

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor European Studies

Limited study programme assessment

Summary

In December 2020, the Bachelor study programme European Studies of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences was visited by an audit panel from NQA. This is a four-year full-time programme, located in Maastricht. The entire programme is taught in English. The audit panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **positive**.

The European Studies programme of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (ES Zuyd) is truly international with a clear focus on the EU and Europe as a whole. The programme has a clear and appropriate profile by training students to become “connectors, who know how to develop meaningful relationships (i.e. partnerships and collaborations) between organizations, working at the intersection of government, business and civil society”. The study programme is ambitious and is currently implementing a new curriculum, which is more practice-oriented and more integrated than the old one. ES Zuyd has intensive contacts with its alumni and professionals from the professional field, who were also actively involved in establishing the new profile and competencies. The programme is blessed with enthusiastic students and lecturers. The team of lecturers is diverse, very dedicated and highly qualified. Student assessment and the quality assurance of student assessment are also elements the study programme can take pride in, with an excellent Board of Examiners. The main development points are the further integration in the curriculum, the redesign of the graduation phase and because of all the ambitions and changes, the workload of the lecturers.

Standard 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

The study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 1.

ES Zuyd has a clear and comprehensive set of competencies, as set out in the new *European Studies National Profile* of 2019. In addition to the competencies, the programme has formulated six professional tasks, which the programme regards as characteristic for the professional domain it is geared to. Together they fit the programme’s professional orientation and profile. The competencies meet the Dublin Descriptors, which means that they are at an internationally recognised professional bachelor’s level. The programme has a relevant professional and distinguishing orientation and profile, which focus on the role of a connector at the intersection of government, business and civil society.

ES Zuyd maintains a wide range of close contacts with the professional field, which was also involved in formulating the learning outcomes and is still involved in keeping them up-to-date. The study programme’s Professional Field Board, which has a broad representation of the professional field, is actively involved with the study programme, not only with respect to the learning outcomes, but also with respect to the contents of the curriculum.

Standard 2: Teaching-Learning Environment

The study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 2.

The curriculum has a strong practical orientation, with authentic professional whole tasks as focus point(s) in each block, starting from the first block in year 1. Students get a sound practical and theoretical basis for their future careers as connectors in a European context. These aspects are

properly balanced and integrated in the curriculum. The competences are well covered by the curriculum. The curriculum is clearly international and has a clear focus on the EU and the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. Research skills are sufficiently addressed in the curriculum. Students are positive about the curriculum, especially about its practical orientation, its European focus and integration of subjects.

ES Zuyd's didactic approach (4C/ID model) fits in well with its intended learning outcomes and its practice-oriented curriculum. This model is characterized by the integration of learning content in the service of an authentic professional task. Student guidance is well designed and works out well in practice.

The study programme has a diverse team of very dedicated and highly-qualified lecturers, with a lot of international experience. The lecturers are highly valued by the students, especially because of their expertise, international experience and their approachability. The workload of the lecturers is a point of concern for the study programme.

Standard 3: Student Assessment

The study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 3.

ES Zuyd has adopted an assessment policy, which is aligned with the learning outcomes. The overall quality of the assessments is satisfactory. They meet the requirements of validity, reliability and transparency. The study programme uses an adequate mix of exams and assessments. The grading of the exams and assessments is insightful. Students judge the assessment system and the various assessments as positive. In general, they are positive about the feedback they get for the assessments. The quality assurance system for student assessment is well designed and works properly in practice, with calibration of grading, the use of testing matrices and of the four-eyes principle. The members of the Board of Examiners are highly-qualified, very knowledgeable, pro-active and the Board of Examiners has a firm position within the study programme. The Board of Examiners is actively involved in the development of the student assessment in the new curriculum.

Standard 4: Achieved Learning Outcomes

The study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 4.

With its curriculum, the design of the graduation phase and the results of the graduates, the study programme demonstrates that the students achieve the intended learning outcomes. The graduation portfolios meet the requirements of the professional bachelor level and show that all the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. The study programme employs proper instruments to monitor the final attainment level. The assessment of the competencies at end level in various products helps to create proper settings for the assessment of the specific competencies. The intended future integration of the assessment of the competencies at end level will be in line with the notion of integrated teaching in the new curriculum. The volume of the graduation portfolios should be considerably reduced, which the programme is also planning to do. The internships and related research reports have a clear European dimension. There is room for improvement and for more flexibility in the methodological approach of the research reports. ES Zuyd maintains close contacts with its alumni. Alumni are positive about the link between the programme and their positions or further education. Finally, the professional field is very positive about the qualities of the ES Zuyd alumni.

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	7
Characteristic Features of the Study Programme	9
Basic Data of the Study Programme	10
Standard 1 Intended Learning Outcomes	13
Standard 2 Teaching-Learning Environment	16
Standard 3 Student Assessment	22
Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes	24
Final Conclusion	29
Recommendations	30
Appendices	29
Appendix 1: Programme for the Site Visit	30
Appendix 2: Documents Examined	32

Introduction

This is the assessment report of the Bachelor study programme European Studies offered by Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (Zuyd UAS). The assessment was conducted by an audit panel compiled by Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA), commissioned by Zuyd UAS. Prior to the assessment process the audit panel had been approved by NVAO.

In this report, NQA gives account of its findings, considerations and conclusions. The assessment was undertaken according to the *Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands* of NVAO (September 2018) and the *NQA Guideline 2020 for Limited Programme Assessment*.

The site visit took place on 15 December 2020.

The audit panel consisted of:

- Drs. D.J.N.M. (Nies) Rijnders (chair)
- Drs. P. (Nel) Göbel (domain expert)
- Prof. E.A. (Elspeth) Jones (domain expert)
- S. (Simona) Siarik MA (domain expert)
- K.S. (Kristin) Tsenkova (student member)

Drs. M. (Mark) Fokkema, NQA-auditor and Ir. M. (Marga) Dekker-Joziasse acted as secretaries of the panel.

The Bachelor programme European Studies of Zuyd UAS was part of the audit cluster European Studies. The audit panels, consisting of expert peers, of this cluster have been tuned in with each other, in the first place through the instruction of their members about the NVAO assessment framework. Beforehand, the tuning is guaranteed by the overlap between the composition of all the panels. In addition, taking into account that each assessment of a study programme is an individual assessment, as a result of the overlap between the composition of the panels, there has been progressive reflection on previous site visits within the audit cluster when relevant. Furthermore, the tuning between panels is guaranteed by the support of the same panel secretary and by employing well-trained panel chairpersons.

Method of working of the panel and process

For the assessment, the study programme offered a critical reflection with appendices. For the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes, the panel has studied 15 graduation portfolios of graduates who recently finished their studies. These portfolios have been selected from the list of alumni of the last two academic years. This selection had been mainly based on the variety in grading.

Central in the assessment was the site visit by the panel. To prepare the site visit, the panel held a preliminary meeting. This meeting was held online, due to the Covid-19 measures. The actual site visit was held in Maastricht, at the location of the study programme, but also due to the Covid-19 measures, three panel members participated online, since they live abroad. Also some of the stakeholders of the study programme participated online in the site visit.

In the preliminary meeting the panel members were instructed about NQA's method of working and about the *NVAO-Assessment Framework*. In this meeting the panel members also discussed their tentative findings. During both the preliminary meeting and during the actual audit, the panel members shared their findings with each other continuously. During the site visit the panel spoke with various stakeholders of the study programme, such as students, lecturers (assessors) and representatives of the professional field and it studied several documents, see appendix 2. At the end of the site visit the panel incorporated all the information it had obtained in an overall picture and in a tentative substantiated assessment. In the final oral feedback session the panel chairperson communicated the conclusive assessment and the major findings of the panel. The site visit finished with a development dialogue between the panel and representatives of the study programme.

Staff members and students of the study programme have had the opportunity to approach the panel (via mail) in confidence to bring to the attention of the panel those matters they deem of importance to the assessment. No one has made use of this opportunity.

After the site visit a draft report was formulated, which was presented to the panel. On the basis of the panel's input a second draft was made, which was presented to the study programme for a check on factual inaccuracies. The panel has taken note of the feedback of the study programme and if necessary, adapted the report. Subsequently, the report was established as definitive. With all information provided (orally and in writing) the panel has been able to make a deliberate judgement.

The audit panel declares that the assessment of the study programme was carried out independently.

Utrecht, 15 April 2021

Panel chair



Drs. D.J.N.M. (Nies) Rijnders

Lead auditor



Drs. M. (Mark) Fokkema

Characteristic Features of the Study Programme

The professional Bachelor study programme European Studies of Zuyd UAS (ES Zuyd) is a four-year full-time programme taught entirely in English. ES Zuyd is located in Maastricht. At the time of the site visit the programme had 354 students with an intake of 114 students in year 1 for the 2020-2021 academic year. About 13% of the students are international. The regular international students are supplemented with some 50 incoming exchange students every year.

The history of ES Zuyd begins in 2002, when the first cohort of students entered the new *Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding (HEBO)* (now ES) study programme, which was taught in Dutch. Initially the study programme had a broad approach with much attention paid to languages: English and two elective languages out of French, German and Spanish. Other subjects included law, administration, politics, marketing, communication and organizational science. The curriculum had mainly a modular structure.

In the development of ES Zuyd since 2002, three general lines can be distinguished. The initial broad orientation has been gradually narrowed down to a more explicit European context. This development is also supported by the new *European Studies National Profile* of 2019, which was formulated by ES Zuyd and its sister programmes of The Hague University of Applied Sciences, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences and NTI University of Applied Sciences. The competencies of this new profile strongly focus on Europe's challenges and on EU policy. Furthermore, they have a larger focus on applied research and professional skills.

Over the years, more cohesion and integration has been established within the curriculum. As stated above, initially the ES Zuyd curriculum was of a modular design, with mainly small and standalone modules. To create more cohesion, modules with contents that link up with each other have gradually been merged into larger units and, as from 2010, a distinction can be made between three main lines in the curriculum, namely substantive classes, communication & skills classes, and languages. This development has also led to the reduction of the large number of tests the programme used to have. In 2012-2013 professional products were introduced in the then specialization phase. In September 2019 the programme started rolling out a new curriculum, which adopts the 4C/ID model as the guiding design principle. This has resulted in the further intertwining of the content of supportive classes with the professional product that students are required to realize in a specific block. Professional products are now used in all years, see also Standard 2.

In the third place, the international nature of the study programme has been enhanced. Originally known as the *Hogere Europese Beroepen Opleiding (HEBO)*, the programme was given the English name 'European Studies' in 2010, after it had been decided at the national level that the new name was a better fit for the international character of the curriculum and its learning outcomes. The entire curriculum has been taught in English since 2010, both to meet the wish of the globalizing professional field and to further the programme's international classroom ambition. Given the international focus and ambitions of the programme, the panel regards the English name of the programme and the use of English as the teaching language as appropriate. Furthermore, the body of lecturers has also become increasingly international over the years. The programme was awarded the *Bijzonder Kenmerk Internationalisering* (distinctive feature of

internationalisation) of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) in 2014. The programme has continued to develop its internationalisation in the succeeding years. A new Vision on Internationalisation was drawn up in 2018, and the revised professional profile also makes the European dimension of the study programme clear, see also Standard 1. The new curriculum has also reinforced the intercultural learning line.

For the near future, the study programme will address the following three general development points. One of them relates to the workload experienced by the lecturers. According to the study programme, this is not as such surprising, because the lecturers are engaged in (1) the development of a new curriculum, (2) new teaching of that curriculum and (3) teaching the old curriculum in which student assessment, in particular, is fairly labour-intensive. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had a negative impact on the workload of the lecturers. As this situation is temporary, the study programme trusts that the workload will decrease in the coming years. Secondly, the study programme will invest in the professionalization of the lecturers to enable them to teach the new curriculum in an effective manner, especially when it comes to integrated teaching. Finally, the intake is regarded as another challenge. The programme can only maintain the necessary financial scope when the intake remains at the current level and, preferably, increases slightly in the coming years. Since Zuyd is located in a shrinkage region, most of this additional intake will need to originate from other parts of the Netherlands and from abroad.

Impact Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has, of course, also effected the study programme. From the middle of March 2020 until the end of the academic year, the teaching was completely online. In the first semester of the 2020-2021 there was also some on-site teaching, in addition to online learning. This has also had an impact on student assessment. The Board of Examiners is closely involved in the changes of exams in the online setting. The study programme has closely monitored the effects of the online teaching. At the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, the study programme conducted a survey among the students about the Covid-19 measures. In the 2020-2021 academic year this is also part of each block evaluation. The outcomes of the first survey show that students were generally not quite satisfied with the organization of the online teaching. The outcomes also show that the provision of information about what students needed to do and about the changes in examination could have been better. On the other hand, students were positive about the support and reachability of their coaches, lecturers and the coordinator of the programme. This had a positive effect on their wellbeing. They were also positive about the quality of the online materials. Furthermore, students experienced a higher workload.

The outcomes of recent block evaluations indicate an improvement of the organization of the online teaching and of the related provision of information. According to the students, the study programme is more adjusted to the new situation. The balance between online and on-site teaching is good, according to the students. They are still positive about the support and attention they get from their lecturers, coaches and the coordinator of the programme. Students, however have complaints about concentration problems during online classes.

Retrospective of the Previous Accreditation

ES Zuyd has taken account of the recommendations in the assessment report for its 2013 accreditation. One recommendation related to the European context of the programme. Europe has a prominent place on the agenda of the new professional and study programme profile and

the most important EU policy domains are incorporated in every block in the new curriculum. Furthermore, the research learning line has also been enhanced by enabling students to conduct research relating to a professional product in each of the blocks. The students then use a range of methods to conduct research of a gradually increasing complexity.

Basic Data of the Study Programme

Name of study programme as in CROHO (Central Register of Study Programmes in Higher Education in the Netherlands)	European Studies
ISAT-code	34419
Orientation and level study programme	Higher profession-oriented education (hbo)
Level study programme	Bachelor
For study programmes in higher profession-oriented education, the addition which is used for the degree. See the ministerial regulation and the incorporated reference list Stcrt 2013 (Netherlands Government Gazette), 35337 and its elaboration by NVAO. Deviations from it must be validated by the audit panel	Bachelor of Arts
Number of study credits	240 EC
Graduation classes / 'tracks'	
Location(s)	Maastricht
Teaching language	English

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.

Conclusion

Based on the considerations mentioned below, the audit panel assesses that the study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 1.

ES Zuyd has a clear and comprehensive set of competencies as set out in the new *European Studies National Profile* of 2019. In addition to the competencies, the programme has formulated six professional tasks, which the programme regards as characteristic for the professional domain it is geared at. Together they fit the programme's professional orientation and profile, according to the panel. The competencies meet the Dublin Descriptors, which means that they are at an internationally recognised professional bachelor's level. According to the panel, the programme has a relevant professional and distinguishing orientation and profile, which focus on the role of a connector at the intersection of government, business and civil society.

ES Zuyd maintains a wide range of close contacts with the professional field, which was also involved in formulating the learning outcomes and is still involved in keeping them up-to-date. The study programme's Professional Field Board, which has a broad representation of the professional field, is actively involved with the study programme, not only with respect to the learning outcomes, but also with respect to the contents of the curriculum.

Substantiation

Professional orientation and profile

ES Zuyd's professional orientation focuses on the role of connector of European professionals. ES Zuyd perceives its graduates as "connectors, who know how to develop meaningful relationships (i.e. partnerships and collaborations) between organizations, working at the intersection of government, business and civil society". They also know how to work across geographical borders, either within the European Union, Europe or between Europe and the rest of the world. With the focus on the role of connector, ES Zuyd meets the demands of the professional field, which increasingly seeks employees who can collaborate on joint projects where parties within the triangle of government, business and civil society work together on international issues. This also holds for the complex challenges that Europe faces today, which generally can only be tackled successfully through cooperation between the parts of this triangle.

To prepare for the role of connector, ES Zuyd teaches their students to utilise their knowledge and understanding of the European institutions, policy making, and culture as well as their communication skills when establishing relationships at the intersection of government, business and civic society in a European context. As to this European context, the focus is on the EU and the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. The professional field ES Zuyd graduates enter extends to mainly European states and encompasses not only government and semi-public institutions, but also NGO's and private parties, such as consultancy firms. Graduates generally take up positions in communication, advice and relationship management.

Final qualifications

The competency profile that supports the programme's professional orientation is based on the new national *European Studies National Profile* of 2019. This profile distinguishes between six core competencies that need to be possessed by European Professionals who have completed the ES programme. The six competencies are listed in the following table.

Competence	Description
1. Europe's challenges	The student applies their knowledge of Europe to analyse challenges related to Europe and its changing role in the world
2. EU Policy	The student applies their knowledge of the European Union multi-level policy framework to advise organizations
3. Connecting cultures	The student establishes professional relationships and collaborates in an intercultural and interdisciplinary environment
4. Applied Research	The student researches and critically evaluates contemporary issues linking theory and practice to formulate concrete recommendations for organizations active in a European context
5. Foreign Languages	The student uses English to communicate in a professional context and at least one other European language foreign to one's own native language in a work-related environment
6. Personal leadership	The student demonstrates, in their behaviour and attitude, awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses on the path towards becoming a European professional

In the *European Studies National Profile* document the relationship is explained between the competencies and the profile of higher education in economics and management (HEO), which also extends to European Studies.

In addition to the above competencies, the programme has formulated six professional tasks, which the programme regards as characteristic for the professional domain it aims at:

1. Give strategic communicative advice
2. Give policy advice
3. Develop a communication plan
4. Develop a policy plan of action
5. Organize an event
6. Disseminate views and opinions.

The panel is of the opinion that the competencies and the professional tasks fit the programme's professional orientation and profile. They correspond with the level of a professional bachelor. They have been developed using the Dublin descriptors. This means that they are at an internationally recognised professional bachelor's level. In its *Profiling and Educational Vision 2019-2023* ES Zuyd has formulated a detailed and insightful interpretation of these competencies, according to the panel.

Consultation with the professional field

The study programme maintains close links with the professional field, according to the panel. Its Professional Field Board has a broad representation of this field. Based on its reports and the meeting the panel had with some of its members, the panel is impressed by the active involvement of the Professional Field Board with the study programme. Next to the board's role in contributing to an up-to-date curriculum, it expresses its views on the competencies and the contents of the curriculum. The programme's collaboration with Zuyd's Research Centre for International Relationship Management and the Research Centre Global Minds @ Work is also beneficial for the connection with the professional field, especially through the international professional networks of these research centres. The large number of lecturers who have recent experience or are still active in the professional field, is also important in this respect.

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.

Conclusion

Based on the considerations mentioned below, the audit panel assesses that the study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 2.

The panel is of the opinion that the curriculum has a strong practical orientation, with authentic professional whole tasks as focus point(s) in each block, starting from the first block in year 1. Students get a sound practical and theoretical basis for their future careers as connectors in a European context. These aspects are properly balanced and integrated in the curriculum. All the competencies are well covered by the curriculum. The curriculum is clearly international and has a clear focus on the EU and the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. Research skills are sufficiently addressed in the curriculum. Students are positive about the curriculum, especially about its practical orientation, its European focus and about the integration of subjects in the curriculum.

ES Zuyd's didactic approach (4C/ID model) fits in well with its intended learning outcomes and its practice-oriented curriculum. This model is characterized by the integration of learning content in the service of an authentic professional task. Student guidance is well designed and works out well in practice.

The study programme has a diverse team of very dedicated and highly-qualified lecturers, with a lot of international experience. The lecturers are highly valued by the students, especially because of their expertise, international experience and their approachability. The workload of the lecturers is a point of concern for the study programme.

Substantiation

Structure and contents of the curriculum

The structure of the curriculum is visualized in the following overview:

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
Year 1	Get to know Europe S Communication officer (for a city council) 3 5	Cooperation in the EU S Project manager 4	Lobbying in the EU S Lobbyist & junior consultant 1 6	Cooperative citizenship (csr) S CSR policy advisor 2
Year 2	European competitiveness S Journalist & regional policy maker 4 6	Democracy in Europe S Political campaigner & event organiser 1 5	EU in a globalised world S Policy analyst 2	Civil society in Europe S Communication officer for an NGO 3
Year 3	Professional differentiation: exchange <i>Intercultural experience abroad</i> S Exchange student		Consultancy project S Public affairs & public relations consultant 1 3 6	EU beyond borders S Project manager & researcher 4
Year 4	Kickstarting your career S Event organiser, job applicant & policy advisor 2 5	Professional differentiation: minor <i>Minor</i> S Minor	Professional differentiation: internship <i>Work experience and practice-oriented research</i> S Intern 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6	
Task-based education Whole-tasks 1 Communication advice 2 Policy advice 3 Communication plan 4 Policy plan 5 Organising an event 6 Dissemination views				Complexity level Complexity level 1 Complexity level 2 Complexity level 3
			Learning lines in every block ■ EU/Europe ■ Personal leadership ■ French, German, Spanish ■ English ■ Research ■ ICC	

Each year consists of four blocks. The blocks in the first two years all have the same structure, in which students work on one or two professional whole tasks in various contexts that are all linked to Europe or the EU. Students entering year 3 begin with a study exchange at a partner institute outside the Netherlands and then follow two regular blocks in the second semester. The first block of year 4 focuses on the preparations for the students' professional future (*Kickstarting your career*). Students then select an elective minor (15 EC) in the second block. They complete their studies with an internship (30 EC) in which they carry out practice-oriented research. Horizontal learning lines run through the blocks: EU/Europe, Personal leadership, French-German-Spanish, English, Research and Connecting cultures.

The contexts central to the various blocks reflect ES Zuyd's decision to approach Europe primarily from the EU perspective, for example the themes of blocks 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, and 3.3, and from the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world in the themes of blocks 2.1, 2.3, and 3.4. The differences between the complexity levels are reflected in the assignments of the blocks. Assignments of the lowest complexity level have a clearly-demarcated scope, address a limited number of issues and relate to one or two specific stakeholder groups. More complex assignments are of a broader scope, address a larger number of issues and relate to more stakeholder groups.

In the first eight blocks (years 1 and 2), students also follow theoretical classes on Europe and the EU (4 EC per block), except blocks 1.4 and 2.4, and classes in French, German or Spanish (3 EC per block), in addition to the professional task (8 EC per block). Although the theoretical classes on Europe and the EU do have a thematic relationship with the professional task, they are nevertheless provided as separate units to assure a deeper acquisition of knowledge. To obtain the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude to perform the professional tasks, students are offered supportive classes during the block, the content of which focuses exclusively on the specific professional task. Students need to be able to use the information provided in these classes immediately during the performance of their task. Students in block 1.2, for example, follow workshops in which they learn how to perform a literature study to explore a specific policy domain and students in block 2.1 learn how to set up a focus group for exchanges of knowledge. From the beginning of the programme, research skills are part of each block. To perform the professional tasks, students have to conduct several types of research, such as a literature study, or quantitative or qualitative research. In this field, the programme collaborates with Zuyd's Research Centre for International Relationship Management. For each professional task, the programme has specified the knowledge, skills and attitude students need to successfully complete the task.

According to the panel, the programme offers students sufficient options for differentiation. Students select which foreign language they wish to study (French, German, or Spanish). They are offered the opportunity to place their individual emphasis on the performance of the professional tasks, for example, their specific focus on certain policy domains, countries, or regions. Furthermore, students can select from a range of destinations in and outside Europe for their study exchange programme in the first semester of year 3, where they can follow classes offered by the partner institute of their choice. Students can subsequently follow a minor (15 EC) in block 4.2, either at ES, another Zuyd School or at another Dutch UAS. They can also follow a pre-master's programme at Maastricht University. Finally, students can customize their programme through the kind of internship they do and the research assignment they do alongside their regular intern duties.

The programme is sufficiently internationalized, according to the panel, with the contents of all the blocks related to Europe or the EU. The teaching language is English and students study a foreign language (French, German or Spanish). The final attainment levels for the languages are CEFR C1 for English and at least B1 for French, German and Spanish (CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference of Languages). All students follow an exchange programme abroad in year 3 and the internship in year 4 must be of a European character in an international environment. The international character of the programme is also reflected in the team of lecturers, see below.

From student surveys, the Student chapter of the Self-evaluation and the panel meeting with the students, the panel concludes that students are generally positive about the contents and design of the curriculum, especially about the clear focus on the professional field, the integration of subjects and the broad perspective of subject matters. They are positive about the balance between theory and practice in the curriculum and also about the level at which these elements are taught. The classes on EU subjects and intercultural communication are highly valued. The programme is truly international, according to the students, but this could be further enhanced by diversifying classes and groups to make them more international.

All in all, the panel concludes that the curriculum offers students an adequate knowledge and skills basis for their future careers. It provides a good foundation for their role as connector in a European context. The curriculum is strongly international, with a clear focus on the EU and Europe and it is well linked to the outside world. The intended learning outcomes are clearly covered by the curriculum. An important development point, according to the panel, is the further integration in the curriculum, especially the integration of the foreign languages and the professional tasks. The panel is positive about the attention paid to intercultural aspects, although it is not clear to the panel how the programme defines those 'intercultural aspects'. Use of 'international' and 'intercultural' sometimes seems to mean the same thing both in the documents and in the use of language by those interviewed, but these are not interchangeable. The multicultural contexts to be taken into account are broader than just those from other countries. A clearer, well-founded vision on this would give this subject more body.

Didactic approach

ES Zuyd's didactic approach fits in well with its intended learning outcomes and its practice-oriented curriculum. The programme has adopted the 4C/ID model (four components/instructional design) for its didactic approach. This model is characterized by the integration of learning content in the service of an authentic professional task. The programme uses the following four principles in its didactic approach:

- (1) Students receive support and coaching at each complexity level on the basis of the diminishing scaffolding principle. The support students receive decreases with increasing experience with a specific task at a specific competency level. The support increases when the complexity of the task increases.
- (2) The programme's support and coaching promote the self-regulation of students. Students are offered supportive information that is always accessible, primarily from the Moodle digital learning environment. For each professional task, this information provides students an insight into the competencies they have already acquired, together with the new competencies that they will need for the successful completion of a specific professional task.
- (3) Students work through a wide variety of exercises. Students get preparatory learning tasks that they work through, with the assistance of a supervisor, until they can perform the entire task in autonomy, see also (1). The context varies between learning tasks to ensure that students come into contact with various settings in which the tasks can be performed in professional practice.
- (4) Students and lecturers acquire knowledge in interaction with others – including representatives from the professional field – in accordance with the social constructivism principle. The programme is convinced that students learn more by interacting with fellow students, lecturers, and representatives from the professional field. Therefore, there are many group discussions and assignments that enable students to test ideas and synthesize the ideas of others, all with the ultimate objective of acquiring a deeper understanding of the subject matter they have learnt in the classes.

Academic Guidance Counselling

Students are assigned a mentor who keeps track of the study progress. The mentor is a lecturer at European Studies who will provide on-demand guidance to the student and will keep up with their study progress during their whole study career. Students will plan at least two meetings with their mentor during which their study progress can be discussed. Students also discuss the

choices they have to make in their learning paths, such as the choice for the exchange partner in year 3 or the choice for the minor or premaster in year 4. The mentor is the first one to turn to if a student has study or personal problems, especially when things occur that may have a negative effect on their study progress. Where appropriate, the mentor may initiate a meeting with the student. If necessary or appropriate, the mentor will refer the student to the student counsellor. From student surveys and the panel's meeting with students, it has become clear that students judge their guidance positively.

Lecturers

The programme has 24 lecturers (15,0 FTE) and the team is considerably diverse. The team includes European Studies graduates, (inter)cultural experts, economists, linguists in applied languages, legal experts, communication specialists and organizational psychologists. A large number of the lecturers have an international background: 42% is non-Dutch, has a dual nationality and/or was born outside the Netherlands and 75% of the lecturers studied and/or worked outside the Netherlands. The vast majority of lecturers has a Master's degree (79%, including one pending); 21% has a PhD (including one pending). Almost all lecturers have completed the training for the *Basiskwalificatie Didactische Bekwaamheid* (BDB, basic didactic qualification). Most lecturers have completed a *Basis Kwalificatie Examinering* (BKE, basic examination qualification) or *Senior Kwalificatie Examinering* (SKE, senior examination qualification) programme in the past few years. As the entire programme is taught in English, all lecturers must have a demonstrable command of English to at least C1 level.

The study programme has changed its internal organization because of the implementation of the new curriculum. Each block has a block coordinator, who is responsible for the substantive synchronization and for the communication between the lecturers. The block coordinator sees to it that all classes and learning tasks have a clear relationship with the professional task and that development points are formulated on the basis of the block evaluation. He or she also monitors the Moodle environment of the block. The formation of groups of lecturers around the professional tasks enables lecturers to focus on the same task and as a result, can professionalize themselves in this area more rapidly and can carry out a more targeted search for input from the professional field.

The panel has met a dedicated, highly-qualified and, indeed, diverse team of lecturers. The expertise of the lecturers covers the contents of the curriculum. The lecturers the panel interviewed were positive about their job and the study programme. As mentioned in the section on the characteristics of the programme, the workload of the lecturers is an issue of concern, because they are engaged in the development of a new curriculum, new teaching of that curriculum and teaching the old curriculum in which the assessment, in particular, is fairly labour-intensive. The panel has established that the study programme is aware of this issue and it urges the study programme to address this issue with appropriate measures. The lecturers are positive about the training and professionalization facilities offered by the study programme. In addition to the above-mentioned didactic and examination qualifications, the professionalization mainly focuses on the 4C/ID didactic model, integrated language teaching and coaching research projects.

ES Zuyd's students assess their lecturers as positive. Course and student evaluations and the Student Chapter of the Self-Evaluation show that ES Zuyd students are positive about the quality,

accessibility, engagement and expertise of their lecturers. This was also confirmed by the students the panel interviewed. Students stress that there is a real community feeling in the study programme. Students state that most lecturers have a good command of English, but the command of English of some lecturers needs further improvement. They also note that in some cases the English of assignments of the exams is somewhat faulty. It has also been noted that some lecturers sometimes switch to Dutch in class. It goes without saying that this is not to be expected in a study programme which aims to be truly international. Therefore, the panel recommends the study programme to determine in which cases further training in English for lecturers is necessary.

Standard 3 Student Assessment

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

Conclusion

Based on the considerations mentioned below, the audit panel assesses that the study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 3.

The study programme has adopted an assessment policy, which is aligned with the learning outcomes. The overall quality of the assessments is satisfactory. They meet the requirements of validity, reliability and transparency. The study programme uses an adequate mix of exams and assessments. The grading of the exams and assessments is insightful. Students judge the assessment system and the various assessments as positive. In general, students are positive about the feedback they get for the assessments. According to the panel, the quality assurance system for student assessment is well designed and works properly in practice, with calibration of grading, the use of testing matrices and of the four-eyes principle. The members of the Board of Examiners are highly-qualified, very knowledgeable, pro-active and the Board of Examiners has a firm position within the study programme. The Board of Examiners is actively involved in the development of student assessment in the new curriculum.

Substantiation

Assessment policy

ES Zuyd's assessment policy is, according to the panel, clearly laid down in its *Assessment Policy 2019-2020*, which is based on Zuyd's guidelines for assessment of the *Assessment Compass* of 2015. Essential in the programme's assessment policy is, self-evidently, the focus on assessing professional whole tasks. This means that there is more integrated assessment than in the old curriculum. This is in line with the 4C/ID didactic model, which assumes that the performance of a complex professional task requires an integrated application of knowledge, skills and professional attitude. This approach does not only have didactic advantages, but it also helps to reduce the workload of lecturers. The study programme is reviewing the first integrated assessments and is planning to extend this by fully integrating the knowledge and language assessments in the professional products from year 3 onwards. The panel strongly supports this plan.

Execution of assessment policy

Each block in years 1 and 2 is concluded with one knowledge test for 4 EC. In addition, all skills and English, as well as the application of knowledge, are assessed in an integrated test in the professional product (8 EC). The foreign languages have separate tests (3EC)

The panel has studied a representative selection of written assessments and related assessment forms. According to the panel, the assessments meet the standards of bachelor assessments and meet the requirements of validity, reliability and transparency. The panel has seen several good examples of integrated assessments. The grading is insightful, according to the panel. Students

judge the assessment system and the various assessments as positive. According to them, the exams and assessments are clearly linked to the classes. They are also positive about the information about the assessment procedures and assessment criteria. This also holds for the feedback they get for the assessments. The feedback for the research reports of the graduation phase, however, could be more elaborate, see also Standard 4.

Quality assurance of student assessment

ES Zuyd has adopted several procedures for the student assessment quality assurance. Firstly, the Board of Examiners appoints examiners nominated by the programme management. Candidates are selected for nomination on the basis of demonstrable substantive expertise and demonstrable test competencies, for example BKE or SKE. In all cases, several lecturers are involved in the preparation of a test for the new curriculum. They jointly develop a test matrix on the basis of the learning goals. Once the first test has been taken, they calibrate the assessment form by jointly marking some of the test papers. Next, they carry out a psychometric analysis of tests which are suitable for that purpose to obtain a greater insight into the quality of the individual test questions and of the test in its entirety. This approach is part of ES Zuyd's calibration policy. Using the four-eyes principle in grading assessments is another instrument used in the quality assurance of student assessment. This is common in the assessment of professional tasks and always done in the assessment of all graduation products.

The study programme has its own Board of Examiners, consisting of four members, including one external member. It works with an annual PDCA cycle and conducts periodic checks of test documents, such as test matrices, assessment forms, and answer keys. Extra checks may also be carried out in response to requests from examiners or complaints from students. When these reveal a problem with the test quality, then performance agreements are reached with the examiners involved and monitored the next time the test is taken. In each academic year, the Board of Examiners puts extra focus on a specific topic. In 2018-2019, the Board of Examiners focused mainly on graduation products in the old curriculum and in 2019-2020 on the first tests in the new curriculum.

According to the panel, the programme's quality assurance system for student assessment is well thought through and works properly in practice, with calibration of grading, the use of testing matrices and the use of the four-eyes principle. Based on the 2019-2020 report of the Board of Examiners and the meeting with some of its members, the panel is impressed by the quality of the Board's work. The members of the Board of Examiners are very knowledgeable, pro-active and the Board has a firm position within the study programme itself. It is also actively involved in the development of the student assessment in the new curriculum.

Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Conclusion

Based on the considerations mentioned below, the audit panel assesses that the study programme **meets** the generic quality requirements for standard 4.

The panel's assessment of this standard is mainly based on the old curriculum, since no sooner than in 2023 the first students will graduate on the basis of the new curriculum. At the time of the site visit, the study programme had only some basic ideas of the graduation phase of the new curriculum and the assessment of the end level of the competencies.

With its curriculum, the design of the graduation phase and the results of the graduates, the study programme demonstrates that the students achieve the intended learning outcomes. The graduation portfolios meet the requirements of the professional bachelor level and show that all the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. The study programme employs proper instruments to monitor the final attainment level.

The panel is positive about the assessment of the competencies at end level in different products, because this helps to create proper settings and contexts for the assessment of the specific competencies at end level. The intended future integration of the assessment of the competencies at end level is also supported by the panel, as this will be in line with the notion of integrated teaching in the new curriculum. The panel strongly supports the programme's plan to reduce the volume of the graduation portfolios. The internships and related research reports have a clear European dimension. The panel is of the opinion that the methodological foundation can be further improved. Most of the research reports have the same methodological format. The panel advocates more flexibility in this respect.

ES Zuyd maintains close contacts with its alumni. Alumni are positive about the link between the programme and their positions or further education. The professional field is very positive about the qualities of the ES Zuyd alumni.

Substantiation

Graduation process

Students following the old curriculum demonstrate that they have acquired the final competences with a portfolio containing a number of products.

They relate to products of the following classes in which the competencies are assessed at end level:

Study course	Product	Competencies
Consultancy project, year 3	-Strategic communication report -Exam Decision-Making in the EU	2. EU policy
English, block 4.1	Common Wealth Studies essay or IELTS certificate	5. Foreign languages
Foreign language (Fr/Ge/Sp)	Written: -Portfolio block 4.1 (Fr/Ge) -DELFI certificate 2.4 (Fr) Written exam, Ge 3.4 or Goethe/Sp 4.1 Oral: -Job interview, block 4.1 (Fr/Ge) -Oral presentation, block 4.1 (Sp)	5. Foreign languages
EU development aid, block 4.1	Written proposal	1. Europe's challenges
Internship (4.3 - 4.4)	-Internship report -Research report	3. Connecting cultures 4. Applied research 6. Personal leadership

The main part of the graduation phase comprises the internship and the research report (28 EC), of which about 60% is dedicated to the internship and 40% to the research report. The internship should be done within an international environment in an organisation, company or institution with a strong European dimension, preferably abroad. The student must carry out a research assignment for the internship provider with an advice based on this research. The student will be assessed on (1) the internship activities (40%), (2) the internship report (20%) and (3) the research report (40%). During the internship, the student is supervised by the company advisor and by an ES internship supervisor. The ES internship supervisor will visit the intern in principle at least once, if the internship location is within a range of 200 km from Maastricht. The ES internship supervisor also gives guidance for writing the research report. The process of writing the research report includes three formative assessment moments: the research proposal and the first and second draft of the report.

The internship activities are assessed by the ES internship supervisor, who will also take the company supervisor's assessment into account. The ES internship supervisor also assesses the internship report. The research proposal and the final version of the research report are assessed by the ES internship supervisor and a second ES examiner.

According to the panel, the study programme has designed a proper graduation process with clear formative assessment moments and adequate guidance and marking procedures. Also alumni judge the graduation process positively. The assessment of the competencies at end level in different products helps to create proper settings and contexts for the assessment of the specific competencies at end level, but it also makes the graduation rather complex and labour intensive, according to the panel. Therefore, the panel supports the programme's plan to reduce the graduation portfolio of the new curriculum, including more integrated assessment of the competencies at end level. This will also be in line with the integrative character of the new curriculum.

Level of intended learning outcomes in graduation products

The panel has studied 15 graduation portfolios of students who graduated in the last two academic years, together with the related assessment forms. These portfolios consist of the main graduation products: the products of the Consultancy Project of year 3, the internship report and the research report. Of two of the graduates the panel studied the complete graduation portfolio, including the products of the foreign languages and the written proposal for the EU development aid block. According to the panel, the portfolios meet the requirements of the professional bachelor level and show that the intended learning outcomes have been achieved.

The internships and research reports all had a clear European dimension. The panel assessed all research reports as satisfactory. The panel found the grading correct and mostly insightful. The quality of the feedback varied and could be more elaborate in some cases. Although the panel has come across some very interesting research reports, which are also of a high quality, it also notes that there is room for improvement in as to methodological approach in the research reports. It seems that most students follow strictly the same methodological format. Therefore, the panel suggests to allow for more flexibility in the methodological approach. The panel advises to pay extra attention in the guidance to the formulation of research questions (sometimes too broad), proper support of claims and making concrete, realistic recommendations.

Assuring the final attainment level

According to the panel, the programme employs a number of proper instruments to monitor the extent to which its students achieve the final competency levels. At least once a year, the programme organizes an 'achieved learning outcome session' in which the programme, together with internal and external stakeholders, examines a number of graduation products to determine whether they meet the required level. Calibrations are also carried out with representatives from the other Dutch ES programmes. The achieved learning outcomes are also high on the agenda of the Board of Examiners. In 2018 the Board of Examiners submitted some research reports to the Hobéon quality agency for an achieved learning outcome test. This test revealed that the achievement of a university of applied sciences level was adequately demonstrated in the relevant products.

Functioning of alumni in the work field

The outcomes from the annual *HBO-monitor* (national survey of UAS alumni), the programme's own questionnaires and focus groups of alumni, show that alumni are generally satisfied with the extent to which the programme ties in with the current position they hold or the selected further education. Alumni are generally positive about the programme as a whole and the knowledge and skills they have acquired through the programme. These outcomes were confirmed by the alumni whom the panel interviewed. These alumni were especially positive about the skills they had acquired and the broad perspective they had developed. Representatives of the professional field the panel met, were also positive about ES Zuyd's alumni. They especially praised their hands-on and proactive attitude. They stressed that they support the programme's focus on Europe and the EU, but that it seems to focus largely on western Europe. Both the wider European context and a more global scope should not be neglected in the programme.

Final Conclusion

Assessments of the Standards

The audit team comes to the following judgements with regard to the standards:

	Bachelor European Studies
<i>Standaard 1 Intended Learning Outcomes</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standaard 2 Teaching-Learning Environment</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standaard 3 Student Assessment</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements
<i>Standaard 4 Achieved Learning Outcomes</i>	Meets the generic quality requirements

The judgements have been weighed in accordance with the NVAO assessment rules. On the basis of this, the audit panel assesses the quality of the existing Bachelor study programme European Studies of Zuyd University of Applied Sciences as **positive**.

Recommendations

The audit panel has the following recommendations for the study programme:

Standard 1

- Formulate a clear definition of what you consider to be 'international'.
- Formulate a clear definition of what you consider to be 'intercultural'.

Standard 2

- Invest more in the proficiency of English of the lecturers and see to it that at all times only English is spoken by them in class.

Standard 4

- Reduce the size of the graduation research reports.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme for the Site Visit

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Participants</i>
08.15-08.30 (15 min)	Welcome	
08.30-09.00 (30 min)	Presentation European Studies Zuyd + opportunity to ask questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student member School Participation Council - Second year student - Senior lecturer, Educational Advisor, Chair Curriculum Committee - Head of Programme - Dean
09.00-10.15 (75 min)	Examination materials + preparation	Panel only
10.15-11.00 (45 min)	Lecturers and examiners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecturer Europe/EU, Spanish - Lecturer German - Lecturer Research, Intercultural Communication, Socio-communicative skills - Lecturer French - Lecturer Research, Socio-communicative skills, Personal leadership - Lecturer Europe/EU, Personal Leadership - Lecturer English, Spanish, Commonwealth Studies
11.00-11.10 (10 min)	Deliberation panel	Panel only
11.10-11.55 (45 min)	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 first year students - 2 second year student - third year student, member School Participation Council - 2 third year students (online) - 2 fourth year students <p>(3 international students among these students)</p>
11.55-12.30 (35 min)	Deliberation + lunch panel	Panel only
12.30-13.15 (45 min)	Alumni + working field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alumnus, graduated in 2015 - Alumnus, graduated in 2015 - Alumnus, graduated in 2020, now a Master student Public Governance at Tilburg University - Alumnus, graduated in 2020, now a Master student European Public Affairs at Maastricht University - 3 members of the Professional Field Board
13.15-13.25 (10 min)	Deliberation panel	Panel only
13.25-14.10 (45 min)	Boards/committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair Board of Examiners - Member Board of Examiners - Chair Curriculum Committee - Student member Curriculum Committee - Chair School Participation Council - Student member School Participation Council
14.10-14.20 (10 min)	Deliberation panel	Panel only

14.20-15.05 (45 min)	Internationalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internship Officer - Exchange Officer - Lecturer Europe/EU, personal leadership - Lecturer Intercultural Communication (ICC), Spanish, socio-communicative skills - Lecturer Europe/EU, ICC, personal leadership, member research centre International Relationship Management - Lecturer ICC, English
15.05-15.15 (10 min)	Deliberation panel	Panel only
15.15-15.45 (30 min)	Management + Quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dean - Head of Programme - Former Head of Programme - Professor [<i>lector</i>] of International Relationship Management - Quality Assurance Coordinator
15.45-16.45 (60 min)	Final deliberation panel	Panel only
16.45-17.00 (15 min)	Feedback and outcome assessment visit	All ONLINE
17.00-17.45 (45 min)	Development meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lecturer Europe/EU, personal leadership - Lecturer ICC, Spanish, socio-communicative skills - Lecturer Europe/EU, ICC, personal leadership, member research centre International Relationship Management - Lecturer ICC, English - Chair Curriculum Committee, Europe/EU, personal leadership - Member research centre International Relationship Management - Head of Programme

Appendix 2: Documents Examined

- ES Connectors, Self-assessment report
- Assessment Policy 2019 - 2020, School of European Studies
- Description of learning outcomes for each learning line, specifies for each block
- Competence and assessment matrix ES 2020 – 2021
- The curriculum inclusive of professional tasks and their complexity levels UPDATED
- Education and Examination Regulation Bachelor Programme European Studies, 2018 – 2019, 2019 – 2020, 2020 – 2021
- European Studies National Profile, 2019
- European Studies Profiling and educational vision 2019-2023
- Faculty profile European Studies October 2020
- Staff Training Plan School of European Studies 2017 – 2020
- Internship Guide European Studies 2018 – 2019, 2018 2019
- Internship Profile European Studies 2019 – 2020
- Minutes of the meetings of the Professional Field Board
- Reports of sessions with stakeholder from the professional field about the new curriculum, 2018
- Ambitieplan 2020 – 2021, School of European Studies
- Representative selection of assessments/exams and related assessment forms
- 15 graduation portfolios of graduates from the 2018 – 2019 and 2019 – 2020 academic years