



Gutachten zur Akkreditierung

des konsekutiven Studiengangs „Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien“

mit dem Abschluss Master of Arts an der Universität Münster

(in Kooperation mit der Radboud-Universität Nijmegen)

Begehung am 20.01.2009

Gutachtergruppe:

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Beschluss:

Auf der Basis des Berichts der Gutachtergruppe und der Beratungen der Akkreditierungskommission in der 35. Sitzung vom 11./12. Mai 2009 spricht die Akkreditierungskommission folgende Entscheidung aus:

1. Der Master-Studiengang „Niederlande-Deutschland Studien“ mit dem Abschluss „**Master of Arts**“ wird unter Berücksichtigung der einschlägigen Beschlüsse des Akkreditierungsrates **ohne Auflagen** akkreditiert.
2. Es handelt sich um einen konsekutiven Master-Studiengang.
3. Die Akkreditierungskommission stellt für den Studiengang ein stärker forschungsorientiertes Profil fest.
4. Die Akkreditierung wird für eine Dauer von fünf Jahren (unter Berücksichtigung des vollen zuletzt betroffenen Studienjahres) ausgesprochen und ist gültig bis zum 30.09.2014.
5. Die Akkreditierung wird unwirksam, wenn der akkreditierte Studiengang nicht innerhalb von zwei Jahren nach dem Wirksamwerden der Akkreditierungsentscheidung eröffnet wird.

Anmerkungen zum Vorgehen im Verfahren:

Die niederländische Akkreditierungsorganisation NVAO und die deutsche Akkreditierungsagentur AQAS e.V. haben das Verfahren für den Studiengang „Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien“ an den Universitäten Nimwegen (NL) und Münster gemeinsam organisiert.

Die Gutachtergruppe, der ExpertInnen aus beiden Ländern angehörten, wurde von beiden Akkreditierungsorganisationen gemeinsam benannt.

Da während der Begehung offene Fragen zum Studiengang deutlich wurden, die von den beiden beteiligten Universitäten erläutert werden mussten, bevor NVAO eine Akkreditierungsentscheidung treffen konnte, wurden mit Datum vom 04.09.2009 ergänzende Unterlagen von den beiden Hochschulen vorgelegt, die an die Gutachtergruppe weitergeleitet wurden.

Da die Prüfkriterien, die NVAO bei der Akkreditierung zugrunde legt, mit den Kriterien in Deutschland in weiten Teilen übereinstimmen, hat AQAS zugestimmt, dass das Gutachten zur Akkreditierung nach den Vorgaben von NVAO erstellt wird. Aspekte, die spezifisch für das deutsche Akkreditierungsverfahren sind, z.B. Qualitätsverständnis der Universität, Profiltyp des Master-Studiengangs, Gender Mainstreaming und Bürgerschaftliche Teilhabe, wurden in den Leitfaden aufgenommen, der die Grundlage für die Antragserstellung der Hochschulen bildete. Die Gutachter haben diese Aspekte im Rahmen der Begutachtung geprüft und konnten keine Monita feststellen.

NVAO hat mit Datum vom 07.04.2009 den Beschluss gefasst, den Studiengang an der Universität Nimwegen zu akkreditieren. In den Niederlanden ist nur eine Ja-/Nein-Entscheidung bei der Akkreditierung üblich.

Akkreditierungsempfehlung für den Studiengang und Änderungsaufgaben

Die Gutachtergruppe empfiehlt der Akkreditierungskommission von AQAS, den Studiengang „**Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien**“ an der Universität Münster mit dem Abschluss „**Master of Arts**“ ohne Auflagen zu akkreditieren.

Zur Weiterentwicklung des Studiengangs werden die folgenden Empfehlungen gegeben:

Empfehlungen:

1. Es sollte ein stärker integratives System der Qualitätssicherung in Zusammenarbeit der Universitäten ausgearbeitet werden.
2. Die Anzahl an Teilprüfungen im Studiengang sollte reduziert werden.

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1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for an initial accreditation procedure, including programme documents, regarding a proposed academic (wo-)master *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* (NDS) at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. The intended master is a joint programme with the Zentrum für *Niederlande Studien* at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. Since this university applies for accreditation for the programme at the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), both universities, AQAS en NVAO agreed to carry out the accreditation procedure together. As a consequence, NVAO in collaboration with AQAS, convened an expert panel. This panel studied the information available and discussed the proposed programme with representatives of the institution and the programme during a site visit.

The following considerations have played an important role in the panel's assessment.

The panel has found an ambitious multidisciplinary study programme that covers four interrelated disciplines and successfully combines academic competencies with a praxis-oriented focus. The panel agreed that the Dublin descriptors are accurately covered by the programme's intended learning outcomes and considers the intended learning outcomes to be at a master level. The panel found an academic programme that clearly seeks to correspond to the expectations of the professional field. The programme is based on many years of experience and a great deal of expertise in the field of comparative cross-national studies, the result of which has been an adequate understanding of the professional needs and requirements. As research and expert centres both of the organising institutes have an excellent reputation in their field.

Overall, the panel has found a well-conceived, innovative, engaging and attractive master programme. This is due to a number of elements in particular: the opportunity offered to students to collaborate with people from different cultures and fields; the programme's transnational focus combined with comparative research training; its clear-cut praxis orientation and the professional experience offered by an internship; the integrated language course; and the advanced level at which the programme is set. The panel has found a programme that was successfully integrated at different levels. The panel found the proposed NDS master ambitious and appreciates the demanding quality of the programme.

The panel believes that the learning concept of the master, as well as its educational approach, correspond well to what the institutes want to achieve with the programme. The programme builds on the knowledge students have obtained through their bachelor and aims at advancing this level. The learning path of the proposed curriculum enables students to develop their knowledge and competencies gradually. The panel appreciates that students are not selected on their previous study results only, but also on their motivation, personality and individual preferences. In the learning process a strong emphasis is placed on analysing problems from different perspectives. The academic and professional elements are balanced out within the curriculum. The links with the current professional practice is found not only in the internship, but also in the professional and practical orientation of nearly all courses.

The panel is confident that the teaching staff is well-equipped to make reference to academic and professional knowledge and insights. The composition of the staff is regarded as a good combination of academic competencies and backgrounds. The programme is carried out by a dedicated group of experienced scholars and teachers. The panel has a positive impression of the expert knowledge and educational skills of the staff, and is confident that this staff is well-placed to guarantee the level of the programme. The amount of staff available is regarded as proportional to the number of students expected to enrol in the programme.

The panel saw no reason to doubt the quantity and the quality of the material provisions and facilities in place for the proposed NDS master programme. Within the curriculum students are given intensive supervision as a cohort. The panels regards it as desirable that students also get support from the institutes in their search for internships.

The programme is subject to the quality control of both universities. The institutes have taken all necessary measures to ensure the involvement of stakeholders in the quality assurance of the programme. The panel has nevertheless advised the institutes to further strengthen the involvement of its alumni.

The panel is confident that the graduation of NDS students is sufficiently guaranteed by the institutes.

The programme needs an extended duration in order to attain the final level that is desired from an international perspective. The duration of the proposed master programme is necessitated by its bi-national and interdisciplinary character. The programme has presented an adequate comparison with other international master programmes. All these MA degrees are two-year master programmes with a structure and volume that is similar to that of the proposed NDS. The panel furthermore concluded that the institutes adequately guarantee that only students with the necessary qualifications and qualities enrol into the proposed programme and that the NDS programme has a tight schedule and a plausible and mandatory order of succession. Considering the demanding character of the programme, the combination of both academic and professional skills and the specificities of an internationally organised curriculum that includes both a language course and an internship, the panel concludes that the course duration of two years for the programme *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* justified.

Given the above listed considerations, the panel advises NVAO to take a positive decision regarding both the quality and the extension of the course duration of the proposed programme wo-master *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

The Hague, 02 April 2009,

On behalf of the Initial Accreditation panel convened to assess the wo-master *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen,

Prof. dr. Kees van Paridon
(chair)

Dr. Patrick De Vos
(secretary)

2 Introduction

2.1 The procedure

NVAO received a request for an initial accreditation procedure including programme documents regarding a proposed wo-master *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien*. The request was received on 23 October 2008 received from the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen.

The intended master is a joint programme with the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. Since the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster applied for accreditation for the programme at the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen (AQAS), both universities, AQAS en NVAO agreed to carry out the accreditation procedure together. NVAO in collaboration with AQAS convened an expert panel. The panel consisted of:

- Prof.dr. C.W.A.M. van Paridon (chair);
- Msc. G.van Houweninge (panel member);
- Dr. R. Kunze (panel member);
- Ms. A.S. Inden (panel member);

On behalf of the NVAO Mrs. dr. M. Woutersen (Policy Advisor) was responsible for the process-coordination. And on behalf of AQAS Mrs. MA. D. Herrmann (Managing Director). The panel was supported by an external secretary, Dr. Patrick De Vos, who was responsible for the drafting of the expert's report.

This composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. (Annex 1: Composition of the panel) All the panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel has based its assessment on the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Initial Accreditation Framework (14 February 2003).

The following procedure was undertaken. The panel studied the programme documents. (Annex 3: Documents reviewed) regarding the proposed programme. Based on their first findings, the panel organised a preparatory meeting the day before the site visit. The site visit took place on 20 January 2009 at the *Haus der Niederlande, Westfälische-Wilhelms Universität* Münster (Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These are based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents. This lead the panel to formulate some concerns regarding the programme. The panel has requested the institutes to give additional written information regarding these concerns. Within three weeks the institutes have provided a document with the requested additional information. After examining this document the panel has concluded that its concerns were adequately met and that the intended programme was improved. The panel decided to give a positive advice about the programme.

On 23 March 2009, the draft version of this report was finalised taking into account the available information and relevant findings of the assessment. Where necessary the panel corrected and amended the report. The chair finalised the report on 02 April 2009.

2.2 Panel report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report, while the current chapter is the introduction.

The third chapter gives a description of the programme including its position within the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, and within the higher education system of the Netherlands.

The panel presents its assessments in the fourth chapter. The programme is assessed by assessing the themes and standards in the Initial Accreditation Framework. For each standard the panel presents an outline of its findings, considerations and a conclusion.

The *outline of the findings* are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the site visit. The panel's *considerations* are the panel's subjective evaluations regarding these findings and the importance of each. The *considerations* presented by the panel logically lead to a concluding assessment.

The panel concludes the report with a table containing an overview of its assessments per theme and per standard.

3 Description of the programme

3.1 Overview

Country:	The Netherlands and Germany
Institution:	Zentrums für Niederlande-Studien (ZNS), Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster Centrum voor Duitsland-Studies (CDS), Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
Programme:	Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien (NDS)
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic (wo)
Degree:	Master of Arts
Location(s):	Münster (Germany) and Nijmegen (The Netherlands)
Mode of study:	full-time
Field of study:	Language and Culture

3.2 Profile of the institution

The proposed bi-national master programme *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* (NDS) is a joint master offered by the German *Zentrums für Niederlande-Studien* (ZNS) of the *Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität* Münster (WWU Münster) and the Dutch *Centrum voor Duitsland-Studies* (CDS) of the *Radboud Universiteit* Nijmegen (RU Nijmegen). For more than ten years both institutes have offered the successful bi-national programmes *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* and *Duitslandstudies*. The proposed NDS master programme is presented as a renewed and improved curriculum with regards to its content and structure. The NDS master is to replace the extinguishing *Diplom-Studiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* offered by ZNS, as well as the *Masterstudiegang Duitslandstudies* offered by CDS.

3.3 Profile of the programme

The proposed *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* (NDS) programme is a two-year master programme (120 ECTS) that consists of an integrated academic study of cross-border communication, socio-political and economic cooperation, and cultural exchange between Germany and The Netherlands, seen from different relevant academic perspectives. The NDS master is a joint inter- and multidisciplinary study programme that deals with cross-border exchange between Germany and The Netherlands from four central and complementary disciplinary perspectives and approaches:

1. **Economy and Law:** this perspective deals with the interaction between the economy and corporate law, to the extent that it has relevance for cross-border cooperation of corporations. The focus is on a comparison of (national) legal conditions: i.e. what is common, what is different, and what tendencies are developing within both countries. It is asked how legal conditions are motivated by business economics, and how they are integrated in strategic decisions. European law is primarily dealt with from the perspective of bridging the economies of both countries, and in the light of the

increased importance of pre-legislative consultation and of organised forms of lobbying in Brussels by corporations, associations and regions.

2. **History and Politics:** this perspective deals with the bilateral relations between Germany and The Netherlands in the pre- and post-war period, and comparatively analyses the political cultures of both countries, as well as their current major problems on the national, bilateral and European level, and against the background of European integration.
3. **Inter-cultural Exchange:** this angle deals with the meaningful creation of identity in both countries, with cultural developments in transnational cultural exchange in the context of European integration, as with the relevant social actors and problems that are historically and currently involved in such exchanges.
4. **Communication:** this approach investigates the processes of information and communication in cross-border cooperation, as well as the fundamental problems and challenge of German-Dutch dyadic group- and mass communication. Particular attention is paid to communication management, to the control of the communication of corporations and public authorities, and to factors that could facilitate or obstruct cross-border cooperation and interaction: e.g. linguistic, cognitive, mental, emotional, habitual, medical, social or structural elements.

The proposed NDS master is multidisciplinary in its approach, as its investigation of German-Dutch relations is based on four chosen professional perspectives. Each of these perspectives deliver a specific approach to the understanding the relationship between these two countries. The overall multidisciplinary approach of the programme allows students to connect their expert knowledge with each other, which is said to result in the adoption of a comprehensive view on the problems that are being considered. Students of the NDS programme are taught how to independently develop research questions, on which they are working from multiple perspectives, and in a goal-oriented manner.

The fifth pillar of the NDS programme, aside from the four disciplines, is a module directed to the student's acquisition of a foreign language (German or Dutch). This module aims to elevate the student's foreign language skills from the B2 level of the European reference frame to a level placed between C1 and C2. To provide students the opportunity gather intensive working experience in the professional praxis of cross-border cooperation, and thus to facilitate their career entrance, the programme entails an internship of several weeks in a bi-national professional context. The internship is wind up with a written report, in which the student critically reproduces and reflects on this experience. The NDS programme is completed with a master thesis. The master (thesis) research is supervised through the frame of a research colloquium.

The NDS master programme has ten modules, of which six are dedicated to the four disciplines. Out of these six modules, two are interdisciplinary modules (Grundlagenmodul) and four are consolidation modules (Vertiefungsmodul). In addition, there are two foreign language modules (Sprachpraxis Modul), one internship module (Praxismodule), and one closure module (Abschlussmodul) in which the writing of the master thesis and the research colloquia are planned. For each of the modules the application documents give an description of the separate classes and teaching activities of the programme.

Structure of the NDS master programme (120 ECTS)						
year 2: Münster	semester 4	Abschlussmodul (30 ECTS)				
	semester 3	Vertiefungsmodul	Vertiefungsmodul	Vertiefungsmodul	Vertiefungsmodul	Modul Sprachpraxis II (5 ECTS)
year 1: Nijmegen	semester 2	Wirtschaft und Recht (10 ECTS)	Geschichte und Politik (10 ECTS)	Interkulturalität (10 ECTS)	Betriebskommunikation (10 ECTS)	Modul Sprachpraxis I (10 ECTS)
	semester 1	Grundlagenmodul Politik und Wirtschaft (10 ECTS)		Grundlagenmodul Interkulturalität und Kommunikation (10 ECTS)		

New programme in the Netherlands

According to the application documents, the proposed NDS master programme has two characteristics that makes it unique within both the Dutch and German context of higher education:

1. The bi-national orientation and organisation of the proposed master: The NDS master is a programme that explicitly deals with German-Dutch relations and cross-border cooperation. As such it is offered nowhere else in either of the two countries. Students are offered a curriculum that is specifically oriented towards cross-border activities and research in the German-Dutch context. The programme is bi-national in its organisation; an organisation based on the collaboration between two prominent institutes in this field: CDS and ZNS (see above: 3.2).
2. The contents of the proposed programme: The above mentioned disciplines of the programme are said to guarantee a multi- and interdisciplinary schooling that combines academic study with professional and praxis-oriented elements. The individual components of the programme are said to be complementary, didactically accounted for, and consistent within the whole of the curriculum. Throughout the curriculum students are taught how to be flexible in their employability and attitude.

The application documents indicate that no other institution of higher education in The Netherlands (or Germany) offers a programme with a similar profile.

New programme for the institution

As mentioned above (see: 3.2), the proposed NDS master is a new programme that has been developed with the aim of replacing the extinguishing *Diplom-Studiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien* at ZNS, as well as the Masterstudiegang *Duitslandstudies* at CDS.

Credits

The proposed NDS programme is a two-year master's programme of 120 ECTS.

The need for an initial accreditation application

In order to register in the Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes (CROHO) in The Netherlands, and to be able to offer a programme and award a recognised master's degree, this new NDS master programme is subjected to initial accreditation.

4 Assessment per theme and per standard

This chapter presents the evaluation by the assessment panel of the six themes and nineteen standards. The panel has reproduced the criteria for each standard. For each standard the panel presents (1) a brief outline of its findings based on the programme documents and on documents provided by the institution and the site visit, (2) the considerations the panel has taken into account and (3) the conclusion of the panel. The panel presents a conclusion for each of the six themes based on the underlying standards.

4.1 Aims and objectives

4.1.1 Subject-/Discipline-specific requirements (standard 1.1)

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond with the requirements set by professional colleagues, both nationally and internationally and the relevant subject/discipline and/or professional practice concerned.

Outline of findings

The application documents outline the intended learning outcomes (i.e. exit or final qualifications) of the proposed NDS master programme in the following manner. Upon completion of the two-year MA programme:

1. Graduates will have the ability to work at an academic level as an expert for cross-border cooperation in different subfields (e.g. economy, international organisations, public service, civil service and science), both independent and as part of a (multidisciplinary) team, and both on the domestic and the international labour market.
2. Graduates will be able to think in a problem-oriented manner about the German-Dutch relations and their conditions. They will be able to analyse complex problems on an abstract level, and to develop and present well-grounded arguments and judgments (e.g. regarding current affairs in German-Dutch relations and its background), while being aware of the social and ethical implications involved.
3. Graduates have a profound knowledge in the subdisciplines of Economy and Law, History and Politics, (corporate) Communication, and Intercultural Exchange:
 - a. Graduates have a profound knowledge of, and insight into, the theories and research methods of the disciplines mentioned above. They are familiar with the conceptual apparatus, as with the most important research instruments.
 - b. Graduates are familiar with the themes and issues of current scientific debates in the relevant academic fields and disciplines. They have insight into different research approaches grounded in different national and cultural backgrounds.
 - c. Graduates are knowledgeable about the contribution of relevant scientific fields for the comprehension of German-Dutch relations and their European integration in political, historical and social perspective.
 - d. Graduates can apply relevant scientific approaches and integrate them into research about German-Dutch relations in the context of European integration, in the fields of Economy and Law, History and Politics, Communication and Intercultural Exchange, understood as historical and developmental processes.

- They can also transfer knowledge into the practical demands of the professional field.
- e. Graduates are able to independently formulate relevant research questions and develop appropriate research strategies, based on their knowledge and acquaintance with different research methods and instruments taken from the subdisciplines mentioned above.
 4. Graduates are capable to formulate the knowledge and skills mentioned under point 3. in a clear, balanced and convincing manner, and can present them in a clear and comprehensive manner to a German-Dutch (professional) audience.
 5. Graduates can speak and write in both the German and the Dutch language, on a level situated between C1 and C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
 6. Graduates are able to independently generate, through the application of appropriate methods and infrastructure, new experiential knowledge and new insight, and are capable of applying this creatively and effectively. Graduates are knowledgeable about relevant information resources available in the German and Dutch context, and can employ them on an academic level. Graduates can evaluate the content value, reliability and expressive validity of resources.
 7. Graduates have the social and professional competencies to work with people from foreign countries and cultures. The graduates' professionalism is based on knowledge of different national identities, considering also differences in social and scientific backgrounds. The social skills of graduates include the ability to think in a problem-oriented manner and from multiple perspectives, to work as part of a team, and to apply the intercultural competencies as acquired in the programme.

The programme's intended learning outcomes correspond to the internationally accepted requirements for graduates of a bi-national master programme that includes a multidisciplinary approach.

Considerations

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes of the master programme are adequately formulated and enough differentiation is found between them.

Overall, the panel has found an ambitious multidisciplinary study programme that covers four interrelated disciplines and successfully combines academic competencies with a clear praxis-oriented focus. The panel found an academic programme that clearly seeks to correspond to the aspirations of the professional field. According to the panel, the programme is based on an adequate understanding of the professional needs and requirements. The programme's aim is to train students for operation in a complex, multi-disciplinary and international context, which is achieved through a mixture of didactical methods and educational formats.

As the objectives of the programme are comparable to its peers in most aspects, the panel also became convinced that the NDS master offers a good match with what is expected of an international MA programme in the field.

Having discussed the above mentioned issues and the information received during the site visit, the panel became convinced that the programme's intended learning outcomes sufficiently correspond with the requirements set by both profession and discipline.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 1.1 ‘Discipline-specific requirements’ as satisfactory.

4.1.2 Master level (standard 1.2)

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond with the general, internationally accepted descriptions of a Master’s qualification.

Outline of findings

At the end of the two-year master programme, graduates will have command of the above mentioned qualifications (see: 4.1.1), in correspondence with the level defined by the Dublin descriptors. To demonstrate how the levels of the proposed NDS programme match with those of the Dublin Descriptors for MA programmes, the application documents have related the learning outcomes (exit qualifications) to the Dublin Descriptors, as shown in the table below. The application documents describe in detail how each qualification corresponds to one or several of the descriptors. With this, all five shared qualification descriptors are claimed to be met.

		Exit Qualification											
		1	2	3a	3b	3c	3d	3e	4	5	6	7	
Dublin Descriptor	1. Knowledge and understanding			•	•	•					•		
	2. Applying knowledge and understanding	•	•				•				•		
	3. Making judgements		•									•	
	4. Communication								•	•			•
	5. Learning skills							•				•	

Considerations

The panel has examined the intended learning outcomes presented above and related them to the Dublin Descriptors for MA programmes. The panel found that the whole programme is well-conceived and based on many years of experience. The panel agrees that the Dublin descriptors are properly covered by the learning outcomes. The panel considers them to be at master’s level. Given these findings, the panel is confident that the programme’s learning objectives correspond satisfactory to the Dublin Descriptors of a master.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 1.2 ‘Master level’ as satisfactory.

4.1.3 Academic orientation (standard 1.3)

The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond with the following descriptions of a Master (academic orientation):

- *The intended learning outcomes are derived from requirements set by the scientific discipline, the international scientific practice and, for programmes to which this applies, the practice in the relevant professional field*
- *An academic master (WO-master) has the qualifications to conduct independent research or to solve multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary questions in a professional field for which academic higher education is required or useful.*

Outline of findings

The application documents assert that the learning outcomes of the proposed NDS master were developed in close collaboration with different groups of stakeholders: i.e. students and alumni of CDS and ZNS; labour market experts and representatives of the relevant professional fields; and academic colleagues in charge of comparable cross-national academic programmes.

According to the economic and political representatives that were consulted by the institutes there is a recognised need for international and multi-disciplinarily educated experts.

The professional fields for which graduates of the proposed programme are educated consists of large and medium-sized business corporation in various industrial branches, public administrations in Germany and The Netherlands, educative and cultural organisations, political parties, parliamentary and governmental organisations. During the last decades these segments of the German and Dutch labour markets have been reported to show a positive advancement that is related to intensified cross-regional economic and cultural developments. The Netherlands are known to be Germany's second most important trading partner in terms of import, and are ranking fifth in terms of export. The amount of cross-border exchange between Germany and The Netherlands, the application reveals, is only comparable to that of the US and Canada. A sustainable growth of the exchange between Germany and The Netherlands, according to the organising institutes, can only be realised if it is founded on well-qualified professionals.

The demand for educated experts on the German and Dutch transnational labour market was confirmed by several prominent political and economic personalities, and is supported by statistical evidence provided by professional organisations, such as the Dutch export federation FENEDEX, who e.g. has calculated that export from The Netherlands to Germany could benefit significantly from an increased knowledge about German etiquette, law and language among Dutch professionals (cfr. exit qualification 1 and 7 above). FENEDEX has also found that some 89 percent of the entrepreneurs they have consulted believes that this type of knowledge and skills would be beneficial to the intensification of the economic relations between the two countries. Moreover, such intensification is considered a necessity. Research outcomes from the *Niederländisch-Deutschen Handelskammer* and the Rabobank seem to point in the same direction, emphasising the need to maintain and improve relationships among both countries. These institutes seem to be in favour of a campaign aimed at spreading this kind of knowledge in each other's country (cfr. exit qualification 2 above). Several of the personalities mentioned above have also agreed to participate in the Advice Committee of the proposed master.

The above findings are additionally confirmed and supported by the long-lasting experience of both institutes: CDS and ZNS. According to an alumni survey carried out by ZNS in 2006, the majority of alumni have found a qualified position on the transnational labour market. Talks with alumni and representatives of the professional field have furthermore revealed that the German-Dutch transnational labour market is growing, and is currently experiencing a shortage of educated professionals with advanced cross-border qualifications and competencies.

The application documents emphasize that the proposed master, with its strong research orientation and institutional entanglement with a number of research units, is also preparing students for a career in academic research and education.

Considerations

From the application documents and the conversations of the site visit the panel gathered that there seems to be a stable demand for cross-cultural qualifications on both the German and Dutch labour market, as well as from the European institutions and organisations. Based on an extrapolation of the institutes' experiences with the old programmes, graduates are expected to find employment without considerable difficulties within these fields. Alumni (of the old programmes) seem to have ended up in coordinating positions in management and political organisations. An expected 10 percent of the graduates, the panel was told, will probably find employment within cultural organisations. In their professional career graduates most often take up roles that have to do with the construction and/or multiplication of communicative processes. Graduates are also said to have the opportunity of entering an academic career.

The representatives of the workforce confirmed that there is a real demand for cross-national competencies in the current labour market. They furthermore asserted that the added value of a master degree in this field is to be found mostly in the research skills of graduates and the level of abstraction of their thinking. What is expected from a MA (in comparison to a BA) are above all advanced analytical skills and a deepened understanding. Project management skills are also in demand. The alumni with whom the panel spoke also affirmed the importance of mastering foreign languages, communicative skills, practical competencies and soft skills, as taught in the new programme. Alumni also seem to appreciate the *savoir faire* approach of the education and the practical training they've received.

Based on these findings, the panel concluded that the proposed programme has a clear professional orientation, with verifiable links to current theories and developments in its disciplinary fields, while research competencies are taught at an advanced level. The panel concludes that the requirements for an academic orientation are hereby met.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 1.3 'Academic orientation' as satisfactory.

4.1.4 Concluding assessment of Theme 1 'Aims and objectives'

The panel has assessed all three standards of the theme 'Aims and Objectives' as satisfactory. Subsequently, the panel has assessed the overall theme 'Aims and objectives' as satisfactory.

4.2 Curriculum

For a detailed description of the proposed master programme, see above (chapter 3.3).

4.2.1 Requirements for academic orientation (standard 2.1)

The proposed curriculum meets the following criteria for academic orientation:

- *The students develop their knowledge through the interaction between education and research within the relevant disciplines*
- *The curriculum corresponds with current developments in the relevant discipline(s) by verifiable links with current scientific theories*
- *The programme ensures the development of competences in the field of research*
- *Where appropriate, the curriculum has verifiable links with the current relevant professional practice.*

Outline of findings

In each of the programme's modules, and especially in the consolidation modules, the application documents state, a link is established to scientific research, in particular to the research activities of the teaching staff involved in the programme. Throughout the courses of the programme students gradually learn how to conduct research independently. Not only are students familiarised with existing research in the field, they are also expected to contribute to it. Students also learn how to publicly present and defend their research. For that purpose, students are given assignments, and group discussions are organised within the courses. Students are given project assignments, learn how to work as a group, and are taught how to review and publish scientific material. The master thesis in particular offers the students the opportunity to engage elaborately and at an academic level with a specific research subject. The master thesis is also envisaged as groundwork for further research.

To encourage the students' academic orientation and professional qualifications, they are expected to regularly attend colloquia and lectures organised by ZNS and CDS. The contents of the proposed curriculum are said to be strongly linked to the research activities at both institutes. The political-historical and intercultural competence profile of the master programme is matched with the *Graduierkolleg Zivilgesellschaftliche Verständigungsprozesse vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart: Deutschland und die Niederlande im Vergleich*. By working together with this research group of ZNS, the proposed programme is given access to a widespread network of experts in Germany and The Netherlands. The communication-theoretical, as well as the transnational business-economical competencies of the programme's exit profile are cross-linked to the research programme *Professionele Communicatie* of the Center for Language Studies at the Radboud University, which is, among others, investigating cultural differences in corporate communication.

The link between the curriculum and the professional praxis is established by picking up existing and practically applicable contents from different disciplines, brought together as central educational themes. Through this students get acquainted with knowledge about significant elements, recurrent differences and persistent problems of intercultural communication in the context of cross-border economic exchange. During the courses students are taught flexible and applicable knowledge that is aimed at facilitating their entrance into various segments of the labour market. Of particular relevance for the student's professional orientation and qualification is the internship (*Praktikum*), and the manner in which the experiences of this *Praktikum* are systematically taken up by, and

assimilated within the education of the proposed curriculum. The gradual structure of the NDS master programme is said to assure that students adequately reflect on their experience and profit from the insights of the teaching staff and the experts involved.

Within the structure of the programme the internship is planned at the end of the first year and has an equivalent of 360 hours. The multi- and interdisciplinary character of the curriculum allows students to decide individually on the operational field of their internship. Central to the internship is the mediation of cross-linked aspects of cross-border cooperation between the professional praxis and the study itself. Throughout the years both institutes have established numerous contacts at various levels in economic, cultural and public organisations. These contacts have proven to be valuable for the placement of internships. The internship is brought to a close with a written report in which students systematically evaluate their experience, as well as the contents and problems of cross-border cooperation encountered during their internship praxis. Apart from the internships that are sought independently by the students, a number of placements is foreseen within the frame of the so-called Monitoring Projects: i.e. research projects conducting cross-border research done between Germany and The Netherlands, resulting in a synoptic diagnosis of probabilities, problems and prospects of cross-border exchange and cooperation.

Considerations

The panel has carefully considered the contents and structure of the proposed NDS master, and discussed both its academic and professional orientation with the representatives of the institutes.

Overall, the panel found an engaging and innovative curriculum that has established clear links with scientific research in the relevant disciplines mentioned earlier. The panel understood that the staff's research directly feeds into the educational programme, hence assuring its relation to up-to-date research. The panel considered the interaction between education and research within the curriculum to be pleasing. The panel is confident that students receive enough scientific knowledge and analytical training, which is meant to culminate in a final research project (master thesis). The learning path of the proposed curriculum enables students to develop their knowledge and research capacities gradually. The panel has verified that the NDS programme contains sufficient substance and training to become an academic researcher.

The panel had the impression that the expectations of the professional field towards the programme's contents and learning outcomes is represented well in the proposed curriculum. The links with the current professional practice is found not only in the internship, but in the professional and practical orientation of nearly all the courses. The curriculum departs from four constitutive disciplines, which are not just dealt with separately, but in an integrated manner that established connections among them. The basis of this education is laid down in the course work of the programme. In the modules students are taught applicable knowledge, while staff members also initiate projects in collaboration with cross-national professional organisations. In addition, the NDS master has integrated an intensive language course, an internship and an exchange programme.

The panel believes that the academic and professional elements are balanced out well within the curriculum and is confident that the lecturers are well-equipped to make reference to both academic and professional knowledge and insights.

In its encounter with the representatives of the institutes the panel has stressed the importance it attached to certain elements and contents of the curriculum. First of all the panel believes that the history courses of the programme should not only deal with the post-1945 period, but should also – on an introductory level – provide sufficient insight into preceding historical developments, from which the post-war arrangements can then be understood better. Likewise, the panel believes that a good understanding of economics is crucial to the achievement of the programme's objectives. In its conversations with the representatives of the institutes, the panel has emphasised the importance of putting across a good understanding of economic processes. However, as economic relations also require that people know about each other's culture and backgrounds, these modules should not only deal with disciplinary or practical issues, but also with intercultural aspects. Economy should therefore be sufficiently present in the programme. Project management skills is another aspect that was stressed by the panel. The same goes for a good knowledge of the administrative structures and procedures of both countries. In addition, the panel believes that enough attention should be paid to the process of European integration, in which the development of both countries is situated. This also included the use of English literature as a mean of advancing language proficiency beyond what is customarily spoken within both countries. Finally, the panel has also given importance to the duration of the internship, which should be substantial enough so as to produce the intended results.

In response to these concerns, the institutes have reassured the panel that each of these elements will have sufficient prominence in the programme's teaching curriculum, and will be permanently safeguarded by the programme's staff and management. At its request, the panel has received a document including the improved programme modules and a longer internship. (See section 3.3 for the outline of the improved teaching curriculum.) After examining this document, the panel was confident to conclude that the requirements for academic education are met sufficiently.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.1 'Requirements for academic orientation' as satisfactory.

4.2.2 Correspondence between the aims and objectives and the curriculum (standard 2.2)

The intended curriculum, the educational concept, the study methods and the learning assessments reflect the intended learning outcomes.

The intended learning outcomes have been adequately transferred into the educational goals of (parts of) the intended curriculum.

Outline of findings

The application documents present in annex a description of the separate modules of the proposed NDS programme, in which the relationship to the intended learning outcomes is discussed in detail. Besides other details and a list of literature for each of the module, these descriptions also deal with the contents of the teachings. For each module, as well as for the master thesis, it described the examination performances that is expected from the students. This also contains the standard assessment criteria that are used by all teachers and examiners in the programme.

The programme's education aims at shaping experts with certain qualifications and competencies in the field of German-Dutch cross-border cooperation. These experts should be flexible employable in various professional fields. The educational form and the contents of the programme are said to assure that the intended qualifications are adequately realised. The application documents declare that the intended learning outcomes of the modules were drawn directly from the seven exit qualifications outlined above (see: 4.1.1). In this way the consistency of the curriculum is assured and in compliance with the intended master level.

Within the curriculum – and in particular within the six discipline-specific modules – students are acquainted with multi- and interdisciplinary knowledge taken from various relevant academic disciplines, and aimed at providing access to a variety of professional contexts. By the choices made with regard to their internship placement and the content of their master thesis, students are expected to place own accentuations in their education, which among others implies that they have to contemplate future career directions.

The fact that the curriculum was developed along the lines of contemporary professional praxis is considered as a contribution to the realisation of the exit qualifications as specified. The language modules of the programme are aimed at the students' attainment of the foreign language at an advanced level: a level which should allow them to work in the German-Dutch professional context, while being regarded as a competent communicator. In addition, the intercultural competencies of students are advanced by the bilingual and bicultural environment of the master programme, in which students constantly have to interact with each other. Students also learn how to deal with the peculiarities of the different forms of education and evaluation in both countries.

So as to meet the variety of intercultural professional demands of a multidimensional workfield, students are taught how to efficiently acquire, combine and share different forms of knowledge. By taking the two interdisciplinary modules, as well as the four consolidation modules, students acquire advanced knowledge of theories, methods and concepts taken from the four disciplines. Within the four consolidation modules in particular, themes and debates from the different disciplines are discussed and compared. In this manner, the praxis-oriented focus of the curriculum is balanced with a scientific orientation and approach. Within the context of a presentation or class-room discussion, as well as with regard to the assignments, students are encouraged to articulate their own point of view vis-à-vis current themes and debates. Hereby, students learn how to develop their argumentative skills within seminars that apply different educational traditions and formats. Students also learn how to develop their personality, and are trained in advisory skills and teamwork.

		Exit Qualification						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Modules of the NDS master programme	Grundlagenmodul Politik und Wirtschaft	•		•			•	•
	Grundlagenmodul Interkulturalität und Kommunikation	•		•			•	•
	Vertiefungsmodul Wirtschaft und Recht	•	•	•	•		•	•
	Vertiefungsmodul Geschichte und Politik	•	•	•	•		•	•
	Vertiefungsmodul Interkulturalität	•	•	•	•		•	•
	Vertiefungsmodul Betriebskommunikation	•	•	•	•		•	•
	Sprachpraxis I				•	•		•
	Sprachpraxis II		•	•	•	•	•	•
	Praxismodul	•	•					•
	Abschlussmodul	•	•	•	•		•	•

In order to further clarify certain features of this arrangement, the application documents have stressed the following aspects of the proposed curriculum in annex:

- A clear engagement with the pre- and post-war history of both countries, in particular regarding their political and economic relations and cultural identities, which for the most part is done in the interdisciplinary modules of the first semester.
- Within the themes and modules of the programme particular attention is given to the European dimension of the transnational processes under consideration, as to the perspective that arises from that. This is mostly done in the consolidation modules *Wirtschaft und Recht* and *Geschichte und Politik*.
- Also within the consolidation modules *Wirtschaft und Recht* and *Geschichte und Politik*, particular attention is given to current economic issues and ongoing economic developments in both Germany and The Netherlands.
- In the teaching activities of the programme, and in particular in the interdisciplinary module *Politik und Wirtschaft*, staff members give special attention to the governmental and administrative structures and procedures of both countries.
- Throughout the programme students not only learn from Dutch and German text books and other resources, in the modules they also make use of English literature, which they are expected to consult on a regular basis.

By the end of the third semester students are expected to independently develop an academic research proposal set at an advanced level. For their master thesis students carry out an extensive research project that deals with a certain topic or theme, which can be chosen freely by the student. Throughout the first three semesters students learn how to properly collect and analyse information. In this stage students also get familiarised with literature, resources and data that will be needed for their research later on. In the master thesis students have to demonstrate the knowledge and competencies they acquired, as well as their ability to collect relevant research material, to purposefully apply and evaluate it, and to combine theory and praxis through the knowledge that is gained in their work. The

master thesis is evaluated in the light of the intended learning outcomes described above (see: 4.1.1), which is done by two examiners, each of which is delivering a written report. The master thesis can also serve as a foundations for future research activities, such as those done in the pursuit of a PhD.

Considerations

The panel has been able to evaluate the learning outcomes at the level of the courses, as presented in the application documents, as well as their relationship with the overall learning outcomes. The panel believes that both the learning concept of the master, as well as its educational approach, correspond well to what the institutes want to achieve with the programme. The organisation of the curriculum at two locations is seen as consistent with the master's aims, and building cohorts of students is seen as an appropriate mode for such arrangement. The panel noticed that the programme's courses were developed in an integrated manner, and that for each course the educational objectives were described in the application documents. The panel has established that the objectives of the programme correspond directly to the aims of its modules.

The panel has specifically enquired about a number of aspects of the curriculum, such as: the contents of various courses, their share and place in the structure of the programme, the scope of various courses (see above 4.2.1), but also with the scientific elements of the curriculum and way it links with the current professional practice. The panel was furthermore concerned with the learning assessments of the modules. The panel discussed these matters with the programme's management and staff at length and was satisfied with their response. The panel understood that the learning assessments of the modules are based on different forms of examination, which were considered adequate. The panel also had the opportunity to look at course materials and samples of exams and papers during the site visit. On its request, the panel has received additional information on the evaluation criteria of the master thesis after the site visit. The panel examined these criteria and concluded that they were adequate.

These deliberations have led the panel to conclude that the improved curriculum and its modules correspond appropriately to its objectives. They are in line with the outlook provided by the programme. The panel is confident that the curriculum and its teaching and assessment methods accurately reflect the learning outcomes aimed for.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.2 'Correspondence between the aims and objectives and the curriculum' as satisfactory.

4.2.3 Consistency of the curriculum (standard 2.3)

<i>The contents of the curriculum are internally consistent.</i>
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Outline of findings

The new NDS master is presented as a multi- and interdisciplinary study programme. As the application documents explain, the various components of the programme are not merely put together as additive elements, but are interrelated and didactically accounted for. Students acquire an integrated outlook and the ability to critically analyse scientific, legal, political, historical, intercultural and communicative information. The design of the

curriculum features a gradual progression aimed at deepening certain contents, and at developing the intended qualifications.

The design of the programme's modules is considered to reflect the intended competence profile of the curriculum. The first semester is balanced out by two interdisciplinary modules, which directly feed into the four consolidation modules of the second and third semesters. In addition to the disciplinary modules, there are two language modules to be taken during the first three semesters. The third semester is brought to a close by an internship and a workshop. The fourth semester is entirely devoted to the closure module, for which students write a master thesis, in which they have to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the courses, the workshop and the *Praktikum*.

All ten modules are said to reflect the internal coherence of the curriculum. The foundation of the programme is placed in the interdisciplinary modules, that deal with general contents and overviews, on which later semesters will then build. In the first semester students are also offered the opportunity to catch up on any study deficits they might still have at that point. To this purpose the interdisciplinary modules offer students exercises in which particular interdisciplinary subjects and contents are addressed. Throughout the programme the contents of the courses are featured by a gradual increase of complexity, a proceeding level of analysis, a gradual strengthening of the student's ability to cope independently with the study materials, and an increase of the academic level. The demands for study and exams are also gradually augmented.

The language modules in which students acquire their knowledge of a foreign language are considered to be demanding and severe courses, that gradually link up with the consolidation modules by involving text and contents from different disciplinary fields. The internship is also conceptually linked to the curriculum. During the first and second semester, students continuously deal with determinants, forms and problems of cross-border cooperation, which is explained by both abstract reasoning and practical application. This knowledge is then employed, made concrete, and broadened by students during their internship. The internship report is evaluated from an multi- and interdisciplinary perspective that is attuned to the context. The experience and insights acquired during the internship are subsequently dealt with in a workshop, that not only reprocesses these experiences, but also place them into a larger frame of interrelations and connections. The modules of the third semester are also supplemented with practical experience and contextual information.

The master thesis is based on the knowledge and methods taught in the modules, and in particular in the four consolidation modules. Within this frame, students have the opportunity to engage comprehensively with specific topics and themes.

To assure not only the internal consistency of the study programme and the realization of the educational goals, but also the deepening of the contents as they are taught in the modules, the curriculum does not offer any elective courses to students. The programme has a cumulative structure, in that each semester builds on the knowledge and skills acquired at a previous stage. Therefore, the modules have to be taken in a mandatory sequence, to which all students are compelled. However, students are free to choose their internship (15 ECTS), as well as the topic of their master thesis (30 ECTS).

Considerations

The panel has assessed the internal consistency of the proposed programme and its components. The panel was particularly interested in how an integrated programme is realised, given the above mentioned double focus and the fact that the curriculum is spread across different institutes and countries. The panel also enquired about the arrangement of the modules and their interrelations.

The panel found a well-coordinated programme with a cumulative structure. The programme's modules were designed to enhance students' knowledge gradually and there is a coordination among the teaching staff on what methods and contents are taught how and when within the different modules. On the level of the modules there is thus intense staff coordination. The panel understood that already in the design phase of the programme gaps and overlaps were avoided and contents were attuned. The fact that all courses were conceived for the proposed master in particular, and were not 'borrowed' from other programmes, is in the opinion of the panel another important element in support of the programme's internal consistency.

Although the panel believes that the programme's coherence benefits from the rigorously planned trajectory of the curriculum, it was eager to learn how the students thought about this. The opinion of students and alumni seems to differ on this issue. While some regret the absence of elective courses, others have asserted that the mandatory trajectory and the cohort structure of the programme are mostly experienced as providing a good orientation and preparation for professional life.

The panel thinks that the institutes have succeeded in presenting a strongly integrated curriculum that has found an acceptable balance at different levels.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.3 'Consistency of the curriculum' as satisfactory.

4.2.4 Workload (standard 2.4)

<i>The intended curriculum can be successfully completed within the set time, as certain programme-related factors that may be an impediment to study progress are eliminated where possible.</i>

Outline of findings

As the application documents state, the proposed NDS master is conceived as a clearly structured and goal-oriented programme. What is requested from the students in terms of accomplishments has been carefully arranged and balanced in the curriculum and its modules. It is said that the NDS programme can be successfully completed within the set time frame. Within the programme, within the years and semesters, as well as within the modules, there is a succession of courses, assignments and evaluation that students have to go through. The courses have to be attended in a given order and at a given location, without the possibility of replacing them. All students must complete the programme's modules successfully in the order and in the time frame specified by the institutes. The fact that the first year of the programme is organised in Nijmegen, while the second year is organised in Münster, implies that students who do not successfully complete the programme's first year, cannot expect continuity. Except for circumstances beyond one's control, students who fail to complete the first year will have to reapply for the programme in order to continue their studies.

The application documents contain an overview of how different forms of assessment are spread across the four semesters of the programme. This overview shows that the student's performance is regularly elevated throughout the first three semesters of the programme. The study load and the contact hours of the educational activities of the programme are reported to be balanced at different levels. The quantity of self-study required from students has been spread across the programme's components in a balanced manner, while within the programme different assessment methods are combined. To guarantee the level and quality of the master thesis the fourth semester is entirely reserved for this, and is accompanied by research colloquium that monitors and supervises the students' research and writing activities.

Considerations

The panel has examined the proposed curriculum in terms of its study load and study planning. During the site visit the panel discussed the workload of the programme with the representatives and the students of the institutes. The panel has also enquired as to whether there is sufficient coordination among staff to keep the workload within limits. Given that the master programme entails an exchange of students among the two universities, the panel also took a particular interest in the tutoring and supervision of the students (see below: 4.4.2).

Both the representatives and the students asserted that the NDS master is indeed a challenging programme, but is nevertheless feasible. It was the students' impression that the demand to perform, especially in the second and third semester, is to be regarded as considerable. Since these semester also include the internship and a study period abroad, the programme can be expected to be demanding. The representatives of the institutes have, however, assured the panel that the workload of the programme is permanently monitored and kept at a acceptable level. The programme has a tight schedule and a plausible and mandatory order of succession, and the distribution of the weight of the separate modules across the curriculum seems reasonable. Students are provided with comprehensive information and the expectations towards them are at all times clear. Given these findings, the panel concludes that the NDS curriculum can be successfully completed within the set time frame, and that the institutes have taken all necessary measures to facilitate the study progress of its students.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.4 'Workload' as satisfactory.

4.2.5 Admission requirements (standard 2.5)

The structure and contents of the intended curriculum are in line with the qualifications of the incoming students: a bachelor's degree and possibly a selection (with a view on contents of the discipline).

Outline of findings

The proposed NDS master is a selective programme, as it only accepts applicants who can deliver proof of their compliance with the admission requirements drawn up by the institutes. Information about the admission criteria and procedure is published online. In addition, both institutes organise informative events twice a year, in which one of the programme's study coordinator provides prospective students with information about the contents and

objectives, organisation, modalities and admission requirements of the NDS programme. The admission requirements are specified as follows:

1. *Bachelor's degree or equivalent degree.* Having completed a bachelor's degree (BA) is the first requirement for being acceptable to the proposed programme. This BA degree should bear reference to the themes of the proposed master. The NDS programme is intended for the following degree holders in particular: *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Deutschland-Studien, Wirtschaftswissenschaft, Geschichte, Politikwissenschaft, Betriebskommunikation, Rechtswissenschaft, Niederlandistik, Germanistik, Kulturwissenschaft, Kommunikationswissenschaft* and comparable programmes.
2. *Contents of the BA and student's performance.* Applicants to the proposed NDS programme have to provide a Transcript of Record that includes an overview of the contents of their degree, together with an outline of their study performance. A successful applicant should have above-average qualifications. In addition, applicants are requested to provide details about the level of their knowledge in fields that are relevant to the master programme.
3. *Acquired language skills.* As the proposed master is a bilingual programme (German and Dutch), a successful applicant should at least have a proficiency at C2 level of the European Reference Frame in one of the two language, while none of the languages should be less than B2. Applicants have to provide a foreign language certificate.

Students can apply for the programme twice a year (deadlines: November 15 and April 15). The application file should hold the following documents: a letter of motivation, a full curriculum vitae (incl. study performance results), and evidence of other qualifications and skills. An Admission Committee – composed of two professors and two academic staff members – evaluates each application file in its totality, and thus decides on the admittance of applicants. All applicants who fulfil the formal requirements are invited for an interview, during which the applicant's language skills, as well as their factual knowledge are assessed. The interview also takes into account the student's personal motivation, as well as previous experiences. In order to ascertain a smooth transition into the master programme, prior knowledge of the programme's four subdisciplines is required. To help prospective students to prepare the interview, the institutes have published list with essential reading materials online.

After each round of interviews the Admission Committee draws up a list that includes all successful applicants of that term. The assessment of the Admission Committee consists of three evaluation elements: the motivation and qualification of the applicant, and the outcomes of the interview. These elements are assessed in a proportion of 1:1:2. If the number of successful applicants exceeds that of the available places, a ranking list is established.

Considerations

The panel understood that the programme mainly recruits two type of students: namely, those coming from the BA programme *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien*, and those with a BA from various academic fields. During the site visit the panel has observed a strong commitment to ensure that only students with the necessary qualifications and qualities enrol into the programme. As the panel considers the proposed NDS master to be a

challenging one (see above: 4.2.4), it supports the view of the management to select only students with suitable backgrounds and prior knowledge, and a high level of motivation. The panel found a systematic admission procedure in place and deems it adequate enough to ensure the quality of the intake.

On the whole, the panel is positive about the admission arrangements. The structure and contents of the proposed curriculum are in line with the qualifications of the incoming students. During the site visit it was confirmed to the panel that staff members responsible for the modules regularly consult each other to discuss the contents and method of their teaching, and the difficulties students might encounter in the early stage of their education. When methodological or other deficits are identified among new students, the panel was assured, they will be made up for in the courses.

The panel has found that the programme has an admission policy in which the selection criteria are clearly outlined in order to select the best students for the programme. The panel appreciates that students are not selected on their previous study results only, but also on their motivation, personality and individual preferences. The panel, nevertheless, suggested to upgrade the information available to applicants beforehand, by formulating more clearly what the applicants need to know before entering the programme, and by providing a literature list with essential readings for the purpose of preparing ones application properly. The institute has readily agreed to follow-up on this advice immediately.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.5 'Admission requirements' as satisfactory.

4.2.6 Credits (standard 2.6)

The programme meets the legal requirements regarding the range of credits for an academic master's programme (wo-master): a minimum of 60 credits.

Outline of findings

The proposed NDS master consists of a total of 120 ECTS, spread across the curriculum's components as depicted above (see table: 3.3). Due to dissimilarities in domestic regulations one ECTS stands for 28 hours at the RU Nijmegen, while at the WWU Münster it counts for 30 hours.

The duration of the proposed master programme is said to be necessitated by its bi-national and interdisciplinary character. This is in line with comparable international master programmes such as the MA *Deutsch-Französische Studien* organised by the *Universität des Saarlandes* in collaboration with the *Université Paul Verlaine* and the *Université du Luxembourg*, and the MA *Deutsch-Französische Studien* as well as the MA *Deutsch-Italienische Studien*, both organised by the *Universität Bonn* in collaboration with the *Université Paris IV*, resp. the *Università di Firenze*. All these MA degrees are two-year master programmes with a structure and volume that is similar to that of the proposed NDS.

The NDS programme's broad and interdisciplinary scope, its high qualification level, as well as the fact that it aims at both academic and professional competencies at once, are all said to reinforce this call for an extended duration. As the application documents explain in annex, the integral connection between economy/law, history/politics, communication, intercultural exchange, together with an internship and the acquisition of a foreign language on an

advanced level, as established in the NDS programme, can hardly be realised in a shorter time span than is currently foreseen, without making considerable concession to its quality. To guarantee its interdisciplinary character, its specific combination of subdisciplinary and practical knowledge, as well as its scientific foundation, the proposed volume of 120 ECTS is considered indispensable.

The need for a two-year duration of the programme, the application documents state in annex, is not only backed by the long-standing experience with cross-national cooperation on hand at both institutes, but has also been confirmed by external experts, and has found consent among the representatives of the professional field and the alumni of the old programmes of the institutes.

Considerations

The panel has reviewed the intended curriculum and concluded that the proposed 120 credits agree with what is common for this kind of cross-nationally organised master programmes. In comparing it to other cross-national programmes, and considering that the NDS master aims at a combination of both academic and professional skills, supplemented with an intensive language course and an internship, ultimately convinced the panel that the demand for a two-year duration is justified. The panel furthermore concluded that the institutes adequately guarantee that only students with the necessary qualifications and qualities enrol into the proposed programme and that the NDS programme has a tight schedule and a plausible and mandatory order of succession. In its considerations the panel has not only taken into account the programme's characteristic combination and structure, but also the fact that students should be given sufficient time to manner certain learning curves, for instance, in terms of developing cooperative skills in cultural diverse contexts. In order to attain the final level that is desired from an international perspective, the panel agrees, the duration of two years is necessary.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 2.6 'Credits' as satisfactory.

4.2.7 Concluding assessment of Theme 2 'Curriculum'

The panel has assessed the six standards of the theme 'Curriculum' as satisfactory. Correspondingly, the panel has assessed the overall theme 'Curriculum' as satisfactory.

4.3 Staff

4.3.1 Requirements for academic orientation (standard 3.1)

The programme meets the following criteria for the deployment of staff for a programme with academic orientation (wo): Teaching is principally provided by researchers who contribute to the development of the subject/discipline.

Outline of findings

The necessary teaching staff for the proposed NDS master is made available by both organising institutes: i.e. six staff members from the ZNS/WWU Münster, and nine staff members from the CDS/RU Nijmegen. Both institutes employ staff members from different backgrounds: e.g. *Geschichte*, *Kulturwissenschaft*, *Sprachwissenschaft* and *Politikwissenschaft*. Most of them have a long record of teaching and research in areas relevant to the proposed curriculum. The research interests of the staff members, according to the application documents, dovetail to a large extent with the disciplines taught in the programme.

For each of the 15 staff members engaged in the NDS programme the application documents provides in annex an overview of their research and teaching activities, as well as a personal publication record. The strong involvement of the programme's staff in international academic networks, events and research activities is said to ensure that students are indeed offered the latest academic knowledge and insight. The application documents furthermore present for both institutes a detailed plan of the engagement of the staff in the proposed NDS programme. Additionally, a cooperation agreement with the *Institut Unternehmen und Recht* was established to involve guest lectures in the programme.

Considerations

The panel has attentively reviewed the CVs of the staff involved in the proposed master programme. The panel had the opportunity to meet most members of the teaching staff during the site visit in Münster, at which point their research and teaching activities were discussed. According to the panel, the research background of the staff is strong enough for an advanced academic master programme. The staff members involved in the programme are regarded as experienced scholars in the field of cross-national German-Dutch relations and studies. The academic level of their work is considered to be very good. Given these findings the panel quickly became convinced that staff qualifications can indeed ensure that the criteria for academic orientation are suitably met.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 3.1 'Requirements for academic orientation' as satisfactory.

4.3.2 Quantity of staff (standard 3.2)

*Sufficient capacity is made available to be able to start the proposed programme.
Sufficient capacity is made available to be able to continue the proposed programme.*

Outline of findings

Staff members of the ZNS teach in both the NDS master programme and in the BA *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien*. The teaching capacity of all staff members at ZNS is 10.5 *Semesterwochenstunden* (SWS) for the master's programme. As the application documents declare, the part of the programme's teaching staff that is employed at the RU Nijmegen is 0.6 fte. Staff member at the RU Nijmegen not only teach within the NDS master, but also in a variety of other programmes.

The institutes declare that the financial provisions required for the engagement of all 15 staff members are in place for the coming years.

Considerations

The panel has considered the quantity of staff involved in the teaching of the curriculum of the proposed master. Given that the amount of staff that is made available by the combined effort of both institutes is regarded to be in proportion to the number of students that are expected to be enrolled in the master, the panel sees no reason to doubt that there is sufficient staff capacity to assure the teaching of the curriculum with the desired outcome. With the current quantity of staff, the panel believes, the programme should be able to maintain an acceptable staff-student ratio. This includes the tutoring capacity that is deemed necessary for this kind of transnational postgraduate programme (see further: 4.4.2). During the site visit the students gave testimony of the approachability of the institutes' teaching staff. Given the formal engagement of the partner institutes, the panel is confident that staff capacity will be sufficient to start up and guarantee the continuity of the programme.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 3.2 'Quantity of staff' as satisfactory.

4.3.3 Quality of staff (standard 3.3)

The staff to be deployed are sufficiently qualified to ensure that the aims and objectives regarding content, didactics and organisation of the programme are achieved

Outline of findings

According to the application documents, the members of the programme's teaching staff are all experienced teachers and scholars who participate in domestic and international academic networks and research. They are thus well-placed to establish connections between education and ongoing research. For many years the teaching staff has been involved in teaching activities with a high relevance for the proposed NDS master programme. All staff members have to meet the requirements outlined by the university and by the faculty, each at its own institutions. According to the application documents, new staff members need to have certified teaching qualifications.

Additional support is provided at the level of the faculty at the RU Nijmegen: e.g. *studentenaktivierenden Unterricht* (SAO), ICT support and a digital Blackboard etcetera.

Staff members involved in the NDS programme are encouraged to utilise these facilities on a regular basis.

Assessment instruments for the evaluation of teaching performance are operational at different levels within the institutions. These evaluations, that include both students and colleagues, are complemented by assessment interviews and lead to improvement measures. A *Kommission für Lehre* has been installed. As the application documents state, the teaching activities of previous semesters have all received excellent evaluations. The teaching quality has also been positively assessed by alumni.

Considerations

The panel has considered the educational quality of the staff members involved in the proposed NDS master programme. The composition of the staff is regarded as a good combination of academic competencies and backgrounds. The panel was also positive about the organisational embedding of the staff and the international networks in which they are involved. Staff members of the programme all seem to be dedicated to high quality education, and in the opinion of the panel they are well-placed to provide such an education. Staff members are also encouraged and supported by the institutes to improve their didactical skills and insights. With regard to the support of the didactical qualifications of teaching staff at the level of the university the programme management has acknowledged that the Netherlands are currently in a more advanced situation than Germany. The panel nevertheless considers the teaching at both institutes of high quality. The panel is also confident that the proposed programme will be able to retain the quality level of its staff. The panel concluded that the quality of the staff available at both institutes is sufficient to offer the proposed master.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 3.3 'Quality of staff' as satisfactory.

4.3.4 Concluding assessment of Theme 3 'Staff'

The panel has assessed the three standards of the theme 'Staff' as satisfactory. As a result, the panel assesses the overall theme 'Staff' as satisfactory.

4.4 Services

4.4.1 Facilities (standard 4.1)

<i>Intended housing and facilities are adequate to achieve the learning outcomes.</i>

Outline of findings

ZNS shares the accommodation of the *Haus der Niederlande* with the *Institut für Niederländische Philologie*. This building also houses the PhD aspirants of the *Graduiertenkollegs Zivilgesellschaftliche Verständigungsprozesse vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. Deutschland und die Niederlande im Vergleich*, as well as a sizeable library. All employees of ZNS are accommodated at the *Haus der Niederlande*. As the application documents report, within the *Haus der Niederlande* two seminar rooms are available for both the ZNS and the *Institut für Niederländische Philologie*. In addition, the auditoria and seminar rooms of the WWU Münster are at the disposal of ZNS. All seminar rooms at the WWU are equipped with modern communication facilities.

The library contains, among others, the collection of the *Sondersammelgebietes Niederländischer Kulturkreis* of the *Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek*. The library also holds the largest collections of literature and electronic media on The Netherlands available in Germany. Library services available to the students of the NDS programme include books, reference books, journals, collections of statistical material, digital databases, as well as the computerised catalogue *Virtuelle Fachbibliothek Niederländischer Kulturkreis*. The library has a number of work and study places with modern ICT facilities, like a wireless network.

At the RU Nijmegen students and staff members have access to comparable facilities, such as seminar rooms, ICT equipment, computer networks, library services and digital media. At faculty level students and staff are provided with ICT support. They also have a digital learning environment that includes a *MultiMedia Studienzentrum*, a Blackboard e-Learning Platform, as well as various interactive electronic language learning tools, such as *Ellips* and *Digitaal Talenpracticum*. At the RU Nijmegen the programme is housed at the Erasmus building of the university. The Radboud University Library holds various collections of books, journals and audio-visual material relevant to the NDS programme, as well as a *Bibliothek der Sprachenabteilungen*, all of which the students have access to.

In 2004 an *Akademisches Schreibzentrum* (ASN) has been established at the Humanities Faculty of the RU Nijmegen, as part of the *Universitair Talencentrum Nijmegen*. The ASN aims at advancing the quality of academic writing throughout the university. For this purpose it has developed a number of personalised services, from which both the staff and students of the NDS programme can benefit.

Considerations

The panel has considered the facilities of the proposed NDS programme, of which it has visited some during the site visit in Münster. Relying on the information that was given by the institutes, the panel saw no reason to doubt the overall adequacy of the material provisions for the purposes of the programme. The panel had a positive impression about the housing and class room facilities, the institutes' libraries and the digital environment. The panel is confident about both the quantity and quality of these facilities. According to the panel, students of the NDS programme are well-accommodated and well-facilitated for

conducting their studies. Hence, the panel considers all material facilities in place for the proposed master to be adequate for the achievement of its learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 4.1 'Facilities' as satisfactory.

4.4.2 Tutoring (standard 4.2)

There is adequate staff capacity to provide tutoring as well as information provision for students, and these are adequate in view of study progress

Outline of findings

As the application documents declare, the contents and organisation of the proposed NDS curriculum were designed and attuned so as to optimize and facilitate study progress within the programme. The course scheme and the planning of the curriculum were developed in compliance with the objectives of the programme. The curriculum is said to be transparent in its structure and contents, and the intentions and arrangements of the programme are clearly communicated to the students during information sessions. Students are monitored throughout the entire programme, and for that purpose they are required to keep a *Studienbuch*.

For the students of the NDS master a *Studienkoordinator* is available at both the WWU Münster and the RU Nijmegen. The responsibilities of the *Studienkoordinator* include the mentoring, supervision and counselling of students. In addition, the *Studienkoordinator* monitors the student's progress on a regular base, and is expected to intervene whenever learning problems should arise. The *Studienkoordinator* also has an advisory role: at the end of the first year it is the *Studienkoordinator* that carries out a *Beratungsgespräche* with each student. During these consultations the student's study performance is analysed and discussed, while a study planning is drawn up for the upcoming year. The *Studienkoordinator* performs in alliance with the teaching staff of the programme, and is advised by the *Kommission für Lehre*.

To assure the tutoring and counselling provisions for students, the following organisational structure is in place:

- A Steering Committee composed of the Directors of both institutes, the *Studienkoordinatoren*, the internship coordinators and other staff members of the institutes, that meets once each semester. The Steering Committee discusses all matters regarding the programme's development and is responsible for providing solutions.
- A *Kommission für Lehre* composed of the representatives of the students, the *Studienkoordinatoren*, the internship coordinators and other staff members of the institutes. It is within this commission that potential study problems or student's grievances can be addressed.
- A *Studienkoordinator* is in place at both the WWU Münster and the RU Nijmegen, who's responsibilities are described above.
- For each module of the programme a coordinator is appointed who is responsible for the contents and organisation of the module.
- There are internship coordinators at both the WWU Münster and the RU Nijmegen who are responsible for the organisation, the supervision and the post-processing of internships.

- At the beginning of the first and third semester students get to elect two representatives, that will function as their spokes persons in the *Kommission für Lehre*.

Special guidance and expert advice for students is also provided at the level of the WWU Münster, which can be utilised by the students of the NDS programme also. The WWU Münster also has a Career Service in place for its students, as well as an university-wide Student Affairs Service where students can obtain guidance, counselling and assistance on a variety of study-related matters, and from a number of experts.

Considerations

The panel has carefully inspected the tutoring provisions in place for the proposed NDS master programme. The panel believes that for this type of programme in particular, spread as it is across different institutions and countries, a well-established tutoring is an important element for assuring the educational progress of the students. A common tutoring approach, that transcends the institutional setting at each location and that stays in touch with students throughout the entire trajectory of the curriculum, is seen by the panel as essential to realise the programme as intended.

The panel applauds the tutoring provisions in place for the proposed master. According to the panel, students have the assurance that they are properly supported and closely supervised. The study load within both the semesters and the courses is closely observed by the *Studienkoordinator* and is kept at an acceptable level at all times. At the end of the second semester, the panel was happy to find, obligatory *Beratungsgespräche* regarding the individual performance of each student are planned. Unlike most other bi-national programmes, students of the NDS master stay within a cohort throughout the entire programme. As a cohort they are given intensive supervision by the members of staff. During the site visit the students gave testimony of the quality of their tutoring.

As internship placements are increasingly professionalised, the panel considers it desirable that students get support from the institutes in their search for a suitable place. The panel was delighted with the initiative to start a Career Service at Münster and has recommended that it would also take up an active role in securing internship placements for the programme. For this purpose an involvement of alumni might also prove of use.

The panel concludes that tutoring within the NDS master programme can confidently be regarded as sufficient.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 4.2 'Tutoring' as satisfactory.

4.4.3 Concluding assessment of Theme 4 'Services'

The panel has assessed both standards of the theme 'Services' as satisfactory. Subsequently, the panel has assessed the theme 'Services' as satisfactory.

4.5 Internal quality assurance system

4.5.1 Systematic approach (standard 5.1)

A system of internal quality assurance is in place, which uses verifiable objectives and periodical evaluations in order to take measures for improvement.

Outline of findings

According to the application documents, each university has its own quality assurance system in place. At ZNS such system was installed in recent years. Various data about student characteristics and performance are collected by the university for the purpose of periodic evaluation. The assessment cycle and procedures are said to assure that both the strong and the weak spots in the education and research of the institute are adequately detected and analysed, and that appropriate action can be taken by the management of either the institute, the faculty or the university. ZDS is said to have a long tradition of didactical evaluation and improvement of its educational activities.

In 2006 ZNS has carried out a comprehensive survey among its alumni, in which they were asked to evaluate, in retrospect, their experience with the existing programmes taught at ZDS. The application documents report on the gratifying results of this assessment, which have been most useful for the development and planning of the proposed NDS master. To further ensure their involvement with the programme, and use their professional experience for adjusting and updating the curriculum, the institute took the initiative in founding an alumni organisation.

At the Humanities Faculty of the Radboud University Nijmegen the internal quality assurance is a shared responsibility of the *Qualitätskoordinator* and the *Studienkommission*. At the RU Nijmegen the quality of the proposed NDS master is guaranteed by the quality assurance instruments that are in place at the level of the faculty. A *Vademecum Kwaliteitszorg Onderwijs* was found among the application documents, providing an overview of the quality assurance procedures at the RU Nijmegen:

- Regular evaluation of all courses taught at the RU Nijmegen by means of a check list developed by the IOWO Nijmegen, containing also an early-warning notification instrument.
- Regular evaluations on the level of the programmes, the organisation and the faculty, for instance with regard to student and staff satisfaction.
- An annual education report (i.e. Annual Report) which accounts of the progress made in the education of the institute, of the problems that were encountered, and of the measures that were taken.
- Twice a year the programme's management and the faculty management discuss the following topics: advancement, planning, complications and evaluation results. For these discussions, the Annual Report is regarded as an essential document. These meetings also serve to formulate and implement the measures taken to solve deficiencies.
- To support the *Opleidingscommissie* a yearly gathering is organised by the faculty's *Bureau Onderwijs*, to which all members of the commission are invited and participate in discussions.

Within ZDS, education is evaluated in accordance with a four-years cycle. Courses and other educational events are assessed every year. The assessment results are analysed and discussed by the *Kommission für Lehre*, which congregates four-to-five times a year. The *Kommission* is also responsible for formulating improvement measures. Short periodical evaluations and regular consultation of students allow for the detection of deficiencies. When problems appear, improvement measures are suggested and discussed with the institute and/or the members of the teaching staff involved.

Considerations

In the application documents the panel found a description of the quality assurance arrangements that were made for the NDS programme, from which it has gathered that the programme is subject to the quality control systems in place at both universities. As the quality control is currently organised, each of the partner institutes thus has its own assessment criteria and procedure. This arrangement was further clarified during the site visit, where the panel had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the management of the institutes. The panel has furthermore established that all courses and lecturers are evaluated regularly through various instruments, and that the programme is modified on the basis of these evaluations. The quality assurance of the programme is furthermore featured by a cross-hierarchical dialogue between the various and stakeholders involved. These instruments, the panel believes, shall allow the programme a high degree of self-reflexivity. Having carefully considered all of these elements, the panel has assessed the quality assurance of the NDS master as satisfactory.

The panel assessed the quality assurance of the proposed master as satisfactory, but recommends the institutes to work out a more integrated system of quality control.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 5.1 'Systematic approach' as satisfactory.

4.5.2 Involvement (standard 5.2)

Staff, students, alumni and the relevant professional field will be actively involved in the internal quality assurance system.

Outline of findings

Staff member of ZNS and CDS cooperate in the quality assurance process by virtue of their own teaching activities and by participating in governing bodies such as the *Kommission für Lehre* and the steering committee. Discussions between the university and members of the teaching staff take place regularly. Once a year an encompassing evaluation is carried out within both institutes.

Students also have their place within the organisational structure. It is through their representatives that they participate in the quality assurance of the programme. They also participate in information events, where they discuss educational and quality-related issues with the management of the programme.

According to the application documents, the alumni are to be considered as important pillars of the quality assurance of the proposed programme. Alumni evaluations of the programme takes place regularly and shortly after graduation. To facilitate feedback and advice from

alumni, an alumni organisation was founded by the organising institutes. In addition, a regularly recurring *Absolventenverbleibstudie* is conducted, which allows alumni to look back on their education in the light of their professional experience.

The representatives of the professional field are involved in the programmes quality assurance through the alumni, the internships, as well as through personalised consultation by the institutes. On all these occasions they can provide feedback on the programme from a labour market perspective.

The application documents furthermore point out that students, alumni and representatives of the workfield were already consulted for the purpose of developing the programme, and these contacts are being continued. The stakeholders are said to have influenced the contents and structure of the proposed programme significantly.

Considerations

The panel has been able to sample check the involvement of the stakeholders in the quality assurance of the proposed master. The panel understood that all the major stakeholders – staff, students, alumni and the professional field – were already involved or consulted in the development of the new NDS programme, and continued their engagement through participation in its quality assurance system. The panel also found a systematic approach able to guarantee the participation of the stakeholders. Overall, the panel found that the institutes have established a strong network of valuable academic and professional contacts. Given these findings, the panel has deemed the involvement of the stakeholders in the quality assurance of the NDS programme as sufficient.

The panel advises the institutes to further strengthen the involvement of the alumni in particular, by giving sufficient attention to the new alumni organisation, and by integrating alumni better into the institutes' existing networks.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 5.2 'Involvement' as satisfactory.

4.5.3 Concluding assessment of Theme 5 'Internal quality assurance system'

The panel has assessed the two standards of the theme 'Internal Quality Assurance System' as satisfactory. Overall, the panel assesses the theme 'Internal Quality Assurance System' as satisfactory as well.

4.6 Conditions for continuity

4.6.1 Graduation guarantee (standard 6.1)

The higher education institution ensures that its students can complete the programme.

Outline of findings

The application documents explicitly state that each of the partner-universities guarantees that student with satisfactory study results will have the opportunity to complete the full programme.

Considerations

Given the formal position of the proposed NDS programme within both partner-universities and the statement mentioned above, the panel is confident that the graduation of students is guaranteed.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 6.1 'Graduation guarantee' as satisfactory.

4.6.2 Investments (standard 6.2)

The proposed investments are sufficient to realise the programme (including the facilities and tutoring).

Outline of findings

As mentioned above (see: 4.3.2), the amount of available staff for the proposed programme is considered to be sufficient. The financial provisions to engage these staff members is said to be assured for the next years. In addition, ZNS has its own budget that is allocated on a annual basis by the Rectorate. For 2008, the application documents report, the budget amounts to 80.000,- euro. This budget covers expenses of education and research, preservation of the library, as well as labour cost for office support. At the RU Nijmegen no substantial material investments are planned, as the programme can be organised with the infrastructure that is in place. The Humanities Faculty at the RU Nijmegen has a budget for purchasing books, which in part is allocated to the subfield of *Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien*.

Considerations

The panel believes that the investments in the NDS programme are based on plausible estimations and calculations. The proposed investments are regarded as sufficient to realise the programme as planned.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 6.2 'Investments' as satisfactory.

4.6.3 Financial provisions (standard 6.3)

The financial provisions to cover the projected deficit are sufficient to cover the initial losses.

Outline of findings

The financial provisions in place at the WWU Münster are said to be appropriate for the next years. At the RU Nijmegen the proposed NDS programme is offered by the Humanities Faculty, and is therefore accommodated by the faculty's financial model. The operational costs of the proposed master that are not covered by this model, are financed by external provisions. The application documents specify the condition of the faculty's financial arrangements in some detail. These include the following:

- In its start-up phase the programme will be organised only during the academic year 2009-2010, which does include both earnings and expenditures of the calendar year 2009-2010.
- By 2011 the start-up phase will be concluded. After that the programme is expected to go on steadily.
- It is assumed that 40 new students will enroll in the programme, of which 20 will do so at the RU Nijmegen.
- The two-year NDS programme – and consequently each calendar year – will contain 41 SWS, which equals to 20,5 course events of 14 two-hour sessions. The RU Nijmegen will take 50 percent of this for its own account. It will also take a 50 percent share of the supervision of the students. According to the faculty's calculations, the costs of staff FTE's amounts to 88.000,- euro.

Aside from staff expenses, another annual budget of 42.000,- euro is needed for support, travel expenses, advertising and accommodation. This will be covered by the RU Nijmegen. For each degree obtained 3.500,- euro is received by the faculty. According to the faculty's financial estimations these earnings will amount to 70.000,- euro a year. Estimated deficits add up to 60.000,- euro a year. Due to launching costs the deficits will augment to 330.000,- euro over a period of five years. This amount will be covered by external funding: i.e. support subsidies obtained from the DAAD and Euregio funding.

Considerations

The panel has examined the financial provisions and the budget plan of the proposed NDS master and has not find any indication that the programme is inadequately financed. The panel has learned that ZNS will receive financial support from the WWU Münster, for which an agreement on objectives will be reached. The panel also understood that at the RU Nijmegen a budget is reserved to support the collaboration with Münster. During the site visit the panel observed among management and staff a strong commitment to the NDS master. Therefore, the panel is confident about the financial and structural arrangements in place for the master programme.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the standard 6.3 'Financial provisions' as satisfactory.

4.6.4 Concluding assessment of Theme 6 'Conditions for continuity'

The panel has assessed the three standards element of the theme 'Conditions for continuity' as satisfactory. Therefore, the panel assesses the overall theme 'Conditions for continuity' as satisfactory.

5 Overview of the assessments

The panel presents its assessments per theme and per standard, as outlined in chapter 4, in the following table.

Theme	Assessment	Standard	Assessment
1 Aims and Objectives	Satisfactory	1.1 Subject-/ discipline-specific requirements	Satisfactory
		1.2 Master level	Satisfactory
		1.3 Academic orientation	
2 Curriculum	Satisfactory	2.1 Academic orientation	Satisfactory
		2.2 Correspondence between aims and objectives and curriculum	Satisfactory
		2.3 Consistency of the curriculum	Satisfactory
		2.4 Workload	Satisfactory
		2.5 Admission requirements	Satisfactory
		2.6 Credits	Satisfactory
3 Staff	Satisfactory	3.1 Requirements for academic orientation	Satisfactory
		3.2 Quantify of Staff	Satisfactory
		3.3 Quality of Staff	Satisfactory
4 Services	Satisfactory	4.1 Facilities	Satisfactory
		4.2 Tutoring	Satisfactory
5 Internal Quality Assurance System	Satisfactory	5.1 Systematic Approach	Satisfactory
		5.2 Involvement of Staff, Students, Alumni and the Professional Field	Satisfactory
6 Conditions for Continuity	Satisfactory	6.1 Graduation Guarantee	Satisfactory
		6.2 Investments	Satisfactory
		6.3 Financial Provisions	Satisfactory

Annex 1: Composition of the panel

Chair

Prof. dr. Kees van Paridon is Professor of Economics at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. He studied Spatial Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam. From 1979 he worked as assistant professor in the economics department of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the same university. He got his PhD in 1987 with a dissertation on the relationships between economic growth, structural changes and internationalization. In 1987 and 1988 he did research at the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB). From 1989 till 1999 he was a staff member at the Dutch Scientific Council for government Policy. From 1992 till 2002 he was also extraordinary professor on German economic development and Dutch-German economic Relations, at the Free University Amsterdam. In 1999 he was appointed as Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Member

Msc. Gerard van Houweninge was from 2003 to 2005 Director of the Business Technology Center Twente, incubator for high tech entrepreneurs. From 1992 to 2003 he was Director of OOM, the Regional Development Company for the Province of Overijssel. He lived and worked in countries and organisations with different cultures. He has port management experience and venture capital experience, including the relevant steering processes. He is founder of Innofonds Twente, with the Twente University and supervisory Board member of this fund between 1996 and 2003)

Member

Dr. Rolf-Ulrich Kunze is a professor at the Institut für Philosophie, Euklid-Studiengang at the Universität Karlsruhe. His research topics are: 'Kirchengeschichte der neuesten Zeit, Wissenschaftsgeschichte, Europäische Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, Niederländische Geschichte, Nationalismusgeschichte'.

Member

Miss Anna Sophie Inden is a student at the Carl-von-Ossietzky-Universität Oldenburg.

External secretary

Dr. Patrick De Vos is an independent researcher and author in the field of political and social sciences.

Policy advisors

Mrs. dr. Mirjam Woutersen is policy advisor at the NVAO in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit

The panel undertook a site visit on 20 January 2009 as part of the external assessment procedure regarding a proposed wo-master Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen/Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster.

Location:

Haus der Niederlande (Zaal 1.05), Alter Steinweg 6/7, 48143 Münster, Deutschland

Agenda of the site visit:

- 09u00-09u15 Ontvangst**
- 09u15-09u45 Sessie 1 - gesprek faculteitsbesturen en onderwijsinstituut**
Mevr. dr. Marianne Ravenstein (Prorektorin für Lehre, Studienreform und studentische Angelegenheiten an der WWU Münster)
Prof. Dr. Paul Sars (Decaan Faculteit der Letteren, RU Nijmegen en directeur Centrum Duitslandstudies)
Prof. Dr. Friso Wielenga (Directeur Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien)
Birgit Hennecke (Medewerkster Team „Studienreform“, WWU Münster)
- 10u00-11u00 Sessie 2 - gesprek opleidingsmanagement en opstellers informatiedossier**
Prof. Dr. Paul Sars
Prof. Dr. Friso Wielenga
Henk Willems (Directeur Honours Programma, beleidsmedewerker)
Dr. Markus Wilp (Docent WWU Münster)
- 11u15-12u15 Sessie 3 - gesprek docententeam**
Prof. Dr. Helmut Ebert (Docent RU Nijmegen)
Prof. Dr. Gert-Jan Hospers (Docent RU Nijmegen)
Drs. Rogier Crijns (Docent RU Nijmegen)
Dr. John Meurders (Docent RU Nijmegen)
Dr. Loek Geeraedts (Docent WWU Münster en zakelijk directeur Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien)
Drs. Carin Lony (Docente WWU Münster)
Prof. Dr. Lut Missinne (Docente WWU Münster)
Dr. Roland Richter (Docent WWU Münster)
- 12u15-13u00 Lunch (besloten)**
- 13u00-14u00 Sessie 4 - gesprek alumni**
Annabelle Arntz (Dubbeldiploma “Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien“, Münster, werkzaam op het Duitsland-Instituut Amsterdam)
Thomas Boom (idem, werkzaam bij Meines en Partners, Den Haag)
Yvonne Brockhaus (idem, werkzaam bij Nederlands-Duitse Kamer van Koophandel, Den Haag)
Christoph Meyer (idem, promotiebeurs aan Jakobs University Bremen)
Drs. Daphne Ekering (Dubbeldiploma Nederland-Duitslandstudies, Nijmegen; werkzaam als HRM manager, Logica)
Drs. Mathijs Verhagen (idem; werkzaam als consultant in Den Haag t.b.v. de Grensprovincies)
Nicoline Marten (“Magisterstudiengang Niederlande-Studien“, Münster, werkzaam aan Institut für Niederländische Philologie, Münster)

- 14u00-15u00 Sessie 5 - gesprek vertegenwoordigers werkveld**
 Harald Krebs (Directeur-bestuurder EUREGIO)
 Enrico Kretschmar (Consultant Bedrijfsleven Gateway to Germany)
 Drs. Rob Maat (Begeleider startende/innovatieve ondernemers grensregio)
 Dr. Johannes Reef (Directeur Firma DNL-contact in Steinfurt)
- 15u00-16u00 Sessie 6 - gesprek studenten**
 Frederic Arntz (Diplomstudiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Münster)
 Bram Berndsen (Bachelor Duitslandstudies, Nijmegen)
 Katrin Grave (Bachelor Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Münster)
 Johanna Holthausen (Diplomstudiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Münster)
 Sanne Maris (Bachelor Duitslandstudies, Nijmegen)
 Constanze Sussek (Bachelor Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Münster)
 Ramona Swhajor (idem)
 Vera Traud (idem)
 Anne Verhoeven (idem)
- 16u00-17u00 Paneloverleg (besloten): voorlopige oordeelsvorming**
- 17u00-17u30 Sessie 7 - tweede gesprek vertegenwoordigers opleidingsmanagement**
 (met aandacht voor zaken die nog onduidelijk/onvoldoende zijn)
 Prof. Dr. Paul Sars
 Prof. Dr. Friso Wielenga
 Henk Willems
 Prof. Dr. Helmut Ebert
 Dr. John Meurders
 Dr. Loek Geeraedts
 Drs Carin Lony
 Dr. Roland Richter
 Dr. Markus Wilp
- 17u30-18u00 Besloten paneloverleg**
 (oordeelsvorming per facet en per onderwerp en input voor paneladvies)

Annex 3: Documents reviewed

Programme documents presented by the institution

- Akkreditierungsantrag des Zentrums für Niederlande-Studien (ZNS) der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster und des Centrum voor Duitsland-Studies (CDS) der Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen: Bi-nationaler Masterstudiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Münster und Nijmegen, 28 August 2008, 60 Seiten.
 - o Anlage 1: Modulbeschreibungen
 - o Anlage 2: Prüfungsordnung für den Masterstudiengang "Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien" (Entwurfassung)
 - o Anlage 3: Zugangs- und Zulassungsordnung für den Masterstudiengang "Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien" an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster und der Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (Entwurfassung)
 - o Anlage 4: Testat über die Rechtsprüfung der Verwaltung der WWU Münster
 - o Anlage 5: Kurzbeschreibung des Studiengangs
 - o Anlage 6: Kooperationsvereinbarungen
 - o Anlage 7: Referenzen
 - o Anlage 8: Übersicht über Aktivitäten des ZNS und CDS
 - o Anlage 9: Gutachten und Evaluationsergebnisse
 - o Anlage 10: Weitere Dokumente

- Ergänzende Unterlagen zum Akkreditierungsantrag für den bi-nationalen Masterstudiengang Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien, Zentrums für Niederlande-Studien (ZNS) der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster und Centrum voor Duitsland-Studies (CDS) der Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Februar 2009, 60 Seiten.

Documents made available during the site visit

- Various semester books, syllabi and readers
- Various student works, papers and master pieces
- Various research and teaching materials of the teaching staff
- Various evaluation forms and reports
- Various brochures and study guides
- Various literature
- Miscellaneous documents and references

Annex 4: List of abbreviations

AQAS	Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen
ASN	Akademisches Schreibzentrum
BA	bachelor
CDS	Centrum voor Duitsland-Studies (RU Nijmegen)
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
FTE	full-time equivalent
IOWO	IOWO (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)
IQA	internal quality assessment
MA	master
NDS	(wo-master) Niederlande-Deutschland-Studien
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie
QAS	quality assurance system
RU Nijmegen	Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen
SWS	Semesterwochenstunde (i.e. contact hours)
WO	wetenschappelijk onderwijs
WWU	Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster
ZNS	Zentrums für Niederlande-Studien (WWU Münster)