

Assessment report
NVAO Limited Framework Programme Assessment

Research Master Migration, Ethnic Relations, and Multiculturalism

Utrecht University

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Research Master Migration, Ethnic Relations, and Multiculturalism programme of Utrecht University. The programme was assessed according to the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands. The additional NVAO requirements for research master programmes were taken into account.

The programme organisation is adequate and the programme is embedded well in the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University.

The profile of the programme is very clear, being focused on migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism, being interdisciplinary with social psychology and sociology as the most prominent disciplines, but with political science, economics, geography and anthropology addressed as well, and being strongly quantitative in methodological terms. Programme management, lecturers and students share the views about the profile.

The programme intended learning outcomes conform to the master level and surpass this level in some respects, aiming at higher levels of knowledge production and adequately preparing students for PhD trajectories.

The programme has important features in common with similar programmes and, at the same time, distinguishes itself through the interdisciplinary and strong research character.

The panel endorses the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction. English enables students to prepare for international research positions in this field, and to relate to the international research community.

Programme management appropriately followed up on the recommendations made by the previous assessment panel.

Although the intake of the programme is rather small, the average number of incoming students allows for appropriate class sizes and for educational viability. The panel supports the target intake figure of 20 students, set by programme management. The admission requirements and procedures are elaborate and assure admitting students who have the capacities to complete the programme.

The curriculum is consistent, coherent and cumulative, being clearly steered by the strong programme profile, and meets the programme intended learning outcomes. The courses in the curriculum are interesting and allow students to reach the high-level intended learning outcomes. The methods training enables students to achieve advanced levels of knowledge and skills in analytical, quantitative research methods. The panel recommends expanding the methodological

variety by strengthening qualitative and policy-oriented methods. The panel advises to offer students more room for choice in the curriculum to pursue their individual interests.

The lecturers have very good credentials in terms of educational expertise, academic qualifications and research track records. The research centre ERCOMER, which the lecturers are involved in, showed *very good* or *excellent* results in the recent research assessment. The panel suggests to be attentive to the vulnerability of the programme, as it rests largely upon one research group only. As the informal communication in the teaching team may hamper strategic reflection and taking into account new perspectives, the panel advises to structure this communication. The workload of the staff is manageable on account of the allocation of hours and the cooperation of teachers in courses.

The educational concept and study methods are appropriate for this programme. The programme coordinator, lecturers and the programme tutor offer adequate guidance to students. Although students are offered assistance in choosing among elective options, the panel proposes to strengthen this guidance, also on major practical issues with respect to going abroad. The drop-out and study success figures for the programme are up to standard. The panel, nevertheless, recommends to address the challenging study load in the first semester of the curriculum.

Suitable rules, regulations and procedures have been put in place to assure the examinations' and assessments' quality. The panel, nevertheless, recommends the Board of Examiners to act more decisively in monitoring examinations and assessments by, among other, scheduling calibration sessions to review master theses.

The examination methods in the courses are satisfactorily varied and are adequate for the knowledge, insights and skills to be tested.

The supervision and assessment processes for the master thesis generally are appropriate. The panel does not doubt the quality of the current processes. The written comments by examiners on the thesis assessment forms are elaborate. To further improve the thesis assessment and grading processes, the panel recommends to make more transparent and to better document the conversion from the proposed grade to the final grade for the thesis, including the weighing in the final grade of the degree of students' independence in the thesis process and of the students' defence. The panel advises to introduce rubrics for theses' assessments, to assure the independent position of the second readers, as the number of examiners is rather small, to relate the assessment criteria for the thesis to the programme intended learning outcomes and to consider adding weights to the assessment criteria. The panel recommends to have master theses checked for plagiarism and to assign the responsibilities in this respect.

The measures programme management has taken in the Covid-crisis to provide education, organise examinations and assessments, and monitor the quality of these are appropriate. The well-being of students has been guarded adequately as well.

The panel reviewed fifteen master theses of programme graduates of the last three years. No theses were found by the panel to be unsatisfactory. Out of all the theses reviewed, seven theses were

graded satisfactory by the panel, seven theses were found to be good, and one thesis was found to be excellent. The marks for nine theses were found to be appropriate by the panel. The panel found the marks for five theses to be too high, but less than one point too high. One thesis was found to be graded somewhat too low.

The panel regards the average grade for the master theses of 7.8 appropriate. The proportion of students graduating cum laude, being 28 %, is considered by the panel to be adequate as well.

The panel welcomes the career preparation activities in the programme, also for non-academic research or policy careers. The panel, nevertheless, recommends to strengthen career preparation activities especially for non-academic careers, reinforcing, among other, the network of students and programme alumni.

The programme prepares well for positions in quantitative research in the field of migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism. The panel welcomes the programme results, 58 % of the graduates having secured PhD positions or non-academic research positions.

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

Rotterdam, 2 September 2021,

Prof. L.J. de Haan PhD
(panel chair)

W. Vercouteren MSc
(panel secretary)

2. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO:	Master Migration, Ethnic Relations, and Multiculturalism (Research)
Orientation, level programme:	Academic Master
Grade:	MSc
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specialisations:	N.A.
Location:	Utrecht
Mode of study:	Full-time
Language of instruction:	English
Registration in CROHO:	21PD-66631
Name of institution:	Utrecht University
Status of institution:	Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance:	Approved

3. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

3.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The Research Master Migration, Ethnic Relations, and Multiculturalism programme is one of the seven research master programmes of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University. The programme carries 120 EC of study load and takes two years to complete. The organisation of this as well as the other research master programmes is in the hands of the Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The Board of Studies of the Graduate School, on which sit the programme coordinators of all seven research master programmes, is responsible for the coordination and quality assurance of these programmes. The programme coordinator manages the programme on the day-to-day basis. The Programme Advisory Committee, being composed of lecturers and students, advises the programme coordinator on the quality of the programme. The Board of Examiners for this and the other research master programmes of the Faculty monitors the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme and verifies programme graduates meeting the intended learning outcomes.

The programme profile is based upon the research areas covered by the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER). The profile of the programme is to educate students in theoretical and methodological advanced research in the field of migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism. The programme is directed towards the study of international migration, the development of ethnic relations, and management of cultural diversity, in particular in Europe or more generally in the Global North. The programme is interdisciplinary, social psychology and sociology being the most prominent disciplines, but political science, economics, geography and anthropology being addressed as well. Students are trained in advanced quantitative methodological skills to research the field mentioned. Theory and methods are intimately connected in the programme. Students are taught to adhere to the principles of academic integrity and are trained to do ethically sound research.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme include, among other, presenting theoretical analyses of relevant issues in the field of migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism, identifying and formulating research problems, carrying out research in this field and completing the empirical cycle, critically reflecting on and formulating judgements about core themes in this field, being aware of professional ethics, working with other researchers, keeping track of international academic trends in this field, and contributing to international discipline-specific discussion in areas of specialisation within the field.

Programme management made the comparison to other programmes in this field abroad, as in the Netherlands no comparable, two-year master programmes in this field are offered. Notwithstanding

similarities to these programmes, this programme distinguishes itself through the interdisciplinary nature, the study of migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism processes in relation to each other and the strong research orientation.

Programme management showed the intended learning outcomes to correspond to the Dublin descriptors for the second cycle, as indicators of the master level. The intended learning outcomes partly reach the Dublin descriptors for the third cycle, as this research master programme clearly aims higher and has a much stronger research orientation than regular master programmes in this field and aims to prepare students for PhD positions.

The programme name is English, and the programme is taught in English as well. The English name and English as language of instruction are chosen to prepare students for the international labour market for research positions in this field, and to acquire international and intercultural skills beneficial to act in international research contexts. English is also the *lingua franca* of international research in this field. Finally, the English language allows international students to enrol.

Programme management addressed the recommendations of the previous assessment panel. The disciplinary and methodological breadth of the staff have been expanded, allowing students to do qualitative and mixed-method research in research internships or master theses. The master thesis assessment form was improved to include specific, concrete assessment criteria.

Considerations

The panel sees the programme organisation as adequate and considers the programme to be well-embedded in the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences of Utrecht University.

The panel appreciates the profile of the programme as being very clear. The programme is focused on migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism, interdisciplinary with social psychology and sociology as the most prominent disciplines, but with political science, economics, geography and anthropology addressed as well, and strongly quantitative in methodological terms. The panel is pleased to note the profile is echoed on all levels of the programme, being programme management, lecturers and students.

The programme intended learning outcomes meet the research master requirements. The intended learning outcomes, so the panel established, conform to the master level and surpass this level in some respects, aiming at higher levels of knowledge production and adequately preparing students for PhD trajectories.

The panel welcomes the comparison of this programme to similar programmes abroad, observing the commonalities and differences of these programmes and the distinctive, interdisciplinary and research character of this programme.

The panel endorses the English name of the programme and English as the language of instruction. The English language enables students to appropriately prepare for international research positions in this field, and to relate to the international research community.

Programme management appropriately followed up on the recommendations made by the previous assessment panel.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The number of applications for the programme is on average 47 per year for the last six years. On average 26 students are admitted. Only part of them actually enrol, mainly because of financial restrictions. The number of students enrolling in the programme is on average 14 to 15 students per year for the last six years, ranging from 9 to 19 students per year. The intake of 9 students in 2020 is regarded to be exceptionally low, probably due to the Covid crisis. Programme management has set the target intake figure at 20 students. The proportion of international students is stable, being on average 44 % of total intake. International students come from around the globe. The gender balance is uneven, nearly 80 % of the incoming students being female.

The programme admission requirements are adequate undergraduate training in social science theory and methods and statistics. The grade point average of candidates in the previous education must be at least be 7.5 (Dutch grading system). Applicants have to be proficient in English. The Board of Studies of the Graduate School decides on admissions. Motivation of applicants is taken into account.

Programme management demonstrated the curriculum to meet the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The curriculum consists of courses, specifically designed for this programme. Students do not take regular master courses. The curriculum is composed of thirteen courses (each 7.5 EC) and the master thesis (22.5 EC). In the first year, four courses are substantive courses, addressing the various subjects within the programme field. The two *Methods and Statistics* courses are taken together with students of the Research Master Sociology and Social Research. In this first year, students take two *Research Practicum* courses, in which students integrate theory and methods, apply methods to subjects in the field, and draft research papers. In the second year, students take one substantive course and one *Research Practicum*. In addition, they take one elective (7.5 EC), which has to be approved by the programme coordinator. Elective options are research internships, applied internships, master courses or summer or winter schools. About 70 % of the students do research internships, most of them at ERCOMER, whereas the rest of the students are equally divided over the other options. In the two *Research Seminars* (2 x 7.5 EC), students work on their master thesis proposal, the theoretical and conceptual parts of the thesis and data analyses and conclusions. As these courses may be regarded to be part of the master thesis, the total study load of the thesis may be said to be 37.5 EC. In extracurricular monthly presentations organised by ERCOMER, students are invited to lectures by international scholars on topics in the programme field.

The staff teaching in the programme comprises 14 lecturers, being one full professor, six associate professors, five assistant professors, and two PhD students. The PhD students act as tutor or teaching assistant in the *Methods and Statistics* courses. All lecturers have PhDs and are University

Teaching Qualification certified, whereas four of them obtained the Senior University Teaching Qualification. The lecturers have different disciplinary backgrounds. They are internationally qualified researchers in their field of study and publish in peer-reviewed journals. The research centre ERCOMER, which the lecturers are involved in, obtained for each of the assessment criteria the scores *very good* or *excellent* in the research assessment in 2020. The lecturers participate in national research networks in the Netherlands. Staff members experience manageable workload. All courses but one are offered jointly by two lecturers.

The educational concept of the programme rests on the active participation by students in class, taking the form of student presentations, student critiques of readings, and class discussions. The study methods in the courses are mainly tutorials. In the *Research Practicum* courses, computer lab sessions are offered as well. Class sizes are small. The students-to-staff ratio in the programme is on average 18/1 for the last five years. The interaction between lecturers and students is intensive. The number of hours of face-to-face education when taking courses is about 8 to 10 hours per week. Students experience teachers as being helpful and being easily approachable. Students are guided in the programme by the tutor, who meets with students and may be contacted by students for assistance. First-year students are matched to second-year students for guidance. Students find in particular the first semester of the curriculum very challenging. The number of students dropping out of the programme is one to four students per cohort. These students nearly all drop out in the first semester. The other students all complete the programme within the nominal study time of two years.

Programme management has taken measures to organise education in the Covid crisis and to monitor the quality of the education. On-campus education often proves not to be feasible, mainly due to government regulations. Therefore, teaching is converted to online teaching. Lecturers are supported by educational experts and the ICT-support office to transfer their lectures and tutorials to online teaching. To guard the well-being of students, programme management creates communities of first-year and second-year students with some on-campus activities, and assists students in coping with the situation. The programme tutor meets regularly with students to help them. Students appreciate the assistance offered by programme management and lecturers.

Considerations

Although the intake of the programme is rather small, the average number of incoming students allows for appropriate class sizes and for the educational viability of the programme. The panel supports the target intake figure of 20 students, as set by programme management. The entry requirements and admission procedures are elaborate and assure admitting students who have the capacities to complete the programme.

The curriculum meets, so the panel established, the programme intended learning outcomes. The panel considers the curriculum to be consistent, coherent and cumulative, being clearly steered by the strong programme profile. The courses in the curriculum are interesting and allow students to reach the high-level intended learning outcomes. The methods training in the programme enables students to achieve advanced levels of knowledge and skills in analytical, quantitative research methods. Although the methods training is appreciated, the panel notes sampling techniques,

survey design, study design or big data not being addressed. The panel recommends expanding the methodological variety of the programme by strengthening qualitative and policy-oriented methods. As the room for choice in the curriculum is limited, the panel advises to offer students more options to pursue their individual interests.

The lecturers have very good credentials in terms of educational expertise, academic qualifications and research track records. The research centre ERCOMER, which the lecturers are involved in, showed very good to excellent results in the recent research assessment. The panel, therefore, finds the programme to be embedded in high-quality research activities. The programme resting largely upon one research group may make it vulnerable. The panel suggests to be attentive to any risks in this sense. The panel notes communication between programme management and teachers and among teachers to be rather informal. As this may hamper strategic reflection and new perspectives being taken into account, the panel advises to structure communication within the teaching team. The allocation of hours and cooperation of teachers in courses make the workload of staff manageable.

The panel regards the educational concept and study methods as appropriate for this programme. The programme coordinator, lecturers and the programme tutor offer adequate guidance to students. Although students are offered assistance in choosing among elective options, the panel proposes to strengthen this guidance, also on major practical issues with respect to going abroad. The drop-out and study success figures for the programme are up to standard. The panel, nevertheless, recommends to address the challenging study load in the first semester of the curriculum. Programme management may already have done so, the panel learnt.

In the panel's view, programme management took measures to provide adequate education during the Covid crisis, to assure the quality of this education, and to monitor the well-being of students.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The examination and assessment rules for the programme are specified in the Education and Examination Regulations of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The assessment plan for the programme specifies the relations between the programme intended learning outcomes and the course objectives, offers the overview of assessments at course level, meant to test the course objectives, and clarifies how students reach the intended learning outcomes in the programme. Course examinations are mostly drafted and assessed by teams of examiners. To assess course examinations, answer keys and assessment criteria are made available. Students are informed about the set-up of course assessments.

As has been said, the Board of Examiners for this and the other research master programmes of the Faculty ensures the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme. On behalf of the Board of Examiners, the Assessment Committee regularly reviews the programme assessment plan, course examinations and master theses. Theses are reviewed on the basis of thesis assessment forms in a procedural sense and not on the basis of the theses themselves. The Board communicates the findings to the Board of Studies and the programme coordinator. The coordinator in turn informs the staff. The Board of Examiners monitors the follow-up on the Board's findings.

In all courses, multiple examinations are scheduled. Most examinations are assignments or papers. Written examinations are rare. If they are scheduled, they are open-book examinations. The examination methods in the programme are, among other, presentations, take-home examinations, individual and group assignments, research papers, and reports. In courses, group assignments always go together with individual tests.

For their master thesis, students may pick one of the topics listed by programme staff. They may also propose topics themselves. Students drafting the master thesis are individually guided in the process by the thesis supervisor. Master theses are assessed by the supervisor and the second reader independently and completing separate thesis assessment forms. Only the supervisor assesses the thesis process, which is one of the assessment criteria. When supervisor and second reader differ on the grading of the thesis with more than 0.5 points, they have to discuss their differing views and arrive at a common grade. The consensual grade of the supervisor and the second reader is the proposed grade. Students defend their master theses in front of two independent examiners, one of whom may be the second reader. After the defence, the Thesis Examination Committee, being composed of the thesis supervisor, second reader, two independent examiners and programme coordinator, decides to lower or raise the proposed thesis grade by maximum 0.5 points. At the end, all thesis grades are discussed with all programme staff to verify the grades given. These deliberations may affect the grades. After this meeting, students are informed about the grade for their thesis. They are also provided with supervisor's and second reader's written feedback.

Programme management has taken measures to organise examinations and assessments in the Covid crisis and to monitor their quality. On-campus examinations, in person presentations and assignments by student groups are no longer feasible. The examinations mentioned are adapted to other formats, such as take-home examinations, online presentations, and digital work on joint assignments. Students are allowed to use secondary data instead of having to collect data themselves. Proposed changes in examinations and assessments are submitted to the Board of Examiners for approval. This Board monitors the quality of examinations and assessments and assures these to meet the programme intended learning outcomes.

Considerations

The panel considers the rules and regulations for the programme examinations and assessments to be adequate. Suitable procedures have been put in place to assure the quality of examinations and assessments. The panel, nevertheless, recommends the Board of Examiners to act more decisively in monitoring examinations and assessments by, among other, scheduling calibration sessions to review master theses.

The examination methods in the courses are adequate for the knowledge, insights and skills to be tested in these courses. The examination methods are satisfactorily varied.

The panel regards the supervision and assessment processes for the master thesis generally to be appropriate. The panel does not doubt the quality of the current processes. The written comments by examiners on the thesis assessment forms are elaborate. To further improve the thesis assessment and grading processes, the panel recommends to make more transparent and to better document the conversion from the proposed grade to the final grade for the thesis, including the weighing in the final grade of the degree of students' independence in the thesis process and of the students' defence. The panel advises to introduce rubrics for theses' assessments, to assure the independent position of the second readers, as the number of examiners is rather small, to relate the assessment criteria for the thesis to the programme intended learning outcomes and to consider adding weights to the assessment criteria. The panel recommends to have master theses checked for plagiarism and to assign the responsibilities in this respect.

The panel considers the measures programme management has taken to organise examinations and assessments in the Covid-crisis and to monitor the quality of these examinations and assessments to be appropriate.

Assessment of this standard

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

3.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Students are to demonstrate the knowledge and skills, they have acquired in the programme, in the master thesis. The average grade for the master theses was 7.8 for the last five cohorts. The Board of Examiners for the programme found the marks of the thesis examiners not too high and to reflect the quality of the theses adequately.

Master theses are written in the format of research articles, to allow students to have their thesis published in peer-reviewed journals. For the years 2015 to 2020, out of a total of 60 theses finalised twenty master theses led to publications in peer-reviewed journals. The proportion of theses leading to publications in these years was, therefore, over 30 %.

The proportion of students graduating cum laude, was 28 % in the years 2015 to 2020.

The programme primarily aims to prepare students for both PhD positions or for positions in non-academic research settings. Every year, students of all seven research master programme organise the annual career event to inform students about career prospects outside of academia and to bring them into contact with graduates from these programmes. This year, an event was specifically organised for students of this programme alone, which could be repeated. The alumni network of the programme is less well-structured.

On the basis of the figures for students having graduated between 2016 and 2020, the proportion of programme graduates proceeding to PhD trajectories is 37 %, whereas 21 % of the graduates found positions in non-academic research.

Considerations

The panel reviewed fifteen master theses of programme graduates. The theses were selected from all of the theses of graduates of the last three years. In the selection, theses with lower, average and higher marks were represented. No theses were found by the panel to be unsatisfactory. Out of all the theses reviewed, seven theses were graded satisfactory by the panel, seven theses were found to be good, and one thesis was found to be excellent. The marks for nine theses were found to be appropriate by the panel. The panel found the marks for five theses to be too high, but less than one point too high. One thesis was found to be graded somewhat too low.

The panel regards the average grade for the master theses of 7.8 appropriate. The proportion of students graduating cum laude, being 28 %, is considered by the panel to be adequate as well.

The panel welcomes the career preparation activities in the programme, including the activities to prepare students for non-academic research or policy careers. The panel recommends to further

strengthen career preparation activities especially for non-academic careers, reinforcing, among other, the network of students and programme alumni.

The panel appreciates the programme preparing well for positions in quantitative research in the field of migration, ethnic relations and multiculturalism. Programme management adequately keeps track of the number of graduates finding research positions as PhD students or in non-academic research. The panel welcomes the results of the programme, 58 % of the graduates having secured PhD positions or non-academic research positions.

Assessment of this standard

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

4. Overview of assessments

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

5. Recommendations

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

- To expand the methodological variety in the programme by strengthening qualitative and policy-oriented methods.
- To offer students more room for choice in the curriculum allowing them to pursue their individual interests.
- To be attentive to the vulnerability of the programme, as it rests largely upon one research group only.
- To structure the communication within the teaching team to allow for strategic reflection and to address new perspectives offered.
- To improve guidance, also on major practical issues with respect to going abroad, for students in choosing among elective options.
- To address the challenging study load in the first semester of the curriculum.
- For the Board of Examiners to act more decisively in monitoring examinations and assessments by, among other, scheduling calibration sessions to review master theses.
- To make more transparent and to better document the conversion from the proposed grade to the final grade for the master thesis, including the weighing in the final grade of the degree of students' independence in the thesis process and of the students' defence.
- To introduce rubrics for theses' assessments, to assure the independent position of second readers, as the number of examiners is rather small, to relate the assessment criteria for the thesis to the programme intended learning outcomes and to consider adding weights to the assessment criteria.
- To have master theses checked for plagiarism and to assign the responsibilities in this respect.
- To strengthen career preparation activities especially for non-academic careers, reinforcing, among other, the network of students and programme alumni.

Appendix: Assessment process

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

This programme is one of the programmes in the assessment cluster of Social Sciences Research Master programmes (in Dutch: WO OZM Maatschappij). Management of the programmes in this assessment cluster discussed the composition of the assessment panel and drafted the list of panel candidates.

Having conferred with the Research Master Migration, Ethnic Relations, and Multiculturalism of Utrecht University programme management, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so.

The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof. L.J. de Haan PhD, Professor Emeritus of Development Studies, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands (panel chair);
- Prof. A. Need PhD, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy; Dean Twente Graduate School, University of Twente, the Netherlands (panel member)
- Prof. J.Y. Nazroo PhD, Professor of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, United Kingdom (panel member);
- Prof. J. van Stekelenburg PhD, Professor Social Conflict and Change, Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands (panel member);
- B.J. Roelofs MSc, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, the Netherlands (student member).

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

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

To prepare for the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with programme management to discuss the documents to be presented to the assessment panel, the site visit schedule, and the planning of the preparatory activities. In the course of this process, programme

management and the process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit were performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of theses of programme graduates of the three most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected fifteen theses from this list. In the selection, theses with lower, average and higher grades were evenly represented.

The panel members were forwarded in time the documents, prepared by programme management. These documents consisted of the self-evaluation report, the appendices to the self-evaluation report and additional information. The student chapter was part of the self-evaluation report. The appendices to the self-evaluation report included overview of relations of intended learning outcomes to Dublin descriptors, overview of relations of curriculum to intended learning outcomes, course descriptions, overview of staff with fields of expertise and qualifications, list of theses published, alumni survey, overview of electives per cohort, and the impact of the Covid pandemic on education. The additional information consisted of course dossiers, course examinations, Programme Advisory Committee minutes, and Board of Examiners annual reports. Extra information, such as the Education and Examination Regulations and the programme assessment plan was provided as well.

To assist panel members in assessing the programme, they were sent the Trained Eye Research Masters Limited Framework document of Certiked evaluation agency, this document being the elaboration of the NVAO Assessment framework and the NVAO Specification for research master programmes.

Prior to the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the assessment process procedures. In this meeting, the panel chair was informed about the profile of panel chairs of NVAO. The panel chair agreed to work in line with the profile of panel chairs.

Seeing the continuing spread of Covid infections in the Netherlands and the measures taken by Dutch government to counter the spread of infections, programme management proposed the site visit to be organised online. All panel members agreed to the online visit.

Prior to the date of the online visit, panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based upon their studying the programme documents, and sent in questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, and compiled a list of questions to serve as the starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the visit.

Shortly before the visit date, panel members met to prepare for the site visit. Panel members discussed the procedures to be adopted during the visit, the preliminary findings about the programme, the panel reviews of the final projects studied, and the questions to be put to the programme representatives.

On 13 April, 2021, the panel conducted the online visit. The visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. The visit schedule included the following meetings.

- 09.00 – 09.45 Faculty representatives, master coordinator
- 10.00 – 11.00 Programme management and core lecturers
- 11.15 – 12.00 Board of Examiners
- 12.00 – 13.00 Panel lunch (closed session), with 12.00 – 12.30 Open office hours
- 13.00 – 13.45 Lecturers/final project examiners
- 14.00 – 14.45 Students, Programme Advisory Committee student member, and alumni
- 14.45 – 16.15 Deliberations panel (closed session)
- 16.15 – 16.30 Main findings presentation by panel chair to programme representatives
- 16.30 – 17.00 Development dialogue

Open office hours were communicated timely by programme management to staff and students. No persons presented themselves during these open office hours.

In a closed session at the end of the visit, the assessment panel considered the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. After these internal deliberations, the panel chair presented in broad outline the panel findings, considerations, conclusions and recommendations to programme representatives.

At the end of the site visit, panel members and programme management met to discuss further improvements in the programme during the development dialogue.

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