



# **HISTORY (RESEARCH MASTER)**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**UTRECHT UNIVERSITY**

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This report was finalised on 17 September 2021.





# REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME HISTORY (RESEARCH) OF UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

This report makes use of the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018) and the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes (May 2016). It takes the criteria for limited programme assessments as its starting point, supplemented by the additional aspects for research master's programmes.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

### Master's programme History (Research)

Name of the programme:	History (Research)
CROHO number:	60139
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specializations or tracks:	History Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance studies tracks : Ancient studies Medieval studies Early Medieval Insular Languages and Cultures Renaissance studies
Location:	Utrecht
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	1-11-2020, extension submission date until 31-10-2021 due to legislation WHW art. 5.16 lid 4

The digital visit of the assessment panel History and International Relations to the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University took place on 1, 2 and 3 June 2021.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Utrecht 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 18 August 2020. The panel that assessed the master's programme History (Research) consisted of:

- Prof. dr. W.P. (Wim) van Meurs, professor and chair of the Political History section at Radboud University [chair];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jan) Ziolkowski, professor of Medieval Latin at Harvard University (United States);
- Prof. dr. J. (Johannes) Hahn, professor of Ancient History at the University of Münster (Germany);
- Prof. dr. M. (Máire) Ní Mhaonaigh, professor of Celtic and Medieval Studies at the University of Cambridge (Great Britain) [referee];
- J.E. (Caroline) Schep, BA, research master's student at Leiden University [student member].

The panel was supported by M. (Mark) Delmartino, who acted as secretary.



## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The site visit to the master's programme History at the Faculty of Utrecht University was part of the cluster assessment History/International Relations Research Masters 2020. Between September 2020 and July 2021 the panel assessed five programmes at four universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: Leiden University, University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen and University of Utrecht.

On behalf of the participating universities, quality assurance agency Qanu was responsible for logistical support, panel guidance and the production of the reports. A.P. (Anke) van Wier MA and J. (Jaïra) Azaria MA were project coordinators for Qanu. A.P. (Anke) van Wier MA, J. (Jaïra) Azaria MA and M. (Mark) Delmartino acted as secretaries in the cluster assessment. During the site visit at Utrecht University, the panel was supported by M. (Mark) Delmartino, a certified NVAO secretary.

### *Panel members*

The members of the assessment panel were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence. The panel consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. W.P. (Wim) van Meurs, professor and chair of the Political History section at Radboud University [chair];
- Prof. dr. B. (Benjamin) Kaplan, professor of Dutch History at University College London (Great Britain);
- Prof. dr. C.G. (Catrien) Santing, professor in Medieval History at the University of Groningen;
- Prof. dr. A. (Anne-Laure) Van Bruaene, professor in Early Modern Cultural History at Ghent University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. M.F. (Mark) Gilbert, professor History & International Studies at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Italy);
- Prof. dr. G.D. (Greg) Woolf, professor of Classics and Director of the Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London (Great Britain);
- Prof. dr. J. (Jan) Ziolkowski, professor of Medieval Latin at Harvard University (United States);
- Prof. dr. V. (Violet) Soen, Associate professor of Early Modern Religious History at KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. M. (Marjolein) 't Hart, Senior Researcher at the Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands in Amsterdam and Professor of the History of State Formation in Global Perspective at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. J. (Johannes) Hahn, professor of Ancient History at the University of Münster (Germany);
- Dr. J. (Jorg) Kustermans, associate professor of International Relations at the Department of Political Science at the University of Antwerp (Belgium).
- S.G.J. (Siebren) Teule, MA, graduated research master's student at Utrecht University and junior lecturer at the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University [student member];
- J.E. (Caroline) Schep, BA, research master's student at Leiden University [student member];
- Prof. dr. M. (Máire) Ní Mhaonaigh, professor of Celtic and Medieval Studies at the University of Cambridge (Great Britain) [referee].

### *Preparation*

On 24 January 2020, the panel chair was briefed by Qanu on his role, the assessment framework, the working method, and the planning of site visits and reports. A preparatory panel meeting was organised on 7 February 2020. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed their working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

The project coordinator composed a schedule for the site visit in consultation with the Faculty. Prior to the site visit, the Faculty selected representative partners for the various interviews. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit to Utrecht University, Qanu received the self-evaluation report of the programme and sent it to the panel. A thesis selection was made by the panel's chair and the project coordinator. The selection consisted of 15 theses and their assessment forms, based on a provided list of graduates from the academic year 2018-2019. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The panel reviewed 8 theses of the



AMRS programme (2 for each track), and 7 of the History programme. The project coordinator and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

After studying the self-evaluation report, theses and assessment forms, the panel members formulated their preliminary findings. The secretary collected all initial questions and remarks and distributed these amongst all panel members.

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

#### *Online site visit*

The online site visit to Utrecht University took place on 1, 2 and 3 June 2021. Before the site visit, the panel studied the additional documents provided by the programme. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programme: students and staff members, the programme management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

At the end of the site visit, the programme and the panel held a Development Dialogue. A separate document on the outcomes of this meeting will be produced by the programme. This document does not form part of the application for accreditation.

#### *Report*

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

#### *Definition of judgements standards*

In accordance with the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018) 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.

For research master's programmes, the aspects as listed in the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes (May 2016) are considered as supplementary to the criteria in this framework and are assessed accordingly.





## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

This assessment report covers the Research Master's degree programme (RMA) History, which is part of the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University. It consists of two Master's programmes: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (AMRS), and History. The AMRS programme features four tracks: Ancient Studies, Medieval Studies, Renaissance Studies, and Early Medieval Insular Languages and Cultures. The panel thinks highly of the quality and comprehensiveness of the written materials provided by the programme. The discussions with programme stakeholders have confirmed that the description and analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report is an adequate representation of the day-to-day reality in the RMA History programme.

### *Standard 1*

The panel considers that the RMA History degree programme at Utrecht University is strong, and this for a number of reasons: the degree programme is well thought out, and the choices made in terms of programmes, profile(s) and curriculum are motivated; it offers good quality and the numbers of students and staff make the endeavour sustainable notwithstanding the breadth of the discipline and the materials; moreover, the programme is well organised, without unnecessary bureaucracy but with all the systematic groundwork of regulations, procedures and forms in place.

According to the panel, the RMA degree programme delivers what it sets out to do - providing specialized knowledge and preparing students for a career as researcher – and it does so by offering comprehensive research-driven training that meets the high level requirements it formulated in the learning outcomes and by striking the right balance between teaching highly specialised knowledge and educating students as researchers.

### *Standard 2*

The teaching and learning environment of the RMA History is well developed. Students and alumni were positive about the staff, the logic and coherence of courses and freedoms the programme had to offer to follow their individual preferences. The panel thinks highly of the current structure of the AMRS and History programmes, which combine common courses with ample room for individualised study. Furthermore, the panel considers that the current quality of education, the diversity of expertise and the ambition to prepare students for an international research career can only be attained by offering the RMA degree programme in English. The potential of the incoming students is beyond doubt and results from a careful selection procedure. While it applauds the decision not to sacrifice quality for quantity, the panel does think that more international students could be attracted to the programme.

The staff is highly motivated and clearly enjoys working with the best of the best among the students, in teams and individually. Despite the high workload, the motivation of the staff is not a desperate effort to make something work that is not sustainable, on the contrary: the programme is sustainable and there is energy and commitment to keep improving and experimenting on the basis of feedback and the staff's own observations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the programme in two ways: 'regular' courses have switched to online formats, while the individual trajectory and the research master thesis were hit harder as students had to cancel study and internship periods abroad or incurred delays because of restricted access to first-hand source materials. The university, faculty and programme have reacted in a timely and comprehensive manner, according to the panel, which thinks highly of the didactical and 'human' efforts of the staff, and of the resilience of students.

In addition to several elements that are organised very well, the panel considers that there are issues in the realm of student wellbeing that can be improved, such as the internal communication, the study load spread, and social bonding within and across programmes and years. The panel welcomes the attention of the RMA degree programme to enhance the study completion rates and supports the measures that have been taken so far. It recommends that programmes uphold the word limit for the thesis and to promote an atmosphere where all students can benefit from the programme, irrespective of their grades. The panel also calls upon the RMA degree programme to monitor the drop-out rate, which seems to be high in comparison to other research master programmes.



### *Standard 3*

The panel considers that student assessment is well organised in the RMA History programme. It is embedded in the principles, policies and structures of the University and the Faculty. The assessment plans constitute a good basis for implementing the overall assessment principles per programme. The panel considers that there is a strong alignment between the programme learning outcomes, the course goals and the assessment formats of both AMRS and History programmes. The course assessments are varied and their marking up to standard. The developments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic have not impacted dramatically on the operation of course assessments, which is another proof of the robustness of the assessment system. The panel thinks highly of the thesis assessment which is thorough, objective, convincing, helpful and constructive. The Board of Examiners plays an important role in assuring the quality of assessment and performs its task with professionalism and competence. The panel is confident about the level of courses and the quality of assessments that students are allowed to take outside of the RMA degree programme.

### *Standard 4*

The panel considers that students who finish the AMRS or History programme have invariably achieved the learning outcomes of the RMA degree. The panel is impressed by the overall high level of research quality and independent thinking students demonstrate in their theses, as well as by the passion, devotion and interest they show in the mastery of their research and the chosen topic. According to the panel, the programmes and their teaching staff should be credited for delivering a solid curriculum where they teach and train students to achieve a level of research excellence. Upon graduation, alumni end up in positions that are commensurate with the level and orientation of the research master programme.

Although it would have expected a higher share of graduates to enter a PhD trajectory, the panel considers that students are increasingly informed and prepared as part of the curriculum to pursue alternative professional careers. The panel does see room for a more active follow-up of alumni (careers) and to involve alumni more in sketching realistic and alternative career scenarios to RMA students.

The panel assesses the standards from the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments, in accordance with the aspects included in the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master Programmes, in the following way:

#### *Master's programme History (Research)*

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

The chair, Prof. dr. W.P. (Wim) van Meurs, and the secretary, M. (Mark) Delmartino, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 17 September 2021



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

## Introduction

This assessment report covers the Research Master's degree programme (RMA) History, which is part of the Faculty of Humanities of Utrecht University. It consists of two Master's programmes: Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (AMRS), and History. The History programme is offered by the Department and School of History and Art History, while the AMRS also resorts under the Department and School of Languages, Literature and Communication. In what follows the panel will refer to one degree programme (RMA) and two programmes (AMRS and History).

The AMRS programme features four tracks: Ancient Studies, Medieval Studies, Renaissance Studies, and Early Medieval Insular Languages and Cultures. The History programme, which used to be called Modern History but changed title since the previous accreditation, has no tracks but reflects the four subdivisions in the History department: political history, cultural history, history of international relations and conflict studies, and economic and social history. The RMA History has its own Curriculum Committee (*opleidingscommissie*), can rely on assessment advice from the Faculty Assessment Committee and shares a Board of Examiners with all research master's programmes of the Faculty. The degree programme has two Directors of Education, one per School, and two programme coordinators who are the designated contact persons for students and teachers in History and AMRS, respectively.

The panel thinks highly of the quality and comprehensiveness of the written materials provided by the programme. The Self-Evaluation Report combined useful descriptions with relevant analyses and contained among others an extensive motivation of the follow-up the degree programme had given to the recommendations in the previous assessment report. The panel also wants to express its gratitude for the impeccable organisation of the online site visit by the Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University. The discussions with programme stakeholders have on the one hand clarified the panel issues that were still outstanding and confirmed on the other hand that the description and analysis in the Self-Evaluation Report is an adequate representation of the day-to-day reality in the RMA History programme.

### **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*

Based on the written materials and the discussions, the panel has established that the RMA degree programme aims to provide good quality research-driven training in history. Students acquire a solid grounding in the discipline, participate in research projects and pursue their individual ambitions on topics of their choice. The panel is impressed by the breadth of the discipline and the materials covered, and thinks that the RMA History at Utrecht University successfully manages to encompass this breadth. The AMRS and History programmes share a common set of core principles: the programmes are selective, tailored to the needs and academic interests of the individual students, feature small-scale classes with research-led, research-based and research-oriented teaching, and provide practical experience in the field. The combination of these principles constitutes according to the panel a fruitful ground for RMA students to prepare for a career as researcher.



The History programme targets students interested in the discipline of modern history. It covers a broad range of historical expertise in four areas of (early) modern history, which coincide with distinct research subdivisions within the History department. The panel understood from the interesting benchmarking section in the report that the programme is comparable to several two-year English-language programmes in History, but that its focus differs from all benchmarks in the Netherlands and beyond.

The AMRS programme targets students with a preference for the interdisciplinary field of pre-modern history, languages and culture. It focuses on the study of the historical, archaeological and intellectual developments in Europe from Antiquity through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. The panel acknowledges the statement on benchmarking in the report that the combination in AMRS of a broad scope, in-depth specialization and an interdisciplinary and diachronic approach to the study of premodern history, languages and culture is unparalleled in the Netherlands and the rest of the world. It also welcomes the strong link in AMRS between (attention for) literary and material sources, and between languages and vernaculars.

While the previous assessment report had recommended to create more overlap and connections between AMRS and (Modern) History, the current panel appreciates two programmes with both a distinct and a common profile. As every profile is elaborate, relevant and well motivated, the panel understands and appreciates the choices made by the Faculty, Department, Schools and RMA programme and underscores the rationale for the current set-up of two individual programmes under one RMA degree programme. In this regard, the panel found that Utrecht University is in the position to provide both programmes with some general courses for all students and enough specialised courses. Nonetheless, the panel does think that there is room for more exchange of best practices between the two programmes: a more systematic comparison might be the way forward, taking not the individuality of each programme as a starting point but rather the logic of having an identical format for the curriculum and explaining the differences. Thematic courses, e.g. on the history of the book or on the use and/or iconography of coinage, might be helpful to strengthen the connections between the various AMRS tracks.

#### *Intended learning outcomes*

The RMA degree aims to provide specialized knowledge and prepare students for a career as researcher and for a PhD programme. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs), which are listed in Appendix 1 to this report, consist of seven exit qualifications the RMA graduate is expected to possess. The formulation of these ILOs corresponds to the five European-wide Dublin Descriptors for master programmes. According to the panel, the ILOs are formulated precisely and reflect the requirements of the discipline (history), level (master) and orientation (academic).

Both programmes are built on the common set of ILOs. The panel noticed in the respective assessment plans that AMRS wants to offer research-based training in premodern studies as an academic discipline and that its learning objectives (what it wants students to learn) are identical to the ILOs. The History programme has translated the seven ILOs in nine learning objectives, which align with both ILOs and Dublin Descriptors, yet are more extensive and specific in their description of what they expect their students to learn. In both cases, the panel thinks that the learning outcomes / learning objectives are covered adequately in the respective curriculum components and that both AMRS and History students have ample opportunities to acquire the learning outcomes of the RMA degree.

#### *Research oriented nature*

The panel has established on the basis of the written materials and the discussions that the research oriented nature of the RMA History is very strong. The degree programme is clearly research driven. The AMRS and History programmes are embedded in research institutes of the university and are closely linked to the Dutch national research schools. Moreover, research-led, research-based and research-oriented teaching allows students to participate in internally and externally funded projects to deepen and broaden their research capabilities. According to the panel, both programmes provide a systematic path towards independent research that combines methodology skills, theoretical groundwork, historiography, deep content knowledge and applied practical experience. In this regard, the central position of the master thesis in the curriculum is both illustrative of the programme's focus, and



fully justified according to the panel. Students acquire a solid basis in the first year and apply their research competence in the second year when they conduct their own individual research in the thesis. The panel therefore agrees with the statement in the report that the RMA History views the research environment as one of the key strengths of the programme.

The panel furthermore noticed that the RMA degree programme distinguishes in its aims between preparing students for a career as researcher outside of academia and for a PhD programme, and expect students to communicate conclusions, as well as the underlying knowledge, grounds and considerations to an audience composed of specialists and non-specialists. In this regard, the panel gathered from the learning objectives of the History programme and the discussions with both programmes that students learn to recognize their transferable skills acquired during the programme and present these on the academic and non-academic job market. The panel confirms that the programme (learning outcomes) prepares students for both academic and non-academic careers.

#### *International character*

The panel noticed that internationalisation is part and parcel of the degree programme. The RMA is embedded in research institutes with a strong international reputation. The teaching staff is quite international in composition and their respective research groups maintain several collaborative partnerships with equally reputed research partners in Europe and beyond. Moreover, students are encouraged to spend part of their curriculum abroad either through the Erasmus programme or via an individual exchange programme. The panel heard many examples of how staff members have used their individual professional networks to ensure that RMA students could spend a research (internship) period abroad or attend international conferences.

The RMA History considers the international character to be an important strength of the programme. The panel confirms that the international dimension is indeed reflected in the objectives, curricula and staff of the RMA programme and that both History and AMRS offer students the opportunity to become part of an international community and a variety of transnational research networks. Hence, it is very likely that the research career of the RMA graduates will have an international dimension. However, the panel also noticed that this international dimension is not (yet) reflected in the student body. Although the number of international students is on the rise, several RMA History students and alumni were either Dutch or had entered this programme after obtaining a bachelor's degree in the Netherlands. As many international students have a Western background (US and UK), the panel welcomes the intention of the programme to pursue more diversity in international student recruitment.

#### **Considerations**

The panel considers that the RMA History degree programme at Utrecht University is strong, and this for a number of reasons: the degree programme is well thought out, and the choices made in terms of programmes, profile(s) and curriculum are motivated; it offers good quality and the numbers of students and staff make the endeavour sustainable notwithstanding the breadth of the discipline and the materials; moreover, the programme is well organised, without unnecessary bureaucracy but with all the systematic groundwork of regulations, procedures and forms in place.

According to the panel, the RMA degree programme delivers what it sets out to do - providing specialized knowledge and preparing students for a career as researcher – and it does so by offering comprehensive research-driven training that meets the high level requirements it formulated in the learning outcomes and by striking the right balance between teaching highly specialised knowledge and educating students as researchers.

#### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme History (Research):* 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***Curriculum*

The RMA History degree is a two-year full-time programme that amounts to 120 EC. Each year consists of four terms of nine to ten weeks and all courses have a study load of 5 EC (units). During the first year, students take compulsory courses in the form of interactive seminars that provide a theoretical (20 EC) and research-based (20 EC) foundation. Moreover, students follow coursework (10 EC) offered by a research school. The remaining 10 EC can be spent on electives or language requirements. In the second year, students follow an individual trajectory (30 EC) deepening their specialisation and writing their master thesis (30 EC). A schematic overview of both programme curricula is provided in Appendix 2 to this report.

All compulsory courses are specifically targeted at an audience of RMA students. Further to its explicit question, the panel heard that there are hardly any RMA students who follow regular master courses, and those who do so need to submit a motivated request and get permission from the Board of Examiners (BoE). The examples provided by students and BoE have convinced the panel that this aspect of the programme – which was identified as an issue for attention in the previous assessment report - is now very well covered and monitored.

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions that the structure and the rationale of the curriculum is quite similar for both programmes. The panel shares the enthusiasm of students, alumni and faculty for the set-up of the curricula, which consist of a useful combination of common courses (per programme) and individual trajectories. In this regard, the panel notices with satisfaction that the programme structure is much more coherent than during the previous accreditation visit, an appreciation that applies to both the RMA degree programme and its two programmes AMRS and History. According to the panel, the current structure of the individualised study programmes is a major strength and key feature of the RMA degree programme.

The panel noticed that Utrecht University has by far the highest number of History students in the Netherlands and manages to provide a differentiated system of specialisations. The RMA degree consists of two programmes, History and AMRS, with the latter featuring four tracks. While it would not consider this set-up to be as simple and straightforward as some interlocutors indicated, the panel did notice that the programmes work in practice and have their own internally consistent rationale. The panel warmly welcomed the support that the university and faculty provide to highly-specialised fields of study. The four AMRS tracks for instance allow for highly specialised education, which according to the panel is rare. Combining early medieval insular studies with the other Medieval and Renaissance tracks has the advantage of bringing these fields in contact with one another to the benefit of all. Nonetheless, the panel also found that the current set-up is vulnerable in some respects as courses from national research schools have to be included to make things work and some fields of study are covered by only a very limited number of research staff.

The respective programme curricula are designed to link research and teaching, and that is exactly what is happening throughout the courses, which are set up according to five principles: excellent researchers, research led teaching, research oriented curriculum, research based projects, and attention to scholarly, critical and ethical research practice. The panel noticed that the curricula of both programmes pay extensive attention to scientific methodology and the ethics of scientific research; in fact, it is an integral part of every RMA course. Moreover, the extensive programme materials have demonstrated that there is a clear link between the learning goals of the individual courses and the overall programme learning outcomes.



Students and alumni have provided many examples of how they individualised their study path. The panel was impressed by these testimonies, by the opportunities that students get / take to tailor the RMA programme to their own interests and by the support they receive from teaching staff and research supervisors. In this regard, the third semester is key to tailoring the individual trajectories and both programmes offer a range of options, such as a study period abroad, internship, master-apprenticeship and cultural transfer courses.

While several students and alumni have used this period in the best possible way, the panel also noticed that there is some confusion among students about the different opportunities and where to get proper information on the respective options. This issue affects in particular the AMRS programme. The panel gathered from the discussions that the amount of information an individual student gets, depends often on the individual mentor or supervisor. While there is a lot of overall course information available on the website, in fact sheets, course syllabi and on Blackboard, it seems that options for individual trajectories (internships, study abroad, etc.) are not systematically shared and updated. The panel therefore suggests to enhance the internal communication, which it understands is an important challenge for programmes in the Faculty of Humanities and is currently being addressed at faculty level.

#### *Language of instruction*

The programme is offered in English. Asked about the rationale for this choice, the management indicated that it is standard policy of the University to offer its Research Master programmes in English. In the case of the RMA degree, the programme aims to provide students with an international research experience that will boost their international career opportunities. As several teaching staff are international, students can benefit from their specific expertise and the programme can offer its students a broader range of specialisations. Finally, the programme aims to attract international students; so far, their numbers have been limited but their involvement is on the rise. The panel acknowledges the motivation of the programme to use English as language of instruction. According to the panel, the current quality of education, the diversity of expertise and the ambition to prepare students for an international research career can only be attained by offering the RMA degree programme in English.

#### *Intake*

The panel gathered from the written materials that the RMA degree is selective and welcomes students with a strong background, a high standard of academic achievement and a good motivation for research. The selection criteria for admission have been specified at the level of the individual programme within the Education and Examination Regulations. Over the past few years, AMRS enrolment has been relatively stable with an average of 23 students per year, but with a fluctuating distribution of students per track. The average intake of History was 12 students per year until 2017 and has increased as of 2018. In September 2020, the RMA degree programme welcomed 27 AMRS and 19 History students. The number of international students remains rather low in AMRS (3 in 2020-21) and is increasing (7 in 2020-21) in History.

The panel was provided with data on application, admission and enrolment. The admissions officer moreover clarified the different stages of the selection process. According to the panel, the procedure is extensive but clear, and implemented meticulously. Roughly one third of the students who express interest in the RMA degree eventually enrol in the programme.

The quality of the incoming students and the careful selection procedure should however not hide that both programmes still have room to accommodate additional students, notably international students from outside the EU. The panel agrees with the programme that recruitment and diversity are indeed important challenges. It seems that several good quality international students decline admission because there are hardly any scholarships. Moreover, the panel gathered from discussions that there is room for a more active marketing of the RMA programme with partner universities abroad. Amidst all quantitative considerations, the panel explicitly applauds the university, faculty and programme for not sacrificing the high standards of the programme for the sake of international diversity.



### *Feasibility and success rate*

Based on the written materials and the discussions with students and staff, the panel gathers that the RMA degree programme is feasible. Although all students indicated that they had to work hard, and some students mentioned that there is room for a better spread of the workload and the deadlines in the first year of the programme, the panel's overall impression is that both AMRS and History programmes and their respective components can be completed successfully within the envisaged timeframe of two years.

However, the panel also noticed that both programmes have a considerable drop-out rate and that completion rates are low. Although rates fluctuate due to the limited number of intake, every year there are a few students who drop out. Moreover, success rate figures provided by the programmes indicate that 41% of AMRS students and 35% of History students finish the programme in time, while in both cases 55% of students finish within three years. The panel understood from the materials and the discussions that the issue of study delay has priority attention of the RMA programme and that several strategies including the thesis lab have been implemented to tackle the problem.

Apart from strictly private reasons for quitting or considerably delaying the completion of the programme, the panel understood from the discussions that some students are at a loss when they realise that their grades are not good enough to pursue an academic career upon graduation. These students often have no 'plan B' and either decide to quit or need time to devise an interesting career alternative in the framework of the RMA degree programme. All stakeholders mentioned during the discussions that the competition for PhD positions and research oriented jobs puts a lot of pressure on students to graduate with the highest grades and build a strong CV during their studies. Hence the ambition of many students to deliver a high quality thesis that serves as an entry ticket to academia and/or to expand their curriculum with additional (research) internships that will strengthen their opportunities on the labour market.

Finally, the panel noticed from the thesis review that several students (significantly) exceeded the foreseen length of the thesis. Given their ambitions and interests, students often find it challenging to stick to a maximum of 30,000 words: in the course of the thesis trajectory they explore new research directions they want to pursue and include, which in turn makes their thesis longer and extends the time they need to submit the final version. While it appreciates the student ambitions, the panel does think that the RMA degree programme should stick to the initially agreed size of the thesis and that the Board of Examiners should enforce this limit with the thesis supervisors, who in turn should pass a clear message to students that "less is more" and that abiding by set word limits is an academic skill, too.

### *Student guidance and wellbeing*

Both programmes aim to establish a research oriented community of students and scholars. According to the panel, the RMA programme achieves this goal by having students participate in the Graduate School of Humanities, by organising interdisciplinary conferences and by promoting personal guidance, supervision and mentoring of students across the two year programme. Students indicated that they appreciate this guidance and feel part of the research community at the Faculty. Teaching staff from their side like to work with ambitious RMA students.

While it acknowledges that student guidance is well organised, the panel did notice that there are issues of student wellbeing that can be improved. In addition to the above-mentioned internal communication, the panel noticed that there is an atmosphere of excellence among students. Although there are no signs of internal competition among students, ambitions for excellence tend to become somewhat problematic when students always want to do more or feel at a loss because they do not systematically obtain high scores. Hence the panel's recommendation to both AMRS and History programmes to actively convey the message that there is life beyond excellence and that all students can - and should - benefit from the programme, irrespective of their average grades. In this regard students and staff indicated that both programmes are paying increasing attention to non-academic research careers, for instance through the cultural transfer optional courses or by including career services staff in specific modules in the curriculum on labour market preparation, a development the panel hugely appreciates. On the basis of the discussions, the panel





also sees room for more social bonding within and across programmes and years, as well as for more contacts between RMA students and alumni who pursued both academic and non-academic careers.

#### *COVID-19 pandemic*

The written materials and the discussions with students and staff have provided the panel with a good view on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the RMA degree programme and how this impact has been mitigated as much as possible by the university, faculty and staff. Courses have been adapted to online formats and individual courses and teachers turned to small-scale teaching when on-campus teaching was allowed for a short period early 2021. The university installed audio-visual equipment in classrooms to facilitate bimodal teaching that would benefit also those (foreign) students that had to remain at home. Over time, all teaching and assignments have been adjusted, and students indicated both in their evaluations and during the discussion with the panel that they appreciate the didactical efforts of the staff, as well as their 'presence' and genuine concern for the wellbeing of the students.

Staff and students did mention, however, that the individual trajectory and the master thesis component were affected more dramatically by the pandemic. In fact, many students had to cancel their study period or internship abroad, while others tried to replace these components with (in-house) research internships that could be performed online. Moreover, the access to primary sources was seriously limited and alternative (online) sources were not always readily available. This issue was particularly felt in the AMRS programme where students could no longer travel abroad for first-hand autopsy of source materials. The panel understands that these circumstances may have entailed (additional) study delay. According to the panel, it goes to the credit of the committed staff and the ambitious students that they do not want to give in, but continue studying, teaching and supporting with unparalleled persistence.

#### *Teaching staff*

Based on the written materials and the discussions, the panel thinks that the teaching staff is very competent and highly committed to both programme and students. The core staff members are excellent researchers and recognised as experts in their respective fields. The 2018 research review of the Institute for History, Art and Art History gave excellent or very good scores on the quality and relevance of the research programmes that are involved in the RMA degree programme. Thesis supervisors are senior researchers and professors. All core teachers have obtained either the basic university teaching qualification or the senior variant. Moreover, the panel was satisfied to hear that all lecturers are encouraged to obtain a university qualification to teach in English (UTQEMI). The panel noticed furthermore that the teaching staff in both programmes work as a team to ensure that a broad range of expertise is represented.

These positive features, however, should not conceal that there has been - and still is - an issue of work pressure. Workload is considered one of the programme's key challenges: the panel understands that the combination of high-quality teaching with timely feedback, supportive supervision and a considerable number of contacts hours alongside competitive research often puts staff members under time constraints. Nonetheless, alumni and students emphasised with the panel that teaching staff continue(d) to help students to the best of their abilities. Furthermore, the panel noticed that the degree to which a certain disciplinary domain is covered largely depends on the number and research specialisms of staff. The recent retirement of a senior staff member for instance has reduced considerably the breadth of research domains students can pursue in the track Ancient Studies. The panel calls upon the management of the faculty, departments and schools to maintain similar levels of disciplinary coverage in their recruitment / staffing policy.

#### **Considerations**

The teaching and learning environment of the RMA History is well developed. Students and alumni were positive about the staff, the logic and coherence of courses and freedoms the programme had to offer to follow their individual preferences. The panel thinks highly of the current structure of the AMRS and History programmes, which combine common courses with ample room for individualised study. Furthermore, the panel considers that the current quality of education, the diversity of expertise and the ambition to prepare students for an international research career can



only be attained by offering the RMA degree programme in English. The quality of the incoming students is beyond doubt and results from a careful selection procedure. While it applauds the decision not to sacrifice quality for quantity, the panel does think that more international students could be attracted to the programme.

The staff is highly motivated and clearly enjoys working with the best of the best among the students, in teams and individually. Despite the high workload, the motivation of the staff is not a desperate effort to make something work that is not sustainable, on the contrary: the programme is sustainable and there is energy and commitment to keep improving and experimenting on the basis of feedback and the staff's own observations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the programme in two ways: 'regular' courses have switched to online formats, while the individual trajectory and the research master thesis were hit harder as students had to cancel or replace study and internship periods abroad or incurred delays because of restricted access to first-hand source materials. The university, faculty and programme have reacted in a timely and comprehensive manner, according to the panel, which thinks highly of the didactical and 'human' efforts of the staff, and of the resilience of the students.

In addition to several elements that are organised very well, the panel considers that there are issues in the realm of student wellbeing that can be improved, such as the internal communication, the study load spread across the first year, and social bonding within and across programmes and years. The panel welcomes the attention of the RMA degree programme to enhance the study completion rates and supports the measures that have been taken so far. In this regard, the thesis lab constitutes both a useful complement to thesis supervision and a relevant tool to keep students on track during the thesis trajectory. The panel does recommend the programmes and thesis supervisors to stick to the size of the thesis and convey the message and promote an atmosphere that all students can benefit from the programme, irrespective of their grades. In this regard, the panel calls upon the RMA programme to monitor in particular the drop-out rate, which seems to be higher in comparison to other research master programmes. Given that most students will pursue research careers in an academic or a non-academic environment but may (have to) switch plans throughout the programme, the panel suggests to facilitate structural contacts in the programme between RMA students and alumni, as well as between first and second year RMA students.

## Conclusion

*Master's programme History (Research):* 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 system*

The Self-Evaluation Report, its annexes and the additional materials provided by the RMA programme have given the panel a comprehensive view on how student assessment is organized. The degree programme adheres to the University and Faculty guidelines regarding assessment. Examination and assessment are based on the principles that they should be varied, aligned with the course goals and programme outcomes, accompanied by feedback, and held at several moments in the course. Both AMRS and History have developed their own assessment plan, which the panel has studied and found to be informative and transparent. Furthermore, the panel understood from the discussions that teaching staff is responsible for the quality of examination and assessment, that courses are always assessed according to the four-eyes principle, and that the evaluation forms for tutorials, internship and theses are provided by the Faculty of Humanities. Students and alumni informed the panel that they are/were always informed about the assessment well in advance and obtained timely and insightful feedback.



The panel noticed furthermore that the COVID-19 pandemic has not affected the assessment to the same extent as it affected the teaching and delivery of courses. Exams often consist of assignments, which anyway have to be submitted and assessed online. Theses have been assessed according to the usual standards with defences taking place online.

#### *Assessment of courses and thesis*

Each programme uses a diversity of assignments - ranging from papers, presentations, research plan, reports and research proposals - which are chosen in relation to the course objectives. The panel read in the assessment plans what forms of examination are used per course and was provided with a selection of courses and their assessments prior to the site visit. The panel has established from these materials that the assessments are relevant, the assessment matrices adequate and the scores and feedback up to par. These findings apply across all assessments / courses reviewed and thus for both AMRS and History programmes. Students from both programmes confirmed during the discussions that they are satisfied with the way exams are organized and scored and confirmed that there is always an opportunity to get feedback. The panel obtained similar indications from the Board of Examiners which deals with complaints from students but mentioned that there were hardly any official appeals from RMA History students.

The RMA thesis is supervised by an experienced staff member and assessed by the supervisor and an independent second reader whose expertise aligns with the field of the thesis. As part of its thesis review, the panel has also looked into the assessment forms of 15 RMA theses. The form is standardized, provided by the Faculty and lists the procedure, criteria, and descriptors for evaluation. The criteria and descriptors are communicated to the students in the Thesis Guide. Each assessor completes his/her own form, providing sufficient detail to justify the suggested mark for the thesis. The final mark is the result of consultation between assessors. The supervisor provides the student feedback on the final assessment.

The panel has been very impressed by the thesis assessment: the form used is relevant because it combines closed pass/fail categories with extensive feedback on the relevant strong and weak points of the thesis. The detailed grade description moreover provides a framework for assessors to grade each thesis correctly. The panel found the scoring adequate: theses with a higher score were indeed of better quality than theses with an average or weaker score, and across the sample there was no tendency towards grade inflation. Finally, the panel thought the feedback provided in the substantiation part of the evaluation form to be insightful because it contained useful and constructively critical comments. All findings apply to a similar extent to both AMRS and History thesis assessments. When discussing their impressions on the thesis assessment sample during the preparatory meeting, panel members mentioned they found this assessment thorough, objective, convincing, helpful and constructive. Assessors treat each thesis as a work of scholarship and suggest improvements to revise the thesis in view of a possible publication. In sum, the panel found that the thesis assessment system is working well because students are properly advised and their theses are scrutinised closely.

#### *Assuring the quality of assessment*

The panel gathered from the written materials that the RMA degree programme can rely on an extensive system of assessment quality assurance. The Assessment Committee (AC) operates at the level of the Faculty and offers advice on general (non-programme specific) aspects of assessment. The Board of Examiners (BoE) monitors the quality of the assessment by annually reviewing the assessment plan. Together AC and BoE report to the Faculty Board in a joint annual report. All research master programmes in the Faculty of Humanities share one Board of Examiners, which ensures that assessments are in line with the learning objectives and the final attainment levels of the respective courses and that the respective assessment plans are implemented. The BoE regularly reviews the assessment forms as well as the grades of courses and theses. The outcomes of these analyses and the ensuing recommendations are discussed with the programme coordinators, who are responsible for the implementation of these recommendations.

The BoE indicated that there are hardly any RMA students who follow regular master courses, and those who do so need to submit a motivated request and get permission from the BoE. The panel understood that a similar procedure



exists for all courses taken abroad or at a different university in the Netherlands, and that each request is handled with care. The discussion with BoE members have convinced the panel that the assessment quality of the RMA degree is well monitored, that the BoE members are competent for their quality assurance tasks and that overall the BoE is indeed the independent body that is on top of all assessment quality assurance things. The BoE is well organized, has developed clear rules and ensures that these rules are adopted and implemented.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that student assessment is well organised in the RMA History programme. It is embedded in the principles, policies and structures of the University and the Faculty. The assessment plans constitute a good basis for implementing the overall assessment principles per programme. The panel considers that there is a strong alignment between the programme learning outcomes, the course goals and the assessment formats of both AMRS and History programmes. The course assessments are varied and their marking up to standard. The developments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic have not impacted dramatically on the operation of course assessments, which is another proof of the robustness of the assessment system. The panel thinks highly of the thesis assessment which is thorough, objective, convincing, helpful and constructive. The Board of Examiners plays an important role in assuring the quality of assessment and performs its task with professionalism and competence. The panel is confident about the level of courses and the quality of assessments that students are allowed to take outside of the RMA degree programme.

### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme History (Research):* 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**

#### *Thesis quality*

One way to assess whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes by the time they graduate is to review the quality of the thesis. The panel has established that the RMA thesis constitutes a crucial element of the degree programme: it is not only an effective form of summative assessment but also serves in many cases as an entry ticket for the future career of students. The RMA thesis is a substantial piece of individual and original academic work that amounts to 30 ECTS and has a (indicative) length of 30000 words.

The panel has looked into a sample of 15 RMA theses from previous academic years. This sample was representative for the entire range of RMA theses in terms of programmes, tracks, scores and thesis supervisors. It included 8 theses of the AMRS programme (2 for each track), and 7 of the History programme. In each and every case, the panel found that the thesis fulfilled the minimum requirements that can be expected of an academic research master thesis. In most cases, the quality largely exceeded the minimum expectations. While scores tend to be high – on average just above 8 – the panel found that these scores reflect the intrinsic quality of the respective theses, with some average quality theses and several (very) high quality theses. The results of the thesis review apply to a similar extent to both programmes AMRS and History.

When discussing their impressions on the thesis assessment sample during the preparatory meeting, panel members mentioned they found the high quality theses to be original, impressive to read, showing independent thinking and a clear interest in the topic chosen, providing a real contribution to scholarship and of a level one would normally associate with publishable doctoral research. In other cases, the panel members noted that students had different interests, abilities and levels of passion and devotion, but had invariably made sincere and capable efforts. In all cases the panel noticed a direct link between the topics of the theses and the research domains covered by the respective programmes and their teaching staff.



According to the panel, the quality of the thesis is the result of a solid RMA programme that prepares students for the 'masterpiece'. In this regard, the programme curricula build up nicely to the final 'thesis' semester, where students continue to learn under the guidance of experienced research supervisors, such that they complete the full research cycle during their programme. The panel noticed, moreover, that the thesis lab plays an important part in the programme of the fourth semester as a complementary source of support. Established in 2015 as a non-credit element in the programme, it provides practical and emotional help to students who find themselves struggling in the thesis process. By meeting regularly with fellow students and PhD supervisors to discuss their individual progress according to a strict timeframe, students are peer-pressured to maintain a strict work rhythm in the otherwise individualistic and 'lonely' thesis endeavour. The panel welcomes the thesis lab as a relevant and useful group component to keep individual students on track.

### *Alumni*

Another way to establish whether graduates have achieved the programme learning outcomes is to look at their follow-up careers. Since PhD positions are scarce, the RMA degree programme pays increasing attention to career orientation and to professional opportunities outside academia. The panel noticed that both programmes invite staff of the central Career Services to participate in and outside the classroom; the AMRS programme features optional Cultural Transfer courses, which prepare students for a career outside academia and include a module job application; the Research Competencies course in the History programme encourages students to explore both academic and non-academic career options.

Data provided by the programmes show that 22% of AMRS graduates start a PhD, while others found research oriented jobs as teacher or academic research project coordinator. AMRS alumni also work in the museum and heritage sector, at publishers and as consultants. About a third of the History graduates find a PhD position; others become consultants and analysts in the private sector. Several graduates are employed as policy researchers in governmental institutions or as temporary university lecturers.

The panel acknowledges that graduates end up in positions that are commensurate with the level and orientation of the programme discipline, which in turn confirms the finding that students who graduate from the programme have achieved the learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the panel finds the share of graduates that pursue a PhD to be rather low, certainly in comparison to data from other RMA programmes. Moreover, the panel thinks that programmes could follow-up alumni and their careers more regularly and more actively. This in turn would allow to better assess the impact of the programme, build a stronger network of alumni contacts and enhance the involvement of alumni as providers of internships. Furthermore, the panel thinks there is room for more exchange of good practices among programmes and for a better involvement of alumni in sketching realistic and alternative career scenarios to RMA students. The discussions with alumni offered very relevant testimonies which the panel found would be useful to share with RMA students.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that students who finish the AMRS or History programme have invariably achieved the learning outcomes of the RMA degree. The panel is impressed by the overall high level of research quality and independent thinking students demonstrate in their theses, as well as by the passion, devotion and interest they show in the mastery of their research and the chosen topic. According to the panel, the programmes and their teaching staff should be credited for delivering a solid curriculum where they teach and train students to achieve a level of research excellence.

Upon graduation, alumni end up in positions that are commensurate with the level and orientation of the research master programme. Although it would have expected a higher share of graduates to enter a PhD trajectory, the panel considers that students are increasingly informed and prepared as part of the curriculum to pursue alternative professional careers. The panel does see room for a more active follow-up of alumni (careers) and to involve alumni more in sketching realistic and alternative career scenarios to RMA students.



**Conclusion**

*Master's programme History (Research):* the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assessed all the standards of the research master's programme History as 'meets the standard'. It hereby took the additional aspects for research master's programmes as included in the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes into account. Based on the NVAO decision rules for limited programme assessments, the panel therefore assesses the programme as 'positive'.

**Conclusion**

The panel assesses the *master's programme History (Research)* as 'positive'.



## APPENDICES







## APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the 2020-21 Education and Examination Regulations of the degree, the aims and objectives are formulated as following:

The degree aims to:

1. provide specialised knowledge, insight and skills in the field of History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies;
2. prepare students for a career as a researcher in the field of History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies in the broadest sense;
3. prepare students for a PhD programme in the field of History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies.

The graduate:

1. has profound knowledge of and insight into the field of History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies;
2. has thorough knowledge of a specialism within the programme, or thorough knowledge at the interface of the degree and another field;
3. has the academic skills to independently identify, formulate, analyse and suggest possible solutions to problems in the field of History and/or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies;
4. has the academic skills to conduct research in the field of History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies and to report on it in a manner that meets the general standards of the discipline;
5. possesses professional and academic skills, particularly in relation to History or Ancient, Medieval, Insular or Renaissance Studies;
6. is able to apply knowledge and understanding in a way that demonstrates a professional approach to his/her work or profession;
7. is able to communicate conclusions, as well as the underlying knowledge, grounds and considerations, to an audience composed of specialists or non- specialists.



## APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

### Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance studies

#### Year 1:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Core Seminar: The Potential of the Past</i> (5 EC)	<i>Knowledge and Skills: Epigraphy or Palaeography</i> (5 EC)	<i>AMRS in Practice 1</i> (5 EC)	<i>AMRS in Practice 2</i> (5 EC)
Research in AMR I (5 EC)	Research in AMR II (5 EC)	Research in AMR III (5 EC)	Research in AMR IV (5 EC)
Language Requirement or Elective (5 EC)	Language Requirement or Elective (5 EC)	Research School I (5 EC)	Research School II (5 EC)

Table 1: Schematic overview study programme Research Master Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies year 1

#### Year 2:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Individual trajectory: Across the Border (30 EC) OR <i>Cultural Transfer I, II and III</i> (up to 15 EC in term 1) and Work Placement (i.e. an internship of up to 15 EC in term 2) AND/OR Courses on offer in the Netherlands (up to 30 EC) AND/OR Master-Apprentice (up to 30 EC)		Thesis Lab (no credits)	
		Thesis (30 EC)	

Table 2: Schematic overview study programme Research Master Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies year 2

### History programme

#### Year 1:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
<i>Fundamentals</i> (5 EC)	<i>Research Seminar</i> (15 EC)		<i>Research Design</i> (5 EC)
<i>Methods</i> (10 EC)		Electives (10 EC) and Research School (10 EC)	
<i>Research Competencies</i> (5 EC)			

Table 3: Schematic overview study programme Research Master History year 1

#### Year 2:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Study abroad or internship (30 EC)		Thesis Lab (no credits)	
		Thesis (30 EC)	

Table 4: Schematic overview study programme Research Master History year 2



## APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

### **Tuesday 1 June 2021**

- 15.00 Preparatory panel meeting
- 17.00 Session with alumni
- 17.30 Open consultation hour

### **Wednesday 2 June 2021**

- 13.30 Internal panel meeting
- 14.00 Session with programme management (+ pitch)
- 15.15 Session with teaching staff
- 16.30 Session with students
- 17.45 Session with board of examiners
- 18.15 Internal panel meeting

### **Thursday 3 June 2021**

- 13.30 Internal panel meeting
- 14.15 Concluding session programme management
- 15.00 Internal assessment meeting panel
- 17.00 Preliminary feedback to programme
- 17.30 Development dialogue
- 18.30 End of online visit

Information on the session participants is available from Qanu upon request.

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

Self-Evaluation Report Research Master History 2021, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University.

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the research master's programme History: 8 theses of the AMRS programme (2 for each track), and 7 of the History programme. Information on the selected theses is available from Qanu upon request.

Before the site visit, the programme provided the following materials through Surfdrive:

### Faculty of Humanities and departmental documents

- Annual report Board of Examiners, Faculty of Humanities 2019-2020 (NL)
- Benchmarks assessment quality, Faculty of Humanities (NL)
- Career Services Faculty of Humanities
- CC Information Event 06-10-2020
- Evaluation research school 2012-2017 (ENG)
- Evaluation research school 2012-2017 (NL)
- Faculty assessment guidelines, Faculty of Humanities 2020 (NL)
- Internal quality assurance guide, Faculty of Humanities 2020 (NL)
- Internship Instructions for Teachers
- Internship Regulations for Students
- Lecturer Manual 2020-2021 (ENG)
- Lecturer Manual 2020-2021 (NL)
- Writing a Research MA thesis

### Programme specific documents

- Curriculum Committee minutes 2019-2020
- Curriculum Committee minutes 2020-2021
- RMA Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies
  - Assessment plan RMA AMRS 2019-2020 (NL)
  - Assessment plan RMA AMRS 2020-2021 (ENG)
  - Community and outreach RMA AMRS
  - Course and track overview RMA AMRS 2019-2020
  - Evaluation RMA AMRS 2019-2020 – RMA Programme Evaluation (Responses)
  - Factsheet RMA AMRS 2020-2021
  - Internship Report - Iris van Nederpelt (NL)
  - Internship Report – Lieve van Ommen (NL)
  - LinkedIn alumni overview RMA AMRS 2020
  - Minutes curriculum talk RMA AMRS 03-04-2019
  - RMA AMRS Thesis Manual 2020
  - UCMS Lecture series 2018-2019
- RMA History
  - Assessment plan RMA History 2019-2020
  - Assessment plan RMA History 2020-2021
  - Community and outreach RMA History
  - Evaluation RMA History 2019-2020 – RMA Programme Evaluation (Responses)
  - Factsheet RMA History 2020-2021
  - Germany and Eastern Europe workshop
  - Internship Report - Maiah Letsch
  - Internship Report - Thomas van Gaalen
  - Minutes curriculum talk RMA History 11-02-2021
  - Minutes curriculum talk RMA History 25-02-2019
  - Programme Book RMA History 2019-2020



- RMA History Events
- RMA History Students in Action (outreach and impact)
- RMA History Thesis Manual 2020-2021
- Symposium - Friction and Control booklet
- Tutorial example: Research on the Social History of Finance (Gelderblom 2020-2021)
- Schematic overview of RMA programmes

#### Selected courses

- AMRS – Knowledge and Skills Epigraphy
  - Course Epigraphy in 2019-2020
    - Greek Epigraphy
      - Student papers 2019-2020
      - Assignments 2019-2020
      - Greek Epigraphy Course Manual 2019-2020
    - Latin Epigraphy
      - Student papers 2019-2020
      - Latin Epigraphy Course Manual 2019-2020
      - Latin Epigraphy term paper
  - Course Epigraphy in 2020-2021
    - Greek Epigraphy
      - Student papers 2020-2021
      - Greek Epigraphy Course Manual 2020-2021
    - Latin Epigraphy
      - Student papers 2020-2021
      - Latin Epigraphy Course Manual 2020-2021
- AMRS – Media and Persuasion
  - Student assignments
  - Student papers
  - Guidelines review
  - Media and Persuasion Course Manual 2019-2020
  - Rubric – feedback assignment – discussion leader
  - Rubric – feedback assignment – secretary
  - Rubric – feedback review
  - Steps to leading a discussion
- AMRS – Potential of the Past
  - Cover page archiving – Potential of the Past – 2019-2020 (NL)
  - Final papers of all students
  - Potential of the Past – final paper Blackboard text
  - Potential of the Past Course Manual (Meens & Saar) 2019
  - Rubric for evaluating chairing a class
- History – Fundamentals of Historical Research
  - Course Fundamentals in 2019-2020
    - Student assignments 2019-2020
    - Fundamentals of Historical Research Course Manual 2019-2020
    - Research proposal assessment criteria 2019-2020
    - Review presentations Fundamentals 2019-2020
  - Course Fundamentals in 2020-2021
    - Fundamentals decision online meetings
    - Fundamentals important announcements
    - Fundamentals online in one group
    - Fundamentals online meetings
    - Fundamentals presentations
- History – Research Competencies
  - Final Portfolios



- Handouts
  - Busynurse Team Roles Test
  - Careers Workshop II
  - Knowledge Utilisation Assignment
  - Pitch2Peer Assignment
  - Your Poster Pitch
- Research Competencies Block 4 Substitute Assignments
- Research Competencies Course Manual 2019-2020
- Research Competencies Overview
- History – Research Seminar
  - Student 1 assignments
  - Student 2 assignments
  - Student 3 assignments
  - Student 4 assignments
  - Research Seminar Course Manual 2019-2020

#### UU documents

- Academic Calendar 2020-2021
- Advisory Report ITK (NL)
- UU Diversity and Inclusion: Highlights 2018-2019 (NL)
- UU Education Guideline (NL)
- UU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Annual Review 2019-2020
- UU Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (NL)
- UU Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (NL)

