

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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This report was finalised on 1 October 2019.



REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point (September 2016).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture

Name of the programme:	English Language and Culture
CROHO number:	50290
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Expiration of accreditation:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel English Language and Culture to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen took place on 21, 22 and 23 May 2019.

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 January 2019. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture consisted of:

- Em. prof. F. (Frank) Willaert, emeritus professor in Early Dutch Literature at the University of Antwerp (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. F. (Folkert) Kuiken, professor by special appointment in Dutch as a second language and Multilingualism at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. S.L. (Sarah) de Lange, professor by special appointment at the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. H. (Helen) Wilcox, professor in English Literature at Bangor University (Wales);
- O. (Onno) van Wilgenburg MA, team leader Languages in Secondary Education at Nuffic;
- T. (Tamara) van Seggelen BA, master's student Linguistics and Communication Sciences (research master) at the Radboud University [student member];
- Dr. B. (Babs) Gezelle Meerburg, lecturer at NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden and Groningen for the bachelor's and master's teacher training programmes in Frisian [referee Minorities and Multilingualism].

The panel was supported by drs. E. (Erik) van der Spek, who acted as secretary.



WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The bachelor's programme English Language and Culture at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Linguistics and Literary Studies. Between January 2019 and June 2019 the panel assessed 55 programmes at 6 universities.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. F. (Frank) Willaert, emeritus professor in Early Dutch Literature at the University of Antwerp (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. P. (Petter) Aaslestad, professor in Scandinavian Literature at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and chair of the Norwegian Association of Researchers (Norway);
- Prof. dr. P.A.J.M. (Peter-Arno) Coppen, professor of Didactic Methods at Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. S. (Stef) Craps, professor of English Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. M.B.H. (Martin) Everaert, professor in Linguistics at Utrecht University;
- Em. prof. dr. O.C.M. (Olga) Fischer, emeritus professor in Germanic Linguistics (in particular English linguistics) at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. E.J. (Liesbeth) Korthals Altes, professor in Literary Studies at the University of Groningen;
- Dr. M. (Maartje) Kouwenberg, policy officer at the Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO);
- Prof. dr. F. (Folkert) Kuiken, professor by special appointment in Dutch as a second language and Multilingualism at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. K. (Karen) Lahousse, associate professor in (French) Linguistics at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. S.L. (Sarah) de Lange, professor by special appointment at the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. K. (Katja) Lochtman, professor in German and English at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. W.M. (Wander) Lowie, professor in English, Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the University of Groningen;
- Em. prof. M.J.H. (Maaïke) Meijer, author and honorary professor at Maastricht University;
- Prof. dr. J.F. (Josep) Quer, research professor at the Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats (ICREA) of Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain);
- Prof. dr. P.J. (Paul) Smith, professor in French Literature at Leiden University;
- D. (Dennis) Smit MA, secretary at the Programme bureau 'Sustainable Humanities' and interpreter Italian;
- Prof. H. (Helen) Wilcox, professor in English Literature at Bangor University (Wales);
- O. (Onno) van Wilgenburg MA, team leader Languages in Secondary Education at Nuffic;
- J.C. (Jolanda) Rozendaal MA, master's student Leraar Frans Voorbereidend Hoger Onderwijs at Utrecht University;
- T. (Tamara) van Seggelen BA, master's student Linguistics and Communication Sciences (research master) at the Radboud University;
- H.M. (Hanne) Stegeman, bachelor's student English Language and Culture and Media Studies at the University of Groningen;
- Prof. dr. B. (Benjamin) Biebuyck, professor in German Literature at Ghent University (Belgium) [referee German Language and Culture];
- Prof. dr. B. (Bart) van den Bossche, professor in Italian Literature at KU Leuven (Belgium) [referee Italian Language and Culture];
- Prof. dr. B.W. (Ben) Dhooge, professor and researcher at the department Languages and Cultures (Slavic and East-European Studies) at Ghent University (Belgium) [referee Slavic Languages and Cultures];
- Prof. dr. S. (Sebastiaan) Faber, professor in Hispanic Studies at Oberlin College (United States) [referee Spanish Language and Culture];

- Dr. B. (Babs) Gezelle Meerburg, lecturer at NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden and Groningen for the bachelor's and master's teacher training programmes in Frisian [referee Minorities and Multilingualism];
- Em. prof. dr. H.L.M. (Hub) Hermans, emeritus professor in Modern Romance Languages (in particular Spanish) at the University of Groningen [referee Romance Languages and Culture];
- Prof. M. (Máire) Ní Mhaonaigh, professor in Celtic & Medieval Studies at St John's College at the University of Cambridge (United Kingdom) [referee Celtic Languages and Culture];
- Prof. dr. B. (Bart) Philipsen, professor in German Literature & Theatre Studies at the KU Leuven (Belgium) [referee German Language and Culture];
- Prof. dr. A. (Arvi) Sepp, professor in German Literature at the University of Antwerp, professor Translation Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium) [referee German Language and Culture];
- Prof. dr. P. (Pierre) Schoentjes, professor in French Literature at Ghent University (Belgium) [referee French Language and Culture].

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

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment Linguistics and Literary Studies was dr. Anna Sparreboom. She acted as secretary in the site visits of Leiden University and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She was also present at the start of the site visits as well as the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at the site visits of the University of Amsterdam and Radboud University. Drs. Erik van der Spek, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the site visits of Leiden University, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Groningen. Dr. Hester Minnema, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the site visits of the University of Amsterdam, Radboud University (under supervision of dr. Anna Sparreboom). Drs. Linda te Marvelde and dr. Joke Corporaal (under supervision of drs. Linda te Marvelde), freelance secretaries for QANU, acted as secretaries in the site visit of Utrecht University. On 1 May 2019, Anna Sparreboom went on maternity leave. Els Schröder acted as project manager for the site visit to the University of Groningen and Alexandra Paffen for the site visit to Utrecht University. The project managers and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes. Jaira Azaria MA, employee of QANU, read all draft reports and acted as project coordinator.

Preparation

On 15 October 2018, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework.

A preparatory panel meeting was organised on 20 November 2018. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed the working method in preparation for the site visits.

A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

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

The panel also studied a selection of theses. The selection consisted of 12 theses and their assessment forms for the programmes, based on a provided list of graduates in 2017-2018. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project manager and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses. The additional conditions for applying an adjusted working method to



the thesis selection, as required by NVAO (joint Board of Examiners and demonstrable overlap in the programmes), have been met.

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place on 21, 22 and 23 May 2019. At the start of the site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

Calibration

In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, a calibration meeting took place on 9 April 2019, in which the panel discussed the first three assessments of Leiden University, the University of Amsterdam and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. In this meeting the working method was evaluated, recurring themes were discussed and judgements per standard for each programme were determined. Panel members Frank Willaert (chair), Wander Lowie, Folkert Kuiken and Helen Wilcox were present during the calibration meeting, as well as project managers Anna Sparreboom and Alexandra Paffen and secretaries Erik van der Spek and Hester Minnema.

After the final site visit in June, a second calibration meeting was organised on 5 July 2019. During this calibration meeting, all programmes were discussed including those taken into account during the first calibration meeting. Panel members Frank Willaert (chair), Wander Lowie (via Skype) were present during the calibration meeting, as well as project managers Alexandra Paffen and secretaries Erik van der Spek and Hester Minnema. Findings and conclusions by Helen Wilcox were also taken into account on behalf of the panel, just as observations by project manager Els Schröder and secretary Linda te Marvelde.

Masterlanguage has been discussed in detail by calibrating panel members after the site visit at Utrecht University. The text on Masterlanguage has been approved by the panel on 19 July 2019.

Report

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

Definition of judgements standards

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

Generic quality

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

Unsatisfactory

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard and shows shortcomings with respect to multiple aspects of the standard.

Satisfactory

The programme meets the generic quality standard across its entire spectrum.

Good

The programme systematically surpasses the generic quality standard.

Excellent

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



SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The bachelor's programme in English Language and Culture offers a broad academic programme focusing on the language, literature, and linguistics of the English-speaking world. Students become acquainted with three research areas — modern English literature, medieval English literature, and English linguistics. The Groningen programme has two distinctive features. Firstly, it has a relatively strong medieval component. Secondly, its international focus is prominent; the Groningen programme is an officially English-medium ('international') programme.

The panel recognises the two distinctive features of the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture at RUG. In its opinion, these two characteristics give the English programme a distinctive profile that is attractive to students from both the Netherlands and other countries. It established that the programme's intended learning outcomes are suitable for an academic bachelor's programme in terms of both level and orientation. However, it feels that they should be more specific and advises adding learning outcomes at the track level. It appreciates the regular revision of the learning outcomes and feels that the adjustments are in line with the international profile.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum is organised into four learning trajectories: Modern English Literature, Medieval English Literature, English Linguistics, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The panel feels that the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture combines high quality with a clear scope. The curriculum with its large common core guarantees that students acquire a complete perspective on the English language and literature. The panel concludes that the move to an English-medium programme has been successful; the programme has become more attractive, and the international approach has been enriching. The panel approves of the educational vision and the teaching methods, and feels that the small scale of the seminars and the international classroom do justice to the programme. It concludes that the focus on research is successful.

The panel established that the students find the programme to be feasible. However, an improvement can be made by giving the students more personal guidance when progressing from the first to the second year. Another point of improvement is the start of the theses after the minor. The panel advises the programme to find ways to prepare the students before or during their minor.

The panel established that the staff members have the expertise needed for this programme. Students are generally satisfied with the academic and didactic skills of their lecturers. The panel concludes that the staff are committed to both teaching and research.

In summary, the panel sees a number of strong points in the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture. These include its large common core, the move to a completely English-medium programme, the successful international classroom, the focus on research and the quality of the staff. These strong points are reasons for the panel to assess standard 2 as 'good'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel studied the assessment plan of the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture and found it to be satisfactory. The intended learning outcomes are linked to the types of assessment per module. The panel ascertained that the types of assessment fit with the programme and that there is sufficient variation in the assessments. It agrees with the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered assessment and with the focus on language proficiency.

In general, the panel agrees with the assessment of the theses. However, it is critical about the use of and variation in thesis assessment forms. The panel has noted that the Board of Examiners has taken steps towards more uniformity and encourages the responsible staff to continue this process. It advises the programme to ensure that the thesis form is completed in full in all cases and to further enhance the transparency of the assessment for the students. It is of the opinion that the programme

should aim for a recognisable voice of the second reader on the form. If a second reader is to play a role in the supervision of a specific student, a third reader should be added in order to guarantee the independence of the assessment.

The panel approves of the merger of the Board(s) of Examiners and is positive about the role of the secretary and the assessment expert in it. However, it also feels that the Board has mandated many activities to the expert teams and questions whether the Board can still take sufficient responsibility for the quality assurance in all cases in the future. In its opinion, the Board of Examiners is still looking for the right interpretation of its own role and could operate more forcefully and independently. However, it fully trusts the Board to continue developing its professional practice as it has sufficiently demonstrated that it is aware of the necessity of enhancing its role within the assurance of assessment.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The panel concludes that the students in the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture achieve the intended learning outcomes. Most theses show a good academic level. The vast majority of graduates enter appropriate master's programmes (including a substantial number of research masters), where they do not appear to experience any major problems. Moreover, a substantial number of graduates succeed in obtaining a PhD position, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

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

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture

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

The chair, em. prof. F. (Frank) Willaert, and the secretary, drs. E. (Erik) van der Spek, 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: 1 October 2019

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

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's programme in English Language and Culture offers a broad academic programme focusing on the language, literature, and linguistics of the English-speaking world. It aims to provide students with academic-level knowledge and skills in the areas of English literature and English linguistics. Students become acquainted with three research areas — modern English literature, medieval English literature, and English linguistics. According to the self-evaluation, the programme is not only focused on the traditionally Anglophone areas, but includes the English-speaking postcolonial world as well.

The Groningen programme has two distinctive features. Firstly, it has a relatively strong medieval component. Secondly, its international focus is prominent; the Groningen programme is an officially English-medium ('international') programme, at the time of the panel visit the only such programme of English Language and Culture in the Netherlands. The programme attracts a substantial number of international students (including native speakers of English) and does not, for instance, contrast English and Dutch language, literature and culture. The panel recognises these two features and finds that the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture at RUG has an attractive and distinctive profile.

Eighteen intended learning outcomes have been formulated for the programme. They are classified in accordance with the Dublin descriptors and are in line with its themes: (1) Knowledge and understanding, (2) Applying knowledge and understanding, (3) Making judgements, (4) Communication and (5) Learning skills. Most of them are stated in rather general terms; some are more specific to the programme. An example of the latter is learning result 1.3: "Knowledge of key authors and a broad range of literary texts in a variety of genres written in the Anglophone world over a period of 1400 years". The staff indicated that the generic character of some of the learning outcomes is necessary to allow for the differences between the literary and linguistic tracks. The panel is of the opinion that the programme's intended learning outcomes are suitable for an academic bachelor's programme in terms of both level and orientation but they are rather generic; it could help to add learning outcomes for the available specialisations.

The intended learning outcomes are revised regularly. The latest adjustment (2016) was aimed at incorporating the profile and aspect of internationalisation properly. The learning outcomes now reflect that RUG offers an entirely English-medium programme. A new learning outcome (5.3) was added to emphasise the coherence of the programme. The panel approves of the regular revision of the learning outcomes and feels that the adjustments are in line with its international profile.

Considerations

The panel recognises the two distinctive features of the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture at RUG: the strong medieval component and the international focus. In its opinion, these two characteristics give the English programme a distinctive profile that is attractive to students from both the Netherlands and other countries. It established that the programme's intended learning outcomes are suitable for an academic bachelor's programme in terms of both level and orientation. However, it feels that they should be more specific and advises adding ones at the track level. It appreciates the regular revision of the learning outcomes and feels that the adjustments are in line with the international profile.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture : the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.

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

Curriculum

The curriculum consists of a major programme (150 EC) and a minor programme (30 EC). In the major, students follow 95 EC of compulsory common courses, 45 EC of optional courses and write their bachelor's thesis (10 EC). The curriculum is organised into four learning trajectories: Modern English Literature, Medieval English Literature, English Linguistics, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Teaching takes place in course units of 5 EC (ten weeks); a small number of courses are 10 EC (20 weeks).

The common core consists of key content and skills from all four learning trajectories. Students are familiarised with basic theories in linguistics and literature and with key texts in the history of English literature. They develop a near-native command of oral and written language skills in English. The programme supplies students with a solid foundation that allows them, for instance, to work as a secondary school teacher of English. In addition, the students choose optional courses that deepen their knowledge and understanding of English linguistics and/or literature. Students choose between 20 and 45 EC of optional courses from the programme. A maximum of 25 EC may be filled by courses outside the programme.

As mentioned above, the programme consists of four learning trajectories. The learning trajectory in *Modern English literature* provides students with the tools to read and analyse literature from a textual and theoretical perspective. They read a survey of modern English literature (after 1550) with an emphasis on classical and biblical themes. The common core also contains a course on William Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The learning trajectory in *Medieval English literature* focuses on English literature before 1550 and contains a separate course on the most significant pre-modern English author, Geoffrey Chaucer. The students are also trained in reading and translating Middle English, so they are equipped with the skills necessary to study original Middle English literary texts. The learning trajectory in *English linguistics* contains courses in English syntax and phonology, followed by sociolinguistics. In the second year, students deepen their knowledge of the development and semantics of English. Optional courses allow the students to deepen their knowledge of syntax, phonology and morphology. Finally, the learning trajectory in *English for Academic Purposes (EAP)* is focused on the development of academic and professional language skills. This trajectory provides important cohesion within the programme since it supplies the students with skills that are relevant for all other learning trajectories. This trajectory culminates in the 'EAP: Research Reports' course, which is a prerequisite for the bachelor's thesis. The students appreciate this trajectory as it provides them with skills that are useful outside the domain of the English language and literature as well.

The Faculty of Arts introduced a new minor system in 2018, in which all students follow a minor in the first semester of their third year. Students can choose one out of twenty minors offered by the Faculty or one of the university minors offered by other faculties. They can also spend a semester at a university in another country; this is done by approximately 20% of the students, partly through the Harting scholarship programme. Other options are the Career Minor (which may also include an internship) and the Education Minor (which prepares students for a career in teaching).

The bachelor's thesis is a research paper of 7,000 words on modern English literature, medieval English literature, or English linguistics. The programme organises a thesis class to prepare the students and help them explore their topic and plan the project. The thesis class is taught during the



first half of the semester, while individual supervision takes over in the second half. A problem for some students is that the bachelor's thesis is written in the final semester, directly after the minor. A number of students are able to write their thesis about a topic they explored during their minor, but for other students (for instance, those who take a Career Minor or a semester abroad) this is not always feasible. Since the minor is fixed in the first semester of the final year by Faculty policy, the panel feels that the programme should develop a creative solution to this problem. An option would be to organise a number of classes before the minor starts, to make sure that the thesis topic is already being considered before the students leave the English department for a few months.

The students are generally very satisfied with the programme. They especially mentioned the EAP learning trajectory, since it provides them with excellent writing and presentation skills that are necessary for the other trajectories as well. They consider the programme to be complete, but they expressed the need for more support with their general study skills and would appreciate more practice in non-academic writing. They suggested that the latter could be offered in an extracurricular course; the panel agrees with this suggestion.

The panel discussed the transition to an English-medium programme with the programme developers and the staff. In general, the staff are satisfied with the new international approach and feel this has enriched the programme. The programme attracts a substantial number of foreign students, also from English-speaking countries, who contribute to both the international and intercultural experience and the level of English. However, a consequence of an English-medium programme is that Dutch language skills are less developed. The staff acknowledges this problem, but feels it should be solved outside the programme, for instance in a minor dedicated to Dutch academic writing. The panel agrees with this view.

In general, the panel feels that the programme combines high quality with a clear scope. The curriculum with its large common core guarantees that students acquire a complete perspective on the English language and literature, which is especially valuable since it is becoming rare these days, according to the panel.

Teaching methods

The programme is based on a shared educational vision within the Faculty of Arts. All teaching should be student-oriented, research-motivated and activating. The teaching is student-oriented as it follows the development of the students; as the student progresses, the focus shifts towards more self-directed and autonomous ways of learning. An important part is the focus on '21st-century skills', such as critical and analytical thinking as well as ICT-skills. The students are also responsible for their own learning process.

Most classes are organised in lectures and seminars. Most seminars are small-scale, allowing for student participation and discussion. Since around a quarter of the students are from foreign countries, the seminar is the place where the international classroom comes into being. Students appreciate the contact with and contributions from students from other countries and cultures. The dialogue between students is encouraged outside seminars as well. The students appreciate the learning communities, consisting of both lecturers and students.

The classes are set up to encourage and stimulate research. Graduates should be able to undertake independent research in the English language and/or literature. Most of the lecturers are active researchers, who incorporate elements of their research into their teaching. Throughout the programme, students are increasingly active in research, culminating in their bachelor's thesis. The panel concludes that the focus on research is successful, since a relatively large number of graduates go on to study for a research master's degree.

Feasibility and study guidance

In general, the students find the programme to be feasible. However, a number of them were sometimes unsure how to attain the level expected of them. This is especially felt when moving from the first to the second year. The panel advises giving students more personal guidance in this period and ensuring that they are clear about the staff's expectations.

The students did not report any major bottlenecks in their studies, apart from the break in the programme caused by the minor system. As mentioned above, the obligatory minor in the first semester of the third year has the side effect of making many students feel ill-prepared for their thesis. The panel advises the programme to find ways to prepare the students before or during their minor.

Apart from this point of improvement, students are satisfied with the information and study guidance they receive. The panel concludes that the study guidance is sufficiently well organised and that the programme is generally feasible.

Teaching staff

The majority of the permanent staff have doctorates (three professors, senior university lecturers and university lecturers). They carry out scholarly research and bring the results to the courses they teach. Most permanent staff members have a university teaching certificate (BKO) (13) or are in the process of obtaining one (3). For a number of temporary staff members, the BKO requirement is not applicable. The panel has established that the staff have the expertise needed for this programme.

The programme experiences staff shortages, which are generally solved by appointing temporary staff. A number of seminars are taught by PhD students, under the supervision of a permanent staff member. The staff shortages are also reflected in the expertise: for instance, the staff contains three mediaevalists, but only one lecturer for the early modern period. As a result, the number of theses that the programme can accept on the early modern period is limited.

Students are generally satisfied with the academic and didactic skills of their lecturers. Teaching is generally well evaluated in student course evaluations, with a medium score of 4.28 (out of 5) in the National Student Survey. Due to the small scale of most seminars, the lecturers have a good personal rapport with students. The students find that the teachers are approachable and knowledgeable and teach effectively and enjoyably. The panel concludes that the staff are committed to both research and teaching and work hard to offer the necessary teaching with limited resources.

Considerations

In general, the panel feels that the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture combines high quality with a clear scope. The curriculum with its large common core guarantees that students acquire a complete perspective on the English language and literature, which is especially valuable since it is becoming rare these days according to the panel.

The panel concludes that the move to an English-medium programme has been successful; the programme has become more attractive, and the international approach has been enriching. However, a consequence of an English-medium programme is that the Dutch language skills are not trained anymore. The panel agrees with the staff's view that this problem should be solved outside the programme, for instance in a minor.

The panel approves of the educational vision and the teaching methods, and feels that the small scale of the seminars and the international classroom do justice to the programme. It concludes that the focus on research is successful.

The panel established that the students find the programme to be feasible. However, an improvement can be made by giving the students more personal guidance when progressing from the first to the second year. Another point of improvement is the start of the theses after the minor. The panel advises the programme to find ways to prepare the students before or during their minor.

The panel established that the staff members have the expertise needed for this programme. Students are generally satisfied with the academic and didactic skills of their lecturers. The panel concludes that the staff are committed to both research and teaching.



In summary, the panel sees a number of strong points in the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture. These include its large common core, the move to a completely English-medium programme, the successful international classroom, the focus on research and the quality of the staff. These strong points are reasons for the panel to assess standard 2 as 'good'.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'good'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The assessment system for the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture is based on (a) the Teaching and Examination Regulations, (b) the programme-level learning outcomes and (c) the assessment plan. The panel studied the assessment plan, in which the intended learning outcomes are linked to the types and moments of assessment for each module. The basic ideas are that all study components are tested, that there is variation in the testing methods, and that the testing method is in line with the learning outcomes of the modules. Most courses have at least two moments of examination, usually an essay and an exam. Details of assessment are specified in the course outlines for all courses. The panel agrees with the principles of assessment outlined in the assessment plan.

The forms of assessment show a gradual development from more teacher-centered, knowledge-driven assessments to more student-centered assessment of higher-level skills. At the start of the programme, for example, students are tested using sit-down exams with multiple choice questions, whereas as they progress, they write more research essays and do presentations. Since English language skills at near-native level are a key learning outcome of the programme, language proficiency is a part of most assessments. The panel agrees with the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered assessment and with the focus on language proficiency.

The tests are compiled by qualified teachers and then assessed by colleagues (peer review). They are periodically evaluated by the Board of Examiners, on the basis of assessment files compiled by the teachers.

The essays and exams are generally graded by the lecturers. In some cases, students from the master's track Applied Linguistics are employed to provide feedback on assignments. The staff assured the panel that this is not done to lower the lecturer's workload, but to provide an opportunity for the master's students to gain experience in assessing papers. Moreover, the students work under the strict supervision of one of the staff members. The panel agrees with this procedure.

The students are generally satisfied with the ways in which they are assessed. However, they experience a sharp rise in the workload at the end of each seminar, since most courses are examined in weeks 9 and 10. The panel understands these workload issues, but feels that it is unavoidable that the focus on evaluation will be at the end of a seminar.

Assessment of theses

The panel read 12 theses and broadly agrees with their assessments. However, it noted that the programme uses various assessment forms. The programme representatives told the panel that the forms differ for each thesis course. For instance, in the linguistics thesis course, empirical research is more prominent than in the literary thesis course. However, the panel noted some differences in the forms and their use *within* thesis courses as well. Apart from the differences, it also established that individual feedback is often lacking. It advises developing a standardised form for all theses and ensuring that the thesis form is completed in full. It recommends providing a standardised cover page for all theses that contains information such as the title of the thesis, student number, supervisors and date.

In the discussions with the teachers and the Board of Examiners, the panel also discussed the role of the second reader. It turned out that within the English programme, the first supervisor and the second reader assess and grade the thesis jointly. Moreover, the programme often works with permanent pairs of first supervisor and second reader. The panel feels that the first supervisor and second reader should work independently and that the second reader should have a recognisable voice on the thesis assessment form. It also advises the programme and the Board of Examiners to avoid permanent pairs of first and second assessors, because a close association of these two may affect the (independent) judgement of the second reader.

Board of Examiners

As of 1 January 2019, there is one Board of Examiners for the Arts, which is responsible for the assessment of all bachelor's and master's programmes within the Faculty of Arts. This committee is the result of a merger of six previous Boards of Examiners. These previous boards decided to merge for reasons of effectiveness. The new Board of Examiners replaces the former chairmen's meeting of the separate boards.

The former independent boards have been given the status of expert teams in the new constellation. These teams ensure that there is still room for the individual character of the quality assurance of each programme, but the cooperation ensures there is more harmonisation between the various programmes. Many daily activities are mandated to the expert teams, e.g. requests for exemption, cases of fraud, advice on the Examination Regulations, the safeguarding of the examinations and random checks on the quality of the theses. The central Board of Examiners monitors the activities of the expert teams and records them in the annual report.

The panel approves of the merger of the Board of Examiners and is positive about the role of the secretary and the assessment expert in it. However, it also thinks that the Board has mandated many activities to the expert teams. Although it did not find any evidence of problems regarding the existing quality control, the question is whether the Board can still take sufficient responsibility for the quality assurance for all cases within all programmes in the future, especially if the total number of students in the programmes grows. The panel noted that in the spring of 2019 faculty rules and guidelines have been laid down that define the structure, responsibilities and tasks of the Examination Board. The panel is of the opinion that these rules must now be implemented in more detail, and that in particular the way in which the supervision of the expertise teams will be put into practice deserves a great deal of attention.

The programmes do not have a separate assessment committee, but members of the expert teams carry out random tests of the assessments in each programme. It is the intention for ten courses per programme to be evaluated by two team members each year; for the theses, this is 10% per year.

While preparing the Self-evaluation Report, the Board of Examiners noted differences between the thesis assessment forms of the various programmes. The Board has advised on these forms, and a number of programmes benefited from this advice. The panel strongly recommends the development and implementation of a common thesis assessment form for all programmes, for which individual programmes can develop additions with a rationale. A shared assessment form would support the Board of Examiners in their quality assurance and further increase harmonisation, spread best practices and further enhance the transparency of assessment for students. The Board has also seen that the degree of feedback varies greatly on thesis assessment forms for the programme under consideration and that the view of the second reader is not always clearly visible.

The examples mentioned above indicate that the Board is aware of its important role in safeguarding the quality of assessment and acts accordingly. The panel concludes that the Board is still looking for the right interpretation of its own role within the new constellation and believes that it could operate more forcefully.



Considerations

The panel studied the assessment plan of the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture and found it to be satisfactory. The intended learning outcomes are linked to the types of assessment per module. The panel ascertained that the types of assessment fit with the programme and that there is sufficient variation in the assessments. It agrees with the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered assessment and with the focus on language proficiency.

In general, the panel agrees with the assessment of the theses. However, it is critical about the use of and variation in thesis assessment forms. The panel has noted that the Board of Examiners has taken steps towards more uniformity and encourages the responsible staff to continue this process. It advises the programme to ensure that the thesis form is completed in full in all cases for the benefit of the quality control cycle of the Board of Examiners and to further enhance the transparency of the assessment for the students. It is of the opinion that the programme should aim for a recognisable voice of the second reader on the form. If a second reader is to play a role in the supervision of a specific student, a third reader should be added in order to guarantee the independence of the assessment.

The panel notes that the introduction of a joint Board of Examiners for the Arts has led to greater efficiency. The panel appreciates the contribution of the official secretary and the assessment expert in this committee. However, the panel is of the opinion that it remains to be seen how the supervision by the EC of the expertise teams will be put into practice. Based on the current assessment quality and its findings during the visit, the panel has sufficient confidence in the Board of Examiners to take this step in the future.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel read 12 bachelor's theses of the programme. In general, it considers them to be of good quality. In the better theses, it noted the logically built-up argument and an intelligent approach to the texts and theories. Most theses were accurately written and fluently expressed. In one case the panel saw "a fascinating and original study that is virtually publishable". Weaknesses found generally had to do with the text structure and with introductions and conclusions that were hastily written. In some cases, the panel noted that the argument remained at a fairly superficial level. In general, however, it found that the students demonstrate in their theses that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

According to the programme, most graduates (80%) continue their education at a master's level, either at RUG or another Dutch university. The graduates go to regular master's programmes (50%), research master's programmes (15%) and educational master's programmes (15%). The remaining 20% follow a second bachelor's programme, a type of education abroad, or find work on the job market. Some direct feedback on the graduates' level comes from the RUG master's programme Language and Culture Education (the teacher training programme). This feedback indicates that the staff here are satisfied with the graduates' level of knowledge and skills, and especially with their command of the English language. The panel concludes that the students are sufficiently prepared to continue their education.

Another indicator of the graduates' level is the number of the students who go on to a PhD position (generally after a master's programme). Quite a few graduates obtain such a position, not only at

RUG or other Dutch universities, but also at a number of universities in the United Kingdom or the United States. The number of graduates entering a research master's programme is substantial.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the students in the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture achieve the intended learning outcomes. Most theses show a good academic level. The vast majority of graduates enter appropriate master's programmes (including a substantial number of research masters), where they do not appear to experience any major problems. Moreover, a substantial number of graduates succeed in obtaining a PhD position, both in the Netherlands and abroad.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme English Language and Culture: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'good'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assessed the standards 1 and 3 of the bachelor's programme in English Language and Culture as 'satisfactory'; it assessed standard 2 and 4 as 'good'. According to NVAO's decision rules, the general final assessment of the programme is therefore 'good'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme English Language and Culture* as 'good'.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

1) Knowledge and understanding

Students have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbook, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study.

- 1.1 Knowledge of a range of linguistic theories as applied to regional and global varieties of the English language, including the history of the English language from medieval English to the present;
- 1.2 Knowledge of a range of literary theories as they are used in the discipline of English literature;
- 1.3 Knowledge of key authors and a broad range of literary texts in a variety of genres written in the Anglophone world over a period of 1400 years;
- 1.4 Knowledge of the cultural contexts in which texts were composed.

2) Applying knowledge and understanding

Students can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.

- 2.1 Capacity to generate new ideas;
- 2.2 Ability to search for information from a variety of up-to-date, academically relevant secondary sources including standard reference works in English language and literature;
- 2.3 Ability to identify, present and resolve problems in a manner suited to English studies;
- 2.4 Ability for abstract and analytical thinking regarding language and literature.

3) Making judgements

Students have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.

- 3.1 Ability to justify a standpoint or decision based on the collection and synthesis of relevant information;
- 3.2 Ability to identify information relevant to contemporary social issues in the Anglophone world;
- 3.3 Ability to be critical and self-critical.

4) Communication

Students can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

- 4.1 Ability to communicate in English in oral and written forms at a near-native level (C1/C2);
- 4.2 Ability to communicate information from the disciplines of English language or literature to academic and non-academic audiences;
- 4.3 Ability to interact with others in a cooperative and constructive manner (with awareness of cultural background).

5) Learning skills

Students have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

- 5.1 Ability to identify and fill knowledge gaps related to English language and culture;
- 5.2 Ability to connect knowledge and understanding from across the modules of the degree programme;
- 5.3 Ability to work effectively and autonomously;
- 5.4 Ability to use IT applications, including the standard electronic resources used in English studies.



APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

The common core of the BA English Language and Culture, by learning trajectory. All individual course units are 5 EC.

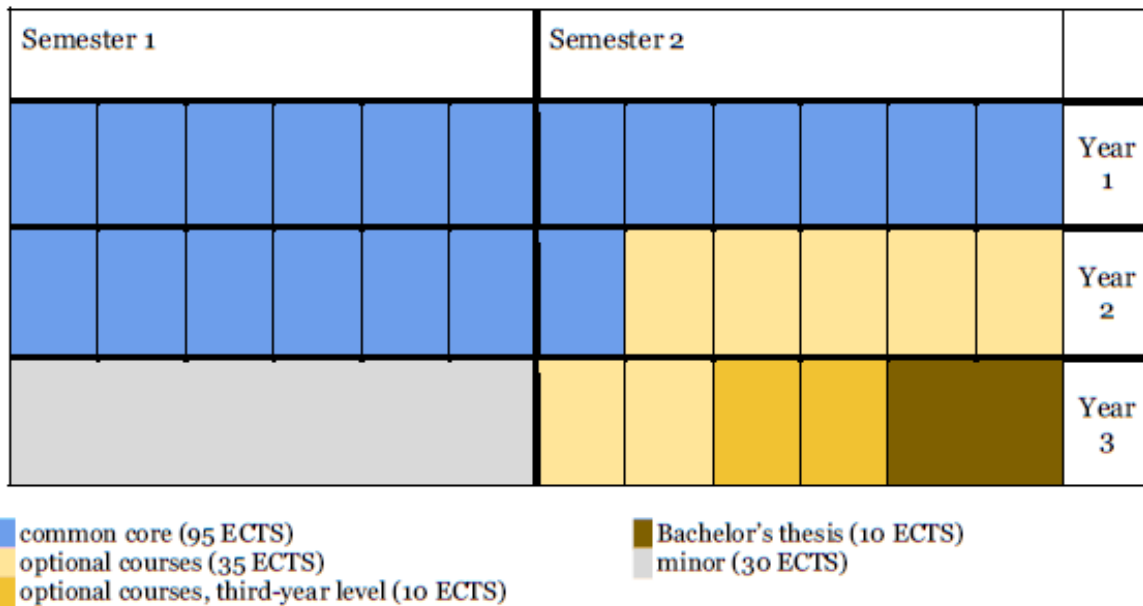


Figure 1. Schematic overview of the programme. Each block represents a 5-ECTS course.

	Modern English literature (25 ECTS)		
	Making Meaning (LEL007P05)	Year 1	Semester 1a
	Knowledge and Power (LEL010P05)	Year 1	Semester 1b
	English Literatures from 1550 (LEL008P05)	Year 1	Semester 2a
	Literary Theory for English Studies (LEL009P05)	Year 1	Semester 2b
	Shakespeare & Early Modern Literature (LEL008B05)	Year 2	Semester 1a
	Medieval English literature (15 ECTS)		
	English Literatures until 1550 (LEO007P05)	Year 1	Semester 2a
	Chaucer (LEO006P05)	Year 1	Semester 2b
	English linguistics (25 ECTS)		
	Eng. Ling.: Sentence Structure (LET010P05)	Year 1	Semester 1a
	Eng. Ling.: Sound Structure (LET011P05)	Year 1	Semester 1b
	Eng. Ling.: Sociolinguistics (LET009P05)	Year 1	Semester 2a, 2b
	Eng. Ling.: Language Change (LET021B05)	Year 2	Semester 1a
	English for Academic Purposes (30 ECTS)		
	EAP: Persuasive Expression (LEV012P05)	Year 1	Semester 1a
	EAP: Composition (LEV011P05)	Year 1	Semester 1b
	EAP: Argumentation (LEV013P05)	Year 1	Semester 2a, 2b
	EAP: Popular Contexts (LEV017B05)	Year 2	Semester 1a
	EAP: Debate and Discussion (LEV018B05)	Year 2	Semester 1b
	EAP: Research Reports (LEV019B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a

Optional courses in the second and third years of the BA English Language and Culture, by learning pathway. All courses are 5 EC. Explanation of symbols:

* = course is taught in alternate years;

◇ = course at third-year level;

† = course from the bachelor's programme in European Languages and Cultures.

Modern English literature			
The Class Struggle in Modern Fiction (LELO16B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	
The Romantic Revolution (LELO17B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	*
The Victorian Age: Progress and Anxiety (LELO20B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	*
Shakespeare in Stratford (LELO07B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	
World Literatures in English (LELO19B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	
Sick Jokes: Postmodernity & English Lit. (LELO21B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	*
Broken Images: Anglophone modernism (LELO18B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	*
Controversial Lit. and Literary Controversy (LELO22B05)	Year 3	Semester 2a	◇
The Century of the Self: Eng. Lit. and Identity (LETo23B05)	Year 3	Semester 2b	◇
Medieval English literature			
King Arthur, Romance and Empire (LEO009B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	
Saints and Sinners in Medieval England (LEO004B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	
Pirates and Poets: Viking Encounters (LEO014B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	
Language and Culture of Anglo-Saxon England (LEO011B05)	Year 3	Semester 2a	◇
Special Topic: Medieval Literature and Culture (LEO012B05)	Year 3	Semester 2b	◇
English linguistics			
Eng. Ling.: Morphology (LETo26B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	*
Eng. Ling.: Phonology Laboratory (LETo23B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	*
English as a Lingua Franca (LEX001B05)	Year 2	Semester 2a	†
Eng. Ling.: Research Tools (LETo24B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	
Eng. Ling.: Syntax (LETo27B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	*
Eng. Ling.: Lexicon (LETo25B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	*
English Language Variation (LETo14B05)	Year 3	Semester 2a	◇
Eng. Ling.: Language in Interaction (LETo28B05)	Year 3	Semester 2b	◇
English Employed (LEVo20B05)	Year 2	Semester 2b	

Bachelor thesis options in the Bachelor English Language and Culture. All courses are 10 EC.

BA Thesis			
BA Thesis English (Modern Literature) (LEL999B10)	Year 3	Semester 2a, 2b	
BA Thesis English (Medieval English Literature) (LEO999B10)	Year 3	Semester 2a, 2b	
BA Thesis English (Linguistics) (LET999B10)	Year 3	Semester 2a, 2b	



APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Indeling

A	BA Nederlandse Taal en Cultuur
B	MA Neerlandistiek BA English Language and
C	Culture
D	MA Literary Studies BA Minorities and
E	Multilingualism
F	BA Taalwetenschap
G	MA Taalwetenschappen
H	BA Europese Talen en Culturen

Dag 1 21 mei 2019

09:00		ontvangst
09:00	11:30	startvergadering en inzien documenten opleidingen A,B,C,D
11:30	12:00	management Moderne Taal en Letterkunde
12:30	13:15	OPD en coördinatie opleidingen A en B
13:15	14:00	studenten opleidingen A en B
14:15	15:00	docenten opleidingen A en B
16:00	16:45	OPD en coördinatie opleidingen C en D
16:45	17:30	studenten opleidingen C en D
17:45	18:30	docenten opleidingen C en D

Dag 2 22 mei 2019

10:00	11:00	OPD en coördinatie opleidingen E, F en G
11:00	12:00	studenten opleidingen E, F en G
12:45	13:45	docenten opleidingen E, F en G
15:00	15:30	OPD en coördinatie opleidingen C, D en H
15:30	16:00	studenten H
16:15	16:45	docenten H
17:45	18:15	alumni opleidingen B, D en G

Dag 3 23 mei 2019

10:00	11:00	Examencommissie
13:00	13:30	eindgesprek management
15:30	15:45	presentatie voorlopige bevindingen
16:00	16:45	ontwikkelgesprekken

APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 12 theses of the bachelor's programme English Language and Culture. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

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

- Annual reports and minutes Opleidingscommissie
- Annual reports and minutes Board of Examiners
- Assessment plans (for all programmes)
- Assessment files (for all programmes)
- Documentation Masterlanguage