

**Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences**  
**Faculty of Health**

**Advisory Report to NVAO**

**European Master of Science**  
**in Occupational Therapy**

**CROHO: 69312**

**\*\*\* FINAL\*\*\***

**29 March 2023**



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## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

On 19 and 20 January 2023 an international panel visited the European Master of Science programme in Occupational Therapy (OT-EuroMaster) at the Faculty of Health of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The OT-EuroMaster has been running since 1999 and is offered by a consortium of five higher education institutions in Europe, who agreed that AUAS would host the programme. The programme aims to further the scientific competences and research skills of professionals in occupational therapy. Its two-year part-time 90 ECTS curriculum is designed to promote cross-border knowledge, inter-cultural dialogue and the mobility of staff and students. Because of its international orientation in terms of student background and consortium partnership, the OT-EuroMaster is offered in English.

This report covers the findings, considerations and recommendations of the panel with regard to the quality of the programme's intended and achieved learning outcomes, as formulated by the NVAO assessment framework. Having established that the OT-EuroMaster meets both standards, **the panel's overall judgement on the programme is therefore positive**. The panel also looked at the quality of internationalisation of the OT-EuroMaster. Arriving at a similarly positive judgement, the panel has reported its observations in a separate document according to the CeQuInt framework.

The panel appreciated the transparency of the programme team during the preparation of the visit, as well as the open discussions with the different stakeholders. Throughout the visit, the panel sensed a positive spirit among all interviewees, as well as a clear commitment to the programme. Management and staff were passionate about their discipline, the courses they teach and the jointly established multi-partner programme they relate to. Similarly, students, alumni and professional field representatives felt part of the OT-EuroMaster community and were advocating strongly for the programme. The panel wants to commend the programme for the work it has undertaken to address the recommendations of the previous accreditation and midterm review committees.

The panel considers that the long-standing OT-EuroMaster programme is built on solid foundations. Its profile is unique in combining a content focus on research theory with a distinctly international delivery of the curriculum. Following the recent adjustment of the programme learning outcomes, the panel considers that both old and new programme learning outcomes are appropriate indicators of the domain, level and orientation of the OT-EuroMaster. The new set of learning outcomes is formulated carefully using clear and accessible language to describe the contents and to monitor student development and achievement. The panel, furthermore, welcomes the embedding of the programme in the professional field. It is clear that this research-focused academic master programme is not conceived and delivered in an ivory tower, but gains added value through its exposure to and dialogue with the professional practice of students and staff, as well as through collaboration with other academic and non-academic institutions.

In order to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved, the committee reviewed a sample of master theses and checked what graduates were doing professionally after they finished the OT-EuroMaster. Based on the written materials, the thesis sample and the discussions on site, the panel considers that upon graduation, all OT-EuroMaster students have achieved all learning outcomes. The thesis review has shown that students are capable of writing good quality final products covering a broad range of interesting and relevant topics and adopting a variety of methodologies. The panel commends the programme for encouraging students to tailor the thesis research to their individual interests, practices and professional contexts. The discussion with alumni confirmed that the programme boosts the professional career of its graduates in different ways: employers recognise student progress already during the study, students make promotion or switch jobs upon graduation, alumni discover new areas of professional activity and assume positions in education, take on management roles, or engage in a PhD trajectory. Both students and alumni reported that their level of job satisfaction has increased thanks to the programme. In sum, the panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster delivers on its promises: the high academic standards of the programme impact not only on the future careers of its students, but also contribute to ongoing professional developments.

In addition to all positive findings and considerations, the panel sees two points that require the attention of the consortium:

- to be more explicit in marketing the unique profile of the OT-EuroMaster programme and in expressing its European identity;
- to adjust the formulation of the learning outcomes on the programme's attention to ethics.

Based on the written materials provided, the sample of research theses and the discussions on-site, the panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster meets the quality requirements set by NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments and relevant for this particular external assessment visit: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. The panel issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy submitted by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

The chair and the secretary 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.

On behalf of the external assessment panel,

Mariëlle Klerks  
Chair

Mark Delmartino  
Secretary

Date: 29 March 2023

## INTRODUCTION

### **Programme**

The plans for a European master programme in occupational therapy (OT-EuroMaster) go way back to the mid-Nineties. Right from the start in 1999, the programme wanted to enhance the understanding of human occupation as a concept that is embedded in occupational science and as a therapeutic modality in the profession. It also aimed at building the research capacity of the profession. Through the design of its curriculum, the OT-EuroMaster envisaged to promote international knowledge, inter-cultural dialogue and mobility of staff and students. These fundamental features are still very much present in the programme today.

The two-year part-time 90 ECTS Master of Science programme is delivered by a consortium of five institutions in different European countries. Each partner is responsible for one of the first five modules, which include a short intensive education programme on-site. The sixth module is offered by all partners: students finish the programme with a master thesis, which they conduct at home with online supervision. Because of its international professional context, the programme is taught in English.

The consortium partners agreed that the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) would host the programme. The OT-EuroMaster therefore adheres to Dutch national rules with regard to accreditation and to AUAS institutional policies. At AUAS, the programme is offered by the Faculty of Health. Administrative data on the institution and the programme are listed in Annex 1. Moreover, the OT-EuroMaster is recognised by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation. Hence, degree awarding power is held by both the Dutch (AUAS) and Swiss (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, ZHAW) partner in the programme. In 2017, the Dutch government granted the programme a funded status, which led to a significant drop in fees for all EEA nationals. Swiss resident and non-EU international students are also registered at ZHAW because the fees for Swiss and international students are subsidised.

Since the previous accreditation visit at the end of 2015, the average annual intake has been around 23 students. After the midterm review of 2019, the programme revised its set of learning outcomes, adjusted the curriculum modules and changed one of the partners. At the time of the current assessment visit in January 2023, both curriculum variants exist next to each other: students who started in September 2021 are in the last master thesis module of the 'old' curriculum. Students who started in September 2022 follow the new curriculum with the new set of learning outcomes and will soon visit the new partner in Spain for module four.

### **Assessment framework**

The OT-EuroMaster obtained initial accreditation and subsequent re-accreditations through the Dutch system. The current review is the third external assessment in which the programme also applies for (a continuation of) the Distinctive Feature Internationalisation. The panel's

findings, considerations and conclusions on the five standards leading to the Certificate of Quality in Internationalisation (CeQuInt) are reported in a separate document.

To establish the quality of the OT-EuroMaster programme from an NVAO perspective, the panel has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. As AUAS has received accreditation at institutional level, its programmes can be assessed according to the limited evaluation framework of NVAO, which consists of four standards. Moreover, AUAS' participation in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education allows its programmes to experiment with a new accreditation process: external assessment on standards 1 (intended learning outcomes) and 4 (achieved learning outcomes) needs validation by NVAO, while standards 2 (teaching-learning environment) and 3 (assessment) can be assessed by an external panel without the involvement of NVAO. The current assessment panel was informed that the OT-EuroMaster will use the findings from the midterm review to account for the quality of its teaching-learning environment and assessment.

### **Panel composition**

The external assessment was performed by an international panel featuring a chair, two members and one student member. The panel, which was approved by NVAO, consisted of:

- Mariëlle Klerks (NL), chair
- Ursula Costa (AT), member
- Claire Hart (UK), member
- Eva Delooz (BE), student-member

The panel was accompanied by Mark Delmartino (BE), a NVAO-certified secretary who liaised between the panel and the programme and ensured that the visit complied with NVAO procedures. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. Annex 2 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

### **Site visit**

Prior to the visit, the programme management was in contact with the panel chair and the panel secretary to work out the site visit programme of the sessions and agree on the materials to be made available. In order to allow the panel to prepare for its tasks, the programme produced an extensive and highly informative Self-Assessment Report, which addressed the respective standards of the NVAO and the CeQuInt frameworks. Furthermore, university and faculty-wide policy documents on quality assurance and assessment, as well as programme-specific materials on the curriculum and course assessments were made available online. The materials which were studied in the framework of this assessment visit are listed in Annex 4.

In the run-up to the site visit, the panel held two online meetings. The first introductory meeting on 19 December 2022 served to get to know each other, describe the assessment frameworks for this review, explain the tasks of the panel and agree on the timing of the preparatory activities. The panel members then reviewed the self-evaluation report and a set of master theses, and reported their findings in writing to the panel secretary. The panellists'



first impressions were compiled in a note, which served as a basis for discussion during the second preparatory meeting on 13 January 2023. The panel members shared their key findings and identified those issues that should certainly be raised during the visit. The site visit took place on 19 and 20 January 2023 according to a schedule which is presented in Annex 3.

The visit schedule also featured an online open consultation hour for OT-EuroMaster students, teaching and support staff. Eventually nobody made use of this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. The visit itself did not include a Development Dialogue. The panel and the programme agreed to hold this meeting before summer.

### **Review of end level products**

The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes was tested among others by examining a sample of master theses. The panel secretary organised the thesis review with the programme representatives and supported the panel members in their work. Based on an anonymised list of 41 students who had successfully finished the programme between August 2021 and October 2022, the panel secretary and chair selected 15 master theses. Given that each thesis is graded with pass or fail, the sample was representative in its coverage of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and by including a fair number of theses that had only been accepted after a re-sit. Moreover, the selected students had been supervised by a variety of staff from different partner institutions.

### **Report structure**

This report covers the external assessment of the OT-EuroMaster programme from an NVAO perspective. In the underlying document, the panel has given a substantiated judgement on NVAO standards 1 and 4 on a two-point scale: meets the standard or does not meet the standard. The panel subsequently recommended a final conclusion regarding the OT-EuroMaster programme on a two-point scale: positive or negative. This weighted and substantiated appreciation serves as advice towards NVAO when taking a decision on the re-accreditation of the European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. The panel's observations on the quality of internationalisation of the OT-EuroMaster are covered in a separate report.

The next chapter constitutes the core of the report as it presents the findings, considerations and conclusions of the panel with regard to the intended learning outcomes and the achieved learning outcomes of the programme. After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the panel for review and feedback. The comments of the panel members were incorporated in a pre-final version, which was validated by the chair. The final draft was sent to the programme team for a check on factual errors on 20 March 2023. The feedback from the institution and the programme was discussed in the panel who modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was submitted to AUAS on 29 March 2023.



## PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

### 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.*

#### Profile

At the time of the site visit, the OT-EuroMaster programme was in its 24<sup>th</sup> year of implementation. The panel noticed that the initial aims of the programme are still very much present in its current outlook. The OT-EuroMaster continues to enhance the understanding of human occupation as a concept embedded in occupational science and as a therapeutic modality in the profession. The programme is still very much aimed at building research capacity in order to academically develop occupational therapy around the world. Similarly, the curriculum design continues to promote cross-border knowledge, inter-cultural dialogue and mobility of staff and students.

The panel also gathered from the written materials and the discussions on-site that over time the programme has been adjusting to new developments in occupational therapy and occupational science. Moreover, the programme team has been making good use of the recommendations by the previous accreditation committee and the midterm review panel. Both review teams indicated on the one hand that the programme is successfully contributing to the development of the occupational therapy profession and the occupational science discipline. On the other hand, both panels saw room for clarifying the content of the curriculum and for positioning the programme's unique selling proposition in a wider international arena.

The current assessment panel acknowledges the efforts of the OT-EuroMaster programme to address these challenges. In so far as the international dimension is concerned, the programme has been promoted actively beyond Western Europe, which in turn has led to an increasing number of students from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and beyond enrolling on the OT-EuroMaster. Moreover, when the long-standing Danish partner institution in the consortium had to leave, it was a conscious decision to look for a new institution beyond Western-Europe. The new partner, the Spanish university of A Coruña, does not only represent Southern Europe with a specific cultural tradition and links to Latin America, but it also brings a strong team with complementary expertise in socio-cultural aspects of occupational therapy and participatory community approaches. Over the past few years, the programme also strengthened its collaboration with international networks, notably but not exclusively by participating in the ENOTHE Master Competences in Occupational Therapy project defining and comparing competences at master level across Europe.

The panel furthermore was informed about the decision of the programme team to remain a generalist programme in terms of content and focus on occupational science, socio-cultural

aspects of occupational therapy practice, internationalisation and research. Given the programme's focus on the research-based and international aspect of the discipline, and in view of the breadth of expertise inside the consortium, the panel endorses this decision.

In this respect, the panel understands that the programme allows students to relate the offered learning content to their respective professional developments, while its focus on the other hand is first and foremost on research, theory and methodology. Asked why this research aspect does not get more explicit attention in marketing and communication as key selling proposition and benchmark, the programme team indicated that too exclusive a focus on research would hold back potential applicants in certain countries, such as Switzerland, from applying. Throughout the discussions, the panel noticed that several groups of participants hold similar views of what makes the OT-EuroMaster stand out: it is a general master programme in occupational therapy with particular attention to the international orientation and to research, whereby students can tailor the contents of the modules to their own situation and in this way get an in-depth view on what occupational therapy theories and concepts and occupational science may mean in/to their own practice. According to the panel, the uniqueness of the programme lies in the combination of its research focus and its international delivery, a combination that can be highlighted more explicitly in the programme's marketing efforts.

Finally, the panel discussed whether the programme intends to introduce a non-European perspective. For now the programme is Europe-centred with European partners and a majority of European students. Within this European dimension, however, there is room for non-European students bringing in their own perspective and practice and acquiring in-depth knowledge that will be to the benefit of their own practice. Furthermore, the programme team recognised that there is room for attracting new partners (and more students) from Southern and Eastern Europe, and in particular from those countries that have no research tradition in occupational therapy. The panel therefore encourages the programme to live up to the 'Europe'-reference in its title, and thus to address the different realities of occupational therapy and occupational science across Europe in a comprehensive way. In this regard, the initiated outreach efforts towards Eastern Europe will certainly enrich and complete the programme's European perspective. This European perspective, however, should not refrain the programme from continuing to attract non-European students and look for ways how to offer them a relevant experience that does justice to their specific profession/practice. In terms of global outlook, there is room according to the panel for paying more explicit attention to linking the domain of occupational therapy, as covered in the programme, to e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Intended learning outcomes**

The panel noticed that, following the advice of the previous accreditation committee and the midterm review panel, the OT-EuroMaster programme has revised its learning outcomes. This revision took place after a thorough exercise involving a consortium-wide curriculum review committee and the validation by the Programme Board. Moreover, the programme benefited hugely from its participation in the ENOTHE project, which allowed to compare and revise

the OT-EuroMaster learning outcomes and assessments with eight other international programmes. The activities of this project group have been used to develop the revised content areas, aims and learning outcomes of the programme. The cohort who started the OT-EuroMaster in September 2022 is the first to use the new set of learning outcomes.

The panel gathered from the materials and the discussion that the set-up of both old and new learning outcomes is similar: both sets consist of several statements that describe the competences students should have acquired by the time they graduate from the OT-EuroMaster. These statements were previously clustered around the five Dublin Descriptors (knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements, communication, and learning to study) while the new set uses the content areas as a framework for the reformulated statements. The panel acknowledges that the former set of learning outcomes – which is still used for students who started the programme in September 2021 and are likely to graduate in the course of 2023 – is still a valid representation of what the programme stands for and covers adequately the domain of occupational therapy. Taken together, these ‘old’ statements are formulated at the appropriate master level and do justice to the academic orientation of the OT-EuroMaster.

The new set of programme learning outcomes – which are operational as of September 2022 and thus affect the most recent cohort of students – are also formulated at the correct level (master) and orientation (academic) of the OT-EuroMaster, and do justice to the discipline (occupational therapy). The panel noticed, moreover, that the new learning outcomes describe the overall programme aims more clearly than before: the statements – also called descriptors in the self-evaluation report – are oriented towards the discipline of occupational science, occupational therapy, and research skills. Moreover, the learning outcomes are formulated in such a way that they describe what students are expected to learn and develop during the programme. In this respect, the learning goals of the respective modules are formulated in a similar way as the programme learning outcomes: the competences OT-EuroMaster students acquire in a particular module build up to the end level, and in certain cases, the learning outcomes will have been reached before the end of the programme. Hence, the learning goals of the final module six are now formulated as a separate set of measurable indicators that contribute to and complement the overall set of programme learning outcomes and are not equal to the programme learning outcomes, as has previously been the case.

According to the panel, the new set of learning outcomes is not only adequate for an academic master programme in occupational therapy, but is also formulated very meticulously reflecting the specificities of the programme content and allowing to monitor progress while students work their way through the different modules. The learning outcomes adequately reflect the programme’s profile. The panel found the language of the statements clear and accessible, and indicative of the current developments and challenges in the field of occupational therapy and occupational science. The panel noticed that while they are no longer the hanger of the learning outcomes, the Dublin Descriptors are still the benchmark and the source of terminology to specify the master level of the programme learning outcomes.

Comparing the two sets of learning outcomes, the panel noticed that the ethical principles are described differently. In the new learning outcomes, the focus is on ‘considering’ ethical principles whereas the previous set emphasised more ‘acting according to’ these principles. The programme team acknowledged this finding and agreed that by reading the statements one could conclude that ethics gets less attention because acting according to ethical principles includes their consideration. The team indicated that it would look into this new formulation because it was certainly not the intention to pay less attention to ethics, on the contrary: the logic behind the reformulation was to make the new indicator on ethics more measurable. Students will be trained – and tested – throughout the programme in not only considering ethical principles but also demonstrably act accordingly.

### **Professional field**

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on-site that the programme is delivered in permanent interaction with the professional field. Most OT-EuroMaster students work at least part-time in an occupational therapy setting during their studies, staff involved in the modules are in close connection to the professional field, and during the class work weeks of each module students are exposed to the specific realities of the occupational therapy profession in five partner countries.

Moreover, the OT-EuroMaster has in-built structures such as the Board and the Advisory Committee that look at both the quality and relevance of programme delivery. When reviewing the programme curriculum and learning outcomes, the consortium used the specific expertise of its members, joined the ENOTHE project for external benchmarking, and had the outcomes of the review exercise validated by the programme Board. According to the panel, the recent experiences with the programme review demonstrate that the contacts with the professional field allow the OT-EuroMaster to follow-up the developments in the discipline and adjust the programme where needed in order to keep it up-to-date.

### **Considerations**

Based on the written materials and the discussions on-site, the panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster programme has a very specific profile. It is unique in combining a content focus on research theory with a very international delivery of the curriculum. The panel thinks highly of the way in which the programme’s international orientation is operationalised through the consortium partners, the short-term visits to different partner countries and the international composition of the student cohorts. It supports the decision of the programme to retain a general professional focus. In this way, the programme continues to address the comprehensive domain of the discipline without shutting down the scope and creativity which is a critical part of the profession.

The panel encourages the consortium to be more explicit in marketing this unique profile and in expressing its European identity. In relation to the latter point, the panel welcomes the inclusion of a consortium partner from Southern Europe and the plans of the programme to

further strengthen their outreach to institutions and students in - mainly Central and Eastern - European countries where there is no master education in occupational therapy yet.

The panel considers that both old and new programme learning outcomes reflect the programme's profile and are appropriate indicators of the domain, level and orientation of the OT-EuroMaster programme. The new set of learning outcomes is formulated carefully using clear and accessible language. The respective statements also do justice to the contents of the curriculum (modules) and allow to monitor student development and achievement of the respective indicators throughout the 24-month programme. While acknowledging that it is treated properly in the curriculum, the panel advises the programme to adjust the formulation of the intended learning outcomes in so far as the attention to ethics is concerned.

Throughout its existence the OT-EuroMaster programme has been implemented in constant interaction with the professional field. The panel welcomes this embedding, as well as the input from external stakeholders in reflecting on the recent programme adjustments. This research-focused academic master programme is not conceived and delivered in an ivory tower, but gains added value through its exposure to and dialogue with the professional practice of students and the professional roots of the academic staff.

Finally, the panel commends the programme for the work it has undertaken to address the recommendations of the previous accreditation and midterm review committees. The efforts have clearly paid off as they resulted in an adjusted and up-to-date programme that underlines even more than before the unique profile of the OT-EuroMaster.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the OT-EuroMaster programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

### **Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes**

*The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

There are two ways to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved – through a quality review of the final products and through checking what programme graduates are doing after they finished the programme. The panel has looked at both elements when assessing the end level qualifications of the OT-EuroMaster programme.

### **Thesis quality**

The panel gathered from the written materials that the sixth and final module of the OT-EuroMaster requires students to demonstrate that they have achieved the aims of the programme through the completion of a research thesis. Students show in their master thesis that they have the competences to integrate conceptual, theoretical and research issues in occupational therapy/occupational science. They are supported to develop, carry out, write

and critically appraise their research project that may have a distinctly local (regional, national) and personally meaningful dimension. Hence, thesis topics often address a specific research need that students identified in their particular area of practice and which they operationalised through a research project with local employers, service users, carers, and/or policy makers. During the visit, the panel was informed that the OT-EuroMaster Director of Education had an important role in advocating for and establishing an Ethical Review Committee at the AUAS Faculty of Health to ensure students can undertake a variety of empirical research methodologies with a range of (potentially vulnerable) participants in line with professional expectations around research integrity and data protection.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a representative sample of fifteen master theses and their evaluation forms. These final products had been produced at a time (2021 – 2022) when students were still following the ‘old’ curriculum with the ‘old’ learning outcomes. Following their review of the allocated master theses, each panel member reported that every thesis was of more than sufficient quality to pass. The quality of the individual theses is obviously different, and ranges from more than sufficient to excellent. The panel did not establish any connection between thesis quality on the one hand and the adopted qualitative / quantitative research approach on the other hand. The panel also noticed that all assessors across partner institutions adopted similar standards in judging the respective evaluation criteria.

The panel found the breadth of the thesis topics to be excellent, and appreciated that the research project deliverable took the form of an article. It was obvious from the thesis manual and the concrete research outputs that students had received clear indications on both research process and deliverable. Moreover, the panel noticed with satisfaction that theses paid proper attention to the ethical aspects of research and that topics were indeed reflecting the professional practice environment of the student.

Theses that had been approved after additional efforts for the re-sit tended to be on the lower side of the quality continuum but still very much deserved to pass. Reviewing both versions of these theses, the panel found assessors were right in failing the first version of the thesis, while a leap in quality was noticeable in the second attempt. Theses on the higher quality end were of publishable quality according to the panel, and have effectively led to publications and to students engaging in PhD trajectories.

Although this is not part of the NVAO standard under review, the panel wants to have recorded on paper that the feedback on the thesis evaluation form was always accurate in the sense that in all cases panel members agreed to the appreciation of the assessors. The size of the feedback varied, however, and therefore not all evaluation forms were completed in an equally insightful way. Looking at the assessment forms of theses that did not pass at their first attempt, the panel found that assessors provided feedback in an appreciative, encouraging and helpful way, pointing out explicitly and clearly what the student needed to improve in order to pass. Emphasising that it thought that each thesis in the sample met all the quality standards, the panel did notice – and advised the programme team accordingly - that in



particular the second round of feedback on theses who passed after a re-sit could be formulated more precisely. While the panel in these cases noticed a net increase in thesis quality following precise indications from the assessors in the first feedback form, this enhancement was not always explicitly and informatively described in the second-round evaluation form.

### **Performance of graduates**

Another way to demonstrate the achievement of programme learning outcomes is to look at the professional whereabouts of the graduates. The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that a dedicated survey in 2022 showed that most alumni (71% of the respondents) changed position or job as a result of obtaining the MSc degree. These changes often related to more research-related tasks or leadership/management roles. Moreover, one third of the respondents had started to teach in an occupational therapy education programme while one fifth took on tasks or positions in research. In addition to getting higher salaries, several respondents indicated that their job satisfaction had increased after the OT-EuroMaster. The survey also showed that one third of the respondents had published their research in peer reviewed journals while 60% had presented their thesis at a professional conference. Several respondents had also advanced in academia by completing, studying or applying for a PhD.

The discussion on-site with both alumni and employers confirmed the findings of the above survey. Alumni were very satisfied with the programme and indicated it had advanced their career and brought them more job satisfaction. Employers from their side noticed the increased level of competence of their employees after having attended the OT-EuroMaster.

According to the panel the research theses, the alumni survey and the testimonials on-site from students, alumni and employers constitute ample evidence that the programme delivers on its promises. The progression of students through the programme and into their further career indicates that the level of study is suitably challenging. Attending and completing the programme has a direct impact on the profession, as is demonstrated by the professional, educational and academic careers of alumni, as well as their research publications and presentations. In this regard, the high academic standards of the programme impact not only on the future careers of the students, but also on the professional practice of students / alumni during and after the programme.

### **Considerations**

Based on the written materials, the sample of master theses and the discussions with alumni and employers, the panel considers that the students who graduate from the OT-EuroMaster programme have the necessary competencies to move on in their career.

The panel thinks highly of the quality of the master theses: all fifteen theses met the expectations of a final master level product of academic orientation, and the panel rated several theses as good or even excellent. There was not a single doubt on the quality of the theses in the sample, and this appreciation also includes those theses that only got a pass mark during re-sit. The good quality theses often lead to presentations or publications of the

research. Based on the quality of the master thesis sample, it is fair to state that students who pass the thesis have effectively reached all learning outcomes.

Overlooking the thesis sample, the panel thought the research projects covered a broad range of interesting and relevant topics, adopting a variety of methodologies. It commends the programme for giving students the opportunity to tailor their thesis towards their own interests, practices and professional contexts.

The panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster alumni are successful in their career, which in turn is a positive indication that graduates have indeed achieved the programme learning outcomes. The number of students who advance in their career upon graduating the OT-EuroMaster is impressive. This advancement, moreover, is visible in various ways: employers recognise student progress already during the study, students make promotion or switch jobs upon graduation, alumni discover new areas of professional activity and assume positions in education, take on management roles, or engage in a PhD trajectory. Overall, students/alumni indicated that their level of job satisfaction has increased thanks to the programme.

In sum, the panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster delivers on its promises: the high academic standards of the programme impact not only on the future careers of its students, but also contribute to ongoing professional developments.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the above-mentioned findings and considerations, the panel judges that **the OT-EuroMaster programme meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.**

### **Overall judgement**

The panel considers that the OT-EuroMaster programme meets the two NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. **The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.**

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme

#### Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution:	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Status of the institution:	publicly funded
Result of the institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive (2019)
Contact person:	Debbie Kramer-Roy (d.e.kramer-roy@hva.nl)

#### Administrative data on the programme

Name:	European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy
CROHO:	69312
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	90 ECTS
Locations:	Amsterdam, Brighton, Zürich, A Coruña, Stockholm and at home
Mode of study:	part-time
Language:	English
Tracks:	not applicable

## **Annex 2 – Panel**

### **Marielle Klerks, chair**

Mariëlle has her own consultancy company providing advice and support in quality assurance and internationalisation in higher education. She has been working on quality assurance issues at universities and with evaluation agencies in the Netherlands. Marielle is certified by NVAO and by ECA (CeQuInt) and has extensive experience in chairing assessment panels.

### **Prof. Dr. Ursula Costa, member**

Ursula studied occupational therapy and related fields in Austria and the United States, and obtained a PhD in Public Health. She is head of the bachelor and master programmes in occupational therapy and occupational science in Innsbruck, Austria. Ursula chaired the midterm review of the OT-EuroMaster programme.

### **Dr. Claire Hart, member**

Claire has degrees in occupational therapy and in counselling, and obtained a PhD from Teesside University, UK. She is currently teaching at Northumbria University in undergraduate, postgraduate and apprenticeship programmes related to occupational therapy.

### **Eva Delooz, student-member**

Eva has a professional bachelor in Occupational Therapy from University College PXL in Hasselt. After a pre-master at KU Leuven, she is now attending the inter-university MSc in Occupational Therapy Sciences. Throughout her studies, Eva has been student representative.

The panel was assisted by **Mark Delmartino**, MDM Consultancy bv, Antwerpen – Belgium. As freelance secretary, Mark has worked with NVAO panels since 2006. He is certified by NVAO and by ECA (CeQuInt) and belongs to the AUAS pool of certified external secretaries.

All members of the panel, as well as the secretary have signed the NVAO independence form.

## **Annex 3 – Schedule of the site visit**

### **Thursday 19 January 2023**

11.00h	Arrival panel and internal meeting, including Open consultation hour (online)
13.30h	Session with Programme Management and Dean
14.45h	Session with Strategic Body (online)
15.30h	Session with Module Coordinators and Teaching Staff
16.45h	Session with Advisory Committee, Alumni and Employers (online)
17.45h	Internal panel meeting and wrap-up with Programme Management
18.30h	End of day 1

### **Friday 20 January 2023**

08.30h	Internal panel meeting
09.00h	Session with Students (online)
10.15h	Session with Examination Board
11.30h	Session with Programme Management
12.00h	Internal panel deliberations and lunch
14.00h	Plenary feedback
14.30h	End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available from the programme on request.

## Annex 4 – Overview of materials

*Self-evaluation report* European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, November 2022.

- Part 1 – introduction and background information about the programme
- Part 2 – programme accreditation by NVAO standards 1 & 4
- Part 3 – programme accreditation by ECA for CeQuInt

*Annexes* to the self-evaluation report

- Overview of intake and study success 2016-2022
- Quality care plan
- Memorandum of Cooperation (including Transition addendum)
- Module Coordinator reports
- Annual Report 2021
- Programme structure: old (until 2021) and new (as of 2022)
- Student handbook 2022-2024
- Module guides
- Action plan 2015-2019
- NVAO accreditation report 2016
- Midterm review report 2019
- Report on curriculum review
- Learning outcomes and module learning goals
- Examination forms and marking grids per module
- Intake and success rate since 1999, including students' countries of residence
- Thesis titles 2020-2021 and 2021-2022
- Alumni survey 2022
- Board policy
- Overview of thesis publications and PhD tracks
- Motivation letter new partner A Coruña
- Aims, learning outcomes and marking grids new modules (2022-2023)
- Staff list and CV's
- Staff development plan
- International Diploma Supplement (2021-2022)
- Student chapter – video message
- Examination Board annual report 2021
- Programme Committee annual report 2021-2022
- Teaching and Examination Regulations 2022-2023

*Graduation projects*

The panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 master theses and their evaluation forms submitted by OT-EuroMaster students who graduated between August 2021 and October 2022. A list of the selected theses is available from the programme on request.