

**MASTER'S PROGRAMME**  
**LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
**LEIDEN UNIVERSITY**

QANU  
Catharijnesingel 56  
PO Box 8035  
3503 RA Utrecht  
The Netherlands

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

Project number: Q0725  
© 2020 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 MASTER’S PROGRAMME LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY ..... 5**

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME..... 5

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION..... 5

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL ..... 5

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL ..... 6

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT..... 11

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

**APPENDICES ..... 25**

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES ..... 27

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM ..... 28

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT ..... 30

APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL ..... 31

This report was finalised on 5 March 2020



# REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

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

### Master's programme Latin American Studies

Name of the programme:	Latijns-Amerikastudies
International name:	Latin American Studies
CROHO number:	60174
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location(s):	Leiden
Mode of study:	full-time
Language of instruction:	English, Spanish and Portuguese
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/05/2020

The visit of the assessment panel Region Studies to the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University took place on 5, 6 and 7 June 2019.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Leiden University
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 4 March 2019. The panel that assessed the master's programme Latin American Studies consisted of:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies];



- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies].

The panel was supported by dr. E. (Els) Schröder and drs. E.G.M. (Mariette) Huisjes, who acted as secretaries.

## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The master's programme Latin American Studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University was part of the cluster assessment Region Studies. Between March 2019 and November 2019 the panel assessed 38 programmes at five universities: Radboud University, Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Groningen.

Leiden University has 19 programmes in the cluster Region Studies. To ensure that the workload for panel members was evenly distributed and all programmes were properly assessed, two site visits were planned (in June and November 2019).

### *Panel members*

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Van Nuffelen, research professor Cultural History of the Ancient World at Ghent University (Belgium) [chair];
- Prof. dr. D.M. (Diederik) Oostdijk, professor in English Literature at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. A. (Umar) Ryad, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.J.C. (Eibert) Tigchelaar, research professor of the research unit Biblical Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gunnar) De Boel, professor in (Greek) Linguistics and Modern Greek and Byzantine Literature (Department of Literary Studies) at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. I. (Inge) Brinkman, professor in African Studies at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. G. (Gert) Buelens, professor in English and American Literature at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Dr. D. (Diana Bullen) Presciutti, senior lecturer in Art History, director of Global Studies and director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Centre at the University of Essex (United Kingdom);
- R.A. (Rianne) Clerc-de Groot MA, teacher in Classics at the Cygnus Gymnasium in Amsterdam;
- Dr. D. (Dario) Fazzi, lecturer in North American Studies and International Studies at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. A.F.R. (Ann) Heirman, professor in Chinese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Axel) Holvoet, professor at the Institute of the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic of Vilnius University (Lithuania);
- Prof. dr. V. (Vincent) Houben, professor Geschichte und Gesellschaft Südostasiens at Humboldt Universität Berlin (Germany);
- Prof. dr. E.M.H. (Helena) Houvenaghel, professor in Spanish Language and Culture at Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. D. (Daeyeol) Kim, professor at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INaLCO) of the Université Sorbonne Paris Cité (France);
- L. (Lotte) Metz MA, teacher in Greek and Latin at the Stedelijk Gymnasium Nijmegen;
- Prof. dr. J. (John) Nawas, professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. A. (Andreas) Niehaus, professor in Japanese Language and Culture at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. J.L.M. (Jan) Papy, professor in Latin Literature at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Dr. N.A. (Nicolet) Boekhoff-van der Voort, teacher Islam studies and coordinator Graduate School for Humanities at Radboud University;
- C. (Charlotte) van der Voort, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture, and pre-master's student Dutch Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];

- L. (Lara) van Lookeren Campagne, bachelor's student in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- G.M. (Gerieke) Prins, bachelor's student in Social and Migration History with a minor in Latin American Studies at Leiden University [student member];
- E.L. (Emma) Mendez Correa, bachelor's student in Greek and Latin Language and Culture at Leiden University [student member];
- Prof. dr. L.P. (Lars) Rensmann, professor in European Politics and Society at University of Groningen [referee International Studies at Leiden University];
- Em. prof. dr. C.H.M. (Kees) Versteegh, emeritus professor in Arabic and Islam at Radboud University [referee Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies at University of Amsterdam];
- Prof. dr. H. (Harco) Willems, professor in Egyptology at KU Leuven (Belgium) and director of the excavation in Dayr al-Barshā (Egypt) [referee Ancient Near East Studies at Leiden University];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jaap) Wisse, professor in Latin Language & Literature at Newcastle University (United Kingdom) [referee Greek, Latin and Classics at the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam].

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. Els Schröder. She acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University and in the first site visit to Leiden University. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the start of the site visits as well as the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at the other site visits and reviewed the draft reports. During her leave of absence, she was replaced by her colleagues at QANU. Dr. Irene Conradie acted as project manager in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and in the second site visit to Leiden University. Dr. Anna Sparreboom acted as project manager in the site visit to the University of Groningen.

Several secretaries assisted in this cluster assessment: drs. Trees Graas, employee of QANU, also acted as secretary in the site visit to Radboud University; drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretary for QANU, also acted as secretary in the first site visit to Leiden University and in the site visit to the University of Groningen; drs. Erik van der Spek, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the second site visit to Leiden University; drs. Marielle Klerks, freelance secretary for QANU, acted as secretary in the combined site visit to the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The QANU project managers and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

#### *Preparation*

On 22 November 2018, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework. Prior to the site visit, the panel members received instruction by telephone and e-mail on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

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

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms, based on a provided list of graduates between 2016-2018 (see Appendix 4).

#### *Site visit*

The site visit to Leiden University took place on 5, 6 and 7 June 2019.



At the start of each site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners. Members of the Programme Committee were included as part of the interviews with staff and students. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for a private consultation were received concerning this programme.

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.

Separate from the site visit, two representatives of the programme and one panel member conducted a development dialogue for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies in Leiden on 20 June 2019. The results of this conversation are summarised in a separate report, which was harmonised with the panel and which will be published through the programmes' communication channels.

#### *Report*

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

### *Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes*

The panel considers the profile of the master's programme Latin American Studies to be appealing and original. Its most distinguishing trait is that it combines three disciplines: Public policies and social programmes, Cultural analysis of image and discourse and Language variation and bilingualism. The panel endorses the international focus of the programme. It recommends fortifying its unique selling points and marketing the programme well and broadly, in order to attract international students and secure its position. Furthermore, the panel is convinced that the potential for interdisciplinarity inherent in the programme is largely underexploited, and that using its potential to the fullest would strengthen its profile.

The panel finds the intended learning outcomes of the master's programme Latin American Studies well-formulated and of an appropriate academic level. They meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The panel advises the Faculty of Humanities to harmonise the intended learning outcomes for all of its programmes and check any reformulation in terms of terminology and categorisation to other programmes within the faculty. This will enhance transparency.

### *Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment*

The content of the programme is of sufficient depth and academic level, the panel found. It particularly liked the way in which theory is connected to region-specific elements. This is done really well, and deserves a compliment. Also, research and teaching are strongly linked, with students drawn into the lecturers' research projects. The panel considers this another asset of the programme, since it is stimulating and inspiring for students.

The structure of the programme is well thought through, with a fertile combination of course-work, field research and full immersion in local language and culture. Specialised staff expertise could be brought together to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in courses or thesis projects. The panel agrees with the programme that advanced competency in Spanish or Portuguese is a vital entry point to the region and that therefore it would be good to have as many courses as possible in the target languages. However, in practice this number seems very limited. The panel encourages the programme to strengthen the use of target languages in the courses. Teaching methods, feasibility, student support, student-specific services and labour market orientation the panel found generally good, and contributing to the students achieving the intended learning outcomes. Intensive teaching in small groups is definitely a strong asset, highly appreciated by the students. A minor feasibility issue is that students who enrolled in September have limited space for their field work. Possibly the structure of the curriculum needs to be tweaked slightly to their needs.

Staff of the programme are experts well qualified for teaching, the panel found. It values that there are quite a few native speakers amongst the lecturers, but it regrets that neither the Cultural analysis nor the Language variation tracks have a full professor. Workload for lecturers in the master's programme Latin American Studies is very high, even higher than in other humanities programmes the panel looked into. This has an impact on the quality of the programme. The panel finds the workload worrying, but was relieved to find that tackling this problem has a high priority for the Faculty Board. The panel commends the faculty for its directive and supportive approach in these matters. Its advice is to carefully analyse the workload issues and emphasise team spirit and the setting of collective goals. Work load monitoring and relief needs continuous attention at Faculty level as well as the programme level. Possibly for the master's programme Latin American Studies, letting go of the February enrolment date, offering fewer courses and co-teaching interdisciplinary courses may offer some relief.

### *Standard 3: Student assessment*

According to the panel, the master's programme Latin American Studies has a sound and transparent assessment system and a well-functioning system of quality assurance. The assessment plan links



the courses to the intended learning outcomes and categorises the assessment methods. These assessment methods are sufficiently varied, in the panel's view. The panel likes that the assessment methods lead the students through an upward curve, challenging them more and more in their capacities to conduct original research.

The assessment of master's theses is clearly designed and its quality is guaranteed by having it done by two independent examiners, with the Board of Examiners aiming to avoid fixed couples. The panel endorses this goal and believes that the keen eye of colleagues from other tracks or even outside the programme can be of added value to permanently reinforce the objectivity of the assessment. It agreed with the assessment of the theses in the sample set and found it well substantiated.

Finally, the panel notes that the Board of Examiners for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies is adequately performing its task to assure quality of assessment, even though it is clearly troubled by lack of time. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can continue to create support for further professionalisation.

*Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes*

Based on the assessment policy, the quality of the master's theses and its discussion with alumni, the panel determines that master's graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The panel found the theses in the sample it studied of good quality, demonstrating original topics, sound knowledge of scholarly debates and good analysis and argumentation. The field work is applied well in the theses, the panel found. It would be interesting, in its view, to see if more multidisciplinary teaching could foster more interdisciplinary theses. Then the strengths of the programme would be optimally used, according to the panel.

Research carried out by the faculty shows that master graduates find employment in a wide variety of sectors. Graduates not only profit from the regional knowledge they acquired, but also from transferable skills such as reading and writing at an academic level, problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. The panel accepts the programme's claim that these skills are currently in high demand.

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

*Master's programme Latin American Studies*

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 of the panel, prof. dr. Peter Van Nuffelen, and the secretary, dr. Els Schröder, 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: 5 March 2020



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

## Context

The master's programme Latin American Studies is one of 18 master's programmes offered by the Faculty of Humanities at Leiden University. The faculty is shaped as a matrix of study programmes and institutes. The institutes harbour research and appoint academic staff members, the study programmes are the units within which teaching is organised. The master's programme is led by a Programme Board, that falls under immediate responsibility of the Faculty Board. It consists of a head of department from the academic staff and a student member. The Faculty Board is advised by a Programme Committee, consisting of equal numbers of lecturers and students. Assessment within the master's programme is supervised by the Board of Examiners, that also serves the bachelor's programme in Latin American Studies. The programme has an annual intake of 20 to 30 students. About a third of these come from abroad.

### **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

### *Profile*

The internationally oriented master's programme Latin American Studies at Leiden University aims to provide students with knowledge of and insight into the Latin American region from one of three disciplinary perspectives. Additionally, its objective is to equip students with analytical, critical, methodological and communication skills that are valuable in the labour market. Besides these general skills, graduates possess knowledge and understanding of a vast region, with a significant economic, ecological and political impact.

Students choose one of three tracks, each of which ties in with the teaching and research expertise of the lecturers in the programme:

- Public policies and social programmes (combining expertise in modern history, political economy, politics, international relations, anthropology and sociology)
- Cultural analysis of image and discourse (combining expertise in literary studies, film and media studies, cultural studies, visual and performing arts and new media)
- Language variation and bilingualism (combining expertise in sociolinguistics, morphosyntax, language acquisition, heritage languages, minority and indigenous languages, language policy and language contact).

The most prominent characteristic of this programme is the chance it offers students to combine different disciplines, as well as the liberty to focus their research on any of the countries in Latin America. Another aspect that makes the programme stand out is the fact that its students base their master's thesis on fieldwork in Latin America. Finally, the programme distinguishes itself by intensive, research-led teaching in small groups.

The only other Dutch master's programme in Latin American Studies is offered by the University of Amsterdam. This programme is also multidisciplinary and most related to the Public policies track at Leiden University. It lacks the Cultural Analysis and Linguistics tracks, however and is therefore more narrowly defined. Related master's programmes abroad are in Manchester, Stockholm and Los Angeles, but they all lack the linguistics component.

The panel finds the profile of this master's programme appealing and original, particularly in its concentration on three disciplines. This offers excellent opportunities for a truly multidisciplinary approach, in the panel's view.



Graduates from the programme are trained for careers in management, marketing, translation, research bodies and government and non-governmental organisations. They may also decide to follow a postgraduate teacher training programme or pursue a PhD. Judging from the labour market survey, the programme responds to a societal need; its graduates have no trouble in finding jobs. The panel considers the programme's international focus to be an asset, because it makes for a lively international classroom and also enables the programme to recruit students from all over the world. The panel recommends the programme fortifying its unique selling points and marketing them well and widely. In this way the programme will attract a sufficient number of students to secure its position.

Securing the programme's position is important to the panel, for in general it is impressed by the diversity and depth of the university's cultural profile, to which the master's programme Latin American Studies contributes. A small programme like this is vulnerable, because it is relatively expensive to maintain. On the other hand, the panel strongly emphasises that such programmes are of vital importance, not only to Leiden University but to the Netherlands as a whole. If academic research is no longer done in certain specialised subfields of the humanities, the university can no longer offer broad programmes with sufficient depth, nor electives to students in other programmes. Also, academics from other faculties and universities in the Netherlands will be deprived of this specialised knowledge. And if expertise in less studied languages and cultures is no longer passed from one generation to the next, the Netherlands will weaken its international position. In cultivating knowledge of many cultures, Leiden University has a long standing tradition; it is an essential part of its identity and gives the university a unique position in the Netherlands. The faculty is committed to keep this tradition alive and protect small fields like Latin American Studies, the panel found. It wholeheartedly supports this ambition, in the interest of Dutch society as a whole.

The panel regrets that there is a disbalance in student numbers between the three tracks: in the 2017-2018 academic year 22 students chose the Public policy track, 7 chose Cultural analysis and 2 chose Language variation. This huge gap in student numbers might be repaired by rebalancing the disciplines in the bachelor's programme and by integrating the target languages into the three tracks in a consistent way, as the panel suggested in its report on this programme. At the same time, the gap also might be repaired by fully exploiting the high potential for interdisciplinarity which is inherent in the programme. The specialised staff expertise could be brought together to adopt an interdisciplinary, innovative and enriching perspective in courses or thesis projects, for instance on 'cultural analysis and language', 'cultural analysis and public policies' and 'language and public policies'. This would, in the panel's view, definitely create new dynamics between the three disciplines and allow the students to discover that by mastering several disciplines, innovative insights can be reached.

#### *Intended learning outcomes*

The programme's profile is expressed in five sets of intended learning outcomes, categorised according to the Dublin Descriptors in 'knowledge and insight', 'applying knowledge and insight/critical thinking', 'judgement', 'communication', and 'learning skills'. For a full overview of the intended learning outcomes, see Appendix 1. In the first category for instance, an intended learning outcome is that students '...have gained knowledge in the most important theoretical debates in at least one of the three tracks'. In the second category, an intended learning outcome is that 'knowledge and insight gained enable students to formulate relevant research questions and to carry out independent research using primary and secondary sources, also in the field, supported by specific methodological training and intercultural skills'. The panel found that the master's programme Latin American Studies at Leiden University has a clear set of goals, aiming at a good academic level. The intended learning outcomes meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The subdivision of the programme in three tracks stimulates sufficient theoretical and methodological depth. Being able to do field work in Latin America is one of the intended learning outcomes; this is a distinguishing trait of the programme, and strengthens its profile.

The panel recommends harmonising the intended learning outcomes of different programmes within the faculty. Obviously they will differ, but it would enhance transparency if all programmes use the same terminology and categorisation.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers the profile of the master's programme Latin American Studies to be interesting and original. Its most distinguishing trait is that it combines three disciplines: Public policies and social programmes, Cultural analysis of image and discourse and Language variation and bilingualism. The panel endorses the international focus of the programme and recommends fortifying its unique selling points and marketing the programme well and broadly, in order to attract international students and secure its position. Furthermore, the panel is convinced that the potential for interdisciplinarity inherent in the programme is largely underexploited, and that using its potential to the fullest would strengthen its profile.

The panel finds the intended learning outcomes of the master's programme Latin American Studies well-formulated and of an appropriate academic level. They meet the international requirements for academic education as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The panel advises the Faculty of Humanities to harmonise the intended learning outcomes for all of its programmes and check any reformulation in terms of terminology and categorisation to other programmes within the faculty. This will enhance transparency.

### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme Latin American Studies:* 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**

#### *Programme language and name*

In principle, Leiden University offers its master's programmes in English. The decision to do so was based on three arguments. Firstly, English is the lingua franca of international science to which the master's programmes intend to connect. Secondly, graduates are increasingly active in the international labour market. Thirdly, Leiden University wants to attract international students because an international classroom enriches the students' perspective.

Against this background, the master's programme Latin American Studies has three languages of instruction: Spanish, Portuguese and English. As far as language is concerned, the panel found some inconsistency however. On the one hand, a certain language level in Spanish or Portuguese is a prerequisite for students who wish to enter the programme: listening, speaking and writing on an advanced level (B2) and reading on a very advanced level (C1). The programme correctly states, in the panel's view, that 'advanced competency in either Spanish or Portuguese (active or passive) is understood as a vital entry point to the region'. Also, the programme prides itself on 'a long tradition of delivering most of our courses in the target languages', which is a distinctive trait of the programme. However, looking at the curriculum, most courses are actually taught in English, with only a few in Spanish and none in Portuguese. This is inclusive, but at odds with the programme's principles. The panel recommends teaching more courses in the target language and obliging students to write assignments and their thesis in Spanish or Portuguese.

#### *Admission*

Students holding a bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies or a related field from a Dutch university are admitted to the programme automatically. Students from abroad have to apply for admission. The Board of Admissions admits international students on the basis of their academic



background, language competency, a motivation letters and recommendation letters. Prospective students who do not have an adequate academic background are sometimes advised to follow a premaster's programme, or read a bibliography on Latin America, on which they are tested through an oral examination. This system works well; it ensures that students meet the required knowledge level.

#### *Curriculum content and structure*

The curriculum's structure is based on the Leiden 100-600 level structure. In the master's programme, only modules are offered at the 400, 500 and 600 level. Practically, these levels translate as a specialist course (400), an advanced course with a clear academic and research focus (500) and a very specialist course and/or master's thesis project, demanding autonomy and independency in the applied research methods and skills (600). In the panel's view, this course level structure reflects and safeguards the level requirements for a master's degree.

The curriculum consists of a 10 EC theoretical seminar in the chosen track (for which a wide range of options is offered), a 10 EC methodological seminar for the chosen track, a 10 EC elective (which may be in the student's chosen track or in one of the other tracks), 10 EC field work in Latin America and 20 EC writing a thesis on this field work.

The programme has two intake moments: September and February. The sequence of courses depends on when the student starts. September starters take the theoretical seminar first, followed by the methodological seminar, finishing the first semester with field work abroad between November and January. The second semester they spend on their elective and thesis. February starters take the methodological seminar first, followed by an elective; they do field work in the summer months. In September of the next academic year they embark on the theoretical seminar and subsequently write their thesis. The programme cherishes the extra enrolment possibility, since students' interest in February enrolment is notably increasing. In 2017-2018 11 out of 28 students chose to start in February. However, for this the programme pays a price in the form of extra workload, since for instance the methodology seminar has to be taught twice a year.

The panel studied some of the literature and course materials and got a favorable impression of the depth and academic level of the seminars. Particularly the way in which theory is connected to region-specific elements in the course material deserves a compliment. Also, the course material is well-designed, with transparent checklists that clearly show what is expected of students. It is obvious to the panel that lecturers draw on their recent and current research interests for their teaching activities. Students are sometimes directly involved in research initiatives and funding applications, they participate in international conferences or co-author papers with their lecturers. This strong link between research and education is another aspect of the programme the panel is enthusiastic about.

The panel finds the structure of the curriculum well thought through, particularly the combination of course-work, immersion in the studied region, field research and thesis writing. It also finds the master's programme very flexible and adaptable to the students' interests. Students told the panel that they are happy with the flexibility of the programme, especially the freedom to take optional courses in other tracks than the track they have chosen. The field work in Latin America the students also find very rewarding.

#### *Teaching methods*

In line with the faculty's didactic principle of creating an interactive and research-led classroom, teaching is done in small interactive groups using various approaches in an international setting. This allows for intensive contact and exchange among students and between students and lecturers. In the master's programme Latin American Studies, classes are generally never larger than 15 students. Teaching methods include class discussions, essay writing and peer review exercises, as well as guest lectures and extracurricular activities. Because of the relatively high number of international students, different cultures and backgrounds make for a lively discussion space. Students appreciate this greatly, the panel found. Indeed, they find the small groups, intense community building and



abundance of personal attention the most attractive features of the master's programme; they find it leads to a stronger basis for professional development.

Following up on its recommendation to strengthen the interdisciplinarity in the programme, the panel recommends co-teaching interdisciplinary courses (language variation/public policies; cultural analysis/public policies; language variation/cultural analysis). These will encourage and enable students to write interdisciplinary theses, which is something that in the panel's view cannot be reached by co-supervision of theses alone; students need to see it modelled before doing it themselves.

Some of the lecturers would like to innovate teaching methods and experiment with blended learning, they told the panel. This is facilitated and stimulated by the faculty, but a high workload prevents the lecturers to go through with these experiments. The panel finds this regrettable. It admires the lecturers' innovative spirit and hopes the faculty and programme can find ways of reducing the staff workload, so that experimentation with new teaching methods may progress.

#### *Thesis trajectory*

During their field trip, students collect data for their thesis, on the basis of a research question and research design that they worked out during the methodology seminar. They read original texts, appreciate audiovisual and social media, hold interviews and communicate in the target language. Students' field work is monitored by the thesis supervisor, who has e-mail contact or Skype conversations with the students when needed. He or she also supervises the writing of the thesis, meeting the students at least three times in the process. Students in the Cultural analysis and Language variation tracks report that they are pleased with the thesis support from their supervisors, which they describe as frequent and intensive. But students from the Public policy track indicate that some supervisors are difficult to approach and that their availability is limited. During their field trip, for instance, they sometimes have to wait too long before an e-mail is answered. The panel assesses that this is a consequence of both the disbalance in student numbers between the tracks and the high staff workload. It recommends tackling both these problems.

#### *Feasibility*

Students in the master's programme Latin American Studies are relatively successful. Almost 40 percent graduate from the programme within one year, which is well above the average of the Faculty of Humanities and Leiden University (25 percent). More than 60 percent graduate within two years. The high percentage of international students – with limited time – is probably partly responsible for this success, but it also demonstrates that there are no major hurdles in the curriculum.

A minor hurdle is the period of field work for students starting in September. Whereas students starting in February can spend June, July and August collecting data in their target region, those starting in September have less time. They say they only have part of December and January, while some papers are also due in January. The panel agrees that this is hectic. It recommends creating more space in the September enrolment curriculum for the field work.

#### *Labour market orientation*

Improving labour market orientation is one of the challenges currently taken up by both the programme and the faculty. Some students still lack confidence in their professional abilities and chances, and have trouble in finding their way after graduating, as alumni told the panel. The faculty organises events where students can gain perspectives on their possibilities on the labour market. There is for instance the annual Humanities Career Event, where potential employers such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Google, publisher Das Mag and the General Intelligence and Security Service offer workshops. At the programme level, all three tracks organise specific events aimed at labour market orientation, often with invited speakers. Also, relations with alumni are being intensified. These are good developments, according to the panel. The Humanities Career Service supports students with their internships and job application procedures. Not all students in the



master's programme Latin American Studies are aware of this, however, as they state in the student chapter of the self-evaluation report.

#### *Student support*

The programme's coordinator of studies also serves as a study advisor. In that capacity, he/she is responsible for guiding and advising students during their studies. To monitor their study progress, students draw up an individual study plan, which they discuss with their study advisor. The study advisor is available to provide individual guidance for study choices, answer study-related questions, discuss study-related problems and present possible solutions. Furthermore, the study advisor serves as the contact for students who complete part of their studies abroad.

At the programme level, the student guidance is intensive. New students are welcomed in September or January with an introduction day. Because students come from different backgrounds and the learning paths are flexible, there is no 'one size fits all'. The coordinator of studies is an active guide and counsellor, frequently sitting down with individual students. Students are very positive about the study advisor and say he or she is helpful and available at short notice.

In contrast to this, the students find the general stream of information they receive from the programme management limited, for instance on practical matters, or on the career services offered by the faculty. The panel recommends discussing with the students how this can be improved.

#### *Lecturers*

Staff members in the master's programme Latin American Studies are experts in their field, the panel found, and well-prepared for teaching. They have the appropriate teaching qualifications, or are in train of doing so if recently hired. The faculty stimulates lecturers in their professional development by offering them workshops at the university's teachers training centre ICLON and expert meetings with other lecturers. In the faculty wide Expertise Centre Online Learning, they can share best practices and in the university wide Leiden Teacher's Academy they can work out innovative didactic tools. Students in the programme praise the programme's atmosphere, which they call 'nice and cosy', and the generally good contact with the staff.

The panel likes that many of the staff members in this programme are native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese, and recommends that they teach in their native language. This allows students to reach a high language level. Also, the programme prides itself on strong institutional links, which result for instance in a Brazilian Studies visiting chair (funded by the Humanize Institute in Rio de Janeiro) and the Chile visiting chair (funded by Diego Portales University in Santiago). On the down side, the panel identified an imbalance in the staff. The programme has two full professors in the Public policy track, but none in the other two tracks. The full professor in the Cultural analysis track left and has not been replaced, whilst for Language variation there is also no full professor. The panel fears that this contributes to the imbalance in student numbers between the three disciplines and also to the excessive workload that the staff experiences. It recommends securing associate or full professors for both the Cultural analysis and Language variation tracks.

Keeping the workload within limits is a great challenge for the master's programme in Latin American Studies. In fact, the panel found that workload in this programme is even more pressing than in the other humanities programmes it assessed, partly because most lecturers in the master programme also teach in the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies which is very demanding because of its complexity. Some lecturers told the panel 'there is not a Sunday they do not work'. The panel finds this worrying; it needs fixing. It discussed the workload issue with the Programme Board and Faculty Board and found that the problem is high on their list of priorities. Dealing with it is complicated by the fact that the educational staff is made available for teaching by the Leiden University Institute for History, the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society and the Leiden Centre for Linguistics. The institutes, not the Programme Board, are directly responsible for personnel management. This may also get in the way of a fair division of labour amongst all members of staff. For instance, some institutes allocate more hours to certain tasks than others. The panel fully

supports the faculty in trying to harmonise this, and calls on the institutes to stick to the list of compensation hours per task that is provided by faculty management.

The faculty management tried to analyse what causes excessive workload and came up with a ten points action plan, it provided extra funds for the research institutes to reduce workload, it brought more stability in the programmes, it weeds out superfluous administrative obligations and courses that do not really fit into the programme anymore, it considers to merge committees, it encourages the institutes to harmonise the allocation of hours and it decided to lift the obligation for all programmes to maintain a dual intake system (September and February) as of September 2020. The panel applauds and encourages the faculty's awareness and decisiveness in this respect, both to protect their staff and to safeguard the connection between education and research. For if lecturers spend so much time on education that they have hardly any time left for research, this connection is in danger. Combining tracks, reducing the number of courses on offer, co-teaching interdisciplinary courses or letting go of the dual intake may be ways in which the programme itself can reduce the workload. The panel recommends seriously looking into these possibilities, for the workload clearly has an impact, not only on staff's work-life balance but on the quality of the programme as well. This could flourish more when the workload is alleviated, is the panel's conviction. It would like to see the causes for the work load issues further analysed and team spirit and the setting of collective goals brought forward as a basis for the sharing of responsibilities. It also recommends reconsidering the distribution of staff members across the tracks. Finally, the panel recommends solidifying the staff by limiting the number of temporary contracts to the unavoidable minimum.

#### *Programme-specific services*

The programme possesses a dedicated library collection within the University Library, including many works in Spanish and Portuguese, managed by a specialised librarian. Students are united in the study association Interlatina, which organises social events as well as academically oriented excursions. A distinguishing feature of the programme is SCOLAS, the Student Conference on Latin American Studies, annually organised in Leiden for undergraduate and graduate students from the Netherlands and abroad. This offers a great opportunity to present one's own research and be inspired by that of other students.

Talented master's students with the ambition to take up management positions in the private sector are given the opportunity to follow the Leiden Leadership Programme, organised in Dutch for students from Leiden University, Delft University of Technology and Erasmus University Rotterdam. Through assessments, training sessions delivered by professionals and practical assignment, they learn to apply their own qualities.

The panel finds the programme-specific services of the master's programme Latin American Studies quite good.

#### **Considerations**

The content of the programme is of sufficient depth and academic level, the panel found. It particularly liked the way in which theory is connected to region-specific elements. This is done really well, and deserves a compliment. Also, research and teaching are strongly linked, with students drawn into the lecturers' research projects. The panel considers this another asset of the programme, since it is stimulating and inspiring for students.

The structure of the programme is well thought through, with a fertile combination of course-work, field research and full immersion in local language and culture. Specialised staff expertise could be brought together to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in courses or thesis projects.

The panel agrees with the programme that advanced competency in Spanish or Portuguese is a vital entry point to the region and that therefore it would be good to have as many courses as possible in the target languages. However, in practice this number seems very limited. The panel encourages the programme to strengthen the use of target languages in the courses. Teaching methods,



feasibility, student support, student-specific services and labour market orientation the panel found generally good, and contributing to the students achieving the intended learning outcomes. Intensive teaching in small groups is definitely a strong asset, highly appreciated by the students. A minor feasibility issue is that students who enrolled in September have limited space for their field work. Possibly the structure of the curriculum needs to be tweaked slightly to their needs.

Staff of the programme are experts well qualified for teaching, the panel found. It values that there are quite a few native speakers amongst the lecturers, but it regrets that neither the Cultural analysis nor the Language variation tracks have a full professor. Workload for lecturers in the master's programme Latin American Studies is very high, even higher than in other humanities programmes the panel has looked into. This has an impact on the quality of the programme. The panel finds the workload worrying, but was relieved to find that tackling this problem has a high priority for the Faculty Board. The panel commends the faculty for its directive and supportive approach in these matters. Its advice is to carefully analyse the workload issues and emphasise team spirit and the setting of collective goals. Work load monitoring and relief needs continuous attention at Faculty level as well as the programme level. Possibly for the master's programme Latin American Studies, letting go of the February enrolment date, offering fewer courses and co-teaching interdisciplinary courses may offer some relief.

### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme Latin American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.*

### **Standard 3: Student assessment**

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

### **Findings**

#### *Assessment policy at the faculty level*

The Faculty of Humanities safeguards the system of assessment for all programmes in the cluster Region Studies at Leiden University. The Faculty drafted a general assessment policy, which is shared amongst the programmes. In it, teachers are assigned a central role in assuring the quality of assessment; as content experts they know the requirements of the relevant fields. Fraud and plagiarism are considered intolerable; the various boards of examiners active within the faculty are expected to closely monitor academic integrity.

Assessment at the programmes is structured according to shared principles. The design of all assessment methods is always peer-reviewed: assessments and exams are checked on their validity and coherence prior to being run. Also, exams are designed in such a way that students are invited to continuously sharpen their skills and broaden their knowledge, based on the principles of structural alignment. In this way, students develop their knowledge and skills from a basic to a more advanced level, appropriate for their degree level. Knowledge acquisition and application are continuously assessed, just as academic and communication skills. Preferably, students are assessed multiple times within a course allowing for a diversity of assessment methods. At least two independent examiners are involved in the assessment of students' theses or final projects.

The faculty developed various guidelines and materials to support the boards of examiners, programmes and their staff in order to develop and enhance their assessment practices and design. Notably, the panel verified that a newly developed Manual for Boards of Examiners proves helpful to align assessment practices at the various programmes. It also considered the support materials available to staff very useful. These contain advice regarding the quality assurance of assessment, practical tips and suggestions regarding exam design. These guidelines currently only exist in Dutch; an English version may be useful for international staff members, especially for master's programmes with a high number of international specialists. In addition, the faculty recently introduced a standard

online evaluation form for thesis assessment to enhance the transparency of their assessment across all programmes under its remit.

The panel is pleased with the increased uniformity of assessment procedures, which add to the transparency and clarity of assessment at all programmes. It appreciates the faculty's efforts in reaction to recommendations regarding its assessment level, resulting in a good support system for all programmes within the cluster Region Studies. During the site visit, the panel found the various boards of examiners engaged and in line with faculty policies and principles. It noted, however, that not all boards interpreted the faculty's guidelines regarding the handling of fraud cases in a similar way. At some programmes, staff members still seemed to deal with individual occurrences on a case-to-case basis. While the panel has no concerns regarding staff members' integrity, it still advocates the boards and faculty to step in. According to the panel, fraud cases should always be handled by the responsible Board of Examiners, not by lecturers. The panel advises to clearly communicate the faculty guidelines regarding fraud, and to adjust these if and where necessary.

#### *Board of Examiners Latin American Studies*

In addition to faculty guidelines, the panel studied the programme's Course and Examinations Regulations and its assessment plan, and the rules and regulations of the Board of Examiners that is responsible for the bachelor's programme and the master's programme Latin American Studies. The Board of Examiners consists of three staff members (each with a PhD and specific substantive expertise) and an external member with long-standing assessment expertise. It closely collaborates with both programme directors and study advisors and is supported by a secretary. Over the last years, all members of the Board of Examiners have invested in further professionalisation regarding their assessment practices and knowledge about assessment methods.

The Board of Examiners is responsible for guaranteeing the quality and standard of examinations and degrees at both the bachelor's and the master's programme under its responsibility. In order to do so, it appoints examiners for all courses, sets a number of ECs for individual internships prior to their approval and ratifies every student's full dossier with assessment results before they receive their diploma, including decisions regarding honours (cum laude; summa cum laude). Additionally, the Board of Examiners advises on matters regarding assessment and is involved in the further development of teaching staff's assessment practices.

In order to guarantee the quality of assessment, the Board of Examiners works with an Assessment Committee. This committee uses assessment forms that reflect the intended learning outcomes to evaluate the quality of assessment in the programme's courses. Twice a year, a sample of courses is evaluated in this way. In addition, the Board of Examiners monitors the average grade per course and subjects any outliers to a quality check. Every year, the Board of Examiners takes a sample of at least six master's theses, spread over the specialisations and final grades and re-assesses these on the basis of a quality assurance form. In the recent past, the Board of Examiners had an extra thorough look at thesis assessment, because the grades seemed high in relation to the comments on the assessment form. But after due diligence, the Board of Examiners judged that the thesis assessment was sound. It encouraged the examiners to mention on the assessment forms not only the aspects of the theses that can be improved, but the good aspects as well.

The panel shares the Board of Examiners' opinion that assessment practice for the master's programme Latin American Studies has improved in recent years, driven by the professionalisation that the entire faculty has gone through. An example of this is the slow decrease in percentage of cum laude diplomas, which dropped from 47 percent in 2016-2017 to 40 percent in 2017-2018. This is a good start, though the panel recommends lowering the percentage even further, so that it is more aligned with other programmes in the Netherlands. The programme assured the panel that this is a point of attention. The panel learned from both the Board of Examiners and staff members that they now feel more supported and that communication about assessment methods and assessment policy in the study programme has been intensified. However, the panel noted that there is still some resistance among members of staff against this professionalisation, which seems to be considered



time-consuming and, in the eyes of some, infringes on the integrity and professionalism of individual teachers. This resistance sometimes means that the recommendations of the Board of Examiners are not followed.

The panel found that the Board of Examiners in Latin American Studies does a good job, even though it is clearly troubled by the aforementioned workload issues. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can (continue to) create support for further professionalisation.

#### *Assessment practice within the programme*

The programme has an assessment plan, which links the intended learning outcomes to the courses and categorises the assessment methods used. The courses of the master's programme are mainly tested via individual and group assignments, resulting in papers, presentations and data analysis. The panel likes that the assessment methods lead the students through an upward curve, challenging them more and more in their capacities to autonomously conduct original research, with the field work and thesis as final focus points.

All exams are designed subject to the four-eye principle, it is anchored in a formal procedure where lecturers must submit a signed form declaring that a colleague has seen the exam. The programme experiments with new forms of assessment such as blogs and formative peer feedback on group assignments, which the panel finds interesting. Now there is a cap on innovation because of the workload issues. Hopefully this will improve, so that innovation can progress. The panel found the assessment methods sufficiently varied and well suited to the modules in which they are used and the skills they aim to measure. It encourages the programme to continue its innovative experiments.

#### *Thesis assessment*

Thesis assessment at the master's programme follows faculty policy. Every thesis is assessed by two examiners, who fill in a digital assessment form individually and independently. The criteria on the evaluation form are in accordance with the programme's intended learning outcomes. Once the two forms have been completed, they are combined and thus the final mark is determined as the average between the marks of the two examiners, unless one of the examiners disagrees, in which the Board of Examiners steps in. The student receives written feedback from both examiners and have the opportunity to receive oral feedback as well. During the graduation ceremony, the student has the option to present his or her thesis to a non-academic audience of family and friends.

In appointing examiners, the Board of Examiners tries to avoid standard pairs and now also allows examiners from another discipline to assess theses, so that for instance one examiner may come from the Leiden University Institute for History and another from the Leiden Centre for Linguistics. The panel approves this practice, which demonstrates awareness of the potential dangers involved in allowing fixed assessment pairs in programmes with limited staff. It recommends even stimulating the appointment of second examiners across programmes, to further diversify assessment pairs. This would allow for exchange of examination practices, while simultaneously introducing an additional element of objectivity to thesis grading. Such an element can be especially valuable for small programmes with a limited student intake, in the panel's view.

Prior to the visit, the panel examined a sample of eight master's theses, including the accompanying assessment forms. It generally agreed with the assessments given by the examiners and finds these assessments well substantiated. The new online thesis assessment forms are well designed, in the panel's view, with clearly defined categories and no overlap. The panel does advise the programme management and the Board of Examiners to continue critically following the assessments handed out. It is precisely in a small community like the Latin American Studies staff that subjective colorings of judgment based on personal preferences may lurk.

## Considerations

According to the panel, the master's programme Latin American Studies has a sound and transparent assessment system and a well-functioning system of quality assurance. The assessment plan links the courses to the intended learning outcomes and categorises the assessment methods. These assessment methods are sufficiently varied, in the panel's view. The panel likes that the assessment methods lead the students through an upward curve, challenging them more and more in their capacities to conduct original research.

The assessment of master's theses is clearly designed and its quality is guaranteed by having it done by two independent examiners, with the Board of Examiners aiming to avoid fixed couples. The panel endorses this goal and believes that the keen eye of colleagues from other tracks or even outside the programme can be of added value to permanently reinforce the objectivity of the assessment. It agreed with the assessment of the theses in the sample set and found it well substantiated.

Finally, the panel notes that the Board of Examiners for the bachelor's and master's programme Latin American Studies is adequately performing its task to assure quality of assessment, even though it is clearly troubled by lack of time. The panel emphasises that it is important to give the members of the Board of Examiners sufficient time for their work, so that they can continue to create support for further professionalisation.

## Conclusion

*Master's programme Latin American Studies:* 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

The assessment plan, the assessment system and the quality assurance role of the Board of Examiners guarantee that the intended learning outcomes of the master's programme Latin American Studies are achieved. Students demonstrate this through a combination of essays, presentations, and finally the thesis. The thesis is an extensive piece of academic writing in Spanish, Portuguese or English. It reflects on an aspect of contemporary Latin America, either through a public policy lens or a cultural or a linguistic perspective.

That students meet the final requirements is also evident from the quality of the master's theses. The panel studied a sample of eight theses and finds them of good quality. The research topics are well chosen, some original. The theses demonstrate sound and in some cases deep knowledge of specific subjects and contemporary scholarly debates around them. The field work is well integrated in the theses, and analysis and argumentation as well are generally good, the panel found. It would be interesting to see, in the panel's view, if a few multidisciplinary courses lead to more interdisciplinary theses, which would really underscore the programme's very own profile.

The Faculty of Humanities performed a labour market study in 2016. This survey shows that 58 of the master graduates in Latin American Studies secure a job within two months of graduating, rising to 87 percent within six months. After two years, 80 percent of alumni has found a job at an appropriate graduate level. The programme receives positive feedback from employers about its graduates. These pursue a variety of career paths, including government jobs (20 percent), research (16 percent), health care (12 percent), communication, non-profit organisations, education and the travel industry (totalling 8 percent). The diversity of career paths shows that alumni not only use regional knowledge in their professional lives, but also transferable skills such as problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. This was confirmed by the panel's own discussion with alumni. They emphasised their skills in gathering large amounts of data, setting up their own research from scratch, and communicating with students from other disciplines. The programme states that these skills, as well as time management and team work skills that the



curriculum also provides, are increasingly appreciated by employers because they are key to our communication-based interconnected world. The panel finds this plausible and therefore endorses that graduates of the master's programme Latin American Studies laid a foundation of knowledge and skills that will prove to be fruitful in their subsequent studies as well as their professional lives.

### **Considerations**

Based on the assessment policy, the quality of the master's theses and its discussion with alumni, the panel determines that master's graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes. The panel found the theses in the sample it studied of good quality, demonstrating original topics, sound knowledge of scholarly debates and good analysis and argumentation. The field work is applied well in the theses, the panel found. It would be interesting, in its view, to see if more multidisciplinary teaching could foster more interdisciplinary theses. Then the strengths of the programme would be optimally used, according to the panel.

Research carried out by the faculty shows that master graduates find employment in a wide variety of sectors. Graduates not only profit from the regional knowledge they acquired, but also from transferable skills such as reading and writing at an academic level, problem solving, analysing, researching and dealing with different cultures. The panel accepts the programme's claim that these skills are currently in high demand.

### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme Latin American Studies: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.*

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The panel assessed standards 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the master's programme Latin American Studies as 'meets the standard'. Based on the NVAO decision rules regarding limited programme assessments, the panel therefore assesses the programme as 'positive'.

### **Conclusion**

The panel assesses *the master's programme Latin American Studies* as 'positive'.



## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the programme have attained the following learning outcomes, listed according to the Dublin descriptors:

### *1. Knowledge and understanding*

- a. Graduates possess comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subjects which are central in one of the three tracks: Public Policy and Social Programmes in Latin America; Cultural Analysis of Image and Discourse in Latin America; and Language Variation and Bilingualism in Latin America.
- b. Graduates have knowledge of the most important contemporary theoretical debates within the central theme of the track they have chosen and they are able to critically reflect on those debates.

### *2. Application of knowledge and understanding*

- a. Graduates have the ability to analyse the texts which are treated in the track they have chosen in a critical manner and to place these texts in their linguistic, cultural and/or historical context.
- b. Graduates are able to translate the acquired knowledge on key issues and the academic debates around them into relevant research questions, which in terms of content and scope can be studied through independent research.
- c. Graduates have a thorough knowledge of up-to-date research methods used in the followed path (such as interviewing techniques, cultural analysis, and so forth) and are able to use this knowledge in an independent way within the context of a concrete and feasible research design.
- d. Graduates are able to carry out independent research in the field of Latin American studies and possess the intercultural skills to work there or in the context of their research more broadly with relevant individuals and institutions.

### *3. Judgement*

- a. Graduates are able to make careful considerations about the academic merits and utility of academic arguments and of material that is at the basis of their research and subsequent final report.
- b. Graduates can form a good judgment about the social, cultural and ethical aspects which should be taken into account when conducting and reporting about their research.

### *4. Communication*

- a. Graduates are capable of making well-structured and clear oral presentations on an academic subject for an audience of specialists or non-specialists.
- b. Graduates are able to write scientific reports in Spanish, Portuguese or English.
- c. Graduates are able to present in a concise and clear manner the subject and the goals of their research to individuals and institutions which can contribute to this research.

### *5. Learning Skills*

- a. Graduates possess the learning skills that enable them to pursue a follow-up study which demands a great amount of self-organization and self-sufficiency.
- b. Graduates are able to apply the acquired knowledge, insights and skills in a work environment, even if it does not totally match the followed disciplinary path or if it is not related to the Latin American region.



## APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

	EC	Level	Public Policies and Social Programmes	Cultural Analysis in Image and Discourse	Language Variation and Bilingualism
Joint courses					
Research in Latin America	10	600	X	X	X
MA Thesis Latin American Studies	20	600	X	X	X
Public Policies in Latin America					
Research seminar Modern Histories <sup>7</sup>	10	500	X		
State, public policies and civil society in Latin America	10	500	X		
Choose 10 EC out of the following: Brazil in the Portuguese Speaking World: Political and Cultural Dynamics (10 EC, 500); Methods in Child Language Research (10 EC, 500); Neoliberalism and Illegality: Flows, Commodities, Locations (10 EC, 500); Methods in Statistics and Linguistic Data Processing (5 EC, 500); Issues in Language Endangerment (5 EC, 500); Modernidad en América Latina (10 EC, 600); Thematic Course Latin American Cultural Analysis (10 EC, 500); Chile Visiting Chair 2019 (10 EC, 500); Contemporary Brazil (10 EC, 500); Issues in Latin American Foreign Policies (10 EC, 500); State-Social Movements relations in the Andean Region (10 EC, 500); Desplazamiento, memoria e identidad en la narrativa y el cine latinoamericanos (10 EC, 600); Topics Latin American Linguistics (10 EC, 500); Remapping the City in Modern Literature and Visual Cultures (10 EC, 500); Language Contact (10 EC, 500); The Sociolinguistics of Second Language Acquisition (10 EC, 500)	10	-	X		
Cultural Analysis in Latin America					
Methods of Cultural Analysis and Critical Readings	10	500		X	
El lugar de lo político en la literatura y el cine	10	500		X	
Choose 10 EC out of the following: Neoliberalism and Illegality: Flows, Commodities, Locations (10 EC, 500); Brazil in the Portuguese Speaking World: Political and Cultural Dynamics (10 EC, 500); Methods in Child Language Research (10 EC, 500); Methods in Statistics and Linguistic Data Processing (5 EC, 500); Issues in Language Endangerment (5 EC, 500); Modernidad en América Latina (10 EC, 600); Thematic Course Latin American Cultural Analysis (10 EC, 500); Chile Visiting Chair 2019 (10 EC, 500); Contemporary Brazil (10 EC, 500); Issues in Latin American Foreign Policies (10 EC, 500); State-Social Movements relations in the Andean Region (10 EC, 500); Desplazamiento, memoria e identidad en la narrativa y el cine latinoamericanos (10 EC, 600); Topics Latin American Linguistics (10 EC, 500); Remapping the City in Modern Literature and Visual Cultures (10 EC, 500); Language Contact (10 EC, 500); The Sociolinguistics of Second Language Acquisition (10 EC, 500)	10	-		X	

Language Variation and Bilingualism					
Methods: Putting Theory into Practice	10	500			X
A theoretical research seminar on Language Variation and Language Change in Latin America	10	500			X
Choose 10 EC out of the following: Brazil in the Portuguese Speaking World: Political and Cultural Dynamics (10 EC, 500); Neoliberalism and Illegality: Flows, Commodities, Locations (10 EC, 500); Methods in Child Language Research (10 EC, 500); Methods in Statistics and Linguistic Data Processing (5 EC, 500); Issues in Language Endangerment (5 EC, 500); Chile Visiting Chair 2019 (10 EC, 500); Issues in Latin American Foreign Policies (10 EC, 500); Modernidad en América Latina (10 EC, 600); Thematic Course Latin American Cultural Analysis (10 EC, 500); Contemporary Brazil (10 EC, 500); State, public policies and civil society in Latin America (10 EC, 500); Desplazamiento, memoria e identidad en la narrativa y el cine latinoamericanos (10 EC, 600); Topics Latin American Linguistics (10 EC, 500); Remapping the City in Modern Literature and Visual Cultures (10 EC, 500); Language Contact (10 EC, 500); The Sociolinguistics of Second Language Acquisition (10 EC, 500)	10	-			X

## APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

**Day 1: Wednesday 5 June 2019** – Bachelors International Studies, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics (GLTC), Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations

08.30 – 08.45	Brief welcome
08.45 – 09.00	Installation of the panel
09.00 – 11.30	First meeting and reading of documentation
11.30 – 12.15	Faculty Board
12.15 – 12.45	Lunch
12.45 – 13.15	Programme Board and Coordinator of Studies of International Studies
13.15 – 14.00	Students and alumni International Studies
14.00 – 14.30	Staff International Studies
14.30 – 14.45	Panel meeting International Studies
14.45 – 15.00	Break
15.00 – 15.45	Programme Boards and Coordinators of Studies Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
15.45 – 16.30	Students Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
16.30 – 17.15	Staff Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Bachelor Classics and Master Classics and Ancient Civilizations
17.15 – 18.00	Panel meeting
18.00 – 18.30	Open consultation hour Area Studies I

**Day 2: Thursday 6 June 2019** – Bachelor & Master Latin American Studies, Bachelor & Master Middle Eastern Studies, Bachelor & Master Russian (and Eurasian) Studies, North American Studies

08.30 – 09.00	Panel meeting and reading of the documentation
09.30 – 10.00	Programme Board and Coordinator of Studies Latin American Studies
10.00 – 10.30	Students Latijns-Amerikastudies and Latin American Studies
10.30 – 11.00	Staff Latin American Studies
11.00 – 11.15	Break
11.15 – 11.45	Programme Board and Coordinators of Middle Eastern Studies
11.45 – 12.15	Students Middle Eastern Studies
12.15 – 12.45	Staff Middle Eastern Studies
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.15	Programme Board and Coordinators of Studies Russische Studies, Russian and Eurasian Studies, and North American Studies
14.15 – 15.00	Students Bachelor and Master Russian (and Eurasian) Studies, and North American Studies
15.00 – 15.45	Staff Russian (and Eurasian) Studies and North American Studies
15.45 – 16.00	Break
16.00 – 16.30	Alumni Russian and Eurasian Studies, North American Studies, and Latin American Studies
16.30 – 17.00	Alumni Middle Eastern Studies and Classics and Ancient Civilizations
17.00 – 18.00	Panel meeting

**Day 3: Friday 7 June 2019** – Boards of Examiners

08.30 – 09.30	Panel meeting and reading of the documentation
09.30 – 10.30	Boards of Examiners Russian Studies, Art and Literature and American Studies, and Latin American studies
10.30 – 11.30	Boards of Examiners Middle-Eastern Studies, International Studies, and Classics and Ancient Civilizations
11.30 – 12.00	Panel meeting
12.00 – 12.30	Lunch
12.30 – 13.30	Final meeting management
13.30 – 16.30	Composing of final judgment
16.30 – 16.45	Break
16.45 – 17.30	Development dialogues – parallel
17.30 – 18.30	Report and drinks



## APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

### *Thesis selection*

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied eight theses of the master's programme Latin American Studies. The programme has outlined learning paths, but these are not official specialisations. As such, these paths are not registered separately. Because they do cover different aspects of the programme, the panel ensured that all three disciplines were represented in the thesis selection: five theses from Public Policies in Latin America, two from Cultural Analysis in Latin America and one from Language Variation and Bilingualism. The project manager and panel chair assured that a variety of topics and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection and that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses. Further information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

The master's programme Latin American Studies shares a Board of Examiners with the bachelor's programme Latin American Studies and the research master's programme Latin American Studies. As part of their study trajectory, students choose electives (30 EC). Many of these electives are shared with other master's programmes: M International Relations (40 EC), M Linguistics (45 EC) and M Literary Studies (10 EC).

### *Documents studied*

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):

#### Faculty-wide documents:

- Transferable skills at the Faculty of Humanities;
- Flyers Career Services Humanities (including: *Your Future: From university to a career*);
- Flyer Humanities Master's Buddy Programme;
- Overview Leiden University Master's Programmes 2019-2020;
- Flyer education vision: *Learning@LeidenUniversity*;
- *Tips bij Toetsen*;
- Expertisecentrum Online Leren Evaluatierapport 2017-2018.

#### Specific reading material master's programme Latin American Studies:

- Course material on 'Modern History', 'Language Variation and Language Change in Latin America', 'Latin American Cultural Analysis';
- Programme Board reports 2015-2017;
- Board of Examiners reports 2015-2018;
- Minutes of Programme Committee 2016-2019;
- Factsheets of Nationale Studentenenquête 2018;
- Course evaluations;
- 'Onderwijsvernieuwing';
- Thesis manual MA Latin American Studies;
- Programme metrics (*Opleidingsjaarkaarten* 2015-2018);
- Assessment plan I and II.

#### Links provided on laptops:

- Learning environment selected courses;
- Structure of the Faculty of Humanities movie;
- Study association Latin American Studies – Interlatina.

