments, and present and discuss them under the supervision of an expert in the field. Students have to perform independent legal research in this seminar. They complete their programme with the master's thesis, in which they demonstrate their mastery of the legal and academic skills required. Appendix 4 presents an overview of the programme.

The panel is satisfied with the programme's design. The content is sufficient for a master's level, and the course objectives are in line with the learning outcomes. The programme contains an adequate balance between academic and professional knowledge and skills. The courses offered give students an overview of core areas of European economic law and, optionally, the added perspective of European human rights law. As emphasized by the lecturers interviewed during the site visit, all staff members carry out legal research and include the output of their research in their teaching. They confront students with contemporary academic debates and give them the opportunity to reflect on them. The link to the professional field is enhanced by the use of practical (real-life) cases and assignments in the field of European economic law. Some staff members are primarily practitioners, and their teaching is both research-informed and influenced by practical experience in the field. With respect to skills development, the panel found that in various courses students have opportunities to apply their acquired knowledge and understanding and strengthen their legal, academic and professional skills. For example, they have to answer essay questions, write papers and/or present their viewpoints orally. Students are explicitly required to conduct research when writing papers for the seminar and when writing their master's thesis.

The panel considers the curriculum to be made up of a coherent package of compulsory courses. However, as emphasized by the students and confirmed by the staff, the order of two courses could be reversed. In terms of content, it would be more logical to schedule Competition Law in the first block and Market Regulation in the second. The panel agrees and recommends reconsidering the sequence of these two courses. Otherwise, it is satisfied with the programme's coherent structure.

During the site visit the panel spoke with the management about the size of the master's thesis in relation to the number of credits. At 18 EC, the thesis takes up a lot of space in the curriculum. The theses the panel studied did not reflect this large number of credits very clearly (see Standard 4). The panel also questions the learning effect of such a large number of credits. It suggests reducing the size of the thesis. A reduction to, for example, 12 EC would have no adverse consequences on the learning effect.

Extracurricular course units and employability

As mentioned in the critical reflection, all students in the programme have the option of taking extracurricular course units, mostly courses from other LLM programmes, or participating in the Law in Practice course unit. This could entail an extracurricular internship or participating in certain law-related activities, such as law clinics or the European Law Moot Competition. EL internships are placed in European institutions or non-governmental organisations or (in the case of Dutch students) the Dutch Foreign Office or the Dutch Permanent Representation to the EU. The panel noted that the internship is popular among EL students and that it is harder for international students to find an internship than for Dutch students. International students mentioned they would appreciate getting more support in finding an internship. The panel recommends looking into this.

A special career adviser was appointed in 2015 to promote paying attention to the career perspective of students. This career adviser has instigated a learning community for internships. This learning community supports students in the orientation stage for internships and provides them with information on possible future careers. There is also an online community for those who actually take up an internship, where they can support one another by sharing experiences. The community offers a number of instruments for students to obtain a better view of the job market, such as the Career

Service Law website. Study associations are also vital in providing students with career orientation activities. In May 2017 the study association for international law students, Nexus, successfully organised the first Nexus Career Day. During the site visit the panel had an extra interview about the theme 'employability' with representatives of the study associations, the programme director and the career adviser. It is enthusiastic about the various initiatives. It particularly appreciates the fruitful collaboration between the faculty and the study associations. It is also positive about the career adviser's position.

Teaching concept and methods

The critical reflection describes a didactic concept developed by the Faculty of Law for all law programmes, in which knowledge transfer plays a key role. At the start of the bachelor's programme, direct instruction by lecturers is the teaching method used to ensure efficient knowledge transfer by an expert teaching staff. This is built upon until at the end of the bachelor's programme, students are challenged to contribute more of their own opinions to the legal discussions. The master's programme is aimed at a more in-depth study of a jurisdiction. The focus is not only on the acquisition of state-of-the-art knowledge, but also on the development of a critical and reflective attitude with regard to the organisation and functioning of the legal system. In the master's phase, lectures are the dominant teaching method. Legal discussion and reflection are primarily facilitated in the seminars.

During the site visit, the panel discussed the didactic concept and the teaching methods extensively with EL students and staff members. It found that the faculty's didactic vision is well supported and offers a solid framework for discussion and further shaping of the teaching. It did ascertain that the choice for a lecturer-oriented didactic model in combination with the teaching methods used and the limited number of contact hours (188 per year, or 4.5 per week based on 42 scheduled teaching weeks) allows students to adopt a less active attitude towards their studies. As explained by the students, there are only a few lectures a week in most master's programmes, including EL. These lectures are not mandatory, and students may put off serious studying until just before the exams. Students also stated that in general they would prefer small working groups to lectures. The working groups help them to actively process the course material. They also offer the possibility to discuss the study material and ask questions. Lecturers informed the panel that efforts are being exerted to make the lectures more interactive and activating, which is effective in a small-scale programme such as EL.

The panel considers the active processing and application of the course material essential for an optimal learning process and appreciates the staff's initiatives to make the teaching more active and interactive. It appears, though, that more can still be done. The panel advises the faculty to explore ways to further activate the students. The input and efforts of those on the receiving end of the process of knowledge transfer, the students, are as important as those of the transferring party, the lecturers. Managing the expectations of students well is an essential part of this process and also requires attention. For example, by labelling an educational meeting as a lecture, students will tend not to prepare as well and assume a more passive attitude than they would for a working group.

Feasibility

The panel ascertained that the programme is feasible based on the information in the critical reflection and on discussions with the students and lecturers. The university-wide implementation of the block system has led to a more even distribution of the teaching load over the year. Each block of 10 weeks has a load of 15 EC with two parallel courses. As explained by the lecturers, it is still too soon to draw firm conclusions, but there is a strong impression that it is discouraging procrastination and competition between courses. The success rates per course confirm that the students do move on and that there are no subjects with a high failure rate. According to the panel, the overall success rates are quite positive. On average, 79% of the students graduate within two years.

The interviewed students confirmed the panel's positive impression. They considered the programme to be doable and experienced no obstacles over the course of the curriculum. Students' delays are



often the result of following extra courses, an internship or a second study. They were satisfied with the teaching and guidance provided by the staff. The staff members are generally very accessible and always ready to answer questions and provide the students with feedback. The students also expressed their great appreciation for the large amount of guidance and support they received from the International Office of the Faculty. They can turn to this office any time they are in need of support with regard to their programme or a personal situation affecting their studies.

The master's programme EL has a very international student population. As the panel experienced during the site visit, most international students are very dedicated and involved. They are eager to learn by working together, participating and interacting during classes. However, the teaching methods applied, i.e. lectures, generally don't facilitate this. The panel considers the international student environment to be an important asset of the programme. It contributes to a positive and stimulating educational climate in which students from different cultural and educational backgrounds can learn with and from each other. The panel recommends exploring how the students' learning process could benefit more from this international environment.

One point of concern is the process of the master's thesis. Talks with the students and alumni revealed that the students are usually expected to take the initiative, and it is their own responsibility to submit their thesis on time. Some students and alumni enjoyed this challenge and did not experience any difficulty with their thesis planning and progress. Others were more hesitant and mentioned they would have appreciated a clear structure with strict deadlines. The panel observed that the high level of self-reliance and personal responsibility expected of students in the thesis project could have negative consequences for their study progress. It advises the programme to make the thesis process more intensive and transparent, perhaps utilising the best practice within the faculty and university. It noted that the thesis process of the master's programme *Recht en Bestuur*, with more fixed guidance, feedback moments and submission deadlines, has led to good results. Otherwise, the interviewed students and alumni expressed their satisfaction with the nature of the supervision provided by the supervisors.

A further point of concern is the panel's observation that EL builds on the faculty's bachelor's programmes, such as International and European Law, and assumes a certain skills level. Some foreign students have had fewer opportunities to acquire and practice skills in their previous education, and experience difficulties writing their thesis and/or other papers and assignments. The panel advises exploring how the students in question could be better guided and supervised.

Teaching staff

The panel studied the composition of the teaching staff involved in the master's programme EL as presented in the critical reflection. During the site visit it also discussed the quality and quantity of the staff with the management, teachers and students. It is satisfied with the quality of the staff. It appreciates that all of them have doctorates and are engaged in research. This guarantees an adequate scientific anchoring of the programme. Various members of the staff are also active in the professional field, for example as an Official with the European Commission, a substitute Appellate Judge ('plaatsvervangend raadsheer') or positions in the Dutch civil service. From time to time the staff invites well-known senior figures from the world of EU law to teach guest lectures in Groningen.

The panel also appreciates the fact that a lot of attention is paid to the staff's didactical expertise. At the time of the site visit, 86% of the teaching staff had obtained the University Teaching Qualification ('basiskwalificatie onderwijs'). Teachers in key positions are given the opportunity to obtain a senior teaching qualification. All of the teachers can apply for an educational sciences programme. The interviewed students are in general positive about the staff. They explicitly mentioned the scientific and professional expertise of the staff as well as their enthusiasm, accessibility and involvement.

From the talk with the management, it became apparent that additional investments had reduced the faculty's staff-student ratio in the past period from 1:51 to 1:45. The panel appreciates this and confirmed that the current number of staff members is sufficient to adequately conduct the various

programmes, including EL. Nevertheless, it considers the staff-student ratio to be a cause for concern. It advises the management to monitor the workload of the staff and to act promptly to correct any problems.

Considerations

The panel established that the master's programme EL is adequately designed and enables the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The programme is fixed, with the exception of one elective (students choose among three courses), which safeguards the programme's coherence. In terms of content, it is advisable to reverse the order of the courses Competition Law in the first block and Market Regulation in the second block. The programme suits a master's level and shows an adequate balance between academic and professional knowledge and skills. Students have ample opportunities to apply their knowledge and insights and to train their legal, academic and professional skills. The link to the professional field is established through the use of real-life or practice-oriented cases and assignments and the contribution of lecturers and guest lecturers with practical experience. It is enhanced by the extracurricular Law in Practice course unit and the various career orientation activities in collaboration with the study association.

The design of the individual courses is based on a lecturer-oriented didactic model with an emphasis on non-compulsory lectures. The panel feels that this allows students to adopt a less active attitude towards their studies and delay much of the course work until just before exams. It advises exploring ways to activate students. Since EL has an international student population with very eager and active students, it also recommends exploring how the students' learning process could benefit more from this international environment.

The programme is feasible and the success rates are quite positive. Students are satisfied with the teaching and guidance they receive and appreciate the large amount of guidance and support from the faculty's International Office. The panel recommends looking into ways to facilitate international students looking for (extracurricular) internships. It advises the programme to consider introducing a more regulated thesis process. With respect to the size of the master's thesis, the panel advises reducing the currently large number of credits (18 EC), for example to 12 EC. A further point of concern is that some foreign students have had fewer opportunities to acquire and practice skills in their previous education and experience difficulty writing their thesis and/or other papers and assignments. The panel advises considering how the students in question could be better guided and supervised.

The panel values the professional, scientific and didactic qualities of the staff members and the attention paid to their professionalization. It appreciates the flat organisation structure with a pleasant and collegial work climate in which many matters are discussed informally. It considers the staff-student ratio to be a cause for concern and recommends monitoring the workload of the staff and acting promptly to correct any problems.

Conclusion

Master's programme European Law: 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

Assessment system

The panel reviewed the faculty's assessment policy. According to this policy, assessment in the bachelor's and master's programmes builds up 'from simple to complex' and from knowledge reproduction to independent understanding and reflection. The assessment system of the master's programme EL is in line with the faculty's assessment policy. The panel learned from the critical reflection that in the courses which predominantly aim at knowledge and insight acquisition, assessment takes the form of written examinations designed to test the students' knowledge, insight, ability to use case law and legislation as appropriate, and understanding of the academic literature in the field. Skills are not only assessed in the European Market Law seminar and the master's thesis, but also in the Market Regulation course, where the final assessment is a paper. Students have to perform independent legal research in the seminar. Attendance at the European Market Law seminar sessions is compulsory. The lecturer assesses the contributions of the students by reviewing each student's written paper while taking the oral presentation into account as well as the student's contributions to in-class discussions of the papers presented by other students in the seminar group. The master's thesis is assessed on the basis of the criteria mentioned on the thesis assessment form: content, argumentation, structure and design, comprehensiveness, attractiveness and accuracy of language, independence, originality and command of specific research skills.

The panel is satisfied with the assessment and evaluation system. During the site visit, it reviewed several examinations and confirmed that they are of an adequate master's level. The assessment methods used are in line with the learning outcomes, content and didactical design of the courses. They are sufficiently varied. The panel appreciates the fact that students have to write papers and give oral presentations throughout the programme.

The panel is positive about the manner of guaranteeing the reliability, validity and clarity of the testing. For example, there are always at least two examiners involved in preparing an exam. The correction of exams is almost always a joint activity, involving several lecturers evaluating the work of each individual student. The evaluation normally follows an answer model prepared in advance. The transparency is improved by determining the timing and type of a test before the start of the academic year. In addition, at least one recent exam is made available for each course, so students can judge the type and level of assessment. After every exam, a discussion is organised to give feedback on the outcome and allow students to review their work. The talks with students revealed that they are in general satisfied with the feedback. They especially appreciate the feedback on papers and presentations. The feedback on written exams is limited by comparison.

During the site visit, the panel spoke with the staff about the manner of assessing the final projects. It was pleased to confirm that since the last assessment, the evaluation process has been better standardised and that a second assessor is always involved. Regarding the assessment form, it noted that the correspondence between the scores for criteria (indicated with plus and minus symbols) and the final grade is not very clear. In addition, the completed assessment forms contained little to no written clarification, impacting the transparency of the assessments. The panel recommends improving the assessment forms on these points.

The panel also discussed the possible introduction of a public defense as a formal conclusion of the thesis process and of the programme. Within the faculty, the bachelor's programme International and European Law has already introduced this, and it is highly appreciated by students and lecturers. The panel also values the public thesis defense, not only in a ceremonial sense, but above all with a view to strengthening the students' oral skills. The management emphasises that it is convinced of the added value, but that staff members need extra time to facilitate this. It intends to investigate whether a faculty-wide introduction is possible and desirable, which the panel appreciates.

A general point of attention concerning assessment within the international master's programmes, including EL, is the grading. Based on its interviews with students and staff as well as the

assessments and theses studied, the panel observed that there are some clear variations in grading between master's programmes. According to the panel, the same amount of effort and a similar quality level are graded quite differently in the various master's programmes. It urges the programmes to strive for more uniformity and advises organising a better calibration of the grading.

Board of Examiners

The critical reflection states that the Faculty of Law has a single Board of Examiners for all programmes. This Board consists of nine members, including the chair, an external test expert, and an official secretary. It has an independent role in safeguarding the quality of assessment. It carries out this role by monitoring the pass percentages and subject evaluations for deviations; statistically analysing random samples of examination results, along with analysing unusual results; and examining the quality of random samples of theses and their assessments. Recently, it started evaluating the relationship between the intended learning outcomes of the programme as a whole and the testing based on programme dossiers. These are documents that reveal the link between the programme's learning outcomes and the courses' learning objectives. The dossiers include the learning outcomes, the course descriptions with learning objectives and literature, the exams and the course evaluations. In 2015, the Board initiated a benchmark for the evaluation of master's theses together with Radboud University Nijmegen. In it, the evaluation results of both universities are compared. As clarified by the interviewed members of the Board, the result was positive: in most cases, both the original assessors and those conducting the benchmark came to comparable results, with a margin of one point being considered acceptable.

The panel is positive about the functioning of the Board. It considers it a proactive, professional and hard-working committee. In the past period, the Board has taken a number of important steps to demonstrably ensure the quality of assessment, and it is clearly in control. The panel is also pleased with the programme dossiers. It realises that these files can make an important contribution to good quality control.

Considerations

The panel confirmed that the assessment and evaluation system of the master's programme European Law functions adequately. The content of the exams demonstrates an adequate academic master's level. The panel approves the types of assessment used. They are sufficiently varied and suit the content and design of the programme. A point of attention is the feedback to students on papers and written assignments. The evaluation of the theses is done properly, although the assessment form used could be made more transparent by clarifying the relation between the assessment of individual criteria and the overall score and by including space for qualitative remarks. The panel advises considering the introduction of a public oral thesis defense. It found some differences in the grading of written exams, papers and theses among the international master's programmes, including EL. It advises organising a better calibration of the grading.

The quality control of assessment and evaluation is good. The panel approves the programme dossier, which reveals the relationship between the intended learning outcomes of the programme as a whole and the learning objectives, content and assessment of the individual courses. It also appreciates the various measures implemented to promote the reliability, validity and clarity of assessment, such as the four-eyes principle. It is positive about the functioning of the Board of Examiners, which is clearly in control.

Conclusion

Master's programme European Law: 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

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a selection of 5 EL master's theses and the accompanying assessment forms completed by the supervisors (cf. appendix 6). In the selection process, it paid attention to a wide spread of the marks. In general, the panel agreed with the grades awarded by the supervisors. As mentioned under Standard 2, not all theses clearly justified the 18 EC awarded for them. Most theses the panel studied were adequately executed. Overall, their structure was logical, the problem definitions were formulated sufficiently clearly, the sources used were relevant, and the analyses tended to show in-depth understanding of the subjects under discussion.

As mentioned in the critical reflection, the European Law programme was included in the faculty's 2016 alumni survey. The results showed that the graduates of this programme remain active in this field of specialisation. They either embark on a PhD or opt for a professional career in a law firm, in a company or working for a government. Some alumni are employed by intergovernmental organisations, such as the European Union and United Nations. The available data suggest that the master's degree programme European Law delivers law graduates who can apply their knowledge and skills as academics, researchers, or practitioners in a domestic, European or international context.

During the site visit, the panel spoke (online) with a selection of alumni of the different English-language master's programmes, including EL. It learned from these conversations that the alumni were very enthusiastic about the programme. They felt well-prepared for their further careers and had obtained relevant legal positions. Several alumni noted there are many RUG graduates in Brussels. There is a Dutch-language RUG alumni network in Brussels, but not an international one. The panel sees an opportunity here for the programme.

Considerations

The panel studied a selection of theses and found that the awarded grades generally matched its own evaluations. It concluded that the level achieved in the theses is satisfactory. They demonstrate a sufficiently academic attitude and understanding. They also testify to sufficient skill in executing research and reporting on it. Data on alumni suggest that EL delivers researchers who can apply their knowledge and skills as academics or practitioners in a domestic, European or international context. The interviewed alumni were very positive about the programme, which prepared them well for their future careers.

Conclusion

Master's programme European Law: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel approves the distinctive profile of the master's programme European Law, with its focus on European economic law. However, the programme's small scale as well as the competition from other programmes make EL somewhat vulnerable in terms of viability. The panel advises the faculty to re-evaluate EL's position and profile in this context, particularly with regard to the other English-language master's programmes' profiles. The intended learning outcomes match EL's master's level and orientation and are in agreement with the subject-specific reference framework. The outcomes are therefore in accordance with national as well as international standards. According to the panel,

the outcomes are rather generic. It advises capturing the programme's specific focus better in the intended learning outcomes.

The panel considers the programme and the courses to be adequately designed. The programme is fixed, with the exception of one elective, which safeguards its coherence. The panel advises reversing the order of two courses (Competition Law in the first block and Market Regulation in the second). The content is of an adequate master's level and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel is also satisfied with the academic as well as the professional orientation of the programme and the attention paid to the development of legal, academic and professional skills. Moreover, it is positive about the connection to the professional field. Concerning the didactic concept and the teaching methods used, it advises exploring ways to motivate students to start studying earlier and more actively. It also recommends exploring how the students' learning process could benefit more from the international learning environment.

The programme is feasible, and the success rates are quite positive. Students value the guidance and support provided by the staff and the International Office. The panel recommends looking into ways to facilitate international students looking for (extracurricular) internships. It feels that attention should be paid to delays during the thesis process, partly due to a lack of firm deadlines. It advises introducing a more regulated thesis process. The programme is aware that some international students struggle with written assignments due to limited prior skills training. The panel appreciates this and recommends closely monitoring these students and taking action when necessary. It is pleased with the specialist, scientific and didactic qualities of the staff and the attention paid to their professionalization. There is a pleasant and collegial work climate in which many matters are discussed informally. The panel considers the staff-student ratio to be a cause for concern and recommends monitoring the workload of the staff and acting promptly to correct any problems.

The panel considers the assessment system adequate. The assessment methods are sufficiently varied and in line with the learning outcomes, content and didactical design of the courses. It is satisfied with the quality control of assessment and evaluation; in particular, the functioning of the Board of Examiners and the programme files are exemplary. The evaluation of the theses is done properly. Feedback on written assignments, including the master's thesis, could be improved. The thesis assessment form could be made more transparent by clarifying the relation between the assessment of individual criteria and the overall score and by leaving more space for remarks. Furthermore, the panel recommends harmonising the perceived differences in the grading of written exams, papers and theses among the faculty's international master's programmes. The quality of the master's theses is satisfactory. The panel suggests reducing the number of credits for the thesis, for example from 18 to 12 EC. Graduates are successful in their further careers and consider the programme to have prepared them well. All in all, the panel concludes that the overall quality of the programme is satisfactory.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *master's programme European Law* as 'satisfactory'.

APPENDICES

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

Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn (chair) is emeritus professor of Transnational Aspects of Corporate Law at Utrecht University. He studied Dutch Law at Utrecht University and started working as an assistant professor in Law at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Amsterdam, which led to his specialization in Business Law. He defended his PhD thesis in 1989 and went on to work as an associate professor in Business Law at Utrecht University (1988-1991) and full professor in Private Law at the Open University of the Netherlands (OUNL, 1991-2000). He returned to Utrecht University as a dean and professor (2000-2017). Between 1994 and 2000, he was a consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers, and he is currently advisor at AKD (since 2008).

Prof. mr. E. (Elies) van Sliedregt (vice-chair) is professor of International and Comparative Criminal Law and deputy-director of the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds (United Kingdom). She obtained her PhD at Tilburg University in 2003, after which she worked at Leiden University (2003 – 2005) and Utrecht University (2005 – 2007). From 2007 until 2016, she was professor of Criminal Law at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where she was also dean of the Faculty of Law from 2011 until 2015 and deputy vice-chancellor from 2014 to 2015. She has held visiting fellowships in Cambridge, Oxford, Bologna, Sydney (UNSW), Melbourne (Monash University), and at the ICC (Chambers). Her research interests include comparative research into principles of criminal law, legal pluralism, European Arrest Warrant, terrorism, refugee exclusion. Professor van Sliedregt is senior editor of the *Leiden Journal of International Law (Cambridge journals)* and the *Journal of Conflict and Security Law (Oxford journals)* and is member of the Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities.

Em. prof. mr. drs. H.P.A.M. (Henk) van Arendonk worked in the department of Tax Law at Erasmus University Rotterdam from 1977 until his retirement in 2013. He obtained his PhD in 1991 at that same university. In 1992 he was appointed full professor in Tax Law and tasked with developing a new tax-legal programme for the Faculty of Law. He was and is an active member of several organisations, advisory boards and committees in the field of tax law, including membership of the Committee Oort (advising the government on simplifying the tax system), the board of the Association for Tax Research (Vereniging voor Belastingwetenschap), the European Fiscal Studies Foundation EUR, and editorial positions at the *Maandblad Belasting Beschouwingen* and *EC Tax Review*. He currently works as a divorce mediator.

Prof. mr. dr. A.J.C. (Adrienne) de Moor-van Vugt is professor of Administrative Law at the University of Amsterdam. She worked at Tilburg University as full professor in (European) Administrative law and was a member of the Faculty board and chair of the Board of Education until 2004. In that year, she transferred to the judicial system and became a judge for the Trade and Industries Appeals Board (College van Beroep voor het Bedrijfsleven), and worked in cases concerning financial supervision, competition law, subsidies and fines and disciplinary hearings against accountants. In 2008 de Moor-van Vugt accepted a professorship at the University of Amsterdam. She is also involved in the Amsterdam Center for Law & Economics. Her research interests are: the Dutch court system for administrative law cases, the impact of EU law on Dutch administrative procedural law and financial supervision. She is an active member of several organizations and advisory boards and she is editor-in-chief of the journal *SEW, Tijdschrift voor Europees en Economisch Recht*.

V. A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB is a master's student in Dutch law, specialising in constitutional and administrative law, at Maastricht University. She graduated from the bachelor's programme European Law School at the same university. Veerle van Waarde was an active member of various student associations. She was an elected member of the Faculty Council of Law in 2015. She currently acts as a student assistant and is a member of the programme committee of Dutch Law.



Prof. dr. R.A. (Ramses) Wessel is professor of International and European Law and Governance and co-director of the Centre for European Studies at the University of Twente. He was Vice Rector (Educational Innovation) of the University from 2013-2017 and between 2011 and 2013 he acted as Dean of the School of Management and Governance. Ramses Wessel graduated in 1989 at the University of Groningen in International Law and International Relations and subsequently worked at the Institute for Peace Research at the same university (1989-1991) and at the Department of International and European Institutional Law of Utrecht University (1991-2000). His research interests lie in the field of international and European institutional law, governance and regulation with a focus on the law of international organizations, issues of global governance and regulation, the relationship between international, EU and domestic law, international and European foreign, security and defence policy and EU external relations in general. He is, *inter alia*, editor-in-chief and founder of the *International Organizations Law Review*, the *Netherlands Yearbook of International Law* and *European Papers: A Journal on Law and Integration*.

Em. prof. mr. L.C. (Laurens) Winkel is emeritus professor of Legal History at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He studied at the Technical University Delft, the University of Amsterdam and the Université des Sciences Sociales Toulouse I (France). He obtained his PhD in 1983 at the University of Amsterdam. From 1979 until 1993, he worked in several positions at the Faculty of Law of that university; in 1986 he became associate professor in Legal History. In 1993 he was appointed full professor in Legal History at Erasmus University Rotterdam. From 1995 until 1997 and from 2001 until 2004 he was vice dean of the Faculty of Law. He was deputy judge between 1991 and 2016. He was and is active in several organisations and advisory boards and is editor of the journals *Legal History Review* and *Grotiana* (until 2017).

APPENDIX 2: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

Introduction

This document outlines the Subject-specific Reference Framework for Law. The framework sets out the basic principles that degree programmes must use when setting their curricula. It indicates what may be expected in terms of the content and the level of the programmes, what they aim to achieve and what wider society can thus expect from a law graduate at Bachelor's and Master's level. The framework has been written explicitly for university Bachelor's and Master's programmes which are part of the Quality Inspections Group for Law (*Visitatiegroep Rechtsgeleerdheid*) by virtue of the final attainment levels they themselves have chosen, or which wish to join it in the context of the initial accreditation process for new programmes (*Toets nieuwe opleiding*).

The framework does not provide an exhaustive list of areas of law or legally relevant areas of focus to which the programmes must restrict themselves. Equally, it does not seek to offer rankings, answers to discussions of methodology or instructions on how programmes should meet professional requirements. It is up to each individual programme to provide an indication of where it considers itself to be on the global map of law. In formal terms, a programme achieves this by means of its academic and examination regulations and in materials included in the documents submitted to independent quality inspection committees when applying to be assessed for the purposes of accreditation.

What this framework does attempt to offer is a blueprint of what the academic world and wider society can expect from a graduate, academically-qualified lawyer – and therefore also from a programme in Law – in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills. The fact that the framework has been revised in no way implicates that programmes offered in accordance with the old framework are outdated. On the contrary, since even the previous framework urged programmes to be open to new developments such as the globalization and digitization of society. However, the new framework places greater emphasis on describing the knowledge, attitudes and skills that relate to contemporary developments and challenges programmes to demonstrate these in their objectives and final attainment levels.

By publishing this Subject-specific Reference Framework, the Consultation Body for Law (*Disciplineoverleg Rechtsgeleerdheid*) hopes on the one hand to have provided independent quality inspection committees that will need to conduct programme assessments within the Quality Inspection Group in the years ahead with an effective basis for doing so. On the other hand, the framework offers the essential room for manoeuvre for the separate programmes offered within the Quality Inspection Group for Law to adopt their own distinctive approach.

Utrecht, December 2015

On behalf of the Council of Law Deans

Professor dr. A.M. Hol,
Chairperson



Realization

On 18 December 2015, the consultative body of the Council of Law Deans (abbreviated in Dutch to RDR) agreed to this Subject-specific Reference Framework for programme assessments within the Quality Inspection Group for academic programmes in Law. It offers a joint framework of subject-specific requirements for all Bachelor's and Master's programmes offered by the Law faculties at Dutch universities. This Subject-specific Reference Framework supersedes its predecessor, agreed by the then Council of Law Deans, in December 2009.

In the rest of this document, the term 'programme' is exclusively intended to mean a degree programme that is included in the Netherlands Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes (*Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs*, CROHO). Any references to the term 'lawyer' refer to academically-qualified lawyers, unless otherwise specified.

1. Law programmes and professions in the wider social context

Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Law aim to educate and train lawyers who are competent in the discipline and engaged in wider society, have a critical, academic mind, and are capable of analysing problem scenarios independently in order to formulate a solution. To achieve this, they not only need to apply analysis and critical evaluation to their thinking: they also need to be capable of synthetic, abstract thought. It is essential that the academic level and relevance to society of the programme is guaranteed. Communication, information and research skills all play an essential role in the programmes and there must be sufficient emphasis on current developments in terms of their social background. As such, the academic programme leading to the qualification of lawyer must be seen in context, so to speak.

The relationship between the law and wider society is in a continuous state of flux. Society is pluralistic and globally-oriented, as a result of which it is becoming increasingly complex. This trend also applies to the law. The days when law in the Netherlands encompassed Dutch legislation and case law alone are long gone and it is now equally affected by international and European legislation and case law, in the form of policy regulations, recommendations, covenants, self-regulation, European harmonization, the influence of comparative law, etc. Citizens have become empowered, the number of legal regulations continues to increase and society is strongly influenced by a trend towards juridification. As a result of European integration and globalization, European law and international law are becoming increasingly important. The 21st-century information society and its legal problems, as well as the expectations placed on the law by society, are decreasingly affected by national borders at the same time as the traditional boundaries in the legal and social sense are regaining ground. In whatever context he or she enters employment, a graduate lawyer needs to be increasingly aware of and responsive to other countries' legal systems and cultures.

Within the Quality Inspections Group for Law, programmes are offered that meet the demand for lawyers with a broad academic training – generalists – especially for the purposes of first-line consultancy and policy preparation and in numerous other positions across the labour market. There are also specialized Master's programmes which produce graduates capable of developing into academically-trained specialists who compare favourably in their field with their academic professional counterparts anywhere in the world. Finally, there are programmes that are actually more focused on broadening the area of law covered by the programme.

Lawyers work in a wide range of positions and roles. Indeed, there are greater numbers of lawyers working outside the traditional legal professions rather than within. The Law programmes prepare graduates for these traditional professions, but increasingly also for a variety of other activities that call for an academic attitude, critical analysis, skills in writing and speaking, and where legal expertise is desirable. They, therefore, no longer focus solely on the professional requirements for the Bar, judiciary, taxation and notarial profession which are generally seen as the traditional legal professions, although these form the core of certain programmes. All programmes aim to achieve effective coordination with the labour market by maintaining strong links with the wider professional field they serve. In addition to internships and career orientation, this encompasses contacts with

professional organizations and employers, advisory councils, alumni and guest lecturers. In addition, a graduate Bachelor of Laws must be adequately equipped with the research and other skills required to gain admission to a Master's programme in Law and subsequently to a PhD programme, despite the fact that only a small portion of graduates opt for a career in research.

In the more than ten years that the Bachelor/Master system has been in place in the Netherlands, no specific career prospects for an academically-qualified Bachelor in Law have emerged and there is no clearly identifiable labour market for graduates equipped only with an academic Bachelor's degree in Law (LL.B). Many LL.B graduates work in an environment where knowledge of law is relevant, but so far no specific requirements for professional skills from a Bachelor's programme have emerged as a result of this. The labour market for academically-qualified lawyers still shows a preference for lawyers who have qualified to Master's level. As a result, a large majority of students studying Law at university opt to complete a Master's programme after the Bachelor. This is not only because of the greater prospects this offers in the labour market, but also because it is a statutory requirement for access to the traditional legal professions.

Nevertheless, Bachelor's programmes still also aim to prepare students for their future life as lawyers. This can be achieved by including aspects of that professional practice in the content and composition of the curriculum, but also by means of extracurricular activities and career preparation.

With the advent of higher professional education (HBO) programmes in areas of the law, a lawyer is no longer necessarily someone with a university certificate that qualifies them for the traditional legal professions (prosecuting lawyers and the judiciary; the Bar; the notarial profession, tax consultants); a Master of Laws (*meester in de rechten, mr.*). Although lawyers qualified to HBO level are entitled to use the title of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B), there is a distinct difference between the HBO programmes and the academic programmes in Law. What distinguishes them is that the academic programmes lay the foundations for mastering the legal research method, as expressed in the final attainment levels of the programmes. This is mainly reflected in the content of the programme, its depth and its approach to the law. Academic Bachelor's and Master's programmes focus on educating lawyers who have learned how to think independently and critically, who not only learn to find answers to questions, but also continue to question the answers they find. Access to the traditional legal professions is regulated by statute and requires both an academic Bachelor's degree (LL.B) and the Master of Laws degree (LL.M).¹

In the Netherlands, lawyers with the LL.M qualification will generally use the equivalent Dutch title *meester in de rechten (mr.)*, especially when working in the traditional legal professions.

2. Possibilities for national and international comparison

Globally and within Europe, programmes in Law are characterized by their highly varied context and structure, together with significant differences in terms of admission and the duration of study. In addition, all countries have separate regulations governing graduate lawyers' access to the Bar, the judiciary, tax law and the notarial profession, which have an influence on both the orientation and the intended final level. Of course, it is possible to compare the curricula of different programmes, but a serious international benchmark for objectives, level and orientation for programmes in Law currently remains impossible.

The German CHE benchmark organization is not open to programmes in Law in other countries, despite the fact that this is possible for other disciplines.² The EU project Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences also failed to reach a harmonized set of final attainment levels for programmes

¹ The professional requirements for the Bar, the judiciary and the notarial profession were changed by Royal Decree on 18 September 2008 (Netherlands Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2008, 383) when, in the context of admission to regulated legal professions, the HBO degree of Bachelor obtained at a university of applied sciences (*hogeschool*) was equated with a Bachelor's degree in Law obtained at an academic university, if the HBO programme in Law was completed by means of a bridging programme. The bridging programme contains course components in Law offered by a university or the Open University, with a total study load of at least 60 credits.

² Gemeinnütziges Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung: www.che.de.



in Law.³ In other countries, several national benchmarks for programmes in Law do exist, including the Benchmarks for Law in the United Kingdom, which stipulates the knowledge, skills and attitude required by Bachelor's and Master's graduates for quality assessment and accreditation of programmes there.⁴ In any case, these are only of limited use for programmes in continental Europe because of the major differences between the common law and civil law legal systems.

There is no doubt that the Bologna and Lisbon Agreements had a harmonizing impact on the content of legal education in the EU. As part of the accession process to the EU, new EU member states have frequently based their programmes on the Bachelor/Master structure in advance, and the old member states are still in the process of reforming and harmonizing their education systems. In this, they sometimes opt for solutions that actually hamper comparability between different countries, as in the example of Germany, which is moving towards a more varied assortment of programmes.⁵

All of this would suggest that a serious international comparison of the objectives, level and orientation of programmes in Law remains impossible or at least of little use.

With regard to the comparison of programmes in the Netherlands itself, it is possible to say that there is a lot of sharing of information and coordination between the faculties of Law in the Netherlands, including on such areas as educational renewal, research, the interpretation of accreditations and the configuration of professional requirements. There is regular national consultation between the Deans in the RDR, as an offshoot of which those responsible for education and the directors of operations meet when necessary to discuss education-related, organizational and financial subjects and share experiences and information. Finally, there are regular national consultations and coordination at administrative level in the National Policy-workers Consultation Body (*Landelijk Overleg Beleidsmedewerkers*). In addition, the RDR and separate faculties also take advantage of good practice examples identified by the panels conducting independent quality inspections and included in their assessment reports to the NVAO (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders). The RDR also engages in discussion with representatives from the varied professional field it serves. For example, it consults with the Council for the Judiciary (*Raad voor de Rechtspraak*) and the Netherlands Bar Association (*Nederlandse Orde van Advocaten*) in order to determine a standard to define the applicable statutory provisions for the so-called civil effect of programmes in Law. This takes the form of a covenant.

As such, it is possible to argue that some kind of national benchmarking does take place, generally of an informal nature, except in the case of national independent quality inspections and the restrictions relating to the aforementioned covenant. In that context, the Discipline Consultation Body also undertakes formal duties.

3. Professional requirements

Access to the judiciary, the Bar and the notarial profession is regulated by and in accordance with statute. In practical terms, this means that requirements are set for the organization of Bachelor's and Master's programmes intended to enable admission to higher programmes that prepare for positions in the judiciary, the Bar, the notarial profession and tax law.

The programmes that opt to prepare for these higher programmes stipulate this in their academic and examination regulations by emphatically including within them the statutory professional requirements and the further definition of these in the covenant described above. The examination

³ Excerpt from the 2012 final report: 'Consequently, even the proto list of the competences required by students and future practitioners of law are still at this stage no more than embryonic.' Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences – Final Report, 2008, p. 45. See also the country lists in Annex 4 of the report (<http://tuningacademy.org/sqf-social-sciences/?lang=en>).

⁴ A draft of a revised version has been published: Subject Benchmark Statement: Law (Draft for Consultation, March 2015) (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-consultation-Law-15.pdf>).

⁵ Neue Wege in der Juristenausbildung, Essen, 2010, http://www.stifterverband.info/wissenschaft_und_hochschule/lehre/juristenausbildung/.

boards for these programmes will issue specific statements to this effect, on the basis of which the higher programmes can determine whether a programme fulfils the intended requirements.

4. Final attainment levels for Bachelor's and Master's programmes

Every Law programme makes choices when setting its final attainment levels based on national and relevant international comparisons of final attainment levels and in an attempt to achieve the best possible match with what is a very diverse professional field. These final attainment levels are included in the academic and examination regulations of each separate programme. They include at least three categories.

A. Knowledge and understanding

The graduate lawyer is proficient in the key tenets of the area or areas of law on which the programme focuses. This applies equally to their material and formal and the historical and theoretical aspects.

However, one-dimensional knowledge alone is not sufficient. Programmes therefore aim to develop a 'genuine understanding of the law' in their students, in an academic environment in which 'why' questions are allowed to flourish. This means that, alongside the subject-specific knowledge referred to above, methods are also taught which enable students to keep abreast of the latest relevant developments and changes. The education can also encompass an understanding of the differences between major legal families (such as those between common law and civil law), of the historical and philosophical evolution of the law and, insofar as the nature of the programme requires or permits it, also of comparative law methodology. This means that the graduate lawyer must always be capable of updating his or her legal knowledge on a permanent basis and possibly also specialize in new areas.

B. Academic and legal skills

The above assumes an increasing focus on acquiring academic and legal skills: lifelong learning and the acquisition of an international attitude. It also assumes that the graduate lawyer is capable of reflecting on the law and translating issues in society into the language that the law uses to solve such issues. During the programme, students are encouraged to search for questions and problems as well as answers and solutions; they are given an opportunity to develop capacities of analysis and learn to think, write and present in a critical way.

The ability to formulate and solve a legal case is also essential. To achieve this, the graduate lawyer must be able to effectively collect, process and evaluate the relevant facts and evidence, and apply the rules of law to them. The lawyer is expected to be capable of legally interpreting a problem in society and outlining potential solutions.

In addition, a lawyer must be capable of conveying his or her legal knowledge and legal judgment both orally and in writing to other lawyers and in other professional environments. This means that language is the lawyer's main working tool. Effective and clear verbal and written proficiency in the Dutch language (or in English if that is the language of instruction for the programme or part of it) is essential. For this, students must have an opportunity during their programme, if relevant for the specific programme, to acquire knowledge of English legal terminology in the current social context.

c. Academic citizenship/attitude

During the programme, the prospective lawyer should become fully acquainted with the legal culture or cultures. He or she should be enabled to develop an ethical professional attitude and be aware of the social context in which the law operates and, related to that, his or her responsibility within society. The teaching and educational environment assists the student in this. It is important for education to be structured in such a way that it sparks an interest in wider society and evokes a natural curiosity for legal issues and legal thinking, as well as for the role that law plays in society.

5. Final level



Programmes need to be transparent regarding how students are able to reach the final level and how they can demonstrate that they have reached it. Test results, assignments and presentations form the primary basis for this.

For Bachelor's programmes in Law, the final level achieved is also reflected in the thesis, dissertation or final project. Responding to a legal question with the help of recognized legal methods and reporting on the underlying research conducted form the main basis for this.

The Bachelor's thesis or its equivalent does not aim to demonstrate that the final attainment levels of the Bachelor's programme have been reached. Some important skills, such as communication, are not tested and neither is the student's understanding of all areas of the law that are of relevance to the Bachelor's programme. Moreover, most Bachelors' programmes in Law award only relatively few credits for this final assignment. In Bachelor's programmes in Law, the acquisition of research skills, in the form of methodology and technique courses, does not generally play a central role. Acquiring research skills is part of the general academic education of lawyers and primarily occurs through the handling of the separate areas of the law. Programmes are at liberty to emphasize certain areas in order to reflect the distinctive appeal of a particular programme, which in turn will be expressed in the final assignment.

The same applies for the Master's thesis, although it differs in generally placing greater emphasis on the development of research skills, if only in view of the fact that achieving any Master's degree in Law in principle enables access to a PhD programme. Alongside the regular Master's programmes, specialist research Master's programmes also exist, which place specific emphasis on the acquisition of research skills. The further in-depth study required for other areas of academic professional practice is in any case only really achieved in the Master's phase. This is expressed in the position played in the curriculum by the Master's thesis, the greater number of credits generally set aside for the final assignment in the Master's programme and the requirements set with regard to its contents.

6. General characteristics and objectives of Bachelor's and Master's programmes

It has already been pointed out above that the range of programmes is varied, in terms of their number, the chosen specializations and their emphasis. This does not detract from the fact that programmes in Law have, and must have, characteristics in common. These characteristics need not necessarily be present to the same extent in each programme, but they must at least be reflected at the core of each programme. The specific approach adopted by programmes in this regard is stipulated in the academic and examination regulations for the programme .

In Bachelor's programmes in Law, the following characteristics play a central role:

- a. the social function of the law;
- b. the core concepts in the most important areas of law: private law, constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law, European law, international law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, tax law;
- c. the law as a coherent system;
- d. the theoretical basic principles and historical development of the law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, the economic aspects of the law.

Master's programmes in Law involve further in-depth study of knowledge relating to one or several areas of the law or specific subjects within them. Key characteristics include:

- e. the social function of the area covered by the programme, its boundaries and related areas;
- f. more intensive or extensive study of core concepts in one or several areas of the law (private law, constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law, European law and international law);
- g. the position of the area of the law covered within the system of the law as a whole;
- h. the theoretical basic principles and historical development of the law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, the economic aspects of the law.

Academic programmes in Law also aim to achieve the following:

- i. the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the law, in which law is considered also in its European, international and comparative law context;
- j. reflecting on the boundaries of the law as well as its related areas;
- k. acquiring academic and legal skills. In this context, this is understood to mean:
 - 1. the capacity to think about the law as an academic;
 - 2. the ability to communicate with fellow lawyers and non-lawyers based on the knowledge and understanding acquired, making use of an analytical attitude and outstanding speaking and writing skills;
 - 3. the ability to apply a relevant set of academic tools;
 - 4. the ability to participate in an academic debate;
 - 5. the ability to gather, evaluate, process and apply knowledge;
 - 6. the ability to apply specific knowledge of an area of the law in a wider academic, historical, philosophical, ethical and socio-cultural context;
 - 7. the ability to deal critically with the rules of law and case law, and seek out and find new solutions;
 - 8. the ability to keep abreast of and explore new developments and new areas of the law;
 - 9. the ability to deal with the increasing globalization, Europeanization and internationalization of the law;
- l. the development of academic citizenship that includes an understanding of a professional ethical attitude and awareness of the social context in which the law operates, as well as the social responsibility that this implies for the academically-qualified lawyer.

APPENDIX 3: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Learning outcomes knowledge and insight.

The learning outcomes of the LLM programme in European Economic Law in the field of knowledge and insight of the graduate are:

- A1. Enhanced knowledge of and insight in specialised areas of European Law by deepening the knowledge gained during the Bachelor's degree programme.
- A2. Enhanced knowledge of and insight in the specialised areas of European Law that are important for legal practice, academic research and European integration.
- A3. Enhanced knowledge of and insight in the functioning of the European institutions and of the interaction between the centralised and decentralised aspects of the European legal system, in particular with respect to the functioning of the European market place, and the interaction between institutional and substantive European law.

B. Learning outcomes application of knowledge and insight, formulating judgements and communication.

The learning outcomes of the LLM programme in European Economic Law in the field of application of knowledge and insight, formulating judgements and communication of the graduate are:

- B1. The ability to assemble, assess and apply independently relevant facts, legislation, jurisprudence and literature in order to solve complex issues in specialised fields of European law.
- B2. The ability to pursue independently academic legal research in the field of European law and thereby contribute in a socially relevant manner to the development of law;
- B3. The ability to participate independently in the debate in the field of European law in an international context, with colleagues.
- B4. The ability to convey to a group of colleagues, both orally and in writing, a complex argumentation in the field of European law, in English in a comprehensive manner.

C. Learning outcomes learning skills.

The learning outcomes of the LLM programme in European Economic Law in the field of learning skills of the graduate are:

- C1. Knowledge and understanding of the (national and/or international) career perspective;
- C2. Understanding of the requirements that are needed, as a result of the continuing and rapid development of European Union law, for self-study and the formation of own judgments.

APPENDIX 4: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Educational format (E)	l = lectures (including the number of hours per week) s = seminar (including the number of hours per week)
Assessment forms (A)	o = oral examination p = paper pp = presentation(s) w = written (essay) examination

Block	Course name	ECTS	E	A
1	European Internal Market Law	6	7*4 l	w
1	Market Regulation	6	7*4 l	p,w
2	Competition Law	6	7*4 l	w
2	Constitutional Principles of the EU Market	6	7*4 l	p
1+2	Seminar European Market Law	6	7*2 s	p,pp
3+4	Master's thesis	18	1*2 l + individual supervision	
3	EU Trade Law	6	7*4 l	w
4	Choose 1 of 3 courses (OC/Optional Course):			
	European Human Rights Law	6	7*2 l	w
	European Judicial Protection	6	7*2 l	w
	European Sustainability Law	6	7*2 l	w

APPENDIX 5: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Monday 22 January 2018		
8.45	9.00	Arrival and welcome
9.00	11.30	Preparatory meeting and review of available information
11.00	12.30	Interview with management of all programmes
12.30	13.00	Lunch
13.00	13.45	Interview with students M Nederlands recht
13.45	14.30	Interview with students B Rechtsgeleerdheid
14.30	15.00	Break
15.00	15.45	Interview with teaching staff B Rechtsgeleerdheid
15.45	16.30	Interview with teaching staff M Nederlands recht
16.30	17.00	Break
17.00	17.45	Interview with members of the programme committee Rechtsgeleerdheid (B Rechtsgeleerdheid and M Nederlands recht)
17.45	18.30	Interview with alumni M Nederlands recht
Tuesday 23 January 2018		
8.30	10.00	Preparatory meeting and review of available information; office hour (9.30-10.00)
10.00	10.45	Interview with students M Fiscaal recht and M Notarieel recht
10.45	11.30	Interview with teaching staff M Fiscaal recht and M Notarieel recht
11.30	12.15	Interview with members of programme committees: PC Fiscaal recht and PC Notarieel recht
12.15	12.45	Lunch
12.45	13.30	Interview with students M Recht en ICT and M Recht en bestuur
13.30	14.15	Interview with teaching staff M Recht en ICT and M Recht en bestuur
14.15	14.30	Break
14.45	15.30	Interview with members of programme committees: PC IT-recht and PC Juridische bestuurskunde
15.30	16.30	Interview with members of the board of examiners
16.30	17.00	Break
17.00	17.30	Theme conversation employability (study associations and career adviser)
17.30	18.00	Interview with alumni M Notarieel recht and M Fiscaal recht
18.00	18.30	Interview with alumni M Recht en ICT and M Recht en bestuur
Wednesday 24 January 2018		
09.00	09.45	Interview with students B International and European Law (English)
09.45	10.30	Interview with teaching staff B International and European Law (English)
10.30	11.00	Break
11.00	11.45	Interview with students M Internationaal en Europees Recht and M European Law
11.45	12.30	Interview with teaching staff M Internationaal en Europees Recht and M European Law
12.30	13.00	Lunch
13.00	13.45	Interview with students International Economic and Business Law and M International and Comparative Private Law
13.45	14.30	Interview with teaching staff International Economic and Business Law and M International and Comparative Private Law
14.30	14.45	Break
14.45	15.30	Interview with students M International Law and the Law of International Organizations and M Criminal Law and Criminology

15.30	16.15	Interview with teaching staff M International Law and the Law of International Organizations and M Criminal Law and Criminology
16.15	16.45	Break
16.45	17.30	Interview with members of programme committees: PC International and European Law and PC English masters
17.30	18.30	Interview with alumni English masters incl. M Internationaal en Europees Recht
Thursday 25 January 2018		
9.00	10.00	Final interview with management
10.00	12.30	Formulation preliminary findings
12.30	13.00	Lunch
13.00	15.00	Formulation preliminary findings
15.00	15.30	Preparation of presentation preliminary findings
15.30	16.00	Presentation preliminary findings

APPENDIX 6: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a selection of theses. The student numbers of these theses are available upon request.

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

- Course materials, sample exams and answer models of the following courses:
 1. European Internal Market Law
 2. Seminar European Market Law
 3. Competition Law
 4. EU Trade Law
- Programme dossiers of all programmes
- Annual reports of the board of examiners over the past 3 years
- Reports of the programme committee over the past years
- Semester evaluations over the past 3 years (6 semesters)
- Internationalisation plan Faculty of Law
- Written assignments Recht en Informatiemanagement
- Didactic concept
- Christodoulou, D. (2014). Seven myths about education. New York: Routledge
- Education Monitor 2015 and 2016
- Arbeidsrecht graduates overview of employment
- PDCA concerning course evaluations and success rates 2016-2017
- Overview teaching capacity 2017-2018