

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

REAL ESTATE STUDIES

FACULTY OF SPATIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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Project number: Q0726
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CONTENTS

REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME REAL ESTATE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN.....	5
ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME	5
ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION.....	5
COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL	5
WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL	6
SUMMARY JUDGEMENT.....	9
DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS.....	11
APPENDICES	21
APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE.....	23
APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES	25
APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM	27
APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT.....	28
APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL.....	29

This report was finalised on 4 October 2019.

REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME REAL ESTATE STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Master's programme Real Estate Studies

Name of the programme:	Real Estate Studies
International name of the programme:	Real Estate Studies
CROHO number:	60659
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location(s):	Groningen
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/11/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Human Geography and Urban Planning to the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	University of Groningen
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 11 February 2019. The panel that assessed the master's programme Real Estate Studies consisted of:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society, Wageningen University;
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at Delft University of Technology [referee].

The panel was supported by drs. Mariette Huisjes, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The master's programme Real Estate Studies at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen was part of the cluster assessment Human Geography and Urban Planning. In April and May 2019 the panel assessed nineteen programmes at four universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, Utrecht University and Radboud University.

Panel members

The panel consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. dr. L.J. (Leo) de Haan, emeritus professor of Development Studies, at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam [chair];
- Em. prof. dr. C. (Christian) Kesteloot, emeritus professor at the Division of Geography and Tourism of KU Leuven (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. E.M. (Ellen) van Bueren, professor of Urban Development Management at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology;
- Drs. J. (Judith) Borsboom-van Beurden, senior researcher Smart Sustainable Cities at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway);
- Dr. L.B.J. (Lianne) van Duinen, project manager at the Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Rli);
- Dr. C.J. (Kees-Jan) van Klaveren, senior auditor and data protection officer at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences;
- Prof. dr. M.A. (Maria) Koelen, professor of Health and Society at Wageningen University & Research;
- Prof. dr. F.J.A. (Frank) Witlox, professor of Economic Geography at the Department of Geography at Ghent University (Belgium);
- J. (Jim) Klooster BSc, master's student Economic Geography at the University of Groningen [student member];
- L. (Lars) Stevenson BSc, bachelor's student Political Science and master's student Comparative Politics, Administration & Society at Radboud University [student member];
- N.J.F. (Niek) Zijlstra, bachelor's student Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Amsterdam [student member];
- Prof. dr. ing. C.M. (Carola) Hein, professor of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology [referee assessment University of Groningen].

For each site visit, assessment panel members were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence.

The QANU project manager for the cluster assessment was dr. Irene Conradie. She also acted as secretary in the site visit of the University of Amsterdam. In order to assure the consistency of assessment within the cluster, the project manager was present at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at all site visits. All draft reports were checked by QANU. Dr. Meg van Bogaert and drs. Mariette Huisjes, freelance secretaries for QANU, acted as secretaries in the site visit of the University of Groningen. Dr. Meg van Bogaert also acted as secretary in the site visits of Utrecht University and Radboud University. Dr. Marijn Hollestelle, employee of QANU, was present at the site visit of Utrecht University, specifically for the ECA assessment report of quality in internationalisation of the master's programme International Development Studies. The project manager and the secretaries regularly discussed the assessment process and outcomes.

Preparation

On 18 February 2019, the panel chair was briefed by the project manager on the tasks and working method of the assessment panel and more specifically his role, as well as use of the assessment framework.

A preparatory panel meeting was also organised on 18 February 2019. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the tasks and working method and the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed the domain specific framework.

A schedule for the site visit was composed. Prior to the site visit, representative partners for the various interviews were selected. See Appendix 4 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit, the programmes wrote self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the project manager. She checked these on quality and completeness, and sent them to the panel members. The panel members studied the self-evaluation reports and formulated initial questions and remarks, as well as positive aspects of the programmes.

The panel also studied a selection of theses and their assessment forms for the programmes. Because of the large number of programmes at the University of Groningen site visit, the selection consisted of ten theses per programme. This was in agreement with the additional conditions for an adjusted thesis selection (i.e. ascertainable overlap between the programmes and a shared Board of Examiners) set by the NVAO. The selection was based on a provided list of graduates between 2017-2018. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project manager and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

Site visit

The site visit to the University of Groningen took place on 16, 17 and 18 April 2019.

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

During the site visit, the panel studied additional materials about the programmes and exams, as well as minutes of the Programme Committee and the Board of Examiners. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 5. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners and the Programme Committee. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for private consultation were received.

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

Report

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

Definition of judgements standards

In accordance with the NVAO's assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:

Generic quality

The quality that, from an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.



Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The panel finds the master's programme Real Estate Studies at the University of Groningen to be well defined, with a clear focus on training critical, ethical and independent leaders in real estate at an academic level. The programme has a multidisciplinary basis and an analytical angle. This meets the demands of today's globalised real estate market, as demonstrated by the programme's recent accreditation by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The RUG-programme is the only initial master's programme in the Netherlands with this accreditation. The societal demands could be met even better – according to the panel – if the programme continues to strengthen its sustainability and ethical profile. The RICS accreditation is attractive to students and therefore a logical step. The panel recommends that the programme carefully safeguard its academic level in the face of annual discussions with RICS, which is after all professionally rather than academically committed.

It considers the programme's intended learning outcomes to be concrete, and reflecting the specific characteristics of the programme. In its view, they mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference for the domain of human geography and urban and regional planning in the Netherlands and demonstrate that the programme's level and orientation align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The intended learning outcomes could be given a more explicit fit to the global role of real estate and real estate markets in relation to societal challenges. This may also make the programme more attractive to international students. The panel recommends reducing the number of intended learning outcomes, that it becomes it easier to check that they have all been realised.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The panel found that the Real Estate Studies curriculum has appropriate content and a consistent build-up of courses. One attractive feature is its clear link to the labour market, which is much appreciated by the students and alumni alike. The programme offers an active learning environment. An example of the innovative work forms used is peer-to-peer discussions facilitated by the learning platform Perusall, which can be seen as a best practice for other programmes. The panel compliments the programme on its varied and innovative work forms. In order to improve even further, it encourages the programme management to stimulate the synergy with other programmes. This guarantees that opportunities for sharing best practices are fully explored.

While Real Estate students typically take a long time to finish the programme, the panel is convinced that this is their own choice, and not caused by problems with feasibility. The students undertake a lot of extra activities, such as an extracurricular internship, in some cases combined with the master's thesis. The panel recommends that the programme pave the way for students who wish to do an internship and give them more support and guidance. To enable students to acquire intercultural competences, the programme would like to offer them a more international classroom. The panel wholeheartedly endorses the fact that the programme keeps its intake standards high, in spite of its ambition to attract international students. A more explicit profiling of the programme as international (see Standard 1) may help to increase the number of international students.

The panel established that the teaching staff is well qualified and sufficient lecturers are available. The ideal of an international and diverse teaching staff that the faculty cherishes has not yet been realised. The panel encourages both the programme and faculty management to remain alert to this point and recruit female and non-Dutch staff members whenever possible.

Overall, the panel concludes that the master's programme Real Estate Studies offers its students a teaching and learning environment that enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It recommends safeguarding the academic level, since in a programme that is so closely linked to industry, there will inevitably be a pull towards a more practical orientation. Finally, the panel also



encourages the programme to step up its collaboration with other programmes and to learn from best practices.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the Real Estate Studies programme is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by intensifying a shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of ten master's theses and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and within the programmes. The panel recommends one thesis assessment procedure in all master's programmes. This enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In the panel's view, thesis assessment forms with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the master's programme Real Estate Studies. Many of the theses have original research questions that are relevant to topical discussions in the field, and solid methodology. Some 80% of graduates in the Real Estate Studies programme acquired a relevant job within three months after graduation. A few students even find employment before graduating. Alumni work as developers, consultants, financiers, local policy makers, real estate valuers, real estate managers. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Real Estate Studies programme to society.

The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Master's programme Real Estate Studies

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

The chair, prof. dr. Leo de Haan, and the secretary, drs. Mariette Huisjes, of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 4 October 2019

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

Context

The master's programme Real Estate Studies is one of nine programmes offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen. Within the faculty, four departments are responsible for research and teaching in a specific discipline: Demography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Population Studies), Economic Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Economic Geography, master's programme Real Estate Studies), Cultural Geography (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Cultural Geography) and Spatial Planning (bachelor's programme Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning, bachelor's programme Spatial Planning and Design, master's programme Socio-Spatial Planning, master's programme Environmental and Infrastructural Planning). The Faculty Board is responsible for all research and teaching at the faculty. It is chaired by the dean. The Economic Geography and Real Estate programmes share a Programme Committee, as well as the Socio-Spatial Planning and Environmental and Infrastructural Planning programmes. The other programmes all have their own Programme Committees. The Programme Committees advise the management as to how to safeguard the quality of each programme. The faculty has one Board of Examiners.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

Profile

The master's programme Real Estate Studies is an internationally oriented, multidisciplinary programme that aims to train critical, ethical and independent leaders in real estate at an academic level. Its students learn to compare, develop, exploit, manage and maintain real estate in an international context. They are able to do this by investigating the fields that impact the real estate industry, such as finance, economics, geography, planning, construction, development, management and law. The programme sets high goals for its students: to connect an academic and research-driven orientation to the real estate industry. It distinguishes itself from other related academic tracks in the Netherlands (such as the Real Estate major within the master's programme Finance at the University of Amsterdam) and abroad by its broad multidisciplinary basis and analytical angle. The panel finds that the programme has a clear focus. Its international orientation matches the global character of today's real estate market. It is unfortunate that the advice given to the programme by the 2013 panel to increase its focus on sustainability was not followed up. The panel agrees with the former panel that by strengthening this element, the programme's profile would be even better aligned with today's concerns and the demands of society. Even though sustainability is incorporated in the intended learning outcomes, it appears only to be a relatively small part of the profile and of the curriculum.

In 2016, the programme acquired a professional accreditation from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), a well-known, London-based but globally operating professional institution. It sets an international standard for a safe and vibrant marketplace in real estate. With its accreditation by RICS, the Groningen programme is unique in the Netherlands. Students are happy with the accreditation, they told the panel. It makes it easier for them to become an associate, member or fellow of RICS after graduating from the programme, which in turn gives them an approved profile in the global real estate market. The panel appreciates this and realises that the programme may be more attractive to international students thanks to the accreditation. The RICS accreditation



therefore seems a logical step, fitting the programme's profile. The panel does recommend that the programme safeguard its academic level in the face of annual discussions with RICS about the curriculum. After all, RICS is professionally but not academically committed. The programme management assured the panel that it will not let itself be limited in its academic aspirations in any way.

The Domain-Specific Framework of Reference for the human geography and urban and regional planning domain in the Netherlands was updated for this review by the four participating universities. The panel noticed, however, that although some programmes refer to the framework of the Association of European Schools of Planning, none makes explicit use of the Dutch framework to position itself. The panel is of the opinion that the Dutch framework could be a useful tool to position the eight programmes in relation to each other and the broader discipline.

Intended learning outcomes

Since 2012, the faculty has had an advisory board consisting of alumni from all master's programmes, which meets two to three times a year. Thus, the faculty management remains well informed on recent developments in the labour market and appropriate desirable changes in the intended learning outcomes. The panel finds this a good practice. In addition, the faculty has long-standing connections to partners from the professional field and numerous guest lecturers. This allows the programme to include the developments in, and wishes from, the professional field.

On the 2014 panel's advice, the Real Estate programme specified its intended learning outcomes in consultation with its relations in industry. The present panel finds that this was done successfully. The intended learning outcomes are now quite concrete, although in the panel's view there are too many of them (38), as the multitude makes it harder to check that all intended learning outcomes are realised. The intended learning outcomes do reflect the programme's multidisciplinary focus by pointing out that students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding 'about the local context including institutions, property rights and regulations (...)' and a 'range of specialist areas including Real Estate law, international real estate markets and spatial economics'. They also mention abstract thinking, the ability to design and conduct a research project, as well as 'critical awareness of the big societal issues in real estate, including contemporary issues in sustainability, ethics and corporate responsibility'.

The panel confirmed that the intended learning outcomes mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference for the domain of human geography and urban and regional planning in the Netherlands, even though they do not mention it explicitly. It also found that the programme's level and orientation align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The programme underlines its desire to enrol more international students. The panel recommends adapting the intended learning outcomes – and through them the programme's profile – to a more globalised perspective. The real estate markets would then be positioned in relation to today's societal challenges, thus balancing the attention given to these challenges with more traditional theories and methods in real estate studies. Such an adaptation will give the programme a more international scope and may at the same time make it more attractive to international students. The panel also recommends reducing the number of intended learning outcomes, so that it becomes more controllable that they are all realised.

Considerations

The panel finds the master's programme Real Estate Studies at the University of Groningen to be well defined, with a clear focus on training critical, ethical and independent leaders in real estate at an academic level. The programme has a multidisciplinary basis and an analytical angle. This meets the demands of today's globalised real estate market, as demonstrated by the programme's recent accreditation by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The RUG-programme is the only initial master's programme in the Netherlands with this accreditation. The societal demands could be met even better – according to the panel – if the programme strengthened its sustainability and ethical profile, as was also suggested by the 2014 accreditation panel. The RICS accreditation is

attractive to students and therefore a logical step. The panel recommends that the programme carefully safeguard its academic level in the face of annual discussions with RICS, which is after all professionally rather than academically committed. It considers the programme's intended learning outcomes to be concrete, and reflecting the specific characteristics of the programme. In its view, they mirror the Domain-Specific Framework of Reference for the domain of human geography and urban and regional planning in the Netherlands and demonstrate that the programme's level and orientation align with the international requirements set for an academic master's programme as laid down in the Dublin Descriptors. The intended learning outcomes could be given a more explicit fit to the global role of real estate and real estate markets in relation to societal challenges. This may also make the programme more attractive to international students. The panel recommends reducing the number of intended learning outcomes, that way it becomes easier to check that they have all been realised.

Conclusion

Master's programme Real Estate Studies: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

Entrance requirements

To ensure that the entry level is sufficiently high, the master's programme Real Estate Studies will become selective from 2019, with strict admission requirements. It is open to students with a bachelor's degree from a research university in Human Geography, Spatial Planning, Economics, Finance, Business Administration or International Business. Students who graduated from a specified set of universities of applied science may be admitted to the programme after completing a 60 EC premaster's programme. September will become the only time when students can enter the programme, in contrast to other programmes at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences that offer the possibility to start in February as well. The programme aims at an intake of 40 students, with a maximum of 45.

Curriculum content and structure

The curriculum contains six compulsory courses of 5 EC each, reflecting the domains in which the programme is rooted: 'Finance for real estate', 'Real estate and land supply', 'International real estate markets', 'Real estate investments', 'Real estate research', and 'Real estate development'. Students may choose two 5 EC electives from the courses offered by the Faculty of Spatial Sciences or from other faculties (with permission granted by the programme coordinator). Finally, they write a 20 EC thesis.

The panel confirmed that the curriculum content – including the course literature that it studied – empowers students to realise the intended learning outcomes. An attractive feature, in its view, is its clear link to the labour market. This is also what both the students and alumni mentioned. Because of the practice-oriented character of the curriculum, the guest lectures by real estate professionals, the lab sessions and the real-life case studies, students feel well prepared for entering the professional field. The panel does recommend fortifying the ethical dimensions in the courses and making them more explicit. This will contribute to the programme's aim to train critical, ethical leaders. After all, the real estate market is full of moral challenges; real estate leaders need to be both aware of them and armed against them. To this end, the panel recommends highlighting ethics: it should not be a tick box aspect of the curriculum, but a key element that completely infuses it.

The panel finds the Real Estate Studies curriculum to be well-structured: starting out with basics and ending in a comprehensive 'Real estate development' course, which appeals to the students'



creativity in dealing with the theoretical knowledge acquired. Students and alumni say that they appreciate the clear learning line throughout the year. The panel noted that the methodology course 'Real estate research', which focusses on quantitative real estate modelling and forecasting, is given relatively late (in the third term), when students are already working on their theses and have chosen their thesis topics (which they are supposed to do in the second term). However, the students say that they already acquired knowledge of methodology in their bachelor's programme, and that they find it useful to pick up more methodology along the way while working on their thesis. They say writing the thesis is an iterative process, so that whatever new insights they gain from the methodology course can still be worked into the thesis. On the one hand, the panel considers it ideal for methodological insights to precede the thesis topic choice, but on the other hand it acknowledges that the methodology course may be more rewarding to students once they already possess a basic knowledge of the different disciplines feeding into real estate studies. It concludes that the current position of the methodology course in the curriculum is acceptable.

Teaching methods and feasibility

The faculty's didactic vision emphasises learning rather than teaching, i.e. professional facilitation of the students' own learning processes rather than teacher transmission. As a consequence, the Real Estate Studies programme aims for an active learning environment, with education-supporting software, online learning platforms and student diaries to exchange experiences. Lectures and assignments from real estate professionals enable students to reflect on the profession, group assignments improve their ability to work in teams, and computer labs encourage them to train their skills in working with geographical information systems. Twice a year the faculty organises a Graduate Research Day, at which recent graduates of all master's programmes present their research in different ways (the best theses in plenary presentations, others in parallel meetings or poster presentations). The panel found that the students look forward to this day. It is a good way to showcase their final projects and also bring the different programmes together. To stimulate interaction between students, the Real Estate Studies programme adopted the online learning platform Perusall, a support innovation with which students annotate readings of journal articles and asynchronously respond to each other's comments and questions about the readings in context before class. The advantage of Perusall is that it activates students at an early stage and prepares them for meaningful interaction in class. Students find Perusall to be valuable because it gives them a better understanding of the academic literature, while learning from their peers. The panel compliments the programme on its varied and in some cases innovative work forms. The use of Perusall may be a best practice for other master's programmes at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences. The panel encourages the programme to continue its emphasis on active learning.

Although the master's programme Real Estate Studies is nominally one year, it is exceptional for students to actually finish their degree within the year. In 2018, no student managed this, and just one in the three previous years. One of three students successfully completed the programme within two years; one of five students dropped out of the programme altogether. However, the pass rates for individual courses are in order: on average 77%. The programme analysed the cause of the relatively long study duration through the curriculum evaluations and discussions with the programme committee and several students. As it turns out, the real estate students spend relatively few hours on their studies. They have jobs in real estate and want to brush up their CV, or choose to do an extracurricular internship. The high dropout is explained by students receiving attractive job offers before graduating, due to the strained labour market. The panel interviewed the students about this matter and reached the same conclusion as the programme did. Students don't see the rush and prefer to spend more than the nominal time on their studies, filling it in with extra activities.

There is, however, one issue the programme could address to increase feasibility. Quite a few master's students felt the need to gain practical experience outside of the university. The panel found that the faculty is still finding its way in meeting this need. Two years ago, all master's programmes introduced the possibility to do a 5 EC internship (either replacing an elective or as an extracurricular activity). For this course, well-defined learning goals were developed, as well as a procedure to achieve these goals. But as the course guide itself warns students, 'only proactive students will be

able to finish this course, because there is little facilitation from the faculty'. Most students choosing an internship now prefer a different route, namely combining research for an organisation with their master's thesis. For this route, there is no clearly outlined procedure. Some students told the panel that they had trouble fitting such an internship into their master's programme, because the curriculum leaves little space for it and because they feel the path has not yet been paved. Many of them decided to prolong their studies for this reason, and felt left to their own devices in bringing the internship to a successful conclusion. The panel acknowledges that the one-year master's programmes are already quite full, and appreciates the faculty's obvious intention to meet students' need in this respect, but recommends taking these efforts one step further, by giving students who wish to do an internship more support and guidance.

The panel emphasises that although the master's theses demonstrate that the academic level of the programme is up to scratch, safeguarding the academic level remains necessary. In a programme that is so well linked to industry, there will inevitably be a pull towards a more practical orientation.

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences chooses to offer two bachelor's and six master's curricula that are substantively related as separate programmes, instead of tracks within one overarching bachelor's and one master's programme. The panel discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this decision with the faculty management. A positive consequence is that now each of the programmes is at liberty to establish its own profile and recruit students that match the profile in a goal-oriented way. A potential challenge resulting from the decision to offer separate programmes is that it may create a hurdle to communicate and collaborate across the boundaries of programmes and (particularly) departments. This is especially the case because many lecturers work within one programme. The fact that there are clear boundaries may impede the sharing of best practices and learning from one another, thus moving all programmes forward. The panel is of the opinion that the faculty does not fall in this trap, mainly because of the enthusiastic teaching staff, who intuitively and informally maintain a cycle of innovation and evaluation across programmes. The faculty manages to attract staff members who fit well into this approach, that supports the quality and improvement culture. The panel would like to stimulate the synergy between programmes even further, to guarantee that opportunities to share best practices are fully explored. It recommends a framework that ensures a minimal level of formal embedding. For example, the six programme committees could structurally meet, which they do not do now.

The panel is very positive about the fact that the faculty publishes the results of student evaluations of all courses on Nestor. This clearly reflects a quality culture within the faculty, and shows the students that their input is taken seriously, valued and used to improve the quality of education. The panel thinks that this attitude and method add significantly to the high response rates to course evaluations (85%). If a course evaluation suggests a course is not up to scratch, then the programme management forms a student panel to discuss this with the lecturer. He or she subsequently writes a reflection report, which is also published on Nestor. The panel finds this a good practice.

International classroom

The Real Estate programme currently has only 2 international students of a total of 47, but hopes that this number will grow in the future. If this growth is realised, students from different backgrounds will share intercultural competences, insights and examples from their own experience. The programme hopes to use cultural diversity as a means to improve its quality. For the 2018-2019 year, the programme received 20 international applications. Of these, five were accepted, and two international students actually came. The panel wholeheartedly endorses the programme's efforts to keep its standard high, in spite of the temptation to accept larger numbers of international students. A more explicit profiling of the programme as international (see standard 1) may help to increase the number of international students. Since the programme is international, all courses are taught in English. This is indeed also fitting for the students' professional careers, which in all probability will be with internationally operating firms or government bodies. The language centre of the university is involved in ensuring that the teaching staff has an adequate level of English. The students did not complain about the English level of their regular lecturers, though they say the



proficiency in English of guest lecturers is sometimes inadequate. Since this occurs only occasionally (and is allegedly compensated by the high level of applicability of the guest lectures), the panel does not consider this a serious problem. Because of its international ambitions, the programme wishes to operate exclusively under its English name in future. Since this does not entail any substantive change, the panel endorses this intention.

Teaching staff

Students in the Real Estate Studies programme encounter both early-career and experienced teaching staff. Nearly all teaching staff have a PhD, and 90% has a university teaching qualification. The faculty aims to reflect the international and diverse character of its programmes not only in its classrooms, but also in its staff. Although this ideal has not been realised yet (the Real Estate Studies staff is mostly male and Dutch), chances are that this may change in the future, since the younger generation of researchers is already more heterogeneous. The panel strongly encourages the programme to remain alert to this aspect and do its utmost to recruit female and non-Dutch staff members whenever possible. Lessons may be learned from other programmes, that have already been successfully diversifying their staff. The panel is of the opinion that in this particular respect, guidance by the faculty management may prove to be advantageous. Since the last site visit, the total number of staff working in the programme has increased. Thus, the workload, whilst still high, is no longer as 'critical' as it was in 2014. The panel established that as soon as there is a structural staff deficiency, extra staff is hired.

The faculty has a clear vision of the required expertise of its staff, and the major disciplines are well covered. The Real Estate Studies programme makes good use of guest lecturers, drawing on a long-term connection to the real estate industry. This is very much appreciated by the students. They are generally enthusiastic about their lecturers, the panel found. The fact that all lecturers are experts within a particular field allows students to go in-depth within the respective topics. The students admire their lecturers' expertise and passion for their subject and find them not only knowledgeable, but also accessible. The panel ascertained that the teaching staff is well qualified and that there are enough lecturers to enable students to realise the intended learning outcomes.

Considerations

The panel found that the Real Estate Studies curriculum has appropriate content and a consistent build-up of courses. One attractive feature is its clear link to the labour market, which is much appreciated by the students and alumni alike. The programme offers an active learning environment. An example of the innovative work forms used is peer-to-peer discussions facilitated by the learning platform Perusall, which can be seen as a best practice for other programmes. The panel compliments the programme on its varied and innovative work forms. In order to improve even further, it encourages the programme management to stimulate the synergy with other programmes. This guarantees that opportunities for sharing best practices are fully explored.

While Real Estate students typically take a long time to finish the programme, the panel is convinced that this is their own choice, and not caused by problems with feasibility. The students undertake a lot of extra activities, such as an extracurricular internship, in some cases combined with the master's thesis. The panel recommends that the programme pave the way for students who wish to do an internship and give them more support and guidance. To enable students to acquire intercultural competences, the programme would like to offer them a more international classroom. The panel wholeheartedly endorses the fact that the programme keeps its intake standards high, in spite of its ambition to attract international students. A more explicit profiling of the programme as international (see Standard 1) may help to increase the number of international students.

The panel established that the teaching staff is well qualified and sufficient lecturers are available. The ideal of an international and diverse teaching staff that the faculty cherishes has not yet been realised. The panel encourages both the programme and faculty management to remain alert to this point and recruit female and non-Dutch staff members whenever possible.

Overall, the panel concludes that the master's programme Real Estate Studies offers its students a teaching and learning environment that enables them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It recommends safeguarding the academic level, since in a programme that is so closely linked to industry, there will inevitably be a pull towards a more practical orientation. Finally, the panel also encourages the programme to step up its collaboration with other programmes and to learn from best practices.

Conclusion

Master's programme Real Estate Studies: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment policy and practice

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen has a shared assessment policy, which is described in the *Faculty of Spatial Sciences Assessment Policy Memorandum*. This memorandum provides directives for the relation between assessment and learning goals, the demands that all assessment forms need to meet, the ways in which students have to be informed, etc. The memorandum sets the boundaries within which each of the programmes can choose its own assessment forms and criteria, and thus shape its own identity. Every programme has *Teaching and Examination Regulations*. Based on these, the programme management is asked to draft an assessment plan, which constitutes the intended learning outcomes and the modes of assessment of all courses in the programme, and a matrix clarifying the relationship between the two.

The panel concludes that quality control of assessment is in order. Beforehand, lecturers have the quality of their exams assessed through peer review by another member of staff. Afterwards, the quality is measured again as part of the course and programme evaluation. In this evaluation, students can indicate the extent to which the assessment ties in with the learning objectives of a course. The course coordinator and the relevant programme committee reflect upon this evaluation, and it is also made publicly available to students and to the members of the Board of Examiners. From these evaluations, it turns out that in general, students are satisfied with their exams.

The panel looked into a sample of the exams given in the Real Estate Studies programme and found that there is a broad spectrum of assessment types: multiple-choice exams, open exams, essays, oral presentations and group assignments. The underlying aim is that students learn to communicate clearly in different contexts and demonstrate they meet all of the intended learning outcomes. During the site visit, the Real Estate Studies students proved to be quite happy with the great variety of assessment methods. The panel also found that, in general, course assignments are well-described, with clear assessment criteria and extensive feedback. Exams are well-designed and properly archived, with the appropriate answer key. The panel confirmed that the assessment procedures used throughout the courses are sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. In many cases it noted that extensive feedback is given, which enables students to shape their own learning process. It recommends improving the assessment even further by sharing successful innovations between the departments, such as the negotiation game in Brussels from the master's programme of Economic Geography, the double peer-review system in the Bachelor two-stage exam from the 'Cultural Geography' course (where part of the mark is determined by fellow-students' rating of an individual's contribution to the group work), the experimentation with two-step exams in the master Cultural Geography (an individual exam followed by a group exam on the same topic to stimulate reflective thinking) or the practice that all thesis marks of a 9 or higher should be validated by a senior staff member.



Thesis assessment

The panel studied a sample of the theses in the Real Estate Studies programme and their assessment forms and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency differs, however. On the form(s) (sometimes one, sometimes two), the independent assessment by the second examiner is not always clear. The panel recommends giving more space to the second examiner's comments, thus making his or her independent judgement more explicit. The faculty management explained to the panel that each of the master's programmes at the faculty has its own procedure of assessing the master theses and its own standard assessment form, with slightly differing criteria or prioritisation of criteria. The panel finds this justifiable, as a way of underlining the specific identity of each of the programmes. This is particularly so in view of the fact that the forms play an important role not only in the assessment itself, but also in guiding the students through their writing process. 'Straightjacketing' would then be ill-advised. While endorsing some free rein on the assessment criteria for each individual programme, the panel does recommend harmonising the assessment processes (see below). This will enhance transparency, enforce validity, and make it easier for students to know what to expect.

In the panel's view, one thesis assessment procedure, which documents recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The role of the second examiner is to form his or her own judgement and add this to the first examiner's judgment on the assessment form, after which the first and second examiner compare notes and work towards a collective final mark. The assessment form should reflect the independent procedure. This procedure should be implemented consistently through all programmes, the panel recommends. Also, the assessment form should be consistently shared with the student, so that he or she can take advantage of the feedback that is given. The panel also suggests that while academic accuracy is well covered on the assessment forms, creativity, scientific depth and societal relevance could be evaluated more strongly and explicitly.

The Board of Examiners

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences has one Board of Examiners, responsible for the examination and assessment quality of all bachelor's and master's programmes, awarding degrees and handling requests by students regarding deviations from the regular curriculum. The Board consists of six members, representing each of the departments. It also includes one external assessment expert. The Board itself meets six times a year, and besides that, it regularly meets with the university's central Board of Examiners, in order to deal with shared challenges and innovative solutions.

The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners has greatly improved its procedures. At the time, the previous panel considered the Board of Examiners to be only slowly moving towards a more professional attitude. Now this faculty's board is seen as a good example throughout the university. Its particular merit is that its members aim to work pro-actively and quickly, communicating directly with students who are unhappy with the assessment methods. In this manner they have been able to prevent appeal procedures, while at the same time retaining broad support from the work floor. As the 2014 evaluation panel recommended, the Board's time allocation was increased. The present panel is very happy with these developments.

The panel noticed that the Board of Examiners has a clear definition of its own responsibilities, as demarcated from those educational aspects that are primarily the management's responsibility. The latter develops the course and assessment methods, while the Board of Examiners safeguards the quality and sees to it that the programmes live up to their intended academic level. As soon as the Board spots an irregularity (relatively low average grades, complaints by students, evaluations that are below the mark), the secretary of the Board of Examiners discusses this with the lecturers involved. Every six months, the Board picks five courses for a systematic evaluation of its assessment methods. These may be courses that stand out in the course evaluations, in the proceedings of the Programme Committees, or in the day-to-day communications between Board members and their colleagues. The Board also makes a random and anonymous selection of ten bachelor's and ten master's theses, which are then re-assessed by one of its members. If there is a significant difference

between the original mark and that given by the Board member, this difference is discussed with the examiners involved. All parties find this an instructive process. In 2018, the Board started a pilot project screening the assessment practices of two complete programmes, with the intention of repeating this exercise with two new programmes each year. The panel applauds this initiative. As well as being instrumental to further reinforcing quality assurance, it also contributes to a broadly shared awareness of how student assessment should be embedded in the bigger picture. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

The Board of Examiners, the Programme Committees and the programme management each take on their individual tasks well. In the panel's opinion, the faculty could gain even more by coordinating them toward a shared faculty-wide assessment culture, e.g. by discussing problems of mutual interest together and actively exchanging lessons learned and best practices. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversify and become more international. Part of such an exercise could be, for instance, to initiate a biannual assessment day.

Considerations

The panel states that assessment throughout the courses in the Real Estate Studies programme is sufficiently valid, reliable and transparent. Extensive feedback and variety in assessment methods enable students to shape their own learning process. The panel thinks that the faculty could gain even more by intensifying a shared faculty-wide assessment culture. This will become especially relevant as the staff diversifies and becomes more international.

The panel reviewed a sample of ten master's theses and found that they are validly and reliably assessed. The level of transparency of the assessment however differs, both between and within the programmes. The panel recommends one thesis assessment procedure in all master's programmes. This enhances transparency, enforces validity and makes it easier for students to know what to expect. In the panel's view, thesis assessment forms with recognisably independent feedback from both the first and second examiner can be seen as a good practice. The panel found that, since the 2014 evaluation, the Board of Examiners greatly improved its procedures. It has become very professional, with a clear view of its responsibilities, and works proactively and quickly. The panel encourages the Board of Examiners to continue its good work.

Conclusion

Master's programme Real Estate Studies: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'meets the standard'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Prior to its site visit, the panel studied a sample of ten recent master's theses. They sufficiently demonstrate, in its view, that alumni realise the intended learning outcomes. Many of the theses had original research questions that are relevant to topical discussions in the field, and solid methodology. It struck the panel that – as is the case for other programmes in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences – the master's theses are now still predominantly monocultural. In the future, as the faculty's international ambitions blossom, one might expect more emphasis on the inclusion of transnational or cross-cultural perspectives as part of the instructional approach to the master's theses. This may need to be addressed at an institutional level, with the Faculty Board encouraging and possibly facilitating such an approach. Moreover, attention for spatial patterns could be more recognisable, while the amount and quality of maps leaves room for improvement.

That the intended learning outcomes are achieved can also be deduced from the alumni's position on the labour market. The faculty regularly performs alumni analyses, charting where its alumni work and how long it took them to find a job. One of these shows that of the alumni who graduated from the in the Real Estate Studies programme in 2016 and 2017, 80% acquired a relevant job within



three months after graduation. Some students even find employment before graduating. Alumni work as developers, consultants, financiers, local policy makers, real estate valuers, real estate managers. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Real Estate Studies programme to society. It values the many different ways in which alumni remain in touch with the faculty: on the advisory board, as guest lecturers, as internship supervisors, or as data suppliers. The Real Estate Club Groningen (a foundation with student board members aiming to build bridges between students, staff members, alumni, government and companies in real estate) purposefully brings together students, staff, alumni, local companies and government institutions. Alumni told the panel that through their involvement with the master's programme Real Estate Studies over the years, they saw it mature. According to them, the programme now holds a strong and unique position, delivering graduates who are well equipped for positions in the real estate industry that involve strategic thinking. This observation is mirrored in this assessment report, which underlines that the programme has improved compared to the last assessment report presented in 2014. The only regrettable aspect of alumni's career choices, according to the panel (and based on the self-evaluation and oral reports by lecturers and students), is that virtually none are interested in further academic research by taking up a PhD position. This may have to do with prospective PhD students with an interest in real estate preferring the faculty's Research Master's programme. The panel found that the programme management is aware that Real Estate Studies needs fresh academic talent to keep it going as an academic discipline. It tries to offer attractive options for real estate research in the faculty's research master. The panel encourages the programme in this kind of initiative.

Considerations

Based on a selection of the master's theses, the alumni survey and interviews with alumni during the site visit, the panel concludes that students realise the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the master's programme Real Estate Studies. Many of the theses have original research questions that are relevant to topical discussions in the field, and solid methodology. Some 80% of graduates in the Real Estate Studies programme acquired a relevant job within three months after graduation. A few students even find employment before graduating. Alumni work as developers, consultants, financiers, local policy makers, real estate valuers, real estate managers. The panel considers this to be a good achievement, underscoring the added value of the Real Estate Studies programme to society.

Conclusion

Master's programme Real Estate Studies: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'meets the standard'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel's assessment on standards 1,2,3 and 4 for the master's programme Real Estate Studies at the University of Groningen is 'meets the standard'. Therefore, according to the rules of the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, the general and final judgement is positive.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *master's programme Real Estate Studies* as 'positive'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain in the Netherlands

The current domain-specific reference framework confines itself to a substantive description of the two core disciplines, in combination with the general expectations regarding the competencies of graduates. Therefore, it is a more concise document than the previous (2012) one. The exit qualifications for bachelor and master programmes are no longer included, partly because the Dublin Descriptors already provide an adequate general description of the desired scientific level, but also to give the programmes taking part in the reaccreditation ample opportunity to demonstrate their own specific profile in their self-studies.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain is very broad and diverse, and the different academic programmes within the Netherlands highlight different elements. They vary, for example, in the balance between scientific and professional training, degree of research intensity, degree of integration between the two core disciplines, opportunities to specialize, and types of specialization offered. This domain-specific reference framework emphasizes the common features applying to all programmes.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain revolves around the complex relationship between people (society) and their environment (space). There are five qualities that determine the mind set of geographers and planners. First of all, the ability to think from a time-space perspective, these being the two dimensions within which human action unfolds. Secondly, the ability to study the relation between people and environment in the context of intertwined spatial scale levels (local, regional, national, global). Insight into socio-spatial transformations is gained by studying the interaction between these scale levels (the multi-scalar perspective), without making prior assumptions about the dominance of any one level (e.g. the global level) over another (e.g. the local level). Thirdly, the mind set of geographers and planners is based on the idea that space and society closely interact and shape each other. Human actions, and the behavioural patterns that develop in the course of time (institutions), crystallize in space, while conversely, spatial structures and place-related features trigger and shape human actions. A fourth quality relates to the strong multidisciplinary orientation in the work of geographers and planners; relationships between humans and their environment are studied from a range of mutually supplementary disciplinary perspectives. The precise combinations chosen depend on the nature of the socio-spatial problems being studied and will vary per programme within the domain. Finally, the fifth quality is closely linked with all the above: the integrative character of the geographical and planning approach. This crux is an ambition to understand the mutual cohesion between economic, social, cultural and political phenomena and processes within their specific spatial contexts.

Key terms in the domain are space, place, location, scale, networks, linkages, spatial behaviour, place attachment, spatial quality, spatial design and spatial interventions. Within the domain socio-spatial problems are taken as starting points of scientific inquiry. These issues include spatial inequality, globalization, migration, segregation, diversity and identity, environmental burden, sustainable area development, mobility and governance. The aim is not only to make critical analyses of the issues concerned, but also to design plans and interventions that may solve or reduce socio-spatial dilemmas.

The international and comparative character of studying the relation between people and environment is inherent to the Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning disciplines. Socio-spatial problems, and planned actions to deal with them, are marked by the specific national, regional and local context in which they arise. The significance of the embeddedness of socio-spatial phenomena is the key to Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning. However, awareness of the importance of context does not imply that the disciplines are merely the sum of an endless series of case-studies. The ambition is to identify the international similarities and differences of socio-spatial processes and developments, in order to unravel both their unique and generic aspects. Both facets are typical of the quest of Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning to



formulate theories (explanation in context). To emphasize this international, comparative character, teaching does not focus solely on the Netherlands. And when studying Dutch cases, the international importance and international suitability of the theoretical perspectives and research angles developed will always be considered. Continuing on from this, the composition of staff and students in all the Dutch programmes in the domain is becoming increasingly diverse (in many ways). The 'international classroom' being introduced in more and more programmes, facilitates and reinforces the international-comparative orientation of both disciplines.

The Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning domain has evolved in close cohesion with the other social sciences. While it shares important qualities with the latter - such as attention for formulating theory and the need for rigid methodology - it is also distinct by emphasizing particular qualities. The strong empirical orientation, apparent in the importance attached to primary data collection and fieldwork, is a typical feature of our domain. Furthermore, 'learning by doing' has become an important part of all programmes, partly because it enhances sensitivity to the time and place (context)-bound character of social, cultural, political and economic phenomena and developments. Geographers and planners are constantly challenged to step outside the comfort zone of their own field. Finally, research within the domain has increasingly opened up for a wide spectrum of methods and techniques. This methodological pluralism corresponds with the choice to study socio-spatial problems at various scale levels, which precludes a standard method of analysis.

Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning graduates are able to identify, analyse and explain socio-spatial problems, based on and contributing to the 'body of knowledge' adhering to the discipline. They are also fully conversant with general social-scientific methods and techniques, as well as more domain-specific research methods, such as GIS and spatial impact analysis. The Bachelor's programmes do this, in line with the basic level of the Dublin Descriptors, by laying a broad scientific foundation in the two core disciplines, while the Master's programmes train students, again following the Dublin framework, at a theoretically and methodologically more advanced and specialist level.

The programmes under consideration prepare students for a variety of professions and sectors. Typical jobs include researcher, teacher/lecturer, consultant, policy official and project manager. A common characteristic of staff qualified in Human Geography and/or Urban and Regional Planning is their inclination for a comprehensive approach to problems, and their ability to create awareness on the spatial diversity of societal problems. Students with a specialist Master's degree often find themselves in professions directly connected with their specialism, such as spatial planning, area development, urban policy, construction and housing, regional policy, traffic and transport management or environmental policy. The self-studies of the individual degree programmes will inform more specifically on the professions and sectors in which graduates work.

The domain-specific framework of reference (DSFR) has been formulated by the national disciplinary meeting (Disciplineoverleg Geografie en Planologie). The former DSFR has been adjusted, i.e. updated and shortened by omitting the concrete exit qualifications for bachelor and master. The participating programmes have been able to comment on the draft. It has been laid down during the meeting on 6 September 2018.

APPENDIX 2: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Master's programme Real Estate Studies

1. Knowledge and understanding:

Have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;

A. Have advanced knowledge and understanding of the nature, history, theory and methodology of the respective discipline or specialisation within the domain of Human Geography and Spatial Planning and are able to apply this knowledge;

B. Have advanced knowledge and understanding of the socio-spatial diversity, complexity and dynamics of societal structures, processes and behaviours;

C. Have advanced knowledge and understanding of possible interventions that are based on the outcomes of research in their respective discipline or specialisation, and of the need and methods of critical assessment of such interventions.

Students also demonstrate knowledge and understanding about:

D. The local context including institutions, property rights and regulations relating to land and real estate markets.

E. The planning, land use and governance structure at various regional levels, such as the urban vs rural level.

F. The financial investment approach to real estate development and redevelopment.

G. The understanding of valuation and appraisal techniques for commercial and residential real estate.

H. The modelling and forecasting methods used in the economic analysis of real estate market analyses.

I. The understanding of international trade and its implications for real estate markets.

J. A range of specialist areas including RE law, international real estate markets, and spatial economics.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding:

Can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;

A. Are able to design an original research proposal or plan for a complex societal issue, in an independent way. In this they integrate knowledge and skills learnt in the bachelor and master phases relating to theory, methodology, research methods and techniques, and interpretation;

B. Are able to conduct a research project with a minimum of supervision, also in unfamiliar contexts; they are able to integrate theoretical knowledge, to apply social research methodology and appropriate research methods and techniques, to interpret data in a valid way and to formulate appropriate conclusions;

C. Are able to develop solutions for complex (spatial) societal problems, both individually and in a team of professionals with different expertise.

D. Are able to apply knowledge and understanding in Real Estate in a broad sense, as demonstrated in making judgements, and communicating development plans and research findings.

3. Making judgements:

Have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;

A. Are able to apply a series of advanced research techniques (data collection, processing, analysis and interpretation) and generic skills (oral, written, visual and mixed presentation; design of relevant policy recommendations; knowledge and use of ICT; working in a team).

B. The techniques and skills are relevant to the respective discipline or specialization;

C. Are able to apply these in the analysis of contemporary societal questions;

D. Are able to analyse and evaluate the effects of complex spatial developments and interventions;



- E. Have developed an academic attitude that induces them constantly to critically reflect on their academic behavior;
- F. Have developed an attitude that induces them to take into account the societal consequences and the ethical implications of academic research. They are able and feel the responsibility to participate in public debates and to formulate policy recommendations.
- G. Applying knowledge and understanding in business practice in an ethical and transparent manner.
- H. Critically reflecting on real estate practice in terms of transparency, the functioning of market institutions and real estate fundamentals.
- I. Critically reflecting on practice versus principles of theory and methodology in Real Estate industry practice.
- J. Demonstrating originality in applying knowledge and understanding in Real Estate research.
- K. Critical awareness of the big societal issues in real estate, including contemporary issues in sustainability, ethics and corporate responsibility.
- L. Proposing original actions to improve transparency in corporate responsibility, including business ethics.

4. Communication:

Can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;

- A. Are able to communicate in written and spoken manner with the groups in society for which their research has implications or is relevant in another way. They are able to participate in academic debates on the basis of arguments and communicate their analysis convincingly;
- B. Are able to listen to, use, integrate, and reproduce complex and unfamiliar arguments given by others;
- C. Are able to integrate the communicative actions by different stakeholders in a complex societal issue, and play a role in linking these to each other. They are able to play a mediating role between actors with competing goals by stimulating the exchange of ideas.
- D. Demonstrating effective communication strategies in debated topics in real estate practice. Ability to effectively communicate Real Estate research findings and conclusions in a transparent and ethical manner.

5. Learning skills:

Have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that maybe largely self-directed or autonomous

- A. Are able to keep up with developments in their respective disciplines in an independent manner;
- B. Are capable of recognizing and analyzing developments in society in an independent manner, and to anticipate on these in the public debate;
- C. Are able to continue experiential learning processes in an independent manner;
- D. Are able to work in an (interdisciplinary) team, and to recognise and communicate the contribution and added value of their own discipline or specialisation in the team;
- E. Have advanced knowledge of and are aware of research and working cultures in other disciplines or sectors;
- F. Are able to qualify for a third cycle (PhD) project.
- G. Collecting and ordering information in the field of Real Estate.
- H. Computer skills in statistics and quantitative modelling of real estate data.

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Master's programme Real Estate Studies

Real Estate Studies			
<i>Term 1A</i>	<i>Term 1B</i>	<i>Term 2A</i>	<i>Term 2B</i>
Finance for Real Estate (by FEB) (5 ects)	International Real Estate Markets (5 ects)	Real Estate Research (5 ects)	Real Estate Development (5 ects)
Real Estate and Land Supply (5 ects)	Real Estate Investments (5 ects)	Optional Course (5 ects)	
Optional Course (5 ects)	Thesis (20 ects)		

Compulsory

Thesis

Optional
Course



APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

DAY 0 Monday April 15th, 2019		
16.45	17.00	Arrival panel and reception at the hotel
17.00	21.00	Preparatory meeting panel
DAY 1 Tuesday April 16th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 1
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Human Geography and Planning
11.45	12.15	Virtual Reality Lab Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Cultural Geography
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Cultural Geography
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 1 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Economic Geography / MSc Real Estate Studies / MSc Cultural Geography
DAY 2 Wednesday April 17th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 2
09.00	09.45	Meeting with programme coordinators of the study programmes of day 2
09.45	10.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
10.15	11.00	Meeting with students BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.00	11.45	Meeting with lecturers BSc Spatial Planning and Design
11.45	12.15	Design Course Tour
12.15	13.15	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel
13.15	14.00	Meeting with students MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.00	14.45	Meeting with lecturers MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning
14.45	15.15	Break / Internal consultation assessment panel
15.15	15.45	Meeting with students MSc Population Studies
15.45	16.15	Meeting with lecturers MSc Population Studies
16.15	17.00	Break / Recording of first findings day 2 / walk-in consultation
17.00	17.45	Meeting with alumni MSc Socio-Spatial Planning / MSc Environmental and Infrastructure Planning / MSc Population Studies
DAY 3 Thursday April 18th, 2019		
08.45	09.00	Arrival panel and preparation for day 3
09.00	10.00	Meeting Board of Examiners
10.00	10.30	Internal consultation assessment panel, draw up provisional findings
10.30	11.30	Final meeting with programme management
11.30	14.00	Lunch / Internal consultation assessment panel / draw up provisional findings
14.00	14.30	Oral report provisional conclusion
14.30	14.45	Break
14.45	15.45	Development Dialogue
15.45	16.00	Closing site visit

APPENDIX 5: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 10 theses of the master's programme Real Estate Studies. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

- Lecturer handbook
- Programme committee handbooks and regulations
- Task division model 2018-2019
- Faculty plans for quality agreements
- Vision on teaching and learning
- Strategic report for the Faculty of Spatial Sciences
- Alumni analyses 2010-2017
- FSS career newsletters
- Summary of all relevant courses
- Top 3 most valued courses of the 2018-2019 semester
- 'Richtlijnen interne evaluaties'
- Course guide format
- Minutes of all meetings by the Board of Examiners
- Annual reports of the Board of Examiners
- Assessment protocols
- Assessment plans

Of the following courses, the panel studied complete portfolios (course literature, assignments, tests and answer keys, fieldwork assignments, reports and assessment criteria if relevant, course evaluations):

- International Real Estate Markets
- Spatial Econometrics