

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

Research Master Media Studies

Utrecht University

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Research Master Media Studies programme of Utrecht University. The programme was assessed according to the standards of the NVAO limited programme assessment framework.

The panel regards the programme organisation to be appropriate and praises the commitment and engagement of the programme staff.

Programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel.

The programme objectives are valid and sound and reflect the humanities signature. The panel sees the breadth of the programme and regards bringing the different fields within the programme domain together in one programme to be ambitious. The programme has a clear identity in terms of the interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to subjects in this domain. The strength of the programme lies in the high conceptual and theoretical level. The panel recommends to be more explicit on methodology and methods in the objectives and intended learning outcomes. The panel welcomes the benchmark with similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. The programme is well-embedded in a productive research setting, as is shown by the close relation to the Media and Performance research group of Utrecht University Institute for Cultural Inquiry.

The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the intended learning outcomes of the programme and meet the level to be expected in research master programmes.

The panel appreciates the programme offering students the options to be employed in academia and to pursue PhD trajectories, but also to work in the non-academic professional field.

The panel approves of both the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction of the programme, as the panel regards the reasons given by programme management and the Faculty Board to be valid.

The panel is pleased to understand the number of incoming students has risen and now is at the number of 16 incoming students per year. The admission requirements are adequate. Although the current admission procedures are valid, the panel advises to organise the admission processes more transparently, involving in a formal sense more than one person.

The intended learning outcomes are appropriately covered in the programme curriculum. Although training in methodology and research methods and techniques is addressed in the curriculum, the panel recommends to have students be trained more explicitly in these subjects. The panel considers the curriculum to be coherent, but advises to be more clear in describing the curriculum structure. The terminology of profiles and specialisations used currently may be confusing.

The lecturers in the programme are experts in the subjects taught in the programme, covering the wide range of subjects addressed. They are also good researchers. Their educational capabilities are up to standard. They introduce research in the lectures and are trained in teaching in the international classroom. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for the lecturers.

The panel welcomes the small-scale, intensive and activating education in the programme and the corresponding teaching methods adopted. The student guidance by the mentors and study advisor has been organised very effectively. The study load of the programme is appropriate for a research master programme. The student success rates are satisfactory, but the panel suggests to try and raise these figures.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty guidelines. The position and responsibilities of the Faculty Board of Examiners are up to standard.

The examination methods correspond to the course objectives and course contents. The panel appreciates the portfolios of smaller written assignments in the courses and the feedback students receive on these. This system allows students to balance the study load of the programme.

The panel is positive about the scheduling, supervision and assessment procedures for both the internship and the Research Master thesis. The panel welcomes the internship and thesis committees approving the internship or thesis proposals. The panel suggests to have the thesis proposals be approved formally by the first and second examiner. The internship assessments by the supervisors, taking into account the assessment by the internship supervisor, are appropriate. The thesis assessments are conducted in a reliable way, involving two examiners and assessment forms with relevant criteria. The *rubric* methods should, however, be added on the assessment form. The comments given by the examiners could be more elaborate, especially in case of low or high grades.

The measures taken by programme management and the Board of Examiners to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments are considered by the panel to be satisfactory. The panel appreciates the thesis assessments' and thesis grades' calibration sessions of groups of examiners.

The panel finds the level and contents of the theses to be up to standard. None of the theses is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. Some of the theses would have been graded slightly lower by the panel than the grades given by the programme examiners. The theses are theoretically strong. They are methodologically up to standard, but less strong than theoretically. In the theses a wide variety of topics is addressed, which is consistent with the broad profile of the programme. The subjects covered are quite innovative. Some theses may be considered to be publishable as journal articles, after reworking the theses in the form of journal articles. The panel recommends to be more ambitious in terms of the publication of theses and to intensify the efforts to have the theses published.

The panel regards 25 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to PhD trajectories to be adequate as outcome. The panel advises to monitor the careers of programme graduates more closely.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the Research Master Media Studies programme of Utrecht University assesses this programme to meet the standards of the NVAO limited programme assessment framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be positive. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to accredit this programme.

Rotterdam, 15 April 2020

Prof dr. A.M.A. van den Oever
(panel chair)

Drs. W. Vercouteren
(panel secretary)

2. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: M Media Studies (research)
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master
Grade: MA
Number of credits: 120 EC
Specialisation: Media, Art and Performance Studies
Location: Utrecht
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction: English)
Registration in CROHO: 21PD-60832

Name of institution: Utrecht University
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

3.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The Research Master Media Studies programme of Utrecht University is a two-year (120 EC) research master programme in the field of media, art and performance. The name of the programme is Research Master Media, Art and Performance Studies.

The programme is one of the eleven research master programmes of the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University. The Faculty offers a wide range of bachelor programmes and one-year master programmes as well. The coordination of the staffing of and teaching in the programme rests with the Department of Media and Culture Studies of the Faculty. The programme is part of the School of Media and Culture Studies within the Faculty. The director of studies of the School is responsible for the contents and the quality of teaching of the programme. The programme coordinator takes care of the day-to-day programme management and is the first point of contact for lecturers and students. The Curriculum Committee, being composed of both lecturers and students, advises the director of studies on the programme quality. The Board of Examiners for this and the other research master programmes of the Faculty has the authority to assure the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme and to ensure students reaching the programme intended learning outcomes. The Faculty Assessment Committee advises on these issues.

The panel was informed about the recommendations made by the previous external assessment panel, six year ago as well as about the steps programme management has taken to follow up on these recommendations.

The programme objectives are to educate students in subjects in the domain of media, art and performance. Students are taught to study these subjects from interdisciplinary, historical and comparative perspectives. Students are, in particular, educated to investigate how emerging forms of media, art and performance, being historically and culturally embedded, interact with and relate to technological, social and cultural transformations. A wide range of subjects as well as the relations between these subjects are studied. These subjects and relations are investigated primarily from the perspective of the humanities. The social sciences perspective is, however, also taken into account. The methodology offered in the programme is not so much perceived as a range of methods to be applied, but is more concept-driven, which means the methods to be applied depend upon the specific concepts and theoretical framework studied.

The programme is firmly embedded in the Media and Performance research group of the Utrecht University Institute for Cultural Inquiry (ICON). Lecturers teaching in the programme are affiliated with this research group. This clearly contributes to the research orientation of the programme. The

programme distinguishes itself from other Dutch research master programmes in this domain through the humanities signature and through the comparative approach to the subjects in this domain. Internationally, the programme may be regarded to have a rather unique position through the integrative approach of media, art and performance, through the historical and comparative perspectives and through the focus on transformation processes.

Students are primarily educated to be employed in academia and to proceed to PhD-trajectories. The programme, however, also trains students for research-oriented positions outside of academia. The programme is geared towards both options.

The programme objectives have been translated into the programme's intended learning outcomes. These include, as the main elements, knowledge of and insight in the subjects in the programme domain, advanced knowledge of one of the specialisms within the programme domain, thorough knowledge of research methods and methodologies, skills to conduct and report on academic research, applying knowledge and skills in a professional manner, and skills to communicate insights and conclusions to various audiences.

The programme name is English and the programme language of instruction is in English as well. The main reasons to offer the programme in the English language are to meet the international orientation of the domain and to allow students to proceed to international PhD positions or to enter the international labour market. The language of the programme is in line with the Faculty of Humanities language policy.

Considerations

The panel regards the organisation of the programme to be appropriate. The panel praises the commitment and engagement of the programme staff.

The panel notes programme management adequately responded to the recommendations of the previous external assessment panel. The recommendations were followed up on by programme management.

The programme objectives are valid and sound. The panel recognises the humanities signature of the programme. The panel sees the breadth of the programme and regards bringing the different fields within the programme domain together in one programme to be ambitious. The programme has a clear identity in terms of the interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to subjects in this domain. In the panel's view, the strength of the programme lies in the conceptual and theoretical level. The panel recommends to be more explicit on methodology and methods in the programme objectives and the programme intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the benchmark with similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad and values the distinctive profile of the programme.

The panel is convinced the programme is solidly embedded in a productive research setting, as is exemplified by the close relation of the programme to the Media and Performance research group of Utrecht University Institute for Cultural Inquiry.

The programme objectives have been adequately translated into the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The intended learning outcomes correspond to the level to be expected in research master programmes.

The panel appreciates the programme offering students the options to be employed in academia and to pursue PhD trajectories, but also to work in the non-academic professional field.

The panel approves of both the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction of the programme, as the panel regards the reasons given by programme management and the Faculty Board to be valid.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The number of students entering the programme increased significantly over the last few years. The number of incoming students was stable in the years from 2013 to 2016 with on average 9 students, but rose to 15 to 16 students in 2017, 2018 and 2019. From a financial perspective, the target figure for the intake is about 20 students. The admission requirements for the programme are academic bachelor degrees in relevant fields within the Humanities, high academic achievements and a clear and strong motivation for the programme domain. Applicants have quite different disciplinary backgrounds. They also are from a wide range of countries. About 75 % of the students are international. Applicants are to submit their bachelor study results, written motivation for the programme and proof of academic writing skills. The programme coordinator schedules skype interviews with all applicants. The programme coordinator is in charge of the admissions, but discusses applications with staff members in the programme.

The curriculum of the programme comprises 120 EC and takes two years or four semesters to complete. Programme management explained the relations between the curriculum and the intended learning outcomes, showing the curriculum to meet the intended learning outcomes of the programme. All of the students in the programme take 40 EC of compulsory courses (eight courses of 5 EC per course). All of them also conduct the individual research project at the end of the curriculum in the form of the Research Master thesis (30 EC). The compulsory courses are all scheduled in the first year. The first semester is composed entirely of compulsory courses. In addition, the curriculum allows students to select one out of three profiles. The first profile is composed of Dutch National Research School courses (10 EC) and electives or tutorials (40 EC). The second profile allows students to do an internship (15 EC), to take Research School courses (10 EC) and to take electives or tutorials (25 EC). The third profile facilitates students to study one semester abroad (30 EC). These students also take Research School courses (5 EC) and electives or tutorials (15 EC). The compulsory courses introduce students to the core concepts of and current debates in the media, art and performance studies domain. In the curriculum, no dedicated research methods and techniques courses have been scheduled. Research methods and techniques are part of the content-related courses in the programme. Subjects taught in courses, are quite often linked to ongoing research of the lecturers. The electives or tutorials offer students the chance to specialise in specific subjects. Students may only take up to 10 EC of tutorials. Some electives are pre-approved and may be taken by students at all times. Other electives have to be approved by the Board of Examiners. Electives have to be courses in the humanities field. By assembling specific electives, students may specialise in fields within the programme. The Dutch National Research School courses are offered by the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA) or the Research School for Media Studies (RMeS). The internships may be done internally, at one of the research groups of the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University or externally, at another university. They may also be done in professional contexts. Internships should be research internships, having clear

research contents. Study abroad allows students to go on exchange and to gain research experience at one of the international partner universities of Utrecht University. Students may take courses of a general nature at bachelor level (e.g. statistics), provided they do extra work. Students may also take courses of one-year master programmes. In this case, they are not obliged to do extra work. The courses have to be approved by the Board of Examiners. Students rarely take these courses.

The lecturing team teaching in the programme has been quite stable over the years and consists of 16 lecturers. They are experts in the subjects, taught in the programme. Together, they cover the wide range of subjects in the programme domain. All lecturers have PhDs. They are expert researchers in their fields and publish on a regular basis in academic journals. The lecturers are affiliated as researchers to the Utrecht University Institute for Cultural Inquiry, which was assessed very favourably in the most recent external research review. Among the lecturers are three full professors, leading the three fields within the programme domain. All staff members are BKO-certified (BKO is University Teaching Qualification). More than 50 % of them are SKO-certified (SKO is Senior Teaching Qualification). The lecturers are trained to teach in the international classroom. Lecturers find teaching in this programme to be rewarding. In addition, many guest lecturers lecture in the programme. Students expressed to appreciate their lecturers for their accessibility and approachability.

The educational concept of the programme, being in line with the Utrecht University educational vision, entails small-scale, intensive and activating teaching and is, in particular, meant to foster the academic skills and the professional work ethos of the students. The teaching methods adopted are, among others, small-scale seminars in the courses, individual or small-scale tutorials, and individual supervision in research internships and in final research projects. The international classroom, with students from different backgrounds and various countries, adds to the value of the programme, as different perspectives are brought forward. Students in the programme regard the programme to be quite intensive and the study load to be rather high. This is, so they say, in part due to the extra study activities they undertake in and alongside the programme. Students are guided both individually and in small groups by their mentor. Mentors are senior staff members, who also lecture in the programme. Mentors advise students, among others, on the study path to be taken and on the choices to be made in the curriculum. Mentors also monitor the grades obtained by students. The study advisor monitors students' study progress and confers with the programme coordinator in case of delays. Students may turn to the study advisor in case of personal problems. Students appreciate their mentors' assistance and support in choosing the right study path amidst the many choices in the programme, so they expressed. The number of drop-outs in the programme is limited to one or two students per cohort. The programme student success rates are about 30 % after two years and slightly more than 63 % after three years.

Considerations

The panel is pleased to understand the number of incoming students has risen and now is at the level of about 16 incoming students per year. The admission requirements are appropriate for this programme. Although the current admission procedures are valid, the panel advises to organise the admission processes more transparently, involving in a formal sense more than one person.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are appropriately covered in the curriculum of the programme. The panel notes methodology and research methods and techniques being incorporated in the courses and no specific courses on methodology or methods and techniques being scheduled. The panel recommends students to be trained more explicitly in these subjects. The panel considers the curriculum to be coherent, but advises to be more clear in describing the curriculum structure. The terminology of profiles and specialisations used currently may be confusing. The coherence of the curriculum across the years and the semesters is appropriate.

The lecturers in the programme are regarded by the panel to be experts in the subjects taught in the programme, covering the wide range of subjects addressed. They are also good researchers. Their educational capabilities are up to standard, among others proven by the very high proportion of BKO-certified and SKO-certified lecturers. They introduce research in the lectures and are trained in teaching in the international classroom. The panel notes the appreciation of the students for the lecturers.

The panel welcomes the small-scale, intensive and activating education in the programme and the corresponding teaching methods. The student guidance by the mentors and study advisor has been organised very effectively. The panel notes this guidance to be intensive and to allow students to find their way among the many choices presented to them. The study load of the programme is appropriate for a research master programme. The student success rates are satisfactory, but the panel suggests to try and raise these figures.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations are in line with the assessment guidelines of the Faculty of Humanities. Directed by the Faculty guidelines, the intended learning outcomes of the programme, the course contents and examinations are aligned in the programme assessment plan.

As has been indicated, the Board of Examiners for this and the other research master programmes of the Faculty has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of this programme. The Faculty Assessment Committee advises on general issues regarding examinations and assessments.

The examination methods in the courses are predominantly final written assignments at the end of the courses or portfolios including smaller written assignments and (reports of) oral assignments. These portfolios allow students to spread the study load of the courses over the entire timespan of the courses, preventing peaks in the work load. Students are given feedback on these smaller assignments. They may include this feedback in their final portfolio to be submitted at the end of the course. In case of group assignments, students are to report on the collaboration to prevent free-riding affecting the grade. Group assignments are only very few in the programme.

Internship proposals are to be approved by the internship committee, being composed of three staff members. One of the main criteria for approval are the research contents of the internship. Students are individually guided by the supervisor of the programme. Internships are graded by the supervisor on the basis of the research outcomes and the reflection report, both to be submitted by the student at the end of the internship. In assessing the internship, the supervisor takes into account the assessment by the internship supervisor.

Students may get ideas for their Research Master thesis in seminars or tutorials. Students are given advice on the thesis topics by their mentor. Thereupon, students find and contact the supervisor for the thesis. The supervisor is to approve the work plan for the thesis, before students are allowed to begin. The thesis proposals are approved by the thesis committee, consisting of three senior staff members. In the course of the thesis writing process, frequent meetings of student and supervisor are scheduled. The theses are assessed and graded by two examiners, the supervisor and the second, independent assessor. Both fill out the thesis assessment form, add comments on the assessment forms and come together to determine the grade. In case of significant differences in judgement between these examiners, a third examiner is asked to assess the thesis.

Programme management and the Board of Examiners have taken measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The assessment plan for the programme lists the course contents and the course examinations and their relation with the

intended learning outcomes of the programme. Prior to the examinations, students are informed about the criteria for assessments and grades. Examiners are appointed by the Board of Examiners and have to meet predefined criteria. The Board of Examiners reviews course examinations, internships and theses in a three-year cycle. So, each of these is reviewed every three years. Course examinations are always checked in case of deviant grade distributions. Groups of examiners meet regularly to discuss thesis assessments and to calibrate the standards for assessing the theses. All written assignments are checked for fraud and plagiarism. Lecturers are obliged to report cases to the Board of Examiners. Cases are rare.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Faculty guidelines. The position and responsibilities of the Faculty Board of Examiners are up to standard.

The panel regards the examination methods to correspond to the course objectives and the course contents. The panel appreciates the portfolios of smaller written assignments in the courses and the feedback students receive on these. This system allows students to balance the study load of the programme.

The panel is positive about the scheduling, supervision and assessment procedures for both the internship and the Research Master thesis. The panel welcomes the internship and thesis committees approving the internship or thesis proposals. The panel suggests to have the thesis proposals be approved and signed by the first and second examiner. The internship assessments by the supervisors, taking into account the assessment by the internship supervisor, are appropriate. The thesis assessments are conducted in a reliable way, involving two examiners and assessment forms with relevant criteria. The *rubric* methods should, however, be added on the assessment form. The comments given by the examiners could be more elaborate, especially in case of low or high grades.

The measures taken by programme management and the Board of Examiners to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments are considered by the panel to be satisfactory. The measures promote the validity, reliability and transparency of the examinations and assessments. The panel appreciates the thesis assessments' and thesis grades' calibration sessions of groups of examiners.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 3, Student assessment.

3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel reviewed fifteen Research Master Theses of the most recent years. In the thesis, students are to demonstrate being able to investigate and reflect upon subjects in the field of media, art and performance from interdisciplinary, comparative and historical perspectives, to identify research questions about these subjects, to answer these questions, and in answering these questions to help understand these subjects in historical, cultural, and social contexts.

The average grade of both the courses and the theses is about 8.0. The proportion of cum laudes is quite substantial with about 30 % of the graduates

An estimated 25 % of the programme graduates proceed to PhD positions at universities in the Netherlands or abroad. Students in the programme with whom the panel met, expressed feeling well-prepared for PhD trajectories. Programme graduates also work in professional contexts of cultural institutions, such as archives, museums, art institutions, or theatres, the creative industries, educational institutions, journalism, or broadcasting corporations.

Considerations

The theses the panel studied, match the intended learning outcomes. The panel finds the level and contents of the theses to be up to standard. None of the theses is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. Some of the theses would have been graded slightly lower by the panel than the grades given by the programme examiners. The theses are theoretically strong. They are methodologically up to standard, but less strong than theoretically. In the theses a wide variety of topics is addressed, which is consistent with the broad profile of the programme. The subjects covered are quite innovative. Some theses may be considered to be publishable as journal articles, after reworking the theses in the form of journal articles. The panel recommends to be more ambitious in terms of the publication of theses and to intensify the efforts to have the theses published.

The panel welcomes the programme preparing students both for academia and for non-academic positions. The panel regards 25 % of the programme's graduates to proceed to PhD trajectories to be adequate as outcome. The panel advises to monitor the careers of programme graduates more closely.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the programme to meet standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes.

4. Overview of assessments

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

5. Recommendations

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

- To be more explicit on methodology and methods in the programme objectives and the programme intended learning outcomes.
- To organise the admission processes in a more transparent manner, in a formal sense involving more than one person.
- To describe the curriculum structure in clearer terms.
- To train students more explicitly in methodology and research methods and techniques.
- To try and raise the student success rates.
- To have the thesis proposals be approved and signed by the first and second examiner.
- To add the *rubric* methods on the thesis assessment form.
- To require comments given by the examiners on the thesis assessment forms to be more elaborate, especially in case of low or high grades.
- To be more ambitious in terms of the publication of theses and to intensify the efforts to have the theses published.
- To monitor the careers of programme graduates more closely.

Appendix: Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Utrecht University to support the limited framework programme assessment process for the Research Master Media Studies programme of this University. The objective of the assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in both the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands of September 2018 (officially published in Stcrt. 2019 no. 3198, on 29 January 2019), and the NVAO Specification of additional criteria for research master's programmes of 30 May 2016.

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster WO OZM Media Studies convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of panel candidates.

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

- Prof. dr. A.M.A. van den Oever, Associate Professor of Film, Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, the Netherlands; Director of Studies Research Master in Arts Media and Literary Studies and Research Master Cultural Leadership, University of Groningen; Extraordinary Professor of Film and Visual Media, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State, South Africa (panel chair);
- Dr. M.N. Goddard, Reader and Course Leader in Film, Television and Moving Image, University of Westminster, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Prof. dr. N.N. Kristensen, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen, Denmark (panel member);
- Dr. S.I. Aasman PhD, Associate Professor Media Studies, Head Department Media and Journalism Studies; Director Centre for Digital Humanities, University of Groningen, the Netherlands (panel member);
- E. Bulten MSc, Graduate Master Communication, Health and Life Sciences, Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands (student member).

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

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

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit were discussed. In the course of the process of preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator had contact to fine-tune the process. The

activities prior to the site visit were performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

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

The panel chair and the panel members were provided with the critical reflection report of the programme. This report addressed the standards of the NVAO Assessment framework. In this report, the student chapter was included. The appendices to this report comprised the programme Education and Examination Regulations, curriculum overview, assessment plan, programme study guide, teaching staff qualifications, Media and Performance Studies research groups and research initiatives. Panel members were also given access to the programme electronic learning system. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates, these final projects being part of the selection made by the process coordinator. The panel members were also sent the Trained Eye Research Masters document of Certiked evaluation agency, this document being the elaboration of the NVAO Assessment framework.

Several weeks prior to the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the critical reflection report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

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

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

On 15 January 2020, the panel conducted the site visit on the Utrecht University campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the planned schedule. The schedule was as follows.

08.30 – 09.00 Arrival panel

09.00 – 09.45 Faculty Board representative, director of studies and programme coordinator

09.45 – 10.45 Programme management

- 11.00 – 11.45 Lecturers of courses in the programme and final project examiners
- 11.45 – 12.45 Panel lunch (closed session), including open office hours
- 12.45 – 13.30 Chair and members Board of Examiners
- 13.30 – 14.15 Students, Curriculum Committee student member, and programme alumni
- 14.15 – 15.45 Deliberations panel (closed session)
- 15.45 – 16.00 Presentation by panel chair of main findings to programme representatives
- 16.00 – 16.30 Development dialogue between panel and programme management

Open office hours were communicated timely by programme management to staff members and students. No persons presented themselves during these open office hours. On the day of the site visit, the panel members were given the opportunity to study University and Faculty policy documents and rules and regulations, Curriculum Committee minutes, the most recent Board of Examiners annual report, course material and examinations of courses.

In a closed session in the second part of the site visit, the panel considered and weighed the findings, formulated the considerations and arrived at conclusions about the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the findings, considerations, assessments and recommendations to programme representatives.

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

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