



M Philosophy (research)
Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Summary

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The research master's programme Philosophy (ReMA in Philosophy and Economics) offered by the Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil) of Erasmus University Rotterdam has a comprehensive and specialized focus on (analytic) philosophy of economics. The programme is linked to the Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE). ESPhil aims to provide its ReMA students with the substantive knowledge and research skills required to pursue a PhD in internationally leading departments in the philosophy of economics, or in any of its adjacent fields within philosophy. It also aims to provide students with the necessary skills to qualify for positions in the private and public sectors, such as policymaking or consulting, that require an interdisciplinary understanding of economics in society at large. The panel considers the ReMA's profile to be clear and distinctive, and in line with the research expertise present at EIPE. The focus on philosophy of economics stands out internationally. The ReMA's intended learning outcomes have been phrased in a concrete way and reflect the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. The ILOs are in line with the expectations of the scientific and professional fields and substantiate the programme's research orientation, while also specifying professional aims.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel considers the teaching and learning environment of the ReMA Philosophy and Economics to offer students a truly research-based education, with intensive and varied working methods, extensive and hands-on professional and academic skills training, considerable and well-designed guidance, a fitting admissions policy, and enough flexibility to design their own learning trajectories. The choice of English as a language of instruction is logical and fits with the research master's orientation and field. Positive points are the option to study at a similar programme abroad, as well as the EIPE Research Seminar, where students are trained as junior members of the academic community and gain a sense of belonging to that same community. The programme is sufficiently feasible and addresses the differences in backgrounds between students well and proactively. A strength is the excellent research environment offered by Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE and its staff; staff members have outstanding track records in the field and their numbers have grown considerably in recent years. The panel advises reinstating the separate course in the history of economic thought. Research integrity should also be given a more prominent and explicit place in the curriculum.

Standard 3. Student assessment

The panel finds that assessment in the ReMA Philosophy and Economics follows adequate procedures and uses fitting and relatively varied methods of assessment, which match the research-oriented profile. Assessment of courses is well conducted and the system of assessment is well designed. The Examination Board is clearly in control and fulfils its quality assurance duties proactively. Thesis assessment is performed according to a clear and well-designed protocol and with the use of clear assessment forms. The panel appreciates the role of the thesis defence, which is a suitable choice in a programme that places a strong focus on academic (communication and argumentation) skills. The 'graduation day' on which theses are defended forms a community event for the programme and encourages the calibration of grading between the programme's examiners. In order to lighten the workload for supervisors, the panel recommends simplifying the thesis assessment procedure by ensuring that supervisors do not have to assess theses twice. It considers the smaller thesis (a maximum of 20,000 words) a suitable assessment method for the final level, as it can demonstrate academic depth and the incorporation of all relevant elements of the research cycle. Such a smaller thesis could also have the format of a research article that is combined with a separate research proposal or policy report.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The panel finds the theses of the ReMA to reflect the level of a research master's programme. The theses all take an analytical approach, which is in line with the programme's profile. A high percentage of graduates end up in PhD positions. The panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. It encourages the programme to organize more for and with the alumni, and to also stay in touch with those who end up outside of research to get a clear idea of the positions they end up in.

Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

M Philosophy (research)

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

General conclusion positive

Prof. dr. Martin van Hees
Chair

Dr. Fiona Schouten
Secretary

Date: 18 March 2024

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 21 and 22 November 2023, the research master's programme Philosophy of Erasmus University Rotterdam was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the Philosophy cluster assessment. The assessment cluster consisted of 29 programmes, offered by Leiden University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Radboud University, University of Groningen, Tilburg University, University of Twente, Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Philosophy. Fiona Schouten acted as both coordinator and secretary, and Irene Conradie, Mariette Huisjes, Marieke Schoots, and Anne-Lise Kamphuis acted as secretaries in the cluster assessment. They have been certified and registered by the NVAO.

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members as well as consistency within the cluster. On 24 July 2023, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. On 20 July 2023, the coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

Erasmus School of Philosophy composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The School selected representative partners for the various interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would take place during the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programme provided the coordinator with a list of graduates over the period May 2020-August 2023. In consultation with the coordinator, the panel chair selected 15 theses. They took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various specializations. Prior to the site visit, the programme provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. They also provided the panel with the self-evaluation reports and additional materials (see appendix 4).

The panel members studied the information and sent their findings to the secretary. The secretary collected the panel's questions and remarks in a document and shared this with the panel members. In a preliminary meeting, the panel discussed the initial findings on the self-evaluation reports and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. Prior to this, the panel was also informed on the assessment frameworks, the working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

Site visit

During the site visit, the panel interviewed various programme representatives (see appendix 3). The panel also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No consultation was requested. The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the preliminary findings.

Report

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it within Academion for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to Erasmus School of Philosophy 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 coordinator sent it to Erasmus School of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Prof. dr. Martin van Hees, professor of Moral and Political Philosophy (VU Amsterdam) and Dean of Amsterdam University College (AUC) – chair;
- Prof. dr. Gerd Van Riel, professor of Ancient Philosophy and Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven – chair and panel member;
- Prof. dr. Mariëtte van den Hoven, professor of Medical Ethics, Amsterdam UMC;
- Prof. dr. Thomas Reydon, professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, Leibniz University Hannover;
- Em. Prof. dr. Jos de Mul, professor of Philosophical Anthropology, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Prof. dr. Sonja Smets, professor in Logic and Epistemology, University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. Bart Raymaekers, professor of Moral Philosophy and Philosophy of Law, KU Leuven;
- Prof. dr. Geert Van Eekert, professor of European Philosophy, University of Antwerp;
- Prof. dr. Martine Prange, professor of Philosophy of Humanity, Culture, and Society, Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. Wybo Houkes, professor of Philosophy of Science and Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. Federica Russo, professor in Philosophy of Science and Technology, University of Amsterdam;
- Dr. Victor Gijssbers, assistant professor Philosophy, Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. Vincent Blok, professor of Philosophy of Technology and Responsible Innovation, Wageningen University;
- Prof. dr. Rein Raud, professor of Asian and Cultural Studies, Tallinn University;
- Prof. dr. Corien Bary, professor in Logical Semantics, Radboud University;
- Dr. Elsbeth Brouwer, assistant professor in Philosophy of Language and Cognition, University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. dr. Erik Weber, professor of Philosophy, Ghent University;
- Dr. Constanze Binder, associate professor Philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam – referee;
- Dr. Bruno Verbeek, assistant professor of Ethics and Political Philosophy, Leiden University – referee;
- Sarah Boer, MA student Philosophy, Politics, and Society, Radboud University – student member;
- Tim van Alten, MSc student Philosophy of Science, Technology and Society, University of Twente – student member;
- Christa Laurens, MA student Modern European Philosophy, Leiden University – student member.

The panel assessing the research master's programme Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. Martin van Hees, professor of Moral and Political Philosophy, VU University and Dean of Amsterdam University College (AUC) – chair;
- Prof. dr. Gerd Van Riel, professor of Ancient Philosophy and Dean of the Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven – chair and panel member;
- Prof. dr. Mariëtte van den Hoven, professor of Medical Ethics, Amsterdam UMC;
- Prof. dr. Martine Prange, professor of Philosophy of Humanity, Culture, and Society, Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. Vincent Blok, professor of Philosophy of Technology and Responsible Innovation, Wageningen University;
- Tim van Alten, MSc student Philosophy of Science, Technology and Society, University of Twente – student member.

Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive

Programme name:	Philosophy (research)
CROHO number:	60128
Level:	Master
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	120 EC
Location:	Rotterdam
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO:	1 May 2024

Description of the assessment

Reflection on the previous assessment

The report based on the previous assessment in 2018 included recommendations to focus the intended learning outcomes more clearly on economics instead of the social sciences, to require students to do extra coursework in courses of the regular master programme, and to strengthen the thesis assessment and the role of the Examination Board. Based on the self-assessments and the interviews conducted during the site visit, the panel concludes that these recommendations have all been followed up by the programme, except for the recommendation to include extra coursework in courses of the regular master's programme. See Standard 2 below for a more detailed discussion. The panel agrees with the way the programme responded to all prior recommendations.

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's programme Philosophy is a two-year 120 EC programme offered by the Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil) of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The programme is known as ReMA in Philosophy and Economics (ReMA) and will be referred to as ReMA for convenience in the remainder of this report. It is one of a small number of programmes in the world that offer a comprehensive and specialized focus on (analytic) philosophy of economics. The programme is linked to the Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE).

The ReMA is a selective programme aimed at attracting students skilled in critical reasoning and analysis and who are strongly motivated to conduct research in the philosophy of economics. ESPhil aims to provide its ReMA students with the substantive knowledge and research skills required to pursue a PhD in internationally leading departments in the philosophy of economics, or adjacent fields such as applied ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of action, and rational choice theory. ESPhil also aims to provide its ReMA students with the necessary skills to qualify for positions in the private and public sector, such as policymaking or consulting, that require an interdisciplinary understanding of economics in society at large.

The programme has a set of intended learning outcomes (ILOs) which reflect this profile and, in particular, the ReMA's research-oriented nature (see appendix 1). The ILOs were designed with the aim of preparing students for research careers as academics or for research and policy work in the public or private sector. From 2023 onwards, the programme plans to have EIPE members and the ESPhil Programme Management Team (PMT) review the intended learning outcomes every three years, taking into consideration developments in the academic field as well as the feedback received from alumni active in policymaking and consulting.

The panel considers the ReMA's profile to be clear and distinctive, and in line with the research expertise present at EIPE. The focus on the philosophy of economics stands out internationally. The intended learning outcomes have been phrased in a concrete way and reflect the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. The ILOs are in line with the expectations of the scientific and professional fields and substantiate the

programme's research orientation, while also specifying professional aims. The panel agrees with plans to include feedback from alumni in evaluating and sharpening the programme's ILOs.

Considerations

The research master's programme Philosophy (ReMA in Philosophy and Economics) offered by the Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil) of Erasmus University Rotterdam has a comprehensive and specialized focus on (analytic) philosophy of economics. The programme is linked to the Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE). ESPhil aims to provide its ReMA students with the substantive knowledge and research skills required to pursue a PhD in internationally leading departments in the philosophy of economics, or in any of its adjacent fields within philosophy. It also aims to provide students with the necessary skills to qualify for positions in the private and public sectors, such as policymaking or consulting, that require an interdisciplinary understanding of economics in society at large. The panel considers the ReMA's profile to be clear and distinctive, and in line with the research expertise present at EIPE. The focus on philosophy of economics stands out internationally. The ReMA's intended learning outcomes have been phrased in a concrete way and reflect the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. The ILOs are in line with the expectations of the scientific and professional fields and substantiate the programme's research orientation, while also specifying professional aims.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

Curriculum

The curriculum of the ReMA in Philosophy and Economics comprises 120 EC and is to be studied full-time over two years. The curriculum is divided as follows (see Appendix 2 for an overview):

- Core courses in the philosophy of economics (30 EC).
- Specialist courses in the philosophy of economics (15 EC), which deepen students' knowledge of more specific cutting-edge topics in philosophy of economics.
- Additional courses in philosophy of economics (10 EC) from the ESPhil M Philosophy programme ('Philosophy Now'). There are four 5 EC courses in that programme that specifically focus on philosophy of economics and that emphasize research aspects. ReMA students select two of these four courses.
- Open elective space for courses in philosophy and/or economics (20 EC). As part of this space, students can take economics courses at the Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) and the Tinbergen Institute. They can take philosophy courses as part of the national OZSW consortium of research master's programmes. They can also take further philosophy courses from the Philosophy Now programme or from other universities. Summer schools and winter schools can also be counted as part of the students' elective space.
- Research training in the philosophy of economics (45 EC). This includes writing a 20,000-word thesis.

In the first year, students typically take the core, specialized and additional courses in the philosophy of economics. Together, the courses cover the entire field of philosophy of economics. Philosophy and economics are not taught as separate subjects, but in combination. In the second year, students mostly follow elective elements and research training courses. Students then also write their ReMA thesis, with close supervision from an expert in the sub-field of the philosophy of economics of their choice.

Over the course of the programme, students are trained in both academic and professional skills. They start with the Academic Skills course, which provides them with basic training in skills such as critical reasoning and argumentation, library research, and reading and writing. The course also introduces students without a background in philosophy to the norms and aims of philosophical research. The course is tailored towards the skills needed for the students to become independent researchers in academia or in the public or private sectors. These include presenting, academic writing and publishing, logical and critical thinking, and structuring arguments. Skills training is subsequently integrated in the courses, so that they are linked to and applied in the context of the course content.

The ReMA courses use activating teaching methods to engage students. The programme has a small intake of roughly 16 students a year, which allows for an intensive type of student guidance following the master-apprentice model. Most courses are taught in a seminar format, sometimes complemented with interactive mini-lectures. Within a seminar, students engage in plenary discussions, small-group work (either on discussion questions or on technical exercises), presentations, and Q&A sessions with the course teacher. Students are asked to prepare for the seminar by reading some texts in advance, and sometimes to prepare answers to questions presented to them in advance. Some courses admit the participation of a limited number of master's students from the Erasmus School of Economics, which allows ReMA students to interact with economists and to gain knowledge about economics as it is currently taught.

ReMA students are required to take part in the EIPe Research Seminar on the philosophy of economics (7.5 EC). This seminar runs every two weeks and is also attended by all the ReMA core teachers and all the EIPe PhD students. In each session, a pre-circulated draft paper is discussed with its author. The author is either affiliated with ESPhil or an external speaker. ReMA students fulfil each of the following seminar roles at least once: presenting, chairing, or acting as a paper commentator. Students are provided with detailed written guidance on how to perform these different roles.

A professional and/or academic orientation that goes beyond the programme is central to the PhD Proposal/Policy Report course that is taught in year 2. This course enables students to prepare for applications for PhD positions while completing the programme. The process is guided by the thesis supervisor and the student's coach, who provide extensive feedback not only on the PhD proposal itself but also on its presentation and style in the light of the particular PhD programme or grant the student is applying for. The PhD Proposal/Policy Report course also contains a seminar informing students about PhD positions and different application requirements and timelines in different countries, as well as a seminar run by a senior policy expert and alumnus of the programme on how to write a policy report.

In the second year of the programme, ReMA students have the opportunity to participate in an exchange programme with the master's programme in Philosophy and Economics at the University of Vienna. About two students per year participate in this exchange. Students visit the University of Vienna for one semester and take courses in economics or in the philosophy of economics. Similarly, students from the Vienna programme can visit ESPhil and contribute to the research and teaching environment in Rotterdam. The Vienna exchange replaces a similar setup with Bologna that was discontinued, since that programme was not taken to be a good fit. The programme ascertained that the Viennese master's programme is of a

comparable standard to the ReMA and shares its research focus on the philosophy of economics. Some of the staff members in the programme previously worked at EIPE and taught in the ReMA. The exchange was initiated as part of the development of an international PPE (Philosophy, Politics, and Economics) network that intends to boost international exchanges. The programme is considering extending the setup to other places, such as Milan.

The panel considers the curriculum of the ReMA in Philosophy and Economics to be very well designed and coherent throughout. Students are offered intensive education in small groups with activating and engaging teaching methods. The course content is state of the art and the students are thoroughly trained in the necessary academic and professional skills throughout the curriculum. Skills are offered in close integration with course content, and this also holds for the dedicated skills course. The programme offers students sufficient components at research master's level (90 out of 120 EC), while allowing for flexibility so that students can follow their own learning trajectories within the domain of philosophy of economics. The current students indicated that many of the electives and additional courses in philosophy of economics that they take up outside the ReMA-programme have a strong focus on research. The panel applauds the EIPE Research Seminar, which helps students become junior members of the academic EIPE community. It is also pleased with the exchange option with the Philosophy and Economics programme in Vienna, and acknowledges the importance of the ReMA management's initiatives to ensure that the Vienna environment is of a similar high standard to the EUR programme. All in all, the panel appreciates the content, composition, and structure of the ReMA, which clearly reflect and support the programme's research orientation.

The previous assessment panel advised that students who take courses in regular master's programmes should be given extra challenges through, for example, extra reading material and research assignments. The programme decided against this because of the complexity it would introduce to the programme. Since students choose much of the research-oriented elective content, the benefits from this proposal would be limited. Moreover, the programme stimulates students via its mentor system, ensuring they select those electives that match their study trajectory as well as possible. Given these considerations, and noting that the components not at research master's level make up a maximum of 30 EC of the curriculum, the panel sees no issues concerning the overall level of the programme.

The programme used to have a course on the history of economic thought. This was taught by temporary staff members but had to be suspended for the 2023–2024 academic year. The programme is currently negotiating with the Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) to appoint a joint chair in the History of Economic Thought for 2024–2025. For current students, the history of economic thought is taught as part of other courses and they have the option to follow an elective at ESE dealing with the same material, at master's level. The panel agrees with the programme that it is preferable to have a separate course taught at research master's level for the ReMA students, especially since the history of economic thought is part of the ReMA's intended learning outcomes. The panel recommends reinstating the course at research master's level as soon as possible.

Another aspect of the curriculum that should be improved is the attention paid to the ethics of conducting research. Research ethics and research integrity are currently discussed in Academic Skills, where students learn how to deal with source materials. This course also considers ethical aspects such as the cooperation of researchers with external partners. By giving research integrity and research ethics a more prominent and explicit place in the curriculum, the programme could teach students how to actively reflect and act on such themes.

Language of instruction

The ReMA Philosophy and Economics is taught in English, with an English programme name. Analytic philosophy of economics is a highly specialised, international, and relatively recent field of research for which English is the default language. As a ReMA programme with a strong orientation on this field, the programme's language of instruction is therefore also English. The panel discussed this with the programme and confirms that the choice of language is both logical and fitting.

Guidance and feasibility

In order to ensure that all students entering the programme are sufficiently prepared to follow and complete it, the programme has developed a thorough admissions procedure. Students require excellent grades (at least an 8.0 average in their bachelor's degree) and a strong motivation to conduct research in philosophy of economics, as well as a bachelor's degree either in economics or another quantitative social science, or in philosophy. The programme conducts a brief interview with promising applicants to ensure that they understand the programme's approach and are motivated to engage in interactive teaching. Student motivation is considered an important aspect to the admission process. Students with less than excellent grades who are motivated and considered a good fit with the programme may be admitted.

Once students are accepted, they are given preparatory reading to be undertaken in the summer before the programme starts. This addresses the fact that some students may have backgrounds in either philosophy or economics but not the other: students can catch up on the areas with which they are least familiar. New students are paired with a 'buddy', a second-year student who helps them prepare for their studies. For administrative support and for a smooth arrival of the international students, all students are given a contact within the ESPhil's administrative office, to whom they can direct questions about enrolment and practical aspects.

At the beginning of the programme, every ReMA student is assigned an academic coach: one of the core teachers in the programme. The coach helps the student navigate the programme and supports them when they encounter difficulties, either within or outside the curriculum. Students have the obligation to meet their coach at least twice a year, and ideally three times. They are also encouraged to contact their coaches whenever they encounter an immediate problem affecting their studies. Each coaching session is structured by a 'coaching sheet', which contains several questions in which students are asked to reflect on their own learning over the past few months, to think about what they want to get out of the programme, and to plan ahead. Students are encouraged in these sessions to take an active role in making the most of their programme. Seven types of mindset are identified to help them take responsibility of their studies and progress: entrepreneurship, adventure, pacing oneself, reflecting on one's own learning, drawing on the community as a resource, respect, and taking ownership of the programme. The coach reflects upon these mindsets with the students.

As part of ESPhil, ReMA students can also make use of the general ESPhil Study Advisor. Due to the extensive support network provided to ReMA students, they tend to make less use of this assistance than students from other programmes. If students face personal circumstances that they prefer not to discuss with their academic coach, however, the ESPhil Study Advisor can guide them in the right direction.

The programme has a thesis trajectory in which students write their ReMA thesis. Students are prepared for this final project throughout the two years of the programme using set milestones and intensive thesis supervision. Students meet potential supervisors at the end of their first year and communicate their supervisor preferences to the ReMA Coordinator, who then allocates students to supervisors over summer,

taking these preferences into account. Students regularly meet their supervisor over the course of a year, and supervisors are assigned 62 hours for supervising each ReMA thesis.

Finally, students receive support and guidance from the academic community they are a part of: the Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE, see also 'Teaching staff and research environment'). The students meet with core members of staff and EIPE PhD candidates in their first week of studies, and continue interacting with them throughout the programme in the research seminars, which are followed by drinks and dinners. EIPE PhD students run the Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics, and ReMA students have the chance to serve as an additional referee, and to be trained by PhD students in how to run a scientific journal. The ReMA staff actively contribute to building a community that the students are a part of. ReMA students have told the panel that they experience this as a distinctive and positive feature.

Students and alumni told the panel that they consider the programme to be demanding, but feasible. They receive a great deal of help from support and teaching staff. The programme acknowledges their varied backgrounds in either philosophy or economics, and addresses the differences in prior knowledge well by requiring summer readings and thematizing them according to the various courses. Students also praised the amount of feedback they receive throughout the programme and in the thesis process, whose milestone setup they consider helpful. Finally, students and alumni mentioned that the staff members in the programme are helpful and willing to go the extra mile to make them feel included and supported.

According to the panel, the programme offers students considerable guidance and a challenging yet supportive academic community. The panel appreciates the carefully designed admissions policy, where motivation is the main selection criterion. It also learnt that the ReMA is implementing a (partial) fee waiver system, which would heighten the ReMA's accessibility. The panel understood from students that they occasionally struggle with their 'other' discipline. Students also mention that the regular master's electives are hard to schedule due to different semester lengths between the programmes. On the whole, however, the panel considers the programme to be clearly feasible. The panel applauds the way in which the students are accepted into EIPE's academic community as junior researchers, in a master-apprentice setup. Student success rates have dropped due to the COVID-19 pandemic: around 50% now finish their studies within three years, as opposed to 70% pre-pandemic. The programme expects these rates to improve now that the pandemic has eased, and has introduced the use of an academic coach and the milestone trajectory in the thesis phase as extra support. The panel appreciates these measures and concludes that the ReMA is feasible.

Teaching staff and research environment

The ReMA is chiefly linked to the Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE). This institute was founded in 1997 as the first research centre for interdisciplinary research in philosophy and economics worldwide. It has played a significant role in helping to establish and develop the analytic philosophy of economics. Many key contributors to the philosophy of economics have either helped found EIPE, have worked at EIPE at some point in their careers, or have been research visitors or students at the institute. EIPE researchers frequently organize major international conferences and specialist workshops, which ReMA students have access to.

The nine core staff members teaching in the programme are all ESPhil staff and EIPE members. In the last SEP research assessment, ESPhil research received very good and excellent scores. Each staff member has a research profile in philosophy and economics and acts as an active researcher. Teaching staff numbers have increased significantly since the previous assessment, when there were only three staff members, and this increase has led to more staff diversity. All staff members possess a UTQ certificate, are in the process of

obtaining one, or have been exempted from obtaining one based on extensive teaching experience. All lecturers publish in the top (English-language) journals in the field, and speak sufficient English.

The panel concludes that the programme offers its students an outstanding research environment. EIPE has a unique and prominent position in the field, and its staff members are experts who have often been trailblazers in the philosophy of the economy. Students are invited into this community and receive truly research-based and high quality education. The panel is pleased with the increase in staff numbers over the past period. As mentioned before, the current staff should be augmented by a senior researcher with expertise in the history of economic thought, and the panel strongly supports the programme's efforts in acquiring such a staff member as soon as possible.

Considerations

The panel considers the teaching and learning environment of the ReMA Philosophy and Economics to offer students a truly research-based education, with intensive and varied working methods, extensive and hands-on professional and academic skills training, considerable and well-designed guidance, a fitting admissions policy, and enough flexibility to design their own learning trajectories. The choice of English as a language of instruction is logical and fits with the research master's orientation and field. Positive points are the option to study at a similar programme abroad, as well as the EIPE Research Seminar, where students are trained as junior members of the academic community and gain a sense of belonging to that same community. The programme is sufficiently feasible and addresses the differences in backgrounds between students well and proactively. A strength is the excellent research environment offered by Erasmus Institute for Philosophy and Economics (EIPE and its staff; staff members have outstanding track records in the field and their numbers have grown considerably in recent years. The panel advises reinstating the separate course in the history of economic thought. Research integrity should also be given a more prominent and explicit place in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment system

The ReMA's student assessment system is based on the principles outlined in the ESPhil Assessment Policy. These principles refer to clear assessment criteria for students, constructive alignment of assessment, and support for the student's learning trajectory through formative as well as summative testing. The principles have been translated into an assessment plan for the programme.

The regular courses in the programme are assessed using several different methods. The principal method of summative assessment is the written essay. Other summative methods include class quizzes, peer review of essays, class participation, and class presentations. In most cases, the final grade is an average of these various components. Written examinations are used in one course only, namely Social Choice Theory. The research training courses are examined on a pass/fail basis. These include Academic Skills, the EIPE Research Seminar, and the PhD Proposal/Policy Report course as part of the thesis trajectory (see below). Formative feedback in the Academic Skills course is given orally within the seminars. The summative (pass/fail)

assessment is determined by the ReMA Coordinator, having confirmed with the five teachers involved how each student has contributed to classroom exercises. The summative assessment in the EIPE Research Seminar is determined by the teacher responsible for the course, who monitors the students' mandatory attendance and performance. Each student is required to present a paper at the EIPE Research seminar to pass the course. Papers are screened for quality by a member of staff two weeks in advance of the seminar and rejected if quality is not deemed sufficient. In this case, the student must present a revised paper at a later meeting.

The panel is pleased with the assessment system and the various exam types undertaken by the programme. The pass/fail assessment of the skills courses underlines the training aspect of these elements, which the panel appreciates. The focus on written essays is fitting for a research master's programme, and their combination with other assessment types contributes to keeping the work pressure for students in check and helps them develop other skills besides academic writing. The panel learnt from students that they are satisfied with the assessment types and methods used throughout the programme. The panel concludes that the assessment of courses is conducted adequately and that the system of assessment is well-designed.

Examination Board

All ESPhil programmes share the same Examination Board (EB), which checks assessments through the assessment plan. The EB also initiates the annual thesis review procedure, which is conducted by a panel consisting of board members, following recommendations from the previous site visit. In addition, the EB critically surveys incoming assessment forms in order to ensure that these have been submitted in a complete and conscientious manner. Over the past period, the board has been active in its oversight of the ReMA programme. In 2022, the EB required the ReMA programme to introduce new thesis assessment forms, and directed each ReMA examiner to fill out a separate evaluation form prior to the examination (see below), following a recommendation voiced in the interim midterm assessment of the programme.

In light of the recent challenge to thesis assessment posed by generative AI, the EB has monitored the plagiarism scores of all submitted theses and has taken further action where deemed appropriate. At its request, the ESPhil Board has additionally set up an ESPhil working group on AI to formulate principles to safeguard assessment.

The panel has met with the EB and discussed assessment practices with its members. Based on this conversation and on the available documentation, the panel concludes that the EB is clearly in control and proactive in fulfilling its quality assurance duties.

Assessment of the exit level

The achievement of the ReMA's exit level is tested in a research project that covers the ReMA thesis and the PhD proposal or policy report written in the dedicated course. The summative (pass/fail) assessment of the PhD proposal or policy report is provided by the supervisor. Students receive formative feedback via detailed written and oral feedback on their drafts. Students are prepared for their final project throughout the two years of the programme using the milestone process (described under Standard 2). Students are free to choose their thesis topic as long as it is broadly related to the analytic philosophy of economics. They are required to find a supervision team that is willing and able to supervise their research topic. Members of ESPhil and ESE who are not core teachers within the ReMA can also supervise students, so long as they are at postdoctoral level or above.

The thesis is assessed first by the supervisor and then by an advisor. Both use an assessment form that contains criteria which include the selection of the research topic, the design of the research hypothesis and

the choice and processing of appropriate literature. Both supervisor and advisor fill out the thesis assessment form separately and offer a provisional grade. This grade is the unweighted average of the two grades, except in cases when the second reader judges the thesis unsatisfactory, in which case the lowest grade counts. If there is a significant difference (1.5 points or more) between the grades awarded by supervisor and advisor, a third examiner is appointed; the thesis is subsequently graded as the average of the three (or in case of two unsatisfactory grades, the average of those two). The student is then offered the opportunity to rework the thesis according to the feedback of the second reader. If they take this opportunity, the thesis is re-evaluated and the grade may be adjusted. Once the final version of the thesis is submitted, the ReMA Coordinator proposes a committee of three examiners for the thesis defence (the supervisor, the advisor, and a third examiner) who are then formally approved by the ESPhil Examination Board (EB). The third examiner is neither involved in the supervision process, nor in the approval of the thesis for examination.

At the thesis defence, the candidate presents the thesis in a 10-minute presentation, which is followed by questions from all three members of the exam committee, lasting approximately 30 minutes. These questions give the student a substantial opportunity to address any concerns that the examiners might have about the argumentation of the thesis. Thereafter, the committee deliberates on a grade. The exam does not take longer than one hour. After the examination, the chair of the three examiners fills out a final form, stating the final grade. The final mark for the thesis is determined in deliberation (after the student's defence) by the graduation committee on the basis of the thesis, the defence, and the thesis process.

The panel appreciates the role of the thesis defence, which is a good addition to a programme that places a strong focus on academic skills such as communication and argumentation. The 'graduation day' on which theses are defended forms a community event for the programme that also helps students earlier in their trajectory gain an idea of what is expected of them. The panel generally agrees with the grades awarded in the research master's programme. It learnt that the viva examination of a thesis functions as a calibration event, where examiners exchange views on and expectations of the thesis level. The way the thesis assessment is shaped therefore positively affects the calibration of grades across the programme.

Regarding the supervision and assessment procedure, the panel is pleased that all three assessors act separately, as this heightens the independence of their assessment. It appreciates this change as enforced by the Examination Board (see above). The option for students to improve their thesis before handing in the final version is an important service to the students. However, the panel wonders whether this should be maintained in view of the extra workload for supervisors, who have to read a thesis twice when students opt to improve their thesis before handing in the final version. It advises investigating whether this procedure could be simplified.

The panel noticed that many of the theses it examined had a high word count (up to 40,000 words) and that this had no consequences for the final mark. It learnt during the site visit that the word count has recently been lowered to 20,000 words per thesis and that this is actively enforced. The panel finds this reduction a wise decision. While, on the one hand, the ReMA thesis should show sufficient depth to demonstrate academic quality, on the other hand it should be easily linked to academic writing and publication in the adjacent academic field. The panel considers the thesis in its current form sufficient as a final work for a ReMA programme in Philosophy, since all students cover the entire research cycle and the result is a solid piece of academic work that could form the basis for a publishable article, accompanied by a research proposal or policy report. However, in view of recent changes and a stronger focus on the article as scholarly output, the panel suggests looking into other options for the final work, such as the combination of a research proposal and a journal article.

Considerations

The panel finds that assessment in the ReMA Philosophy and Economics follows adequate procedures and uses fitting and relatively varied methods of assessment, which match the research-oriented profile. Assessment of courses is well conducted and the system of assessment is well designed. The Examination Board is clearly in control and fulfils its quality assurance duties proactively. Thesis assessment is performed according to a clear and well-designed protocol and with the use of clear assessment forms. The panel appreciates the role of the thesis defence, which is a suitable choice in a programme that places a strong focus on academic (communication and argumentation) skills. The 'graduation day' on which theses are defended forms a community event for the programme and encourages the calibration of grading between the programme's examiners. In order to lighten the workload for supervisors, the panel recommends simplifying the thesis assessment procedure by ensuring that supervisors do not have to assess theses twice. It considers the smaller thesis (a maximum of 20,000 words) a suitable assessment method for the final level, as it can demonstrate academic depth and the incorporation of all relevant elements of the research cycle. Such a smaller thesis could also have the format of a research article that is combined with a separate research proposal or policy report.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel read 15 final theses from the programme and concludes that they all meet the standard expected of a research master's programme in Philosophy and Economics. In line with the programme's setup, all of the theses use methodology from analytical philosophy. Some of the theses are quite lengthy, but this has been addressed by reducing the word limit (see Standard 3). All in all, the panel is satisfied with the level of the theses, which it finds could form the basis of an academic publication.

Alumni of the programme often go on to become researchers in the field. From the 2018 cohort of students to the present, 45% of alumni have obtained PhD positions, for example at the Universities of Cambridge, Calgary, Bristol, and Sheffield, as well as at ESPhil itself. Most of these are in philosophy, but some are also in economics. ESPhil opens one funded PhD position a year for which only ReMA students are eligible to apply. This ensures a thriving PhD research community in the philosophy of economics. Alumni from the programme are pleased with the education they received and feel well prepared for a career either inside or outside research. The programme is planning to strengthen its ties with alumni, for instance through organizing an annual event in which alumni give presentations on their work in policy, research, or the private sector and at which students get to meet graduates from the programme.

Judging by the quality of the final theses, as well as the success and satisfaction of graduates, the panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes are being achieved. The ESPhil PhD position is a positive option that the panel applauds. It encourages the programme to organize more events for and with alumni, and to stay in touch with those who end up outside of research to get a clear idea of the positions they end up in.

Considerations

The panel finds the theses of the ReMA to reflect the level of a research master's programme. The theses all take an analytical approach, which is in line with the programme's profile. A high percentage of graduates end up in PhD positions. The panel concludes that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. It encourages the programme to organize more for and with the alumni, and to also stay in touch with those who end up outside of research to get a clear idea of the positions they end up in.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

General conclusion

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

Development points

1. Reinststate the separate course in the history of economic thought as soon as possible. Give research integrity and ethics a more prominent and explicit place in the curriculum.
2. Simplify the procedure whereby supervisors read theses twice, in order to reduce their workload.
3. Consider a smaller thesis and other options for the final project besides the thesis, such as the combination of a research proposal and a journal article. Invest in the alumni community, including staying in touch with those who end up outside of research to get a clear idea of the positions they end up in.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes Research Master Philosophy and Economics, 2023-2024

Students who successfully complete the *Research Master in Philosophy and Economics*:

Formal aims

1. have a mastery of the methodology and style of philosophical research within the analytic tradition
2. are trained in academic writing
3. have expertise in arguing clearly and convincingly for/against a position and to reach conclusions involving answers to the important research questions
4. have the expertise to apply their knowledge and skills in new and multidisciplinary contexts
5. are able to report their research for specialists and non-specialists
6. are capable of writing and speaking in the English language on their research
7. are trained in information search, in data documentation and archiving

Substantive aims

8. have a detailed knowledge of the contemporary debate in the field of philosophy and economics, as defined by the four subjects:
 - a. Methodology of Economics
 - b. Ethical Aspects of Economics
 - c. Rationality and Choice
 - d. History of Economic Thought
9. have an overview of important issues in general analytic philosophy/philosophy of economics
10. have an overview of important developments in society and the (social) sciences related to their area of specialisation

Curricular aims

11. have expertise in formulating original and innovative research problems based on a solid understanding of the state of the art in their area of specialisation
12. have the skills required for further study in a largely self-directed or autonomous manner
13. have a general work attitude required for membership in a research team, and for participation in a research network in their own area of research
14. have a strong international orientation in their work and interest
15. have the faculty of critical and independent thinking to analyse societal problems

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

Research Master Philosophy and Economics

Module	Name	EC	Offered by: Research theme / collaboration
Core courses (30 EC)			
FW-REMA01	Methodology of Economics	7.5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA02	Rationality & Choice	7.5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA013	New Developments in Economics	7.5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA03	Ethics & Economics	7.5	Philosophy of Economics
Specialist courses in philosophy of economics (15 EC)			
FW-REMA21	Philosophy & Economics of Climate Change	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA22	Climate change and the Principles of Justice	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA020	Deliberative Democracy	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
	(new course to be developed in 2023 ³)	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
MA courses in philosophy of economics (10 EC)			
FW-MA0007	Social Choice Theory and Political Representation	5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-MA0020	Capitalism & Freedom	5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-MA0018	Welfare & Cooperation	5	Philosophy of Economics
FW-MA0021	Justice in the Economics and Politics of Wealth	5	Philosophy of Economics
Research courses (15 EC)			
FW-REMA010	Academic Skills	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA12	PhD proposal/Policy Report	3.75	Philosophy of Economics
FW-REMA11	EIPE research seminars & PhD seminars	7.5	Philosophy of Economics
Elective courses in philosophy (20 EC) ⁴			
Thesis course (30 EC)			
FW-AFS5200	Research Master Thesis & Milestones	30	Philosophy of Economics

³ A new colleague will develop a new course to be given in 2024

⁴ Students make a study plan in which they propose courses from either the MA Philosophy Now, OZSW courses or courses abroad. Students can ask permission to follow economics courses.

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

21 November		
10.00	Welcome panel	NL (of EN)
10.15	Preparation meeting panel & open virtual 'walk in'	
11.45	Meeting with programme management	EN
12.30	Lunch	
13.00	Meeting on BPSD theses	NL
13.15	Meeting B Philosophy students & (recent) alumni	NL (of EN)
13.45	Meeting B Philosophy of a Specific Discipline students & (recent) alumni	NL (of EN)
14.15	Meeting B Philosophy & B Philosophy of a Specific Discipline staff	NL (of EN)
15.00	Break	
15.30	Meeting M Philosophy students & (recent) alumni	EN
16.15	Meeting M Philosophy staff	EN
17:00	End	
22 November		
09.00	Meeting Examination Board	NL (of EN)
09.45	Meeting M Philosophy (research) students & (recent) alumni	EN
10.30	Break	
11.00	Meeting M Philosophy (research) staff	EN
11.45	Internal meeting panel	
12.15	Lunch	
13.00	Final meeting programme management	EN
13.45	Internal meeting panel	
15.30	Development meeting programme management	EN
16.15	Report and conclusion by panel	EN
17:00	End	

Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request. The panel also studied other materials, which included:

0. Self evaluations
 - Part I – ESPhil general information and reflections
 - Part II – Self evaluation B Philosophy
 - Part II – Self evaluation B Philosophy of a Specific Discipline
 - Part II – Self evaluation M Philosophy
 - Part II – Self evaluation M Philosophy (research)
1. ESPhil general appendices
 - Appendix 1.01 – Domeinspecifiek referentiekader Wijsbegeerte 2016
 - Appendix 1.02 – All courses ESPhil
 - Appendix 1.03 – ESPhil academic staff overview
 - Appendix 1.04 – Collaborations
 - Appendix 1.05 – Alumni portraits
 - Appendix 1.06 – EUR taalbeleid 2020
 - Appendix 1.07 – Reflection Covid pandemic
 - Appendix 1.08 – Programme Committee year report 2022 – 2023

2. Programme specific appendices

B Philosophy

- Appendix 2.01 – Filosofische profielen Filosofisch Atelier
- Appendix 2.02 – Eindreflecties Filosofische Stage 2021 – 2022

B Philosophy of a Specific Discipline

- Appendix 2.07 – BPSD Erasmus MC courses
- Appendix 2.08 – BPSD Erasmus School of Economics courses
- Appendix 2.09 – BPSD Erasmus School of Health and Management courses
- Appendix 2.10 – BPSD Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication courses
- Appendix 2.11 – BPSD Erasmus School of Law courses
- Appendix 2.12 – BPSD Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences courses
- Appendix 2.13 – BPSD Erasmus University College courses
- Appendix 2.14 – BPSD Rotterdam School of Management courses
- Appendix 2.15 – Full overview all EUR programmes

M Philosophy

- Appendix 2.03 – Elective course clusters

M Philosophy (research)

- Appendix 2.04 – International benchmarks ReMA
- Appendix 2.05 – ReMA core staff and expertise
- Appendix 2.06 – ReMA student self-evaluation MP3

3. Assessment

- Appendix 3.01 – Assessment policy ESPhil
- Appendix 3.02 – Examination protocol ESPhil
- Appendix 3.03 – Jaarverslag EC ESPhil 2020-2021
- Appendix 3.04 – Jaarverslag EC ESPhil 2021 – 2022
- Appendix 3.24 – Review theses EB 2022

Assessment plans

- Appendix 3.05 – Assessment plan BA 2023-2024
- Appendix 3.06 – Assessment plan BPSD 2023-2024
- Appendix 3.07 – Assessment plan MA 2023-2024
- Appendix 3.08 – Assessment plan ReMA 2023-2024

Intended learning outcomes

- Appendix 3.09 – Eindkwalificaties- Bachelor Filosofie Voltijd
- Appendix 3.10 – Eindkwalificaties Bachelor Filosofie Deeltijd
- Appendix 3.11 – ILOs Bachelor Philosophy of a Specific Discipline
- Appendix 3.12 – ILOs Master Philosophy Now
- Appendix 3.13 – ILOs Research Master Philosophy and Economics

TER and R&G 2023-2024

- Appendix 3.14 – OER Bachelor Filosofie Voltijd
- Appendix 3.15 – OER Bachelor Filosofie Deeltijd
- Appendix 3.16 – TER Bachelor Philosophy of a Specific Discipline
- Appendix 3.17 – TER Master Philosophy Now full-time and part-time
- Appendix 3.18 – TER Research Master Philosophy and Economics
- Appendix 3.19 – Regels en Richtlijnen BA VT
- Appendix 3.20 – Regels en Richtlijnen BA DT
- Appendix 3.21 – Rules and Guidelines BPSD
- Appendix 3.22 – Rules and Guidelines MA
- Appendix 3.23 – Rules and Guidelines ReMA

4. Theses

- Appendix 4.14 – Rapportage scriptie review EC januari 2022

Manuals and grading forms

- Appendix 4.01 – Bachelor thesis manual
- Appendix 4.02 – Thesis assessment form bachelor
- Appendix 4.03 – Master thesis manual
- Appendix 4.04 – Thesis assessment form master
- Appendix 4.05 – ReMA thesis milestones
- Appendix 4.06 Thesis assessment form ReMA
- Appendix 4.07 – Formal requirements + grading criteria ReMA
- Appendix 4.08 – Instructions for thesis examiners ReMA

Theses 2019 – 2023

- Appendix 4.09 – All theses ESPhil
- Appendix 4.10 – Theses B Filosofie
- Appendix 4.11 – Theses B Philosophy of a Specific Discipline

- Appendix 4.12 – Theses M Philosophy
 - Appendix 4.13 – Theses M Philosophy (research)
5. Research
- Appendix 5.01 – Research review Philosophy
 - Appendix 5.02 – Rapportage mid term research review ESPhil
 - Appendix 5.03 – Action plan ESPhil research
6. Accreditation reports
- Appendix 6.01 – Rapport accreditatie BA – BPSD – MA 2028
 - Appendix 6.02 – Rapport accreditatie ReMA 2018
 - Appendix 6.03 – Rapport accreditatie na herstel BPSD – MA 2020
 - Appendix 6.04 – Panelrapport TOE 2021