

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME
EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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This report was finalised on 1 October 2019 .



REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME EUROPEAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES 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 European Languages and Cultures

Name of the programme:	European Languages and Cultures (Europese Talen en Culturen)
CROHO number:	56124
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	European Languages and Cultures (English) Europese Talen en Culturen (Dutch)
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	Dutch, English
Expiration of accreditation:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Linguistics and Literary Studies 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 European Languages and Cultures 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 European Languages and Cultures 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 was 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 European Languages and Cultures (ELC) combines the study of the phenomenon of Europe in its linguistic, cultural and political dimensions with the study of a European language: Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish or Swedish. The panel appreciates the profile of the bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures, which essentially combines a language programme with a specialised disciplinary profile. Students not only learn a European language during language acquisition courses, but the disciplinary content is also largely offered in the language of their choice. Students can essentially design their own programme. The panel agrees with the assumptions underlying the programme, including the key idea that mastering a foreign language is essential when studying the phenomenon of Europe.

The panel established that the learning outcomes are fitting for a bachelor's programme and feels they clearly reflect the focus on European languages, culture and politics. It approves of the ambition to reach a C1/C2 level in language acquisition. The innovative combination of language acquisition and a disciplinary profile, together with the freedom of choice the programme provides, is a reason for the panel to assess standard 1 as 'good'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel is very positive about the rich curriculum of the ELC programme, which combines a large number of languages and other specialisations. The curriculum is logical, coherent and well-organised, with a general introduction, three disciplinary profiles, a language-specific part and a substantial number of electives. Students can tailor the programme to their own needs and interests. Students and staff participate in an international classroom, which allows for enriching the teaching with experiences from other countries and cultures.

The panel commends the way the programme combines language acquisition, content-specific courses in the languages on offer, and a substantial period abroad to reach the required level of language acquisition. The students indicated that they consider the language-specific courses to be invaluable, since they combine topics from European studies with teaching in their target language.

The panel approves of the attempts to innovate the teaching methods and feels this is appropriate for an innovative programme. The programme offers a proper introduction, and the mentor system helps the students to find their way. The panel concludes that the study guidance is adequately organized and that the programme is generally feasible. It praises the lecturers' expertise and didactic skills and feels they are doing a commendable job.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel read the assessment plan of the ELC programme and established that the final qualifications are linked to the types of assessment per course. It approves of the development of the assessments during the programme, with an increasing focus on research. The students are happy with the diversity of assessments; the panel approves of the use of innovative assessment types, such as vlogs. It is satisfied with the steps to standardise the assessment procedures. Transparency is sufficiently guaranteed by relevant information in the study manual and on Nestor.

In general, the panel agrees with the assessment of the theses. However, it is critical about the use of and variation in the thesis assessment forms. It advises the programme to ensure that the thesis form is completed in full in all cases and further enhance the transparency of assessment for students. In its opinion, the programme should aim for a recognisable voice of the second reader in 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 assessment.

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 feels that the Board has mandated many

activities to the expert teams and questions whether it can still take sufficient responsibility for the quality assurance in all cases in the future. According to the panel, 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 demonstrated being sufficiently 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 ELC programme achieve an adequate final level and the intended learning outcomes. The bachelor's theses are of an adequate quality. However, the panel recommends that the programme rethink its thesis policy as far as the scope of subjects is concerned.

The panel concludes that the ELC alumni have a choice of a wide range of master's programmes that consider the ELC learning outcomes compatible with their admission criteria. It feels the programme is preparing its students for a suitable master's programme and subsequent career.

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

Bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures

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

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 European Languages and Cultures (ELC) combines the study of the phenomenon of Europe in its linguistic, cultural and political dimensions with the study of a European language. Students achieve an advanced level of proficiency in one of the following eight languages: Dutch (for international students), English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Swedish. They choose one of three disciplinary profiles: Language and Society, Literature and Culture, or Politics and Society. The programme (apart from the language-specific courses) can be followed in both English and Dutch.

The profile of the programme is based on three key assumptions. Firstly, the programme developers assume that mastering a foreign language is essential when studying the phenomenon of Europe. Secondly, they consider Europe to be a transnational, intercultural and multilingual phenomenon. As a result, students require both a solid disciplinary training and an interdisciplinary perspective. Thirdly, the academic study of the phenomenon of Europe must be grounded in research. These three assumptions have been worked out in the curriculum (see Standard 2).

This specific profile means that the ELC programme differs from other programmes that focus on European Studies. It stands out given its substantial component of proficiency in the chosen language. Compared to programmes that focus on a specific language or country, the focus on Europe as a cultural and political phenomenon is a major distinction. The choice between three disciplinary profiles is another distinguishing feature. The panel recognises the unique character of the ELC profile and considers the combination of a language study and a focus on the cultural and political background of Europe to be a fruitful one. The students not only learn a European language during language acquisition courses, the content is also largely offered in the language of their choice. Since they choose a disciplinary profile as well as a European language, they can largely design their own programme.

ELC has developed intended learning outcomes on several levels: for the degree programme, for the disciplinary profile and for the chosen language. The learning outcomes follow the five Dublin descriptors. The focus on Europe is reflected in the three learning outcomes that belong to the first Dublin descriptor, knowledge and understanding, for instance in 1.3: '(Bachelor's graduates) have knowledge of the political and sociocultural context of Europe in diachronic and synchronic perspectives'. The panel feels the learning outcomes clearly reflect the focus on European culture and politics.

Regarding the language specialisation, the programme aims for graduates to become proficient at C1/C2 level in one of the eight languages covered within the programme. However, the programme developers admit that there is some variation in the level of proficiency achieved. In general, Dutch students who choose one of the Dutch high-school languages (German, French and English) will reach a higher level than students who start at zero proficiency (for instance, Russian or Swedish). However, the relative increase in proficiency should be the same for all languages. The panel approves of the programme's ambitions regarding language acquisition and understands the differences between familiar and entirely new languages. This topic is elucidated under Standard 2.

Considerations

The panel appreciates the profile of the bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures, which essentially combines a language programme (one of eight European languages) with a



specialised disciplinary profile. In its view, this makes for a fruitful combination with a clear interdisciplinary approach. Students not only learn a European language during language acquisition courses, the disciplinary content is largely offered in the language of their choice. Since students choose a disciplinary profile as well as a European language, they can essentially design their own programme. The panel understands the assumptions underlying the programme, including the key idea that mastering a foreign language is essential when studying the phenomenon of Europe.

The panel established that the learning outcomes are fitting for a bachelor's programme and feels they clearly reflect the focus on European culture and politics. It approves of the ambition to reach a C1/C2 level in language acquisition. The innovative combination of language acquisition and a disciplinary profile, together with the freedom of choice the programme provides, is a reason for the panel to assess standard 1 as 'good'.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'good'.

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

For a programme overview, see appendix 3. The programme consists of different types of courses (5 EC each, except for the electives):

- Shared content, followed by students of all languages and tracks. The programme offers four courses (20 EC in total) of shared content, all in the first semester: one interdisciplinary course, 'Studying Europe', and three courses that are introductions to the three disciplinary profiles: 'Culture and Literature', 'Language and Society' and 'Politics and Society' (5 EC each).
- Language training and acquisition in one of eight European languages (30 EC). The language learning consists of four courses in the first year and two courses in the second.
- 25 EC of courses that are taught in the chosen language; the content differs for each language.
- The three disciplinary profiles (Language and Society, Literature and Culture, and Politics and Society) consist of seven courses (35 EC) each.

Finally, the students have 30 EC of elective space at their disposal to follow additional courses or a minor or to study abroad. They may choose courses from all programmes in the Faculty of Arts. Those who wish to strengthen their ELC profile can opt for the ELC elective 'Historical Literature, Languages and Translation'. Those who want to strengthen their language skills can add a second language to their profile. They can also widen their knowledge of the European context with courses on other regions such as 'Europe and the Americas' or 'Central and Eastern Europe Studies'. The panel believes this choice of electives is attractive to students and allows for interesting combinations. The programme concludes with a bachelor's thesis (10 EC). The panel considers the curriculum interesting and well-organised.

The organisation of the programme guarantees that language acquisition is taught in a number of ways, which strengthen one another. The six language acquisition courses in the first and second year lay the foundation (especially for the unfamiliar languages). Students improve their language skills in the five courses that focus on topics from European studies and are taught in the target language. Language acquisition is further supported by the study abroad period, which provides students with an immersion in their chosen language. Finally, the students may opt to write their bachelor's thesis in the language of their choice. This is not mandatory, but the students who do so obtain an added notification to their bachelor's degree certificate indicating the chosen language. The panel highly appreciates how the programme combines basic and advanced language acquisition,



content-specific courses in the target language, and a substantial time abroad to achieve the required level of language proficiency. The students interviewed by the panel indicated that they consider the language-specific courses to be invaluable, since they combine topics from European studies with teaching in their target language, preparing them for a study abroad.

The choice between the three disciplinary profiles allows the students to specialise in either linguistics, politics or culture. Each disciplinary profile is developed in seven courses (35 EC), in addition to the introductory course to the profile, which is taken by all students. For instance, a student who opts for the Language and Society profile starts with the course 'Structure and Variation', which provides basic competence in subjects such as phonetics, morphology and syntax. The subsequent courses explore how linguistic structure functions in the use and development of language. These courses share a focus on European languages and a common thread of multilingualism. The perspective changes from cross-linguistic influence in language learning to the history of languages and the role of multilingual repertoires in interaction and language processing. The other two profiles are designed in a similar way. In general, they proceed from introductory courses to ones that are more research-intensive and prepare the students for an independent research project. The panel finds that the design of the three disciplinary profiles is logical and coherent.

The introductory courses in year one and the seven disciplinary courses are offered in both English and Dutch. However, according to the students, this does not always work out as planned, mainly due to a shortage of Dutch-speaking staff. In some cases, lectures are given in both Dutch and English, but the accompanying seminars are only offered in English. The staff state that all mandatory courses are offered in both English and Dutch, but some electives are only in English. In some cases, the course itself is in English (because of the international classrooms), but students may submit their work in Dutch. The panel finds it ambitious to offer a substantial part of the programme in two languages. It understands that practical problems may occur in executing the programme. The programme should inform students beforehand, to properly manage their expectations.

Students appreciate the breadth of the programme and its flexible structure, which allows them to tailor their degree to their interests. However, there is a feeling of discontent amongst them about graduating with the same degree as their peers despite having specialised in different languages and profiles. Many students have the impression that the content of the different profiles is not comparable. The panel understands this problem but concludes that it is an unavoidable consequence of the choices the programme has made to combine multiple disciplinary approaches with eight language specialisations. It urges the programme to inform students about this aspect, both on the website and in the introduction period.

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. However, the ELC programme has a number of distinctive features. It aims to foster an intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue on the phenomenon of Europe with an inclusive approach to the various backgrounds and experiences of both students and staff. Since a substantial number of the students and staff come from different European countries, an international classroom is a daily reality for the programme. This allows for interesting group discussions during seminars and comparison of views and experiences from different countries and cultures.

The curriculum is designed to facilitate the students' continuous growth towards autonomous competency development. As the student progresses, the focus shifts towards more self-directed and autonomous ways of learning. Most classes are organised in lectures and seminars; generally, a 5 EC course has four contact hours per week, which is divided into a lecture and a seminar. In the second year, the students follow feedback-intensive profile courses that prepare them for their bachelor's thesis in the final year. In a number of classes, more innovative teaching methods are being used, such as flipped-classroom approaches and the preparation of vlogs. Students appreciate

the innovative teaching methods, but indicate that they are comfortable with more traditional approaches as well. The panel appreciates that the staff employ non-traditional teaching methods and concludes this is highly appropriate for an innovative programme.

The programme employs English and Dutch as the *linguae francae*, and the language-specific content is offered in the language the student is specializing in. Courses (not just the general courses, but also the courses in the language-specific content) are sometimes taught by non-native speakers, since the goal of the programme is effective communication and not a 'prescriptivist' native speaker target. A number of students, however, have voiced complaints about the language command of their teachers. The panel understands the aim of the programme but feels that academic requirements concerning language levels should be met.

Feasibility and study guidance

Students indicate that the programme is feasible. They do not report any major bottlenecks. However, some of them perceive the wide range of options as complex. Student mentors and study advisors are available to assist them with designing their programme. Students are informed about the structure and options during an introduction at the start of year one. They appreciate this introduction, during which they are placed in a mentor group with both a regular staff mentor and a student mentor (second year). The student mentor is the first point of contact for all general questions. The students are subsequently informed about the choices for a disciplinary profile by their lecturers in the introductory courses in the first semester. They have regular meetings with their mentor group and access to the study advisors.

The panel concluded that the programme offers a solid introduction and that the mentor system helps students to find their way. It ascertained that study guidance is properly organised and that the programme is generally feasible.

Teaching staff

A total staff of 34.1 fte is employed in the programme: 37 have tenured positions, 11 have temporary contracts. All permanent staff members have at least a PhD (professors, senior university lecturers and university lecturers). They have a minimum of 40% research time and bring the results to the courses they teach. The language proficiency teachers mostly hold a master's degree or equivalent title. Most permanent staff members have a university teaching certificate.

The programme regularly experienced staff shortages in the past. Its design is challenging as far as staffing is concerned. This is particularly noticeable when it comes to the teaching of academic content in Dutch, as mentioned above. According to the programme management, however, these staff shortages have been solved by hiring additional staff, and the programme now has sufficient capacity for the courses in Dutch.

Students are generally satisfied with the academic and didactic skills of their lecturers. Teaching is generally evaluated favourably in student course evaluations, with an average of 4.37 out of 5. Students find their lecturers to be knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects, as well as helpful and approachable. The panel approves of the teaching staff and feels they are doing a commendable job.

Considerations

The panel is very positive about the rich curriculum of the ELC programme, which combines a myriad of languages and other specialisations. The curriculum is logical, coherent and well-organised, with a general introduction, three disciplinary profiles, a language-specific part and a substantial number of electives. Students can tailor the programme to their own needs and interests. The programme aims to foster an intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue on the phenomenon of Europe. Students and staff participate in an international classroom, which allows for enriching the teaching with experiences from other countries and cultures.



The panel commends the way the programme combines language acquisition, content-specific courses in the languages on offer, and a substantial period abroad to reach the required level of language acquisition. The students indicated that they consider the language-specific courses to be invaluable, since they combine topics from European studies with teaching in their target language. A point of consideration is the language level of some of the staff members; the panel understands the focus on effective communication, but feels that academic standards should be met in this respect.

The panel feels that it is ambitious to offer a substantial part of the programme in two languages. It understands that practical problems may occur in executing the programme, so the students should be informed beforehand in a realistic way, to ensure that their expectations match the reality.

The panel approves of the attempts to innovate the teaching methods (for instance 'flipping the classroom') and feels this is appropriate for an innovative programme. The programme offers a proper introduction, and the mentor system helps the students to find their way. The panel concludes that the study guidance is adequately organized and that the programme is generally feasible. It praises the lecturers' expertise and didactic skills and feels they are doing a commendable job.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures: 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 ELC programme is based on (a) the Teaching and Examination Regulations, (b) the 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 course. Assessment is used as a didactic tool. It assumes that students' progress should be evaluated before it is assessed. Therefore, formative tests play a large role in the assessment system. For instance, in several courses students have to produce weekly reaction papers ('reading responses') to gain insight into their grasp of the assigned reading. The panel agrees with the emphasis on formative testing.

The assessment of the profile courses (the courses that are part of the three profiles: Language and Society, Literature and Culture, and Politics and Society) progresses as the students develop their knowledge and skills. In the earlier courses, the focus is on theoretical knowledge that is tested with multiple-choice questions and essay questions. In this way, students are tested on both their knowledge and their writing ability. The assignments in the profile courses in the second year are designed to identify research lacunas and to train the students in writing research questions. In this way, the students are prepared for their individual research paper in the form of a bachelor's thesis.

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 reports compiled by the staff. These reports contain the course outlines, workload, assessment methods, assessment instructions, exam questions, marking guidelines and model answers. The programme uses standardised procedures, either per track or for the programme as a whole. For instance, the rubrics for essay and presentations grades are standardised per track; the evaluation form for the bachelor's thesis is standardised for the programme. The panel is happy about these steps to standardise the assessment procedures. Transparency is sufficiently guaranteed by relevant information in the study manual and on Nestor.

The students are generally satisfied with the way they are assessed. They experience the assessment to be sufficiently diverse, for example using presentations, debates, vlogs, group and individual work. They feel this diversity helps them to hone their skills.

Assessment of theses

The panel read 12 theses and broadly agrees with the assessments. It encountered several types of thesis assessment forms, but the staff assured the panel that these differences belong to the past. The new and standardised form, which the panel saw as well, allows room for both assessors to make independent comments and identifies the criteria on which the final grade is based. The panel believes this is a good form. It recommends providing a standardised cover page for all theses that contains information such as the title of the thesis, track, 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. During these discussions, it found that in a number of cases, the second reader is assigned to evaluate and sometimes advise on the language used. This procedure is applied when the first supervisor is an expert in the topic of the thesis, but not in the language itself. The panel feels that if the second reader is involved in supervising the thesis as far as the language is concerned, this reader is at least partly a supervisor and cannot play the independent role that is expected of a second reader. The panel recommends adding a third reader in these cases.

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 meeting of the chairs 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 Exam Regulations, 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 collects them in its 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 on it. It found 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 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 read the assessment plan of the ELC programme and established that the final qualifications are linked to the types of assessment per course. It approves of the development of the assessments during the programme; it feels this development, with an increasing focus on research, prepares the students in a proper way for their bachelor's thesis. The students are happy with the diversity of assessments; the panel approves of the use of innovative assessment types, such as vlogs. It is satisfied with the steps to standardise the assessment procedures. Transparency is sufficiently guaranteed by relevant information in the study manual and on Nestor.

In general, the panel agrees with the assessment of the theses. However, it is critical about the use of and variation in the thesis assessment forms. 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 further enhance the transparency of assessment for students. In its opinion, the programme should aim for a recognisable voice of the second reader in 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 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 Board 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 European Languages and Cultures: 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 adequate quality. In the better theses, it was impressed by the thorough scholarship, clearly constructed argument, the historical and theoretical setting, and clear structure and writing style. A thesis on a literary theme showed an ambitious and interesting choice of post-colonial texts. In the weaker examples, the panel sometimes encountered a lack of balance between the theoretical background and empirical data, with an overemphasis on theory combined with either insufficient data or insufficient space to deal with it adequately. In other cases, it encountered a tendency towards descriptive rather than analytical writing. In general, the panel found that the students demonstrate in their theses that they are achieving the intended learning outcomes.

The panel has some questions, however, about the scope of the theses. With eight languages taught and three disciplinary profiles, the subjects vary widely, from 'Word order in Russian subclauses' to 'Il Forest Gump Italiano'. It encountered little policy on comparative components or restrictions on the European dimension of the theses. It recommends that the programme rethinks its thesis policy

as far as the scope of subjects is concerned. It believes that the programme's profile would be strengthened if a comparative research focus was part of each thesis.

Most graduates (81%) of the ELC programme continue their studies in a subsequent master's degree programme, according to the *123 studiekeuzegids*, with 35.6% continuing in a master's programme at the University of Groningen. The wide range of languages and specialisations is reflected in a wide range of master's programmes. Popular choices include Linguistics, International Relations, Literary Studies and various Educational master's programmes to continue training as a language teacher. Other options are European Studies, Media Studies and Communication Studies. The panel concluded that the ELC alumni have a choice of a wide range of master's programmes that consider the ELC learning outcomes compatible with their admission criteria.

The same diversity is visible in the employment the alumni manage to find, generally after completing a master's programme. Many end up working as a teacher in a European language, both in the Netherlands and abroad. A substantial number find work in private enterprises in the cultural sector, for instance with a publisher or as a journalist. The panel feels the programme is preparing its students for a suitable master's programme and subsequent career.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the students in the ELC programme achieve an adequate final level and the intended learning outcomes. The bachelor's theses are of an adequate quality. However, the panel recommends that the programme rethink its thesis policy as far as the scope of subjects is concerned.

The panel concludes that the ELC alumni have a choice of a wide range of master's programmes that consider the ELC learning outcomes compatible with their admission criteria. It feels the programme is preparing its students for a suitable master's programme and subsequent career.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'satisfactory'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

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

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme European Languages and Cultures* as 'satisfactory'.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Description of the Bachelor's level in accordance with the Dublin descriptors	Learning outcomes of the specialization Bachelor's graduates:
<p>1. Knowledge and understanding: Graduates have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and exceeds their secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have knowledge of European linguistics in a broad sense 2. Have knowledge of a wide range of European literary texts as well as literary history and theory 3. Have knowledge of the political and sociocultural context of Europe in diachronic and synchronic perspectives
<p>2. Applying knowledge and understanding: Graduates are able to apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their job or profession, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are able to adequately communicate in a second (foreign) language 2. Are able to develop innovative ideas 3. Are able to select, process and analyse information from a range of sources 4. Are able to identify, formulate and resolve problems 5. Are able to reason in the abstract and analytically and synthesize ideas
<p>3. Making judgements: Graduates have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to make judgements that include reflection on relevant social, academic or ethical issues.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are able to gather and interpret relevant data in order to form judgements about relevant social, academic or ethical issues 2. Are able to take critical distance
<p>4. Communication: Graduates are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are able to motivate and guide others 2. Are able to communicate essential information from their own discipline or field to both experts and non-experts 3. Are able to have constructive discussions with others while respecting diversity 4. Are able to express themselves correctly, carefully and at an academic level both orally and in writing, in Dutch or English and/or the second foreign language (Major language)
<p>5. Learning skills: Graduates have those learning skills that are necessary for students to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are able to stay up-to-date with developments in their field 2. Are able to plan properly and keep to deadlines 3. Are able to function independently and in a team.



APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Year 1

Sem 1	Block 1	Lang 1a 5 ECTS	Studying Europe 5 ECTS	Language and Society 5 ECTS
	Block 2	Lang1b 5 ECTS	Culture and Literature 5 ECTS	Politics and Society 5 ECTS
Sem 2	Block 1	Lang2a 5 ECTS	Profile 1 5 ECTS	Elective 1 10 ECTS
	Block 2	Lang2b 5 ECTS	Profile 2 5 ECTS	

Year 2

Sem 1	Block 1	Lang3a 5 ECTS	Profile 3 5 ECTS	Elective 2 10 ECTS
	Block 2	Lang3b 5 ECTS	Profile 4 5 ECTS	
Sem 2	Block 1	Language specific1 P&S 5 ECTS	Profile 5 5 ECTS	Elective 3 10 ECTS
	Block 2	Language specific 1 C&L 5 ECTS	Language specific1 L&S 5 ECTS	

Year 3

Sem 1	Minor 30 ECTS			
Sem 2	Block 1	Language specific 2 5 ECTS	Profile 6 5 ECTS	BA thesis 10 ECTS
	Block 2	Language specific 2 5 ECTS	Profile 7 5 ECTS	

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Indeling

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

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 European Languages and Cultures. 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 Programme Committee;
- Annual reports and minutes Board of Examiners;
- Assessment plans (for all programmes);
- Assessment files (for all programmes);
- Documentation Masterlanguage.