

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment
Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
Leiden University

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of Leiden University, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

The programme objectives are sound. The panel appreciates the strong research-orientation of the programme and the focus on methodology, these being unique features of the programme. The programme objectives are up-to-date. The visual anthropology and digital media components of the programme are greatly appreciated and the panel suggests to further strengthen the profile in terms of non-textual forms of knowledge production and distribution.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel welcomes the comparison to other programmes in the Netherlands and abroad and regards this programme both to share important features with other programmes and to have a clearly distinguishing profile.

The panel welcomes students being offered distinct specialisations, allowing students interesting options. The panel advises to state the preparation for positions in the professional field, i.e. outside of university, more explicitly, emphasising the relevance of anthropological knowledge and skills for societal problems.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives, are well-articulated and conform to the master level. The panel advises, however, to address anthropological knowledge and skills more explicitly.

The student influx numbers are appropriate. As the programme intends to raise the influx of students in the Bachelor programme, the inflow in this Master programme may rise also. The panel supports programme's intentions in this respect. The entry requirements and admission procedures are adequate. The panel welcomes the pre-master programme being offered.

The panel is positive about the curriculum contents, these meeting the programme intended learning outcomes. The components are up to standard, showing the strong research-orientation of the curriculum. The curriculum is well-organised and coherent.

The panel considers the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The lecturers have strong education profiles. The panel notes that the lecturers are appreciated by students. The panel finds it positive that additional staff has been recruited. As the Institute has impressive resources and potential, the panel advises to communicate these more explicitly.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods to be appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The panel appreciates the small-scale and student-activating education. The study load is balanced. The student success rates are favourable.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty policies. The panel welcomes the responsibilities and tasks of the Board of Examiners and finds that the Board monitors the quality of examinations and assessments appropriately.

The panel approves of the examination methods adopted in the programme. These are very diverse, well-organised and consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master theses have been satisfactorily organised. The panel recommends, however, having the examiners comment on each of the assessment criteria in order to align the text and the criteria on the assessment scoring forms. The panel also advises to clarify the relations and interactions of the two examiners, when arriving at their judgment for the Master theses.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be satisfactory.

The panel considers the Master theses to be adequate academic projects. The relations between empirical data and theoretical concepts are satisfactory. In some of the theses, the theoretical dimensions could have been strengthened. The panel in general supports the grades given by examiners of the programme. For some of the Visual Ethnography theses, the panel would have given somewhat higher grades.

The panel welcomes the measures taken in the programme to promote the labour market orientation of students and to foster the preparation for their future careers.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enter the labour market and find appropriate positions in the professional field.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of Leiden University assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel advises NVAO to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 18 February 2019

Prof. dr. T. Otto
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren
(panel secretary)

2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Leiden University to manage the limited framework programme assessment process for the Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of this University. The objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Having conferred with management of the Leiden University programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof dr. T. Otto, full professor of Anthropology and Ethnography, University of Aarhus, Denmark, full professor and tropical leader, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Australia (panel chair);
- Dr E.D. Rasch, associate professor, Sociology of Development and Change Group, Wageningen University (panel member);
- Dr M.E. Pelkmans, associate professor in Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Drs E.B. Heiman, city anthropologist, organisational anthropologist, co-owner company De Staalmeesters (panel member);
- I. Corbeek, student Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies, Radboud University (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs W. Vercouteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit was discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected the final projects of 15 graduates from the last few years. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of theses of the programme graduates, these theses being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

Several weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator discussed the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the theses were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 21 November 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the Leiden University campus. The site visit schedule was as planned. In a number of separate sessions, the panel was given the opportunity to meet with Faculty Board representatives, programme management, Board of Examiners members, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management were given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the Leiden University Board, to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: M Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
Grade: MSc
Number of credits: 60 EC
Specialisations: Global Ethnography
Sociology of Policy in Practice
Visual Ethnography
Location: Leiden
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction English)
Registration in CROHO: 60156
Name of institution: Leiden University
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology and the Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology are programmes of the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Leiden University. The dean of the Faculty has the responsibility for all programmes of the Faculty. The scientific director of the Institute is responsible for both the research and educational activities of the Institute. The director of studies of the Institute is in charge of the coordination and organisation of both programmes. The master coordinator coordinates the Master programme under supervision of the director of studies. The director of studies is advised on the quality assurance of the programmes by the Programme Committee, being composed of three lecturers and three students. The Board of Examiners for both programmes has the authority to monitor the quality of examination and assessment processes and products.

The Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme of Leiden University is a one-year, research-based, academic master programme in this field. The programme, in general terms, studies culture and cultural diversity in human societies, from holistic and comparative and dynamic perspectives. The programme is, more specifically, directed towards the study of the themes Diversity, Sustainability and Digitalisation. The themes are derived from the research programme *Global Vulnerabilities and Social Resilience* of the Institute. Trends in these themes are closely monitored. The programme is strongly focused on methodology in this field, being especially geared toward ethnographic research, field research and visual research methods.

The objectives of the programme conform to the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands, which has been drafted by the joint programmes of this assessment cluster in the Netherlands.

Students are educated for careers in the professional field. The programme offers three specialisations. The Global Ethnography specialisation educates students to become independent researchers. The specialisation Sociology of Policy in Practice trains students to be consultants in this field. The Visual Ethnography specialisation prepares students as audio-visual media experts for research. Programme management regularly discusses the programme with the Advisory Board, being composed of professional field representatives.

Programme management compared the programme to other programmes in this field in the Netherlands, in the United Kingdom and in the United States. The programme is quite comparable to the other programmes in the Netherlands, but distinguishes itself in offering the Visual Ethnography specialisation.

The programme may be compared to the programmes in the United Kingdom and the United States in terms of emphasising analytical reflection and critical assessment of social sciences research methods.

The programme objectives have been translated into intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes specify, as the main points, specific knowledge and understanding of dominant theories and debates in this domain; thorough knowledge and understanding of research methods and techniques in this field; skills to do research independently; critical and reflective thinking competencies; advanced communication skills in this field, and self-directed learning skills.

Programme management presented the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for the master level.

Consideration

The panel considers the programme objectives to be sound. The panel values the strong research-orientation of the programme and the focus on methodology, these being unique features of the programme. The programme objectives are up-to-date, the programme monitoring new trends. The visual anthropology and digital media components of the programme are greatly appreciated and the panel suggests to further strengthen the profile in terms of non-textual forms of knowledge production and distribution.

The programme objectives meet the requirements of the Reference Framework for Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology in the Netherlands. The panel welcomes the efforts by the joint programmes to draft this framework and regards this to be a sound description of this domain.

The panel welcomes the comparison to other programmes in the Netherlands and in other countries and regards this programme at the same time to share important features and to have a clearly distinguishing profile.

The panel welcomes students being offered distinct specialisations, allowing students to qualify for diverse positions. The panel advises to state the preparation for positions in the professional field, i.e. outside of university, more explicitly, emphasising the relevance of anthropological knowledge and skills with reference to societal problems.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to the programme objectives, are well-articulated and conform to the master level. The panel advises, however, to address anthropological knowledge and skills more explicitly.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, Intended learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The student influx numbers remained the last five years rather stable at about 40 incoming students per year. Applicants having obtained the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology degree of any Dutch University are admitted to the programme. Applications by students with academic (wo) or higher professional education (hbo) bachelor degrees in other disciplines are reviewed on an individual basis by the programme Admissions Board. Entry requirements are set. Students with deficiencies have to complete a pre-master programme. The pre-master programmes are tailored to the prior education of individual students. Students with hbo bachelor degrees have to complete 60 EC pre-master programmes.

The curriculum of the programme takes one year, the study load being in total 60 EC. Programme management presented a table, showing the mapping of the intended learning outcomes to the courses. At the beginning of the curriculum, students enrol in one of the three specialisations offered. The curriculum is composed of the compulsory theory-driven course *Large Issues, Small Places* (10 EC). In parallel, students take the *Research Design* course (5 EC), addressing practical aspects of fieldwork research. To prepare for Fieldwork, students draft their proposal in the *Research Proposal* course (5 EC). Fieldwork takes three months (20 EC). Fieldwork will typically be classical fieldwork for Global Ethnography students, internships for Sociology of Policy in Practice students and fieldwork for Visual Ethnography students. Having completed the Fieldwork, students draft the *Master Thesis* (15 EC). Parallel to the thesis in the *Thesis Seminar* course (5 EC), students are introduced to the subject of communicative contexts to present their research.

The lecturing team is composed of 14 permanent staff members and 6 temporary staff members. Staff members are employed at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. All permanent staff are engaged in both education and research. All are BKO-certified and, with one exception, all have PhDs. Two of them have SKO-certificates as well. Temporary staff members are only involved in teaching. About half of them have BKO-certificates. In the last years, no less than 30 % additional permanent staff were recruited. Lecturers meet regularly to discuss the programme. Students appreciate the lecturers and their being very accessible.

The educational concept of the programme is research-based and student-centred learning. The study methods adopted in the programme are lectures, tutorials and individual supervision. Lectures and tutorials include presentations, debates, discussions and assignments. Courses are lectured by several lecturers. Class sizes in the tutorials are about 10 to 15 students. Individual supervision is offered during the Research Proposal course, Fieldwork and the Master Thesis. Students are entitled to a total of 48 hours of supervision. The master coordinator of the programme plays an important role in study guidance by, among others, arranging the matching of students and supervisors. Fieldwork may be done in the Netherlands, Ghana, Java or the Philippines. At these fieldwork locations, staff members are present for supervision. Other locations suggested by students must be approved by the master coordinator.

Internship organisations are suggested by the programme. During the fieldwork, students submit three monthly reports, two interim reports and one final report. Students may contact the programme study advisor in case of questions or problems. The study load of the curriculum is experienced by students to be manageable. The student success rates are on average about 77 % after one year (last five cohorts).

Considerations

The student influx numbers are appropriate. As the programme intends to raise the influx of students in the Bachelor Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology programme, the inflow in this Master programme may rise also. The panel supports programme's intentions in this respect. The entry requirements and admission procedures are adequate. The panel welcomes the pre-master programme being offered.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The curriculum components are up to standard, showing the strong research-orientation of the curriculum. The curriculum is well-organised and coherent. The panel welcomes the specialisations offered, allowing students interesting options.

The panel regards the lecturers to be both good researchers and skilled teachers. The panel notes that the lecturers are appreciated by students. The panel finds it very positive that additional staff has been recruited. As the Institute has impressive resources, the panel advises to communicate these more explicitly.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods in the curriculum to be appropriate, allowing students to complete the curriculum. The panel appreciates the small-scale and student-activating education. The study load is balanced. The student success rates are favourable.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be satisfactory.

4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The examination and assessment rules and regulations for the programme are laid down in the Course and Examination Regulations and in the Rules and Guidelines for the Board of Examiners. Both documents meet Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences policies. As has been indicated, the Board of Examiners has the authority to monitor the quality of programme examination and assessment processes and products.

The examination methods for the curriculum components are selected in line with the goals and contents. The methods adopted include written weekly or biweekly assignments, in-class participation, research proposal, fieldwork reports and thesis. Plagiarism and fraud regulations are communicated to students. The Board of Examiners handles cases in line with the seriousness of the offences. The number of serious offences is limited.

The final project of the programme is the Master thesis. In the Master theses, students are to integrate data gathered during the empirical, ethnographic field research with theories and current debates in this domain and are to reflect on their social and ethical responsibilities. As has been mentioned, students are individually supervised in the research proposal, fieldwork and thesis phases. Master theses are assessed by the supervisor and the second examiner independently. For their assessments, both examiners use assessment scoring forms with assessment criteria and boxes for written comments. For some assessment criteria, such as language skills and literature referencing, threshold values have been set. The examiners discuss their assessments and the grade. In case of major differences in judgments, one of the members of the Board of Examiners will review the thesis as well. The final grade will be the result of this process.

Programme management and the Board of Examiners have taken measures to promote the quality of examinations and assessments. The Board of Examiners appoints examiners. Examinations including test matrices and answer models or assessment scoring forms are peer-reviewed by fellow examiners. Every year, the Board of Examiners inspects several course dossiers, which include course goals, examinations and answer models of courses. Also yearly, the Board invites independent examiners to review Master theses. This has led to the Master thesis assessment scoring forms being to some degree adapted.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty policies. The panel welcomes the responsibilities and tasks of the Board of Examiners and finds that the Board monitors the quality of examinations and assessments appropriately.

The panel approves of the examination methods adopted in the programme. These are very diverse, well-organised and consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master theses have been satisfactorily organised. The panel recommends, however, having the examiners comment on each of the assessment criteria in order to align the text and the criteria on the assessment scoring forms. The panel also advises to clarify the relations and interactions of the two examiners, when arriving at their judgment for the Master theses.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be satisfactory.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3, Student assessment, to be satisfactory.

4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.
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Findings

The panel reviewed 15 Master theses of programme graduates of the last two years. The average grade for these projects is about 7.7.

To prepare for their future careers, students are offered fieldwork or internship options, depending upon the specialisation they have chosen.

Data on careers of programme graduates are rather scarce. Sources of information, however, indicate the professional field being positive about the graduates. Every year, some of them succeed in securing PhD positions.

Considerations

The panel considers the Master theses to be adequate academic projects. In the theses, the relations between empirical data and theoretical concepts are satisfactory. In some of the theses, the theoretical dimensions could have been strengthened. The panel in general supports the grades given by examiners of the programme. For some of the Visual Ethnography theses, the panel would have given somewhat higher grades.

The panel welcomes the measures taken in the programme to promote the labour market orientation of students and to foster the preparation for their future careers.

The panel considers the programme graduates to have reached the intended learning outcomes and to be qualified to enter the labour market and find appropriate positions in the professional field.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme	Satisfactory

6. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below. These panel recommendations are the following.

- To further strengthen the profile of the programme in terms of non-textual forms of knowledge production and distribution.
- To state the preparation for positions in the professional field, i.e. outside of university, more explicitly, emphasising the relevance of anthropological knowledge and skills with reference to societal problems.
- To address anthropological knowledge and skills more explicitly in the intended learning outcomes of the programme.
- To have the Master thesis examiners comment on each of the assessment criteria, this way aligning the text and the criteria on the thesis assessment scoring forms.
- To clarify the relations and interactions of the two examiners, when arriving at their judgments for the Master theses.