



M Linguistics (research)  
University of Groningen

Assessment of conditions

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## Summary

The initial assessment of the research master Linguistics of the University of Groningen in 2021 was conditionally positive, stating two conditions with regard to student assessment (Standard 3):

“Have the local Board of Examiners delegate responsibility for the assessment of the parts of the EMCL track taught outside Groningen to the EMCL Examination Board, on the condition that the local board is fully informed by the EMCL Examination Board of assessment practices in these parts.

[The panel] also advises the programme to ensure that the two boards share one member, and recommends peer review at the level of course assessments between consortium partners to enhance assessment quality.”

The panel studied the progress the programme made with regard to these conditions. It appreciates the work and the improvements that have been made.

The panel is convinced that through the implementation of the measures listed in the programme’s revision plan, EMCL now meets the formal standards concerning the quality control of student assessment. The EMCL Examination Board shares one member with the Board of Examiners (ECL) of the Faculty of Arts Groningen. This ensures that the local board is fully informed of assessment practices in the parts taught outside Groningen by the EMCL Examination Board. Furthermore, the consortium partners have been executing the planned peer review of theses and courses, and discussing the results in the Examination Board meetings. The panel concludes that the programme has fulfilled the conditions set for accreditation.

### Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

#### *M Linguistics (research)*

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
<b>Standard 3: Student assessment</b>	<b>meets the standard</b>
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard

#### **General conclusion**

**positive**

Prof. dr. Maarten Mous (chair)

Dr. Fiona Schouten (secretary)

Date: 9 December 2022

# Introduction

## Procedure

### Context

The research master Linguistics of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen was assessed by an external panel on 17 and 18 May 2021. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018).

The assessment panel advised the NVAO to accredit the programme conditionally due to an issue it encountered in the Erasmus Mundus track European Master in Clinical Linguistics (EMCL) concerning standard 3 (Student assessment). Based on the panel report, the NVAO conceded the programme conditional reaccreditation, requiring the programme to provide the NVAO with an additional report demonstrating that the conditions were met by 20 January 2023.

### Preparation

The University of Groningen requested quality assurance agency Academion to coordinate the assessment of conditions. Dr. Fiona Schouten of Academion acted as coordinator and secretary of the assessment. She has been certified and registered by the NVAO.

In communication with the University of Groningen and the research master's programme Linguistics, Academion approached the panel members who made up the initial accreditation panel in 2021:

Prof. dr. M.P.G.M. (Maarten) Mous, professor of African Linguistics at Leiden University [chair];  
Prof. dr. A. (Ad) Neeleman, professor of Linguistics at University College London (United Kingdom);  
Prof. dr. H.E. (Henriette) de Swart, professor of French linguistics and semantics at Utrecht University;  
S. (Suze) Geuke MA, alumna research master's student Linguistics at Leiden University.

The NVAO approved the panel on 10 November 2022.

The programme prepared a status report on the implemented improvement plan. This status report was made available to the panel members and secretary in preparation of the online visit. Prior to the visit, the panel studied this report as well as a number of supporting documents (see appendix 2). The University of Groningen composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the Academion secretary (see appendix 3).

### Online site visit

On 11 November 2022, the research master Linguistics was assessed in an online site visit by the panel to determine whether the programme had fulfilled the conditions imposed in the initial assessment. After a preparatory meeting, the panel discussed its initial findings based on the documentation with the programme management and the members of the two Boards of Examiners involved. It then reported its conclusions and findings to the programme management.

### Report

After the online site visit, the secretary composed a draft report in consultation with the panel and sent it to the programme in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing

comments with the panel chair, and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalised the report, and the secretary sent it to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen.

## Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Linguistics (research)
CROHO number:	60817
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic
Number of credits:	120 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Language and Cognition (L&C) Language and Communication Technology (LCT) Clinical Linguistics (EMCL)
Location:	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO (assessment of conditions):	20-01-2023

# Description of the assessment

## Introduction

The research master Linguistics was assessed by an external panel on 17-18 May 2021 seeking initial accreditation. The panel advised the NVAO to accredit the programme conditionally due to an issue it encountered in the Erasmus Mundus track European Master in Clinical Linguistics (EMCL). It posed the following conditions with regard to Standard 3 of the assessment framework (Student assessment):

“Have the local Board of Examiners delegate responsibility for the assessment of the parts of the EMCL track taught outside Groningen to the EMCL Examination Board, on the condition that the local board is fully informed by the EMCL Examination Board of assessment practices in these parts.

[The panel] also advises the programme to ensure that the two boards share one member, and recommends peer review at the level of course assessments between consortium partners to enhance assessment quality.”

The Board of the NVAO adopted these conditions and granted the research master Linguistics conditional accreditation on 22 July 2022. Based on the issues signaled by the panel, the programme formulated a revision plan, which it implemented in 2022. This report uses this revision plan and its implementation as the basis for an assessment of the conditions imposed by the previous assessment panel.

## Standard 3. Student assessment

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

## Findings

### *Conditions*

The remarks of the panel concerned the track European Master in Clinical Linguistics (EMCL), which is part of a European Joint Master programme in Clinical Linguistics, funded by the European Union under Erasmus Mundus funding. The EMCL track has a consortium agreement with its partner institutions in which responsibilities are described, including examination. EMCL also has a consortium-wide Examination Board. The local Board of Examiners of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen, which is responsible for quality of assessment in the research master Linguistics according to the Dutch higher education law, has delegated responsibility for assessment in the parts that EMCL offers at one of the partner institutions to this EMCL Examination Board. The panel recommended to maintain this delegation under the condition that the local board would be fully informed by the EMCL Examination Board of assessment practices in these parts. It advised appointing a shared member between the two Examination Boards, and introducing peer review at the level of course assessments between consortium partners.

### *Planned measures*

Immediately after the site visit, the EMCL Examination Board and the representative member of the Board of Examiners for the Arts faculty discussed the points raised by the panel. They decided that the EMCL Examination Board would henceforth not only include one teacher per institution, but would also include a member of the Board of Examiners of the Faculty of Arts (ECL) of the University of Groningen. The ECL-member would have no voting rights in the EMCL-Board. In addition, the minutes of the meetings of the

EMCL Examination Board were to be sent to the Board of Examiners of the Groningen Faculty of Arts, in order to inform this Board of the procedures and results of the quality assurance of assessment in EMCL Board.

It was also decided that one representative member of the EMCL Examination Board per consortium partner would annually check two randomly selected theses, two internship reports, and two courses from another partner university according to an evaluation form. In case of discrepancy in the grading, a meeting with the teacher and/or local director would be held to find a compromise. Representatives would not be allowed to check their own students or courses.

### *Implementation*

The panel received a status report and additional documents from the programme about the implementation of these measures. The panel studied a description of the new quality assurance procedure as used within the consortium, as well as the thesis and course evaluations that result from this procedure. It also studied the minutes of the EMCL Examination Board.

Based on these documents, the panel was able to verify that the changes listed in the revision plan have indeed been implemented. The EMCL Examination Board now shares one member with the Board of Examiners (ECL) of the Faculty of Arts Groningen to ensure all information between the Boards is shared. Furthermore, the consortium partners have been executing the planned peer review of theses and courses, and discussing the results in the Examination Board meetings. ECL receives the minutes of these meetings including the peer review evaluation results. All consortium partners now use the same quality assurance procedure, which has been developed by the Board of Examiners of the RUG.

The panel is pleased with the way the programme acted to ensure that quality of assessment in the EMCL track is guaranteed throughout, and appreciates that its advice concerning the shared examination board member and the peer review between consortium partners has been followed up. It congratulates the programme with the changes made.

During the site visit, the panel had a constructive meeting with members of the EMCL Examination Board and the faculty-wide ECL. It learned that those involved in assessment practices within and around the programme are working hard and have taken important steps towards achieving an ongoing, robust and productive quality culture surrounding education and assessment quality.

### *Considerations*

The panel is convinced that through the implementation of the measures listed in the programme's revision plan, EMCL now meets the formal standards concerning the quality control of student assessment. The EMCL Examination Board shares one member with the Board of Examiners (ECL) of the Faculty of Arts Groningen. This ensures that the local board is fully informed of assessment practices in the parts taught outside Groningen by the EMCL Examination Board. Furthermore, the consortium partners have been executing the planned peer review of theses and courses, and discussing the results in the Examination Board meetings. The ECL Board is informed of the results. The panel concludes that the programme has fulfilled the conditions set for accreditation.

### *Conclusion*

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3.

### *General conclusion*

The panel's assessment of the research master's programme Linguistics is positive.

## Appendix 1. Site visit schedule

### 11 November 2022

11.00-11.30	Internal meeting panel
11.30-11.50	Interview programme management
11.50-12.10	Interview Boards of Examiners
12.10-12.30	Internal meeting panel
12.30	Feedback session programme and faculty management

## Appendix 2. Materials

The panel considered the following materials:

ReMa Linguistics herstelplan

Memo ReMa Linguistics

Signed Consortium Agreement EMCL

Minutes Exam Board September 2021-May 2022

Course, internship, and thesis quality assurance forms EMCL (filled out)

Erasmus+ interim report 2021-2022