

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME
HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND URBAN AND
REGIONAL PLANNING

BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME
SPATIAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF SPATIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

QANU
Catharijnesingel 56
PO Box 8035
3503 RA Utrecht
The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0) 30 230 3100
E-mail: support@qanu.nl
Internet: www.qanu.nl

Project number: Q0726

© 2019 QANU

Text and numerical material from this publication may be reproduced in print, by photocopying or by any other means with the permission of QANU if the source is mentioned.



CONTENTS

REPORT ON THE BACHELOR’S PROGRAMME HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING AND THE BACHELOR’S PROGRAMME SPATIAL PLANNING AND DESIGN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN5

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME 5

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION..... 5

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL 6

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL 6

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT..... 9

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS..... 13

APPENDICES 31

APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE 33

APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES 35

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM 38

APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT 40

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL..... 41

This report was finalised on 4 October 2019.





REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING AND THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME SPATIAL PLANNING AND DESIGN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning

Name of the programme:	Sociale Geografie en Planologie
International name of the programme:	Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning
CROHO number:	56838
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
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/11/2019

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design

Name of the programme:	Technische Planologie
International name of the programme:	Spatial Planning and Design
CROHO number:	56194
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
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Human Geography and Urban Planning to the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 2019. In this report the two bachelor's programmes are assessed by the panel.

The programmes' management propose to change the CROHO programme names, see Standard 1.

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 has approved the composition of the panel on 11 February 2019. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning consisted of:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society, Wageningen University;
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology [referee].

The panel was supported by dr. Meg van Bogaert, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning and the bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen were part of the cluster assessment Human Geography and Urban Planning. In April and May 2019, the panel assessed nineteen programmes at four universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, Utrecht University, and Radboud University.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Drs. J. (Judith) Borsboom-van Beurden, senior researcher Smart Sustainable Cities at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway);
- Dr. L.B.J. (Lianne) van Duinen, project manager at the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli);
- Dr. C.J. (Kees-Jan) van Klaveren, senior auditor and data protection officer at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society at Wageningen University & Research;
- Prof. dr. F.J.A. (Frank) Witlox, professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography at Ghent University (Belgium);
- J. (Jim) Klooster BSc, master's student Economic Geography at the University of Groningen [student member];
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- N.J.F. (Niek) Zijlstra, bachelor's student Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Amsterdam [student member];



- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology [referee assessment University of Groningen].

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

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Irene Conradie. She acted as secretary in the site visit of the University of Amsterdam. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at all site visits. All draft reports were checked by QANU. Dr. Meg van Bogaert and drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretaries for QANU, acted as secretaries in the site visit of the University of Groningen. Dr. Meg van Bogaert also acted as secretary in the site visits of Utrecht University and Radboud University. Dr. Marijn Hollestelle, employee of QANU, was present at the site visit of Utrecht University, specifically for the ECA assessment report of quality in internationalisation of the master's programme International Development Studies. The project manager and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 18 February 2019, 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 also organised on 18 February 2019. 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 domain specific framework.

A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 4 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 and their assessment forms for the programmes. Because of the large number of programmes at the University of Groningen site visit, the selection consisted of ten theses per programme. This was in agreement with the additional conditions for an adjusted thesis selection (i.e. ascertainable overlap between the programmes and a shared Board of Examiners) set by the NVAO. The selection of both the bachelor's programmes was based on a provided list of graduates between 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.

Site visit

The site visit to University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 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 5. 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 and the Programme Committee. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

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.



Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to QANU 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 inaccuracies. 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 Spatial Sciences 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 the standards:

Generic quality

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

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

According to the panel, the HG-URP programme describes its identity well. The panel is of the opinion that the programme has a distinctive and unique profile with a balanced build-up. Within the bachelor's programme HG-URP, attention is paid to geographical processes and understanding the geographic context. The panel is positive with respect to the balance between theory and practice that is aimed for, with theory actually applied in field work and real-life assignments. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are based on the Dublin Descriptors and fulfil the international requirements for an academic bachelor's programme. According to the panel, the ILOs clearly fit a bachelor's programme in the field of Human Geography and Planning. With respect to the objective of internationalisation, the panel thinks that the added value of teaching in English and organising an international classroom is clearly supported for both bachelor's programmes. Although the programme is only in the second year of this process and international student numbers are still relatively low, it concludes that the process of internationalisation is well on its way and has confidence in the international future of the programme. The connection to the professional field is good when taking into consideration that all students continued with a master's programme after graduation. The panel appreciates the fact that the FSS offers many programmes that each have a distinctive profile. It would have appreciated the positioning of both bachelor's programmes in relation to each other and the broader discipline of Social Geography and Planning, for example by using the DSFR.

The panel considers that the shift to using the English name exclusively is a logical step in the development towards an international programme. It verified that the name change is not accompanied by changes in the curriculum and considers that the proposed name change is adequate and should be approved for the bachelor's programme HG-URP.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel considers the HG-URP curriculum to be well designed and structured. A significant number of courses are shared with the other bachelor's programme, mostly methodological courses. The panel pointed out two courses that are particularly interesting and provide the Groningen bachelor's programmes with a distinctive perspective. The first is the *Physical Geography* course, which provides a solid basis in physical geography that supports students throughout their studies. The second course is *Philosophy in Social Sciences*. Although the bachelor's programmes do not specifically focus on the labour market, the panel observed a number of nice features in which these programmes include practice. In the GIS course, the students have to work for a client and use real data, providing them with the experience of working for a client.

The panel would like to compliment a number of developments in the bachelor's programme. First is the way in which many courses deal with group work and accompanying aspects like group formation and free-riding. By having students assess each other through double peer review, they are not only taught that free-riding is not rewarded, they also learn to provide feedback to each other and gain insights into the dynamics of groups, supporting them among others to prevent and tackle freeriding. The second development is the introduction of learning communities (LCs) in the first year. The panel concludes that the LCs stimulate cohort formation in the first year, which has a positive effect on later years as well. Both bachelor's programmes focus on stimulating their students in active learning. Part of the contact hours involve small-scale teaching methods. The required input of staff is compensated by also including large-scale lectures. The international classroom was introduced in 2017. At the same time, the programmes shifted to a curriculum fully taught in English. The panel considers that even though the internationalisation of the bachelor's programmes is still underway, the results after two years are good. The programmes have a genuine view on internationalisation, for example a clear focus not only on teaching in English, but on actually integrating different perspectives and views on local and international phenomena. Both bachelor's programmes



increasingly manage to bring together various perspectives, viewpoints and experiences and prepare students for work and study in a globalised and international field. The dynamic and enthusiastic teams of teaching staff of both programmes impressed the panel. The FSS has a clear view of the expertise of its staff as well as a strategy on what expertise to hire. To provide students with expert teaching staff on all topics, frequent use is made of guest lecturers, who also connect the programmes to the practice.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the bachelor's programme HG-URP is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by increasing the shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international. The panel reviewed a sample of the bachelor's theses and found that they were validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment differs, however, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures in both bachelor's programmes as this enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In its view, one thesis assessment form with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. It found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the random selection of theses produced by recent graduates the panel agrees with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor. Although graduates of both bachelor's programmes continue with a master's programme, the panel is pleased with the attention paid to future employability and connection to the professional practice. Based on a selection of the bachelor's theses and interviews with alumni during the site visit, it concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The panel is of the opinion that the SP&D programme described its profile well, with ample attention being paid to spatial interventions and design. It concludes that the design component in this programme aligns well with the objective and is integrated with the spatial planning aspects. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are based on the Dublin Descriptors and fulfil the international requirements for an academic bachelor's programme. They specifically fit the requirements for a bachelor's programme in spatial planning, including both spatial and institutional knowledge and skills, and relate to active design as well as reflective skills. With respect to the objective of internationalisation, the panel thinks that the added value of teaching in English and organising an international classroom is clearly supported for both bachelor's programmes. Although the programme is only in the second year of this process and international student numbers are still relatively low, it concludes that the process of internationalisation is well on its way and has confidence in the international future of the programme. The connection to the professional field is good when taking into consideration that all students continued with a master's programme after graduation. The minor criticism of SP&D students in the self-evaluation report had to do with the implicit way practice is included in the programme, according to the panel. Students do not recognise these activities as preparation for their future career. The panel recommends paying attention to embedding of and communication on this topic within the programme.

The panel considers that the shift to using the English name exclusively is a logical step in the development towards an international programme. It verified that the name change is not

accompanied by changes in the curriculum and considers that the proposed name change is adequate and should be approved for the bachelor's programme HG-URP and SP&D.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel considers the SP&D curriculum to be well designed and structured. A significant number of courses are shared with the other bachelor's programme, mostly methodological courses. The panel pointed out two courses that are particularly interesting and provide the Groningen bachelor's programmes with a distinctive perspective. The first is the *Physical Geography* course, which provides a solid basis in physical geography that supports students throughout their studies. The second course is *Philosophy in Social Sciences*. Although the bachelor's programmes do not specifically focus on the labour market, the panel observed a number of nice features in which these programmes include practice. In the GIS course, the students have to work for a client and use real data, providing them with the experience of working for a client. In the SP&D programme the panel looked in depth at the aspect of design. It concludes that design is well embedded in the curriculum. The programme is clear on the position of design in relation to the overall learning objectives. The panel appreciates the fact that the cycle of design returns each year of the programme, with a gradual shift in scale. It is impressed by the way the programme managed to develop the design learning line over the past ten years, including the hiring of qualified staff members. It would like to stimulate the programme to increase the conceptual aspects even further, with a focus on water, the environment and infrastructure.

The panel would like to compliment a number of developments in the bachelor's programme. First is the way in which many courses deal with group work and accompanying aspects like group formation and free-riding. By having students assess each other through double peer review, they are not only taught that free-riding is not rewarded, they also learn to provide feedback to each other and gain insights into the dynamics of groups, supporting them among others to prevent and tackle freeriding. The second development is the introduction of learning communities (LCs) in the first year. The panel concludes that the LCs stimulate cohort formation in the first year, which has a positive effect on later years as well. Both bachelor's programmes focus on stimulating their students in active learning. Part of the contact hours involve small-scale teaching methods. The required input of staff is compensated by also including large-scale lectures. The international classroom was introduced in 2017. At the same time, the programmes shifted to a curriculum fully taught in English. The panel considers that even though the internationalisation of the bachelor's programmes is still underway, the results after two years are good. The programmes have a genuine view on internationalisation, for example a clear focus not only on teaching in English, but on actually integrating different perspectives and views on local and international phenomena. Both bachelor's programmes increasingly manage to bring together various perspectives, viewpoints and experiences and prepare students for work and study in a globalised and international field. The dynamic and enthusiastic teams of teaching staff of both programmes impressed the panel. The FSS has a clear view of the expertise of its staff as well as a strategy on what expertise to hire. To provide students with expert teaching staff on all topics, frequent use is made of guest lecturers, who also connect the programmes to the practice.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the bachelor's programme SP&D is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by increasing the shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international. The panel reviewed a sample of the bachelor's theses and found that they were validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment differs, however, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures in both bachelor's programmes as this enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In its view, one thesis assessment form with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. It found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of



Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the random selection of theses produced by recent graduates the panel agrees with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor. Although graduates of both bachelor's programmes continue with a master's programme, the panel is pleased with the attention paid to future employability and connection to the professional practice. Based on a selection of the bachelor's theses and interviews with alumni during the site visit, it concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

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

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

The chair, prof. dr. Leo de Haan, and the secretary, dr. Meg van Bogaert, 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: 4 October 2019



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

Context

The bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning and the bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design are two of nine programmes offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen. The other seven programmes that are offered are master's programmes. Within the faculty, four departments are responsible for research and teaching in a specific discipline: Demography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Population Studies), Economic Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Economic Geography, master's programme Real Estate Studies), Cultural Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Cultural Geography) and Spatial Planning (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Socio-Spatial Planning, master's programme Environmental and Infrastructural Planning). The Faculty Board is responsible for all research and teaching at the faculty. It is chaired by the dean. The Economic Geography and Real Estate programmes share a Programme Committee, as well as the Socio-Spatial Planning and Environmental and Infrastructural Planning programmes. The other programmes all have their own Programme Committees. The Programme Committees advise the management as to how to safeguard the quality of each programme. The faculty has one Board of Examiners.

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 panel reviewed eight of nine educational programmes offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FSS) at the University of Groningen. All programmes reviewed by the panel have a large amount of freedom and space to define their own profile and set-up of the curriculum. In the self-evaluation report most programmes in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences (FSS) emphasised their unique profile in relation to other national and international programmes. The panel noticed that in addition to the specific profile of each of the two bachelor's programmes, there are many similarities and connections between the two. It is of the opinion that although it observed a number of positive interactions between the bachelor's programmes, there is an added value for the programmes and the FSS as a whole in more strongly formalising some aspects to increase the interaction and synergy (see Standard 2).

The Domain-Specific Framework of Reference (DSFR) for the human geography and urban and regional planning domain in the Netherlands was updated for this review by the four participating universities. The panel noticed, however, that although some programmes refer to the framework of the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), none makes explicit use of the Dutch framework to position itself. The panel is of the opinion that the Dutch framework could be a useful tool to position the eight programmes in relation to each other and the broader discipline.

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning

The principal aim of the bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning (HG-URP) is to develop the students' capacity to analyse, interpret and understand socio-demographic and economic developments from a spatial perspective. The analysis of such developments, their challenges, and their outcomes form the basis of planning spatial interventions. Given this principal aim, the programme is broad in its scope and entails developing knowledge and



understanding of relevant social, demographic, cultural and economic developments in their relation to geography and planning. The bachelor's programme HG-URP distinguishes itself from other Dutch programmes in Human Geography and Planning in a number of ways. Firstly, it is undergoing a process of internationalisation to achieve an international classroom. Secondly, it trains students to be investigative learners and emphasises the role of research in teaching and learning. Thirdly, the FSS strongly believes that demographic developments are an important theme in this programme. Finally, explicit attention is paid to physical geography and landscape studies. The interviews with staff and students provided the panel with a clear view on the profile of the HG-URP programme. Students informed the panel that they consider the programme to be very attractive. Specifically, the broad view (which was described as a combination of multiple aspects and themes) was considered a positive feature. Students and staff mentioned in this respect the international view on human geography as well as the fact that many courses combine human geography and planning. Thus, the interaction between the two is part of the programme.

The bachelor's programme HG-URP has three main aims that have been translated into 23 intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs are classified according to the Dublin Descriptors and geared towards the expected level of graduates of a bachelor's programme. The first aim covers the Dublin Descriptors of *Knowledge and Understanding* and *Applying knowledge and understanding* and involves imparting knowledge, skills and understanding in the field of human geography and urban and regional planning. The second aim covers the Dublin Descriptors *Making judgements* and *Communication* and intends to promote academic development, including acquaintance with academic instruments, understanding academic norms in practising and communicating research, and the position of human geography and planning in a wider academic context. The third and final aim covers the Dublin Descriptor *Lifelong learning skills* and prepares students for further studies by combining geographic knowledge and research practice through experience with and execution of the research process.

The panel is of the opinion that the objective and identity of the HG-URP programme are well formulated, that the profile is clear, and that the ILOs fit this profile well. It established that the ILOs are formulated according to the Dublin Descriptors for an academic bachelor's programme.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design

The aim of the bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design (SP&D) is to educate students to understand, analyse and reflect on spatial and institutional planning issues, and to design creative solutions – spatial ones as well as ones contributing to a sustainable and resilient society. The spatial design component concerns the physical part of planning within its institutional and societal context. Institutional design focuses on organising the process of planning, decision-making and implementation. Insights from Dutch planning practice act as a starting point for understanding and working with contemporary issues, which are drawn from around the globe and dealt with in various ways. In the positioning of the programme in relation to other spatial planning programmes in the Netherlands, the SP&D programme explicitly focuses on water, infrastructure and the environment.

During the site visit the students and staff told the panel that they appreciate the profile of the SP&D programme. In interviews, the students mentioned that they appreciate the broad scope of the programme, which helps them understand the social aspects and implications of the choices in planning that are made. The panel discussed the objective of incorporating design into the programme with the management and teaching staff. Initially, it was unclear to the panel what the programme's definition of design is and what the purpose was of teaching students to design. Within the programme, there is a clear view about the extent to which students have to learn to master elementary design skills and in what way this supports them in their planning skills and understanding of the design process and the role of design in planning. Students complete the design cycle at different spatial scales to understand all aspects related to a design. The programme was able to convince the panel that it approaches design from a planning perspective, aimed at understanding and that a clear distinction is made from the design process rather than mastering design skills as such, which are core to – for example – building design and engineering programmes.

The SP&D programme is designed to impart knowledge, skills and professional values of spatial planning and design, to promote academic development and to prepare students for further studies (masters) in the field of planning and human geography. The ILOs were revised in 2016-2017 to fit the focus on internationalisation within the FSS and the programme. The current ILOs are formulated in line with the five Dublin Descriptors and according to the international understanding of the planning discipline (AESOP). The programme states in the self-evaluation report that the ILOs reflect the evident worldwide shift from a positivist, goal-oriented approach (complexity reducing) towards a more adaptive, shared governance approach (complexity acknowledging). With the current ILOs, the SG&P programme puts its focus on the differentiation of situations and possible international planning approaches, taking the complexity of the context into account when designing and planning spatial transformations. The panel is of the opinion that the objective and identity of the SP&D programme are well formulated, that the profile is clear and that the ILOs fit this profile well. It established that the ILOs are formulated according the Dublin Descriptors for an academic bachelor's programme.

Link to the professional field

Since 2012, the faculty has had an advisory board consisting of alumni from all master's programmes, which meets two to three times a year. Thus, the faculty management remains well informed on recent developments in the labour market and appropriate desirable changes in the intended learning outcomes. The panel finds this a good practice. In addition, the faculty has long-standing connections to partners from the professional field and numerous guest lecturers. This allows the programme to include the developments in, and wishes from, the professional field. Information from the self-evaluation report shows that all graduates from both bachelor's programmes continued their studies with a master's programme. Although the bachelor's degree is thus not seen as an exit point towards the professional field, attention is paid in the programme to the link with the professional field. HG-URP students were positive in both the interview and the student chapter regarding the link to the professional field. One of the examples given is the possibility to do an internship, but guest lectures are also valued. While SP&D students in the interview considered the connection to practice to be adequate, the student chapter revealed a more critical point of view. It states that the activities are organised, but the students are often unaware of them, or do not understand what they entail. The panel is of the opinion that some attention to the positioning of and communication about these activities might improve the students' perspective on this topic.

Proposed name changes

Both bachelor's programmes propose changing their names. In the self-evaluation report and during interviews, the programmes supported this proposal.

The bachelor's programme in Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning proposes to change to *Human Geography and Planning*. Over the past years the programme has worked on the clarity of its scope, content and ILOs and would like to see this reflected in the name. In addition, the current English name is considered overly long and sometimes confusing. The English name also deviates from the current Dutch CROHO name, which is *Sociale Geografie en Planologie*. As the bachelor's programme is now an international programme taught in English, the FSS proposes changing the English name to be more compact and aligned to the Dutch name. The student members of the Programme Committee support this proposed new name.

According to the self-evaluation report, the English name of the bachelor's programme in Spatial Planning and Design fits the programme well. However, the Dutch name (*Technische Planologie*) could lead to unclear expectations about the science-character of the programme. Without eliminating any of the technical components, it is proposed to use the English name exclusively in the future. This is also in line with the programme being taught in English and having a clear international focus. The student members of the Programme Committee support this proposed new name.



The panel discussed the proposed name changes with students, staff and management. All were positive with respect to the proposed names. For both programmes, the panel considers that the shift to using the English name exclusively is a logical step in the development towards an international programme. With respect to the HG-URP programme, it verified that the change in name is not accompanied by changes in the curriculum. In its opinion, the proposed name change is adequate and should be approved. The specification of *Urban* and *Regional* to planning is not considered crucial in the programme's name. With respect to the SP&D programme, the panel agrees with the management that the Dutch name might be misleading to prospective students. It verified that no changes in the curriculum are being made as a result of the new proposed name. It recommends using only the English name for the programme. It does stress the fact that the new names of both programmes contain the word *Planning*. It recommends that the FSS be clear in its communication towards prospective students and employers about the specific planning aspects in both programmes.

Considerations

According to the panel, the HG-URP programme describes its identity well. The panel is of the opinion that the programme has a distinctive and unique profile with a balanced build-up. Within the bachelor's programme HG-URP, attention is paid to geographical processes and understanding the geographic context. The panel is positive with respect to the balance between theory and practice that is aimed for, with theory actually applied in field work and real-life assignments. The ILOs are based on the Dublin Descriptors and fulfil the international requirements for an academic bachelor's programme. According to the panel, the ILOs clearly fit a bachelor's programme in the field of Human Geography and Planning.

The panel is of the opinion that the SP&D programme also described its profile well, with ample attention being paid to spatial interventions and design. It concludes that the design component in this programme aligns well with the objective and is integrated with the spatial planning aspects. The ILOs are based on the Dublin Descriptors and fulfil the international requirements for an academic bachelor's programme. They specifically fit the requirements for a bachelor's programme in spatial planning, including both spatial and institutional knowledge and skills, and relate to active design as well as reflective skills.

With respect to the objective of internationalisation, the panel thinks that the added value of teaching in English and organising an international classroom is clearly supported for both bachelor's programmes. Although the programmes are only in the second year of this process and international student numbers are still relatively low, it concludes that the process of internationalisation is well on its way and has confidence in the international future of the programmes.

The connection to the professional field is good when taking into consideration that all students continued with a master's programme after graduation. The minor criticism of SP&D students in the self-evaluation report had to do with the implicit way practice is included in the programme, according to the panel. Students do not recognise these activities as preparation for their future career. The panel recommends paying attention to embedding of and communication on this topic within the programme.

The panel appreciates the fact that the FSS offers many programmes that each have a distinctive profile. It would have appreciated the positioning of both bachelor's programmes in relation to each other and the broader discipline of Social Geography and Planning, for example by using the DSFR.

Proposed name changes

For both programmes the panel considers that the shift to using the English name exclusively is a logical step in the development towards an international programme. It verified that the name changes are not accompanied by changes in the curricula and considers that the proposed name changes are adequate and should be approved for the bachelor's programmes HG-URP and SP&D.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

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

Ten courses (70 EC) are part of both bachelor's programmes (HG-URP and SP&D). This is considered important by both programmes as the relations between the two are essential: Geographers study the places created by spatial interventions, and planners use geographic studies in their design of places. In the shared courses, the students lay the groundwork for spatial research and analysis. Most of the common courses are scheduled in the first year. In the second and third years specialisation courses are added. The panel appreciates the fact that both programmes share a significant number of courses to allow for interaction. It would like to point out two common courses that are particularly interesting and provide the Groningen programmes with a specific perspective. The first is a course in *Physical Geography*. Both students and teaching staff emphasised the value of this course, as knowing about physical environment supports students in understanding the effects of human geography on it. The panel agrees that this course provides a solid basis in physical geography that supports students throughout their studies. The second course is *Philosophy in Social Sciences*. Although the course seems somewhat isolated in the curriculum and students do not always understand its added value when taking it, in the long run they understand and value the content.

Curriculum, content and structure of the HG-URP bachelor's programme

The three-year, 180 EC bachelor's programme HG-URP spans six semesters, with each semester covering two terms. Most terms contain two courses: one 5 EC and one 10 EC course. An overview of the curriculum is provided in appendix 3. The structure of the curriculum is set up as follows: in the first year, students are introduced to a research perspective, basic methodologies, and the different subfields of human geography and planning. In the second year their knowledge and understanding are deepened, culminating in a group execution of a full research project (*Methods for Academic Research*). In the minor of the third year, students are stimulated to reflect on what they have learnt thus far from other disciplinary and cultural perspectives. They can opt to go abroad during the minor but can also use 10 EC to gain professional experience in an internship. In the third and final year, students apply their knowledge and skills in an unfamiliar context (*Fieldwork abroad*) and a familiar one (*Bachelor's project*).

The HG-URP bachelor's programme has three learning pathways to shape a consistent programme and connect the individual courses. The *People, Space and Economics* and *Planning* pathways cover the history, theories and understanding of human geography and planning. The third pathway, *Research*, covers research methods and the academic approach. Connections between the research and content pathways are regularly made in the programme, which is facilitated by the introduction of 10 EC courses. In these larger courses, the research attitude and methods are used in assignments in content courses, and methodology courses contain relevant content.

The panel is of the opinion that the curriculum is strong and has clear learning pathways. It specifically appreciates the balance between theory and practice that is consistently introduced in the curriculum. Not only is this observed in individual courses, it is also apparent in the combination of courses during each of the terms. This specific aspect was also mentioned by the students, in addition to their appreciation of the breadth of the programme. The panel agrees that it is a very broad bachelor's programme, but at the same time sufficient depth is obtained in the different



disciplines. The content and level of the courses the panel looked at in more detail are good. All courses have clearly described course descriptions, learning goals, as well as an assessment plan.

Curriculum, content and structure of the SP&D bachelor's programme

The three-year, 180 EC bachelor's programme SP&D spans six semesters, with each semester covering two terms. Most terms contain two courses: one 5 EC and one 10 EC course. An overview of the curriculum is provided in appendix 3. The profile of the SP&D programme is translated into four learning pathways. The *Spatial design* pathway emphasises spatial, physical design. The *Spatial planning* pathway focuses more on the institutional side of planning. The *Water infrastructure and environment* pathway provides a comprehensive understanding of these themes, both spatially and institutionally. Finally, the *Research* pathway teaches students to perform academic research along with imparting the relevant skills and techniques. The setup of the curriculum over the three years builds up to shift the attention gradually from spatial design towards institutional design. In the minor of the third year, the students are stimulated to reflect on what they have learnt thus far from other disciplinary and cultural perspectives. They can opt to go abroad during the minor but can also use 10 EC to gain professional experience in an internship.

In the SP&D curriculum the design component is emphasised. During the site visit the panel extensively discussed the way design is incorporated into the curriculum and what the objective of this was. A tour of the atelier facilities during the site visit provided the panel with an impression of the actual situation. It was told that over the past ten years, specific attention has been paid to the development of a design pathway throughout the curriculum. The programme aims at understanding the cycle of design by experience and learning how the physical design of the environment, on multiple levels, from the ways in which the regional to the local and neighbourhood level, is interrelated with the policy process. Design atelier courses are project-based and require students to work several days per week on a real-life assignment. Throughout the curriculum the three studios include this cycle of design at different scales, starting with the regional scale in the first year and moving towards city, neighbourhood and building scales in the second and third years. The complexity of the institutional setting increases throughout the curriculum.

Similar to the HG-URP programme, the panel is of the opinion that the S&D curriculum is strong and has clear learning pathways that are explicitly visible. It appreciates the way that the design aspects are incorporated into the curriculum. Step by step, the students are taken through the many different aspects that are involved. The panel is impressed by the programme's vision in developing this design learning pathway over the past decade. It would like to encourage the programme to increase the conceptual aspects of the programme even further, with a focus on water, the environment and infrastructure, as this is a learning pathway. The content and level of the courses the panel looked at in more detail are good. All courses have clearly described course descriptions, learning goals, as well as an assessment plan.

Methodology

In the discipline of Human Geography and Planning, it is considered important for students to have a solid basis in methodology. Depending on the objective of the specific programme, there is a different balance in focus on quantitative and qualitative methodology. Both bachelor's programmes aim at providing a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. In both bachelor's programmes the *Introduction to Academic Research* and *Methods of Academic Research* courses familiarise students with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Although multiple methods for analysis are mentioned in the courses, the panel noticed that in the theses, nearly all quantitative studies make use of regression analysis. Although this observation is not restricted to Groningen students, it would like to encourage the programme to stimulate students to focus a bit more broadly by including exploratory multivariate data analysis techniques like principal component analysis, cluster analysis and structural equation modelling.

Internship

In both bachelor's programmes, the students can use 10 EC of the minor period in the third year to do an internship. The students informed the panel that they appreciate this opportunity to get some experience in the professional field and that the internships are actively promoted and supported. Students have to find their own position, but there is a list available with local, regional and international internship positions. They are also supported by the internship coordinator, for example by holding a mock interview. The internship plan has to be approved beforehand, and the coordinator visits the internship workplace when in the Netherlands or has contact via e-mail for international internship positions. Afterwards, the students have to hand in a report that includes a reflection, which is graded. The panel looked at the course outline and is of the opinion that there are clear guidelines and criteria available for the bachelor's internship.

Teaching learning environment

The vision of the FSS emphasises learning rather than teaching, and as a consequence the programmes aim for an active learning environment in which knowledge development, experimentation, fieldwork and shared learning experiences are key. The self-evaluation report of HG-URP described how, from the start of the programme, the students engage in the design, execution and reflection on information gathering and knowledge development. In addition, the SP&D programme mentions two main components, *spatial* and *institutional* planning and design. To achieve these aims, both programmes have a number of principles that support the teaching-learning environment. These principles are described below for both programmes and include active learning, the international classroom, connection to practice, and training reflective capacities.

Active learning

Starting with the first course, students from both bachelor's programmes are stimulated in active learning. They are responsible for their own learning, inspired to take the initiative, and are actively encouraged to share insights and skills with their peers. Throughout the programme, they are encouraged to experiment with and develop their own ideas and insights, challenging and co-developing them through discussion with peers and academic staff. The programmes help students in active learning by guidance, support and experience. Material is provided through the literature and lectures.

In the interviews, the students mentioned the small-scale teaching methods in addition to larger-scale lectures as a positive feature of the programmes. They often work in small groups on group assignments, specifically in the second and third years. They indicated that they appreciate the skills they learn by working in groups, but they would prefer to have more individual assignments in the later years of the programmes. Although the student chapter mentioned the risk of free-riding in group assignments, students from both bachelor's programmes were much more positive in this respect during the site visit. They informed the panel that free-riding cannot be completely avoided, but usually is not rewarded. In many courses a system of peer review on participation in group work is part of the assessment. Lecturers added to this information that students provide the input as they cannot evaluate this aspect themselves. The panel is of the opinion that the system used is rather effective. There are minor differences between different courses, but in general it starts with students filling out an assessment form on all group members and uploading this form for the lecturer to see. Then the second and more important step is that the group meets without the lecturer and fills out the same form as a joint exercise. In some cases, one of the students can earn an additional point, while another student loses this point. If the group cannot manage to fill out a form jointly, the lecturer uses the individual assessment forms. Both students and staff say that this system works well, and in addition to a reduced risk of free-riding, the group process is very informative for students. The panel is very positive about the way the programmes deal with group work and the risk of free-riding and believes it can serve as a best practice for other programmes in the faculty.

International classroom

Both bachelor's programmes in the FSS (HG-URP and SP&D) started a process of internationalisation in 2017 with the objective to achieve an international classroom. This entails training in English,



making these bachelor's programmes unique in the discipline in the Netherlands. However, to achieve an international classroom, the programmes are also working on encountering, managing and employing international experiences. An international classroom brings together experiences and knowledge from various contexts to exemplify the vibrancy and dynamism of human geography and planning in an international context. The panel extensively discussed this transition of both programmes and what is considered necessary to achieve an international classroom. The programmes' management clearly stated that in addition to international students and international staff being present, it is important to include the international perspective as well as international cases and examples in the curricula. In the interviews with students during the site visit, this approach was confirmed.

In the international classroom students engage with each other from their diverse perspectives and positions. International students bring their own experience and perspective into the classroom, in which lecturers provide room for discussion. To make the international classroom a success, the student population has to be diverse, as does the background of the lecturers. As many cases and fieldwork in the curriculum are traditionally local or regional, the programmes and lecturers actively include international cases and examples and invite guest lecturers (international). According to the self-evaluation report, the students develop their skills in relation to information gathering, professional and academic writing and presenting, communication in group work, and (self)reflection in an international context. In order to make the international classroom work, groups of students always have to consist of at least two Dutch and two international students. When creating groups, the lecturers take this into account, but also when students are free to choose their own peers, the diversity in the group is considered important. Students told the panel that they appreciate the variety in background of enrolling students, which enriched the interactions and discussions.

Students from the HG-URP programme informed the panel that they appreciate the international perspective of the programme, and although they mentioned minor points of improvement (e.g. English proficiency of some lectures), they consider that the FSS is working hard and doing a good job in this respect. They specifically mentioned to the panel that they feel part of an international classroom, which includes not only international students, but also international lecturers (guest) and the fact that many international examples are provided in the courses. Although fieldwork sometimes requires students to conduct interviews in Dutch, they stated that it is mandatory to mix the groups once the fieldwork is complete. Students of the SP&D programme confirmed the input of the HG-URP students and mentioned that in the first year of the English-taught programme, some issues occurred, like Dutch-language excursions to municipalities. However, the FSS worked hard to smooth things out, and in the second year things went much better. In this programme many Dutch planning ideas are used in the curriculum, but students claimed that they were often accompanied by international examples, which provided them with the international perspective. In addition, students emphasised that they appreciated the use of Dutch planning examples, given the international reputation of Dutch planning. The panel is of the opinion that both bachelor's programmes are doing a good job in transitioning to international programmes.

Students in the programmes are expected to benefit from the diversity in backgrounds and culture to enrich understanding of their own environment. In order to achieve this, growth in international student numbers is necessary. With 27% (HG-URP) and 18% (SP&P) international students two years after starting the English-taught programmes, it seems that both programmes are increasingly attractive to international students. The panel considers that the approach of both bachelor's programmes to internationalisation and the international classroom is broad in the sense that it goes beyond merely teaching in English or attracting international students. Although both programmes are still in the early stages of internationalisation, it is convinced that they are doing well in this respect.

Learning through fieldwork and learning through experimentation – HG-URP programme

Within the HG-URP programme, learning through experimentation and fieldwork is mentioned as critical to the learning process. The experience of designing, testing and evaluating an idea or project



(learning through experimentation) extends learning beyond the topic or assignment at hand. Fieldwork (learning through fieldwork) provides first-hand experience with relevant topics, research methods and the ability to put geographic themes in context.

Real-life assignments and training reflective activities – SP&D programme

The SP&D programme focuses on real-life assignments and the training of reflective activities. The education in the SP&D programme is policy-oriented and case-based to prepare students for planning practice in a real-world working environment. Practitioners participate intensively in the programme, like professionals from Rijkswaterstaat and other planning authorities. In the SP&D programme the academic view on the planning practice is considered fundamental to the education and in line with the perspective of planning and design as a *reflection*. Reflective capacities enable students to consider the complexity of the situational context.

Student numbers, contact hours, feasibility

The enrolment numbers of the HG-URP programme were fairly stable at around 100 students per year in the period between 2013 and 2017 but showed an increase in 2018. This growth was predominantly achieved by increasing numbers of international students, with 27% international students in 2018. In the SP&D programme student numbers increased between 2013 and 2018 from 46 to 94. In addition to more Dutch students over the years, the enrolment of international students resulted in additional expansion. Both programmes state that in the coming years, careful attention will be paid to the intake of both Dutch and international students.

The number of contact hours is in line with university policy, which states that 12 hours per week is optimal for the learning process. Reflecting the active learning philosophy, the amount of time spent on lectures declines as the programme progresses. The number of contact hours goes down after semester 3 as students assume more responsibility for their own learning. From the self-evaluation report it became clear that the students consider the total workload low, specifically in the HG-URP programme. During the site visit they informed the panel that changes have been made in the first year to increase the workload, but at the same time they consider it their own responsibility to study and prepare for classes. They did mention that they notice a difference in workload between different courses. If a course includes seminars and working groups, more effort is required compared to courses with many lectures and reading papers. At the same time, during practicals and fieldwork there are a lot of contact hours, but their level is not considered to be very difficult. In the previous assessment report the workload in the SP&D programme was stated to be rather high. During the site visit the panel discussed the workload with current students who informed it that the workload is feasible. There are peaks in workload, but they state that this is understandable as an excursion or atelier requires more effort.

For both bachelor's programmes the departments involved introduced larger courses in the curricula, which was partly intended to spread the workload better: by introducing multiple assessments throughout the course, the peak load at the end of a block could be reduced. Furthermore, the teaching staff informed the panel that discussions of assignments and assessments are regularly held between lecturers of parallel courses. The assessment matrix is also used as a tool to evenly spread the assessments in the semester and to balance the workload.

The success rates of the first year are increasing in both programmes, most likely due to the Binding Study Advice (BSA) that was introduced. However, the programmes believe that the Learning Communities (LCs, see *Student guidance and facilities*) also had a positive effect. Dropout rates are showing a downward trend, with the exception of 2017 in the HG-URP. The programme and the FSS are looking into what could have caused this. The panel considers that the introduction of the international classroom and teaching in English might have had an effect, as major changes always come with minor challenges. The success rates of students completing within four years is consistently above the strategic ambition of 70%. The panel concludes that the programmes are actively working on maintaining an acceptable study load. In the first year the study load has increased somewhat, and peaks in study load were reduced by the introduction of larger courses.



Student guidance and facilities

Both bachelor's programmes introduced Learning Communities (LC) in which groups of around 15 first-year students – both Dutch and international – are supervised by mentors (students from the second and third year). These LCs were set up to provide a community for first-year students who enrol in the bachelor's programmes. Events related to the study programme, the professional field and social activities are organised by the LC mentor. Although the LCs are not formally part of the curriculum, they are organised by the programmes and include more than just social activities. The LC groups also collaborate in group work in a number of first year bachelor's courses. The students and staff the panel talked to during the site visit were very positive about the LCs. The students indicated that they provided them with a safe and supportive environment in their first year and made it easier to adapt to being a student. Students in their second and third year mentioned that even though the formal LC community is discontinued after the first year, they still have regular contact with their peers of the first year. The panel concludes that the introduction of LC's indeed had a positive effect on cohort formation and – specifically for international students – provides a safety net in the first period of their studies.

The panel was given access to the digital learning environment, Nestor, and in general is positive about the way the FSS uses this learning environment. It would recommend making use of Nestor even more intensively to create communities and stimulate discussions not only between students within a year, but also across the years.

The regular setup of lecture rooms provides neither the extensive time slots nor the large tables and good lighting that studio teaching in the SP&D programme requires. This implies that the atelier courses cannot be accommodated in the regular lecture rooms. Currently, atelier space is available close to the faculty building. This building serves an educational purpose well, as it is at the students' disposal during the week. The panel was given a tour around the atelier rooms and concludes that they fulfil the requirement for organising an atelier.

Quality assurance

The two bachelor's programmes, which share a number of courses and are predominantly run by the same four, have some nice examples of collaboration like the activated learning approach and the way they deal with free-riding. The panel concludes that the cycle of innovation and evaluation works due to the intuitive, informal and enthusiastic approach of teaching staff. The FSS manages to attract staff members who fit well in this approach that supports the quality and improvement culture.

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences chooses to offer two bachelor's and six master's curricula that are substantively related as separate programmes, instead of tracks within one overarching bachelor's and one master's programme. The panel discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this decision with the faculty management. A positive consequence is that now each of the programmes is at liberty to establish its own profile and recruit students that match the profile in a goal-oriented way. A potential challenge resulting from the decision to offer separate programmes is that it may create a hurdle to communicate and collaborate across the boundaries of programmes and (particularly) departments. This is especially the case because many lecturers work within one programme. The fact that there are clear boundaries may impede the sharing of best practices and learning from one another, thus moving all programmes forward. The panel is of the opinion that the faculty does not fall in this trap, mainly because of the enthusiastic teaching staff, who intuitively and informally maintain a cycle of innovation and evaluation across programmes. The faculty manages to attract staff members who fit well into this approach, that supports the quality and improvement culture. The panel would like to stimulate the synergy between programmes even further, to guarantee that opportunities to share best practices are fully explored. It recommends a framework that ensures a minimal level of formal embedding. For example, the six programme committees could structurally meet, which they do not do now.

The panel is very positive about the fact that the faculty publishes the results of student evaluations of all courses on Nestor. This clearly reflects a quality culture within the faculty, and shows the

students that their input is taken seriously, valued and used to improve the quality of education. The panel thinks that this attitude and method add significantly to the high response rates to course evaluations (85%). If a course evaluation suggests a course is not up to scratch, then the programme management forms a student panel to discuss this with the lecturer. He or she subsequently writes a reflection report, which is also published on Nestor. The panel finds this a good practice.

Teaching staff

The students encounter both early-career and experienced teaching staff throughout the three years of the programmes. Nearly all teaching staff have a PhD, and the FSS is working to reflect the international classroom in the staff, with approximately 25% non-Dutch members during the time of the site visit. In many courses students encounter guest lecturers from other universities and the wider geographic employment sector. Lecturers are encouraged to relate their teaching approach to their research. Specifically, in the *Introduction to Academic Research* course, learning takes place in the shape of sharing experiences. The students are taken through the process of writing a paper within the supervisor's area of expertise. This process is repeated in *Methods for Academic Research*.

Both groups of staff members interviewed by the panel during the site visit made a positive impression. The panel met with diverse, dynamic and enthusiastic teams that are reflective and aim at providing high-quality education. There is an overlap in staff of the two programmes and synchronisation both within and between the programmes. FSS has a clear vision of the expertise of its staff and what is required in this respect. The panel concludes that the major disciplines are well covered. If a specific expertise is temporarily lacking, the programmes make good use of guest lecturers. Many guest lecturers represent long-lasting connections to practice, with organisations such as ministries, municipalities and consulting firms. In addition to acquiring specific expertise, some guest lecturers allow for a good connection to practice, while others bring international experience into the classroom.

The student to staff ratio of the HG-UP programme is 28, which is rather high. The self-evaluation report stated that this ratio is an average as some courses are deliberately taught in a teaching-efficient way to provide other courses with a lower student/staff ratio. The students informed the panel that the programme occasionally struggles to deal with the increased student numbers. Activating teaching methods are labour-intensive, and the students mentioned that the Learning Communities were larger than originally intended. They stated that they appreciate the variety in teaching methods, but would welcome even more small-scale, activating methods like seminars. For the SP&D programme the student-staff ratio is 31.4, which is also high. The programme strives for a lower ratio in some courses, specifically in the design ateliers. The students mentioned being pleased with the number of teaching staff in the programme and consider the supervision during the design ateliers to be adequate. During the site visit it became clear to the panel that the FSS is aware of the issues regarding small-scale teaching methods and is working on solutions. This was confirmed by the teaching staff and the programme management. More staff is being hired, and more vacancies are being created; the panel is of the opinion that the hiring strategy of the FSS is good. For example, in the SP&D programme the increased focus on water management was supported by the qualification of new staff members on this topic.

Considerations

The panel considers both bachelor's curricula to be well designed and structured. A significant number of courses are shared between the two programmes, mostly methodological courses. The panel pointed out two courses that are particularly interesting and provide the Groningen bachelor's programmes with a distinctive perspective. The first is the *Physical Geography* course, which provides a solid basis in physical geography that supports students throughout their studies. The second course is *Philosophy in Social Sciences*. Although the bachelor's programmes do not specifically focus on the labour market, the panel observed a number of nice features in which these programmes include practice. In the GIS course, the students have to work for a client and use real data, providing them with the experience of working for a client.



In the SP&D programme the panel looked in depth at the aspect of design. It concludes that design is well embedded in the curriculum. The programme is clear on the position of design in relation to the overall learning objectives. The panel appreciates the fact that the cycle of design returns each year of the programme, with a gradual shift in scale. It is impressed by the way the programme managed to develop the design learning line over the past ten years, including the hiring of qualified staff members. It would like to stimulate the programme to increase the conceptual aspects even further, with a focus on water, the environment and infrastructure.

The panel would like to compliment a number of developments in both bachelor's programmes. First is the way in which many courses in both programmes deal with group work and accompanying aspects like group formation and free-riding. By having students assess each other through double peer review, they are not only taught that free-riding is not rewarded, they also learn to provide feedback to each other and gain insights into the dynamics of groups, supporting them among others to prevent and tackle freeriding. The second development is the introduction of learning communities (LCs) in the first year. The panel concludes that the LCs stimulate cohort formation in the first year, which has a positive effect on later years as well. Both bachelor's programmes focus on stimulating their students in active learning. Part of the contact hours involve small-scale teaching methods. The required input of staff is compensated by also including large-scale lectures. The international classroom was introduced in 2017. At the same time, the programmes shifted to a curriculum fully taught in English. The panel considers that even though the internationalisation of the bachelor's programmes is still underway, the results after two years are good. The programmes have a genuine view on internationalisation, for example a clear focus not only on teaching in English, but on actually integrating different perspectives and views on local and international phenomena. Both bachelor's programmes increasingly manage to bring together various perspectives, viewpoints and experiences and prepare students for work and study in a globalised and international field. The dynamic and enthusiastic teams of teaching staff of both programmes impressed the panel. The FSS has a clear view of the expertise of its staff as well as a strategy on what expertise to hire. To provide students with expert teaching staff on all topics, frequent use is made of guest lecturers, who also connect the programmes to the practice.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Assessment policy and practice

The FSS at the University of Groningen has a shared assessment policy, which is described in the *Faculty of Spatial Sciences Assessment Policy Memorandum*. This memorandum provides directives for the relation between assessment and learning goals, the demands that all assessment forms need to meet, the ways in which students have to be informed, etc. The memorandum sets the boundaries within which each of the programmes can choose its own assessment forms and criteria, and thus shape its own identity. Every programme has *Teaching and Examination Regulations* (TER). Based on these, the programme management is asked to draft an assessment plan, which constitutes the intended learning outcomes and the modes of assessment of all courses in the programme, and a matrix clarifying the relationship between the two.

The self-evaluation report of HG-URP explained that throughout the curriculum, the relationship between individual courses and the ILOs is monitored through the annually updated assessment plan. Within the courses, the assessment supports the philosophy of active learning. The role of this



assessment is not only to assess learning, but also to encourage active and continuous learning. Active and research-oriented learning is reflected in the use of assignments that require information gathering, reflection, and constant and active student engagement with the course material. For most courses a combination of exams and individual and group written assignments are used. The self-evaluation report of SP&D adds to this that formative assessment is applied in the active learning environments to design spatial interventions and strategies (policy). Formative assessment supports the active learning with design ateliers and real-life assignments. Courses employing group learning, such as *Reflection on Human Geography & Planning*, *Introduction to Academic research* and *Methods for Academic Research*, provide active learning by collectively discussing the writing, research and learning process. It also requires students to take the initiative, assist fellow students or provide useful comment.

The panel concludes that quality control of assessment is in order. Beforehand, lecturers have the quality of their exams assessed through peer review by another member of staff. Afterwards, the quality is measured again as part of the course and programme evaluation. In this evaluation, students can indicate the extent to which the assessment ties in with the learning objectives of a course. The course coordinator and the relevant programme committee reflect upon this evaluation, and it is also made publicly available to students and to the members of the Board of Examiners. From these evaluations, it turns out that in general, students are satisfied with their exams.

The panel confirmed that assessment throughout the courses is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback enables the students to shape their own learning process. The panel recommends improving the assessment even further by sharing successful innovations between the departments and programmes.

Thesis assessment

Both bachelor's programmes have a *Bachelor Project* that culminates in the bachelor's thesis. In HG-URP, the students conduct a full research project under supervision that spans the second semester of the third year. Groups of up to 11 students work together on a theme, supervised by one or two lecturers. The students work on the same widely interpreted theme and can discuss barriers, challenges, ideas and suggestions under supervision. The *Bachelor Project* is divided into seven assignments to guarantee a common process among the different groups. These assignments also allow for formative feedback while carrying out the research project. The thesis is graded individually by both the supervisor and an independent second assessor. They subsequently discuss their findings and decide on a final grade. In case of disagreement, a third assessor is involved.

A similar process is organised in the SP&D programme. To become acquainted with the research theme, students work on eight formative assignments, which build on one another. These assignments relate to different aspects of the thesis, e.g. the theoretical framework, data collection, data analysis and presentation. The final bachelor's thesis, a poster presentation and the process throughout the project comprise the work that is graded by the supervisor and a second assessor. They subsequently discuss their findings and decide on a final grade. In case of disagreement, a third assessor is involved.

The panel reviewed a sample of the theses of both programmes and found that they were validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency differs, both between and within the programmes. Sometimes the panel found two separate assessment forms, for two examiners; sometimes one form with two separate assessments; sometimes the input of the second examiner was not distinguishable at all. Some students received oral feedback from both the first and the second examiner (in addition to their assessment forms), some only from the first examiner, some students did not get any written qualitative feedback and just received their final mark. The faculty management explained to the panel that both bachelor's programmes have a slightly different procedure of assessing the theses but use a similar assessment form. The panel thinks that as both programmes are taught by staff members from four departments, it seems logical to have a similar procedure in place.



In the panel's view, one thesis assessment procedure, which documents recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The role of the second examiner is to form his or her own judgement and add this to the first examiner's judgment on the assessment form, after which the first and second examiner compare notes and work towards a collective final mark. The assessment form should reflect the independent procedure. This procedure should be implemented consistently through all programmes, the panel recommends. Also, the assessment form should be consistently shared with the student, so that he or she can take advantage of the feedback that is given. The panel also suggests that while academic accuracy is well covered on the assessment forms, creativity, scientific depth and societal relevance could be evaluated more strongly and explicitly.

The Board of Examiners

The FSS has one Board of Examiners, responsible for the examination and assessment quality of all bachelor's and master's programmes, awarding degrees and handling requests by students regarding deviations from the regular curriculum. The board consists of six members, representing each of the departments. It also includes one external assessment expert. The board itself meets six times a year, and besides that, it regularly meets with the university's central Board of Examiners, in order to deal with shared challenges and innovative solutions.

The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. At the time, the previous panel considered the Board of Examiners to be only slowly moving towards a more professional attitude. Now this faculty's board is seen as a good example throughout the university. Its particular merit is that its members aim to work pro-actively and quickly, communicating directly with students who are unhappy with the assessment methods. In this manner they have been able to prevent appeal procedures, while at the same time retaining broad support from the work floor. As the 2014 evaluation panel recommended, the Board's time allocation was increased. The present panel is very happy with these developments.

The panel noticed that the Board of Examiners has a clear definition of its own responsibilities, as demarcated from those educational aspects that are primarily the management's responsibility. The latter develops the course and assessment methods, while the Board of Examiners safeguards the quality and sees to it that the programmes live up to their intended academic level. As soon as the Board spots an irregularity (relatively low average grades, complaints by students, evaluations that are below the mark), the secretary of the Board of Examiners discusses this with the lecturers involved. Every six months, the board picks five courses for a systematic evaluation of its assessment methods. These may be courses that stand out in the course evaluations, in the proceedings of the Programme Committees, or in the day-to-day communications between board members and their colleagues. The Board also makes a random and anonymous selection of ten bachelor's and ten master's theses, which are then re-assessed by one of its members. If there is a significant difference between the original mark and that given by the board member, this difference is discussed with the examiners involved. All parties find this an instructive process. In 2018, the board started a pilot project screening the assessment practices of two complete programmes, with the intention of repeating this exercise with two new programmes each year. The panel applauds this initiative. As well as being instrumental to further reinforcing quality assurance, it also contributes to a broadly shared awareness of how student assessment should be embedded in the bigger picture.

The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work. The Board of Examiners, the Programme Committees and the programme management each take on their individual tasks well. In the panel's opinion, the faculty could gain even more by coordinating them toward a shared faculty-wide assessment culture, e.g. by discussing problems of mutual interest together and actively exchanging lessons learned and best practices. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversify and become more international, leading to different assessment cultures among the staff. Part of such an exercise could be, for instance, to initiate a biannual assessment day.

Considerations

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in both bachelor's programmes is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by increasing the shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of ten bachelor's theses of both programmes and found that they were validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment differs, however, both between and within the programmes. The panel is pleased by the use of similar assessment procedures in both bachelor's programmes as this enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In its view, one thesis assessment form with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Prior to its site visit, the panel studied a sample of ten recently delivered bachelor's theses from both programmes. The theses sufficiently demonstrate that graduates realise the ILOs. The grading by the programme and by the panel was within the same range for all theses, with not more than one point difference. The panel noticed that many theses in both programmes were written in Dutch. This is understandable as those graduates started the programmes prior to 2017 and thus prior to it becoming a fully English-taught programme.

Bachelor's programme HG-URP

In general, the theses were on highly relevant topics and often contained original research questions. Ones that were graded with high grades were well written and connected the theoretical approach to the methodology. Many also showed a good knowledge of the relevant methodologies. Ones with a lower grade – from both the supervisor and the panel – showed limited literature lists and often lacked framing and critical investigation. The panel asks for attention to be paid to the graphical skills and cartography in the theses. Although these aspects are dealt with throughout the curriculum, it would have appreciated having them better reflected in the theses. Moreover, attention for spatial patterns could be more recognisable, while the amount and quality of maps leaves room for improvement.

Bachelor's programme SP&D

The panel noticed many highly relevant topics in the selected theses. It agreed with the high grades of several good theses, which were well written, provided a good literature overview and had clearly formulated research questions. It also agreed with the lower grades of other theses but did not identify general points of attention. Sometimes the quality of data collection was limited; in other theses, the theoretical framework was lacking, or the writing was of poor quality.



Employability

The FSS has developed policies to keep in contact with alumni and involve alumni in the teaching practice. This is also done at the bachelor's level where alumni are regularly involved, for instance as commissioners of real-life assignments or guest lecturers. The panel values the many different ways in which alumni remain in touch with the faculty: on the advisory board, as guest lecturers, as internship supervisors, as data suppliers, or as mediators introducing a constant stream of young pupils to the faculty (if they become teachers). This is done very well.

Nearly all bachelor's graduates choose to do a master's study in the field of human geography and spatial planning. In 2016, 58% of the SP&D graduates continued at the FSS with a master's programme, most with the master's programme Environmental and Infrastructure Planning. A small number of students continued with a master's programme at another faculty in Groningen, and about 36% continued with a master elsewhere. HG-URP graduates also continued with a master's programme. On average, 69% chose a master's programme at the FSS, 4% started a non-FSS master's in Groningen, and 25% went to a different university to continue their studies. Although bachelor students do not consider graduation the final point in their education, the programmes pay attention to the connection to the professional field. Preparation takes place in the form of transferable skills and coordination of course assignments with the professional field (e.g. GIS). Many *real-life assignments* are commissioned by external organisations, and external partners frequently cooperate in these assignments. In the SP&D programme this is the case in the *Design ateliers* and in the *Mobility Infrastructure and Planning* and *Water and Planning* courses. For both programmes the *Geographical Information Systems* course includes real-life assignments. The students informed the panel that they feel well prepared for their future career, both through guest lectures and assignments with real-life cases. They also attend the sessions that are organised, like career days. Students can opt for an internship during their minor. This internship is actively promoted and supported by the FSS. The students informed the panel that many indeed opt for an internship. The panel is of the opinion that this attention to employability in the bachelor's programmes is good, as master's programmes of one year only have a very limited amount of time to do this.

Considerations

Based on the random selection of theses produced by recent graduates the panel agrees with the grades given by the supervisor and second assessor. Although graduates of both bachelor's programmes continue with a master's programme, the panel is pleased with the attention paid to future employability and connection to the professional practice. Based on a selection of the bachelor's theses and interviews with alumni during the site visit, it concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme.

Conclusion

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel's judgement on standards 1, 2, 3 and 4 for both the bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning and the bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design at the University of Groningen is 'meets the standard'. Therefore, according to the rules of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, the general and final judgement is positive for both programmes.



Conclusion

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning* as 'positive'.

The panel assesses the *bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design* as 'positive'.





APPENDICES





APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain in the Netherlands

The current domain-specific reference framework confines itself to a substantive description of the two core disciplines, in combination with the general expectations regarding the competencies of graduates. Therefore, it is a more concise document than the previous (2012) one. The exit qualifications for bachelor and master programmes are no longer included, partly because the Dublin descriptors already provide an adequate general description of the desired scientific level, but also to give the programmes taking part in the reaccreditation ample opportunity to demonstrate their own specific profile in their self-studies.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain is very broad and diverse, and the different academic programmes within the Netherlands highlight different elements. They vary, for example, in the balance between scientific and professional training, degree of research intensity, degree of integration between the two core disciplines, opportunities to specialize, and types of specialization offered. This domain-specific reference framework emphasizes the common features applying to all programmes.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain revolves around the complex relationship between people (society) and their environment (space). There are five qualities that determine the mind set of geographers and planners. First of all, the ability to think from a time-space perspective, these being the two dimensions within which human action unfolds. Secondly, the ability to study the relation between people and environment in the context of intertwined spatial scale levels (local, regional, national, global). Insight into socio-spatial transformations is gained by studying the interaction between these scale levels (the multi-scalar perspective), without making prior assumptions about the dominance of any one level (e.g. the global level) over another (e.g. the local level). Thirdly, the mind set of geographers and planners is based on the idea that space and society closely interact and shape each other. Human actions, and the behavioural patterns that develop in the course of time (institutions), crystallize in space, while conversely, spatial structures and place-related features trigger and shape human actions. A fourth quality relates to the strong multidisciplinary orientation in the work of geographers and planners; relationships between humans and their environment are studied from a range of mutually supplementary disciplinary perspectives. The precise combinations chosen depend on the nature of the socio-spatial problems being studied and will vary per programme within the domain. Finally, the fifth quality is closely linked with all the above: the integrative character of the geographical and planning approach. This crux is an ambition to understand the mutual cohesion between economic, social, cultural and political phenomena and processes within their specific spatial contexts.

Key terms in the domain are space, place, location, scale, networks, linkages, spatial behaviour, place attachment, spatial quality, spatial design and spatial interventions. Within the domain socio-spatial problems are taken as starting points of scientific inquiry. These issues include spatial inequality, globalization, migration, segregation, diversity and identity, environmental burden, sustainable area development, mobility and governance. The aim is not only to make critical analyses of the issues concerned, but also to design plans and interventions that may solve or reduce socio-spatial dilemmas.

The international and comparative character of studying the relation between people and environment is inherent to the Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning disciplines. Socio-spatial problems, and planned actions to deal with them, are marked by the specific national, regional and local context in which they arise. The significance of the embeddedness of socio-spatial phenomena is the key to Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. However, awareness of the importance of context does not imply that the disciplines are merely the sum of an endless series of case-studies. The ambition is to identify the international similarities and differences of socio-spatial processes and developments, in order to unravel both their unique and generic aspects. Both facets are typical of the quest of Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning to



formulate theories (explanation in context). To emphasize this international, comparative character, teaching does not focus solely on the Netherlands. And when studying Dutch cases, the international importance and international suitability of the theoretical perspectives and research angles developed will always be considered. Continuing on from this, the composition of staff and students in all the Dutch programmes in the domain is becoming increasingly diverse (in many ways). The 'international classroom' being introduced in more and more programmes, facilitates and reinforces the international-comparative orientation of both disciplines.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain has evolved in close cohesion with the other social sciences. While it shares important qualities with the latter - such as attention for formulating theory and the need for rigid methodology - it is also distinct by emphasizing particular qualities. The strong empirical orientation, apparent in the importance attached to primary data collection and fieldwork, is a typical feature of our domain. Furthermore, 'learning by doing' has become an important part of all programmes, partly because it enhances sensitivity to the time and place (context)-bound character of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena and developments. Geographers and planners are constantly challenged to step outside the comfort zone of their own field. Finally, research within the domain has increasingly opened up for a wide spectrum of methods and techniques. This methodological pluralism corresponds with the choice to study socio-spatial problems at various scale levels, which precludes a standard method of analysis.

Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning graduates are able to identify, analyse and explain socio-spatial problems, based on and contributing to the 'body of knowledge' adhering to the discipline. They are also fully conversant with general social-scientific methods and techniques, as well as more domain-specific research methods, such as GIS and spatial impact analysis. The Bachelor's programmes do this, in line with the basic level of the Dublin descriptors, by laying a broad scientific foundation in the two core disciplines, while the Master's programmes train students, again following the Dublin framework, at a theoretically and methodologically more advanced and specialist level.

The programmes under consideration prepare students for a variety of professions and sectors. Typical jobs include researcher, teacher/lecturer, consultant, policy official and project manager. A common characteristic of staff qualified in Human Geography and/or Urban and Regional Planning is their inclination for a comprehensive approach to problems, and their ability to create awareness on the spatial diversity of societal problems. Students with a specialist Master's degree often find themselves in professions directly connected with their specialism, such as spatial planning, area development, urban policy, construction and housing, regional policy, traffic and transport management or environmental policy. The self-studies of the individual degree programmes will inform more specifically on the professions and sectors in which graduates work.

The domain-specific framework of reference (DSFR) has been formulated by the national disciplinary meeting (Disciplineoverleg Geografie en Planologie). The former DSFR has been adjusted, i.e. updated and shortened by omitting the concrete exit qualifications for bachelor and master. The participating programmes have been able to comment on the draft. It has been laid down during the meeting on 6 September 2018.

APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Bachelor's programme Human Geography & Urban and Regional Planning

1. Knowledge and understanding

Graduates have demonstrated a proficiency in knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education and is typically at a level that graduates are able to, whilst supported by academic literature, study the frontiers of their field of study.

A. Graduates have basic knowledge, and are able to produce an overview, of the world's past and recent insights into human geography, spatial planning and demography.

B. Graduates are familiar with the main current social themes, (sub)cultures, research topics and policy aims relating to the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography.

C. Graduates are familiar with the principal theoretical, methodological and ethical foundations of human geography, spatial planning and demography.

D. Graduates have basic knowledge of standard research methods and techniques (both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including GIS) available for problem analysis.

E. Graduates understand the diversity and complexity of social and physical structures and processes, and their interactions with environmental structures and processes in an international context.

F. Graduates are aware of the relevant national and international career prospects for human geographers, spatial planners and demographers, both on the job market and in advanced studies.

2. Applying knowledge and insights

Graduates are able to apply their knowledge and insights in a manner that indicates a professional academic approach to their work or vocation, and they have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.

A. Graduates are able to design and conduct supervised research using standard research methods and techniques (both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including GIS) in the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography.

B. Graduates are able to independently contribute to formulating, analysing and solving problems in the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography. This implies that graduates are aware of the time-space context in which problems occur.

C. Graduates are able to make informed decisions about the theoretical positioning, the use of previous international empirical research, and which academic research methods to apply.

D. Graduates are able to position important research topics, such as those described in the faculty research programme tWIST, within the context of social and policy-related developments in the world.

3. Making evaluations

Graduates have the skills to gather and interpret relevant data to reach an informed conclusion, goal, or judgement – including a reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues – on frontier topics within the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography.

A. Graduates are able to gather data effectively – while considering all possible ethical issues involved – using primary (fieldwork, observation, interviews, surveys) and secondary (quantitative and qualitative data) sources.

B. Graduates are able to interpret research findings in an academic manner and they are aware of possible alternative interpretations.

C. Graduates are able to evaluate the (spatial) consequences of spatial (policy) interventions.

D. Graduates are aware of the interdisciplinary and international character of spatial research and they are able to integrate and analyse information from various themes (including social, cultural, economic, spatial planning, demographic and physical geographic themes).

E. Graduates are able to reflect on and criticise their own academic actions, including in terms of the methods used and the ethical implications of a research project.



4. Communication

Graduates are able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, whilst taken into account the possible intercultural differences.

- A. Graduates are able to convey knowledge and research outcomes to an intercultural audience of specialists or non-specialists, both verbally and in writing.
- B. Graduates are able to present and visualise scientific (spatial) information clearly, for example, by using geographical information systems.
- C. Graduates are able to work constructively as part of a team, whilst taken into account the possible intercultural differences.
- D. Graduates are open and aware to others' perspectives on their work and are open to receive constructive feedback on their work.
- E. Graduates are able to incorporate comments and other types of constructive feedback from peers, either obtained in writing and/or during debate, in their own work.

5. Learning skills

Graduates have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study in their relevant field with a high degree of autonomy.

- A. Graduates have developed academic skills – such as comprehending theories, gathering and analysing academic literature and data – and more general skills – such as computer, reporting and presentation skills – that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study in their relevant field in a national or international university.
- B. Graduates have obtained academic skills needed to independently gather information relevant to solving a research problem within the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography.
- C. Graduates have obtained academic and other skills needed to perform effectively in national and international jobs related to the fields of human geography, spatial planning and demography.

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning & Design

1. Knowledge and understanding

Graduates have demonstrated a proficiency in knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that graduates are able to, whilst supported by academic literature, study the frontiers of their field of study.

- A. Graduates can reproduce an overview of past and present developments in the field of spatial planning and human geography.
- B. Graduates can explain the complexities of spatial planning and design while paying attention to the relationships between planning and the dynamic social, physical and institutional context.
- C. Graduates are able to distinguish the different spatial planning cultures present in the national and international contexts.
- D. Graduates know the theoretical, methodological and ethical foundations of spatial planning and design.
- E. Graduates can describe the main physical variables and natural laws relevant to planning interventions in physical space, and apply the associated basic formulas and models, with a particular focus on the subsoil, building, water, infrastructure and the environment.
- F. Graduates are aware of the relevant Dutch and international career prospects for spatial planners, both in practice and research.

2. Applying knowledge and insights

Graduates are able to apply their knowledge and insights in a manner that indicates a professional academic approach to their work or vocation, and they have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study.

- A. Graduates can utilise contemporary experiences from Dutch planning practice as a starting-point for applying knowledge in an international context.
- B. Graduates can design and develop innovative strategies and solutions for spatial planning challenges with the aid of design techniques in a creative and substantiated manner.



- C. Graduates can devise and design a realistic decision-making and implementation trajectory for institutional planning challenges in a substantiated manner.
- D. Graduates can explain and apply mainstream methods and policies used within the fields of environment, water, infrastructure and spatial planning.
- E. Graduates can independently formulate, analyse and solve problems in the field of spatial planning and human geography.
- F. Graduates are able to make informed decisions about the theoretical positioning of planning questions.
- G. Graduates are able to relate important, globally relevant research topics to the faculty research programme and the research program of the spatial planning department.
- H. Graduates are able to design and conduct supervised research using standard research methods and techniques (both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including GIS) in the field of spatial planning.

3. Making Judgements

Graduates 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.

- A. Graduates can develop a clear vision regarding spatial planning challenges motivated from their own research.
- B. Graduates are aware of the interdisciplinary and international character of spatial research and they are able to integrate, analyse and reflect upon information from various perspectives (including social, cultural, economic, planning, demographic and physical geographic themes).
- C. Graduates are able to give substantiated and critical feedback on analyses, designs and solutions for spatial problems.
- D. Graduates have the ability to reflect on relevant social, scientific, intercultural or ethical issues related to spatial planning.

4. Communication

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

- A. Graduates are able to present theoretical concepts, proposals, research outcomes, designs and spatial strategies by means of visualization, written texts and verbal presentations in a convincing and informed way to an diverse audience of specialists or non-specialists.
- B. Graduates can work as part of an interdisciplinary and international team and are able to interact with a range of other professionals (e.g. experts, administrators stakeholders)
- C. Graduates are able to contribute to thematic discussions and debates in academia and planning practice.

5. Learning skills

Graduates have developed an academic attitude and the learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study, with a high degree of autonomy.

- A. Graduates have developed academic skills (e.g. comprehending theories, gathering and analysing academic literature and data) and general skills (e.g. computer, reporting and presentation skills) – that are necessary to perform effectively in planning related jobs and to undertake further study.
- B. Graduates are able to deduce relevant information from a large number of sources with a high variety of purposes.
- C. Graduates keep up-to-date of contemporary planning developments and are able to integrate this information in spatial planning processes.



APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Bachelor's programme in Human Geography & Urban and Regional Planning

Bachelor 1			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Urbanism and Planning (10 ECTS)	Economic Geography (10 ECTS)	Geographical Information Systems (10 ECTS)	Population Geographies (10 ECTS)
Reflecting on Human Geography and Spatial Planning (5 ECTS)	Statistics 1 (5 ECTS)	Introduction to Academic Research (5 ECTS)	Rural-Urban Relations (5 ECTS)
Bachelor 2			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Migration and Development (10 ECTS)	People, Place & Culture (10 ECTS)	Governance Innovations (10 ECTS)	Methods of Academic Research HGP (10 ECTS)
Physical Geography (5 ECTS)	Healthy Ageing / Real Estate Principles / Population & Development / North America: A Regional Perspective (5 ECTS)	Statistics 2 (5 ECTS)	Landscapes (5 ECTS)
Bachelor 3			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Minor / Optional Courses / Exchange / Internship (30 ECTS)		Philosophy of Social Science (5 ECTS)	International Fieldwork (5 ECTS)
		Geography, Planning and the European Union (5 ECTS)	Bachelor Thesis Project HGP (15 EC)

Learning Pathways:

People,
Space and
Economics

Planning

Research
& Thesis

Bachelor's programme in Spatial Planning & Design

Year 1			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Urbanism and Planning (SP1) (10 ECTS)	Economic Geography (10 ECTS)	Geographical Systems (10 ECTS)	Information Spatial Design Atelier (SD3) (10 ECTS)
Power of Design (SD1) (5 ECTS)	Statistics 1 (5 ECTS)	Introduction to Academic Research (5 ECTS)	Spatial Design Standards and Conditions (SD2) (5 ECTS)
Year 2			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Mobility and Infrastructure Planning (10 ECTS)	Water and Planning (10 ECTS)	Governance Dynamics *) (SP2) (10 ECTS)	Methods of Academic Research SPD (5 ECTS)
			Comparative Urbanism / Global Course (SP3) (5 ECTS)
Physical Geography (5 ECTS)	Urbanism Atelier (SD4) (5 ECTS)	Statistics 2 (5 ECTS)	Landscapes (5 ECTS)
Year 3			
Term 1A	Term 1B	Term 2A	Term 2B
Minor / Optional Courses / Exchange / Internship (30 ECTS)		Environment and Engineering (5 ECTS)	Environment and Planning (5 ECTS)
		Philosophy of Social Science (5 ECTS)	Bachelor Thesis Project SPD (15 EC)

(*) Before 09-2018: "Governance in Theory and Practice"

Learning Pathways:

Spatial Planning (SP)

Spatial Design (SD)

Water Infrastructure & Environment (WIE)

Research & Thesis



APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

DAY 0 Monday April 15th, 2019		
16.45	17.00	Arrival panel and reception at the hotel
17.00	21.00	Preparatory meeting panel
DAY 1 Tuesday April 16th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 1
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.45	12.15	Virtual Reality Lab Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Cultural Geography
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Cultural Geography
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 1 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies / MSc Cultural Geography
DAY 2 Wednesday April 17th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 2
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 2
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.45	12.15	Design Course Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Population Studies
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Population Studies
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 2 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning / MSc Population Studies
DAY 3 Thursday April 18th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 3
09.00	10.00	Meeting Board of Examiners
10.00	10.30	Internal consultation assessment panel, draw up provisional findings
10.30	11.30	Final meeting with programme management
11.30	14.00	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel / draw up provisional findings
14.00	14.30	Oral report provisional conclusion
14.30	14.45	Break
14.45	15.45	Development Dialogue
15.45	16.00	Closing site visit

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied ten theses of the bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. The panel also studied 10 theses of the bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design. 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):

- Lecturer handbook
- Programme committee handbooks and regulations
- Task division model 2018-2019
- Faculty plans for quality agreements
- Vision on teaching and learning
- Strategic report for the Faculty of Spatial Sciences
- Alumni analyses 2010-2017
- FSS career newsletters
- Summary of all relevant courses
- Top 3 most valued courses of the 2018-2019 semester
- 'Richtlijnen interne evaluaties'
- Course guide format
- Minutes of all meetings by the Board of Examiners
- Annual reports of the Board of Examiners
- Assessment protocols
- Assessment plans

Of the following courses, the panel studied complete portfolios (course literature, assignments, tests and answer keys, fieldwork assignments, reports and assessment criteria if relevant, course evaluations):

Bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning

- Population Geographies
- Statistics 1
- Fieldwork abroad

Bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design

- Urbanism and Planning
- Urbanism Atelier
- Environment and Planning

