



Political Science  
Radboud University

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# Contents

- Summary ..... 4
  - Score table ..... 5
- Introduction..... 7
  - Procedure..... 7
  - Panel ..... 8
  - Information on the programmes..... 8
- Description of the assessment..... 10
  - Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes ..... 10
  - Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment..... 13
  - Standard 3. Student assessment ..... 21
  - Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes ..... 24
  - General conclusion ..... 24
  - Recommendations ..... 25
- Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes ..... 26
- Appendix 2. Programme curriculum..... 28
- Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit..... 31
- Appendix 4. Materials ..... 32

## Summary

### Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The *bachelor's programme Politicologie*, organized by the Department of Political Science of Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) at Radboud University (RU), aims at highlighting the relationship between domestic and international politics and between normative and empirical dimensions of political processes, while combining theoretically and methodologically-driven research and analysis. The programme takes a multidisciplinary and methodologically pluralistic approach and combines foci on International Relations, Political Theory, Comparative Politics, Conflict Studies and Research Methods. The CS focus has been added as of the 2021-22 academic year, and students are now offered a choice at the end of the first year between a Power and Conflict, and a Power and Democracy track.

The panel appreciates the programme's broad setup, which is aimed at training well-rounded political scientists. It considers the focus on political theory as an independent strand in the programme to be distinctive for the BSc. The panel understands and appreciates the newly added focus on conflict studies. However, the identity of the Power and Democracy track is less clear to the panel by comparison. It recommends either re-naming or re-focusing this track. The panel considers the BSc's intended learning outcomes apt and fitting for a bachelor's programme in Political Science.

The RU NSM *master's programme Political Science* allows students to choose between seven specializations, which all highlight the interrelationship between international and national politics while combining the use of normative and scientific theories and empirical approaches, and developing and applying research skills. The specializations have different substantive foci. Three of these are disciplinary; four are multi- or interdisciplinary, organized between disciplinary groups at NSM. Students have the option of a dual master's degree in Nijmegen and abroad, either at the American University in Washington, DC, the University of Glasgow (for some specializations) or the University of Bamberg (starting in 2023).

The panel finds that the shared principles underlying all tracks provide clarity and unity, while the various tracks have a clearly distinctive and attractive profile that is recognizable to students and outsiders. It is particularly pleased with the programme's four multidisciplinary tracks. The panel appreciates the dual degree options and encourages the MSc to keep developing them. It learned that the programme is working on a reorientation towards other perspectives than the traditional Western one, and encourages the programme to continue down this road by making conscious choices where to include these in the curriculum. It agrees with the MSc's wish to allow the newer tracks to grow and develop. It does point out that their feasibility should be constantly and carefully monitored. The panel agrees with the programme's intended learning outcomes, which it considers fitting for an MSc in Political Science.

### Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

According to the panel, the curricula of both the bachelor's programme *Politicologie* and the master's programme *Political Science* have been well and carefully designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes in a structured way that promotes feasibility. In both programmes, students receive much guidance and support from study advisors and staff members (and in the bachelor's, from mentors during the first year). Changes have been made in the bachelor's and master's thesis trajectory to ensure less delays. Teaching methods are fitting and varied, and often provide a link with both the academic and the professional field. Students are taught by expert and accessible staff members whose quantity and quality are clearly sufficient. The panel highlights the programmes' academic quality culture, where students and staff form a community that works on continuous improvement in an open and warm atmosphere, as a clear strength of the Political Science department in Nijmegen.

The BSc offers students five strands or foci that feed into and build upon each other, particularly where the combination of research methods and substantive courses is concerned. The panel appreciates the activating teaching methods, and suggests introducing seminars in all courses where larger-scale lectures are offered to stimulate active learning. The programme provides students with the possibility to tailor their learning trajectories to their wishes by allowing them a flex-semester with electives, an internship or a stay abroad. The panel is pleased with these options. It recommends considering whether the programme could be adapted in such a way that students doing an internship don't have to follow too many courses in parallel, for instance by enlarging the internship. It advises the programme to carefully monitor the progress of students opting for the internship.

In the MSc, students choose one of seven tracks and, except in the IPE track, have one elective. The panel agrees that the brief duration of the programme creates the need for fixed curricula and finds that students have sufficient options to tailor the programme to their needs and interests. It is particularly impressed with the four multidisciplinary tracks, which are organized well between NSM departments and achieve solid interdisciplinary education. The panel suggests ensuring that the clear curriculum structure and deadlines, which have had a positive effect on feasibility, do not stand in the way of study progress. It suggests looking for more flexible ways of dealing with the option of an internship, and for more continuity in thesis supervision in case of a missed deadline.

### Standard 3. Student assessment

The panel approves of the system of assessment in place within the programmes, which is transparent, valid, reliable and varied. Tests in the programmes match the respective bachelor's and master's levels. Assessment of internships and theses is done well, and the Examination Board is proactive and in control through its 'meta-assessment' of courses. The panel recommends strengthening the Examination Board, and investing in a better electronic support system.

### Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

According to the panel, the theses and alumni of both programmes clearly demonstrate that the learning outcomes are achieved. The bachelor's theses have a solid set-up and quality, and the master's theses demonstrate the breadth of the programme's spectrum of specializations and are generally of high quality. Bachelor's alumni move on easily to master's programmes in the Netherlands and abroad, and master's graduates find their way to positions in research or the working field. Alumni look back with appreciation and warmth on the programmes.

### Score table

The panel assesses the programmes as follows:

#### *BSc Politicologie*

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

*MSc Political Science*

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

General conclusion positive

Prof. dr. Petra Meier  
Chair

Dr. Fiona Schouten  
Secretary

Date: 30 May 2023

# Introduction

## Procedure

### Assessment

On 23 and 24 February 2023, the Political Science programmes of the Radboud University were assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment Political Science. The assessment cluster consisted of nine programmes, offered by Radboud University, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam and Leiden University. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Political Science. Fiona Schouten acted both as coordinator and secretary in the cluster assessment. She has been certified and registered by the NVAO.

### Preparation

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members as well as consistency within the cluster. On 2 April 2022, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on her role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

The programmes composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3) and selected representative partners for the various interviews. They also determined that the development dialogue would be made part of the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programmes provided the coordinator with a list of graduates over the period 2021-2022. In consultation with the coordinator, the panel chair selected 15 theses per programme. She took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various tracks. Prior to the site visit, the programmes provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. They also provided the panel with the self-evaluation reports and additional materials (see appendix 4).

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

### Site visit

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

### Report

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to a colleague in Academion for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After

processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the programmes in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalised the report, and the coordinator sent it to Nijmegen School of Management at Radboud University.

## Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Prof. dr. Petra Meier, Professor in Politics at the University of Antwerp, Belgium (chair);
- Dr. Chris van der Borgh, Associate Professor at the Centre for Conflict Studies Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. Stefan Rummens, Professor in Philosophy at KU Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Marijke Breuning, Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas, USA;
- Prof. dr. Peter Bursens, Professor in Political Science at the University of Antwerp, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Maarten Vink, Professor in Citizenship Studies and chair of the Global Citizenship research programme of the Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute, Italy;
- Prof. dr. Sofie Marien, Associate Professor in Comparative and Historical Political Science at KU Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Amy Verdun, Professor of Political Science and founding Director of the European Studies Program at the University of Victoria, Canada;
- Prof. dr. Laura Horn, Associate Professor in Political Economy at Roskilde University, Denmark;
- Fee A'mema MSc, Political Science graduate at Leiden University (student member);
- Elsbeth de Vries, MSc student in Political Theory at Radboud University (student member);
- Mark Dzoljic BSc, MSc student in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam (student member).

The panel assessing the Political Science programmes at Radboud University consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. Petra Meier, Professor in Politics at the University of Antwerp, Belgium (chair);
- Dr. Chris van der Borgh, Associate Professor at the Centre for Conflict Studies Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. Stefan Rummens, Professor in Philosophy at KU Leuven, Belgium;
- Prof. dr. Marijke Breuning, Professor of Political Science at the University of North Texas, USA;
- Fee A'mema MSc, Political Science graduate at Leiden University (student member).

## Information on the programmes

Name of the institution:	Radboud University
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Politicologie
CROHO number:	56606
Level:	Bachelor
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specializations or tracks:	Politiek: Macht en Democratie



Location:	Politiek: Macht en Conflict
Educational minor:	Nijmegen
Mode(s) of study:	Not applicable
Language of instruction:	Fulltime
Submission date NVAO:	Dutch
	1 November 2023
Programme name:	Political Science
CROHO number:	60203
Level:	Master
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Comparative Politics (CP) Comparative Politics, Administration, and Society (COMPASS) (discontinued 2019) Conflict, Power, and Politics (CoPoPo) European Union Politics and Governance (EUPG) Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Politics (GEP) International Political Economy (IPE) International Relations (IR) Political Theory (PT)
Location:	Nijmegen
Joint programmes:	American University in Washington, DC; University of Glasgow; University of Bamberg (all dual degrees)
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO:	1 November 2023

## Description of the assessment

### Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

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

### Findings

#### *BSc Politicologie*

The bachelor's programme Politicologie, which is organized by the Department of Political Science of Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) at Radboud University (RU), is a disciplinary programme in political science that prepares students for entering various master's programmes and helps them become committed, open-minded and involved global citizens. The programme is built on the central idea that its students should be trained in the interrelationship of domestic and global political processes and the confrontation between the empirical and normative aspects of the discipline of political science. It aims at highlighting the relationship between domestic and international politics and between normative and empirical dimensions of political processes, while combining theoretically and methodologically driven research and analysis. The bachelor's programme takes a multidisciplinary and methodologically pluralistic approach.

The programme combines five interrelated foci: International Relations (IR), Political Theory (PT), Comparative Politics (CP), Conflict Studies (CS) and Research Methods (RM). The CS focus has been added from the 2021-2022 academic year onwards. This was done to allow the programme to reflect the increased complexity of the domain of political science, which has transcended the traditional distinction between domestic and global politics since many political conflicts contain both domestic and global dimensions. As a result of this added focus, students are now offered a choice at the end of the first year between two different tracks: Politiek: Macht en Conflict (Politics: Power and Conflict), and Politiek: Macht en Democratie (Politics: Power and Democracy). Politiek: Macht en Democratie focuses on non-violent means of regulating conflicting interests, whereas Politiek: Macht en Conflict focuses on causes of and solutions to violent conflicts.

The panel appreciates the programme's broad setup, which aims at training well-rounded political scientists. It considers the focus on political theory as an independent strand in the programme to be distinctive for the BSc, adding to its normative and academic character. Considering the recent introduction of the two tracks, the panel understands and appreciates the newly added focus on conflict studies. However, the identity of the broader democracy track, which is a continuation of the BSc curriculum prior to the introduction of the Conflict Studies track, is less clear to the panel by comparison. The panel recommends either re-naming or re-focusing this track to make its contents and setup clearer.

The bachelor's programme translated its aims and profile into a set of five intended learning outcomes (see appendix 1). These have been formulated in line with the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes, on the basis of the agreement of the European Conference of National Political Science Associations and the reference framework prepared by representatives of the Dutch bachelor's programmes in Political Science as part of their National Consultations of Political Science Programmes (LOOP). The panel considers the intended learning outcomes to reflect the wide profile of the BSc. It finds them apt and fitting for a bachelor's programme in Political Science.

### *MSc Political Science*

The master's programme Political Science at Radboud University offers its students the opportunity to prepare for a career in leading positions in the public and private sector, or to pursue a PhD. It aims to prepare students for employment in segments of the high skills labour market, nationally as well as internationally, and to actively participate in society as engaged and responsible citizens. The programme allows students to choose from seven specializations (as of 2022-23), all respecting the following three principles: (1) highlighting the interrelationship between international and national politics; (2) combining the use of normative and scientific theories and empirical approaches; and (3) developing and applying research skills. The specializations have different substantive foci. The first three are disciplinary; the final four are multidisciplinary.

*Comparative Politics (CP)* focuses on configurations of political power around the world, covering subjects like representative and deliberative democracy, democratisation and authoritarianism, political parties, grass roots mobilisation, mediatisation, democratic reform, the welfare state, gender, immigration policy and conflicts over values;

*International Relations (IR)* focuses on the (interactions between the) essential players that shape global politics, for example, governments, international organisations, media, multinationals, and NGOs, and it covers topics like violent conflict, (cyber) terrorism, human rights, regional integration and global trade;

*Political Theory (PT)* focuses on the relationship between political power and morality, posing the central question of the legitimacy of political principles, institutions and practices, and it covers topics such as the environment, democracy and urbanisation;

*Conflict, Power, and Politics (CoPoPo)*, combining Conflict Studies and International Relations, addresses the origins, dynamics and resolution of (especially) violent conflicts within societies and the roles of state and non-state actors in these as well as interrelationships between domestic and international dynamics of conflict and intervention;

*European Union Politics and Governance (EUPG)* started in the academic year 2022-23 and was developed together with the Department of Public Administration. The specialisation replaces the specialisation Comparative Politics, Administration and Society (COMPASS), which focused on the politics of public policy-making in multi-layered systems of governance both in a national and an international context. EUPG is concerned with the complex societal challenges that require cross-border solutions, the politicisation of European integration, the legitimacy and functioning of European governance, as well as the role the European Union plays in global politics;

*Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Politics (GEP)*, offered in collaboration with the Department of Business Administration, is concerned with how gender operates in societies and what might be sustainable strategies for the realisation of gender equality and diversity, both in organisations and in society;

*International Political Economy (IPE)*, offered in cooperation with the Department of Economics, focuses on the interrelationships between the two partaking disciplines with a particular emphasis on their (intellectual) histories and theories and how these can be applied to advance our understanding of trade, foreign direct investment, global economic governance, or economic crises.

In the multidisciplinary IPE, EUPG, and GEP specializations, Political Science students follow courses with students from other programmes, whose curriculum is similar but adapted to fit a master's diploma in their respective fields. CoPoPo combines Political Science subdisciplines. In all multidisciplinary specializations, students obtain only the MSc Political Science degree upon graduation. The name of the specialization is stated on the diploma.

Students have the option of combining their master's in Nijmegen with one abroad in a dual degree programme. They can do so at the American University in Washington, DC (since 2020, possible for students in all specializations; study load and tuition in Washington are reduced), the University of Glasgow (since 2021 open to students in the Comparative Politics or International Political Economy specializations) or the University of Bamberg (all students, starting 2023). Upon completion, students receive an MSc degree from Radboud University and from the dual degree partner. These dual degree options are based on a 1+1 construction, where the two degrees are followed consecutively and there is no course overlap between the two programmes. All curriculum elements leading to the RU degree fall under the responsibility of the RU MSc programme. In the dual degree with the University of Glasgow, the master's thesis is a joint thesis (first graduates expected later in 2023), which is coordinated and supervised by both universities. The dual degree programme with the University of Bamberg is still under development but will also follow the 1 + 1 model.

The panel studied the MSc's profile and that of its specializations. It finds that the three shared principles underlying all tracks (the focus on the interrelationship between national and international politics, the combination of normative theory and empirical approaches, and the development of research skills) provide clarity and unity. At the same time, each track has a clear, distinctive and attractive profile that is recognizable to students and outsiders. The panel is particularly pleased with the programme's four multidisciplinary tracks. Due to collaborations between groups at NSM, the programme manages to offer them as truly interdisciplinary tracks (see also standard 2) that are unique and appealing to students. The panel also understood that some of the more recent tracks, EUPG and GEP, do not yet draw large numbers of students. It appreciates the programme's wish to grant these new tracks time to grow and develop, but points out that their feasibility should be constantly and carefully monitored, also in view of the work pressure of staff members contributing to them.

The panel learnt that due to Covid-19, the dual degree collaborations have had a slow start. The panel appreciates that these dual degree options are offered as an opportunity for students, and encourages the MSc to keep developing them. During the site visit, the panel was told that the programme is also working on internationalization in terms of the content of its curriculum through a reorientation towards other perspectives than the traditional Western one. The panel agrees that the programme should invest in including and maintaining this wider outlook, which alumni, students, staff members and the programme's Advisory Board advocate.

The programme's aims have been translated into five intended learning outcomes (see appendix 1). These have been formulated on the basis of the agreement of the European Conference of National Political Science Associations and the domain-specific reference framework Political Science, and are in line with the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. Learning outcome 2 distinguishes between the tracks; the other outcomes are the same for all tracks. The panel appreciates the programme's intended learning outcomes, which it considers sufficiently specific and overall fitting for an MSc in Political Science.

### Considerations

The *bachelor's programme Politicologie*, which is organized by the Department of Political Science of Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) at Radboud University (RU), aims to highlight the relationship

between domestic and international politics and between normative and empirical dimensions of political processes, while combining theoretically and methodologically-driven research and analysis. The programme takes a multidisciplinary and methodologically pluralistic approach and combines foci on International Relations, Political Theory, Comparative Politics, Conflict Studies and Research Methods. The CS focus has been added as of the 2021-22 academic year, and students are now offered a choice at the end of the first year between a Power and Conflict, and a Power and Democracy track.

The panel appreciates the programme's broad setup, which is aimed at training well-rounded political scientists. It considers the focus on political theory as an independent strand in the programme to be distinctive for the BSc. The panel understands and appreciates the newly added focus on conflict studies. However, the identity of the Power and Democracy track is less clear to the panel by comparison. It recommends either re-naming or re-focusing this track. The panel considers the BSc's intended learning outcomes apt and fitting for a bachelor's programme in Political Science.

The *master's programme Political Science* allows students to choose between seven specializations, which all highlight the interrelationship between international and national politics while combining the use of normative and scientific theories and empirical approaches, and developing and applying research skills. The specializations have different substantive foci. Three of these are disciplinary; four are multi- or interdisciplinary, organized between disciplinary groups at NSM. Students have the option of a dual master's degree in Nijmegen and abroad, either at the American University in Washington, DC, the University of Glasgow (for some specializations) or the University of Bamberg (starting in 2023).

The panel finds that the shared principles underlying all tracks provide clarity and unity, while the various tracks have a clearly distinctive and attractive profile that is recognizable to students and outsiders. It is particularly pleased with the programme's four multidisciplinary tracks. The panel appreciates the dual degree options and encourages the MSc to keep developing them. It learned that the programme is working on a reorientation towards other perspectives than the traditional Western one, and encourages the programme to continue down this road by making conscious choices where to include these in the curriculum. It agrees with the MSc's wish to allow the newer tracks to grow and develop. It does point out that their feasibility should be constantly and carefully monitored. The panel agrees with the programme's intended learning outcomes, which it considers fitting for an MSc in Political Science.

### Conclusion

The panel concludes that both programmes meet standard 1.

## Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

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

### Findings

#### *Curriculum: bachelor's programme*

The curriculum of the three-year bachelor's programme Politicologie (180 EC) combines five foci or learning lines: the aforementioned International Relations (IR), Political Theory (PT), Comparative Politics (CP), Conflict Studies (CS) and Research Methods (RM) foci. Each academic year consists of two semesters. In each semester, five courses of 6 EC are offered in two periods, with one of the courses spanning both periods. During the first year, students follow introductory courses in all of the learning lines. At the start of the

second year, they opt for one of the programme's two tracks: Politiek: Macht en Conflict (Politics: Power and Conflict), and Politiek: Macht en Democratie (Politics: Power and Democracy). The tracks largely overlap, but offer a total of four (24 EC) track-specific courses. The first semester of year 3 is the so-called 'flex-semester', in which 24 EC is available for electives, minors, international exchange or 12 EC internships. In the final semester, students write their bachelor's thesis (12 EC) alongside an additional 18 EC of courses. See appendix 2 for a curriculum overview.

The programme is designed coherently within and between the foci. These learning lines consist of dedicated courses that build up in level throughout the three years. The learning lines are programmed in parallel throughout the curriculum, so that they feed into and build upon each other. The panel learnt from its conversations with teaching staff and students that this is particularly clear where the research methods courses are concerned. Students apply the methods they are introduced to in these courses during the substantive courses planned in parallel. In addition, links between all of the foci are highlighted in the various courses.

Academic skills are acquired through the Research Methods focus. This starts in the first year with basic academic skills and development, including an introduction to the theoretical-empirical research cycle: Onderzoeks- en Interventiemethodologie A. In the course Academic Skills, students carry out a research project in small groups. This is followed by the course Onderzoeks- en Interventiemethodologie B, which introduces students to descriptive and explanatory inferential statistics. Year 2 first focuses on qualitative methods and techniques such as case study design and interviewing techniques (Political Science Research Methods I) and, subsequently, on intermediate-level statistical methods (linear and logistic regression) in the context of theory-testing research (Political Science Research Methods II).

The bachelor's programme also offers students relevant professional skills. In addition to the optional internship in the 'flex-semester', students are taught by practitioners in guest lectures. The curriculum also offers excursions. Towards the end of the programme, courses explicitly highlight how their theoretical and methodological knowledge can be useful in students' professional and/or academic future. This is done through teaching methods reflecting professional practice, such as participation in negotiation simulations, writing policy-briefs and op-ed blogposts, or analyzing moral dilemmas in contemporary societal issues. In terms of job orientation, students can take part in study association ismus's Career Event, and in career events offered by the university.

The panel considers the curriculum of the bachelor's programme to be well-structured. Its foci are well-composed and refer to one another, creating coherence and clarity. Students are clearly informed of the way the course level builds up throughout the programme. Distinguishing features of the curriculum are the way research skills are taught in close connection with substantive learning lines, the strong presence of political theory, and the normative and ethical content which the panel found in many of the courses. The panel also appreciates the flexibility offered students through the flex-semester.

Content-wise, the programme is looking to include more diverse and non-western perspectives as part of the current foci. The panel appreciates this intention, and suggests investigating how to best introduce these in the carefully composed and balanced curriculum.

#### *Curriculum: master's programme*

Each of the master's programme Political Science's seven 60 EC specializations follows a similar setup. In the first semester, students follow one 6 EC semester-long course and four 6 EC period courses. In the second semester, students follow two 6 EC courses (including one elective in all specialisations except IPE; this can

also take the shape of an internship) and work on their thesis (18 EC). The Master's thesis reflects the theoretical, methodological, empirical and reflective skills acquired throughout the year and includes the Master Thesis Course.

The three disciplinary specializations CP, IR and PT share a 12 EC common core where students learn about epistemological, theoretical, methodological and normative issues in political science. All students in these specializations take the courses Sociology, Philosophy and Ethics of Research (SPER) and Advanced Research Methods (ARM). Here, students receive theoretical and methodological training for conducting empirical research within their specialisation or, in the case of Political Theory, for building political-theoretical arguments, and they are exposed to relevant empirical research where possible. Students learn about salient sub-disciplinary core themes and questions in their four specialization-specific courses. The final course is an elective.

The four multidisciplinary specializations offer students a mixture of disciplinary political science courses and specialization-specific courses that are, in part, offered in collaboration with other departments (public administration, business administration and economics). As mentioned under standard 1, Political Science students in the IPE, EUPG, and GEP specializations follow courses with students from other programmes, whose track is similar but adapted to fit a master's diploma in their respective fields. This ensures that the Political Science students are trained as political scientists, but also receive the theoretical training necessary for conducting empirical research in their specific interdisciplinary domain. CoPoPo students do not mix with other programmes due to the combination of Political Science subdomains of International Relations and Conflict Studies.

In the first semester, each multidisciplinary specialization contains one or two 6 EC courses in which the specific empirical domain of the specialization is discussed. As in the disciplinary specializations, all students are required to follow a course in advanced research methods. In EUPG, CoPoPo and GEP, this is the course Advanced Research Methods; in IPE, it is Methods of Empirical Analysis. Throughout the academic year, the programme enables students to develop skills that are relevant for the labour market. Students are trained in transferrable skills such as presenting, writing, leadership and cooperation. Specific assignments explicitly link academic knowledge to policy practice. Occasionally, alumni of the programme provide guest lectures within courses to talk about their career and explain how their political science education has helped them in their subsequent jobs (e.g. in Contemporary Debates in Political Theory). Under normal circumstances, all students are also invited to participate in a Day at the Job, where they join one of the programme's alumni at their job for one day. This activity had to be temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is scheduled to make its return in 2023.

Students opting for a dual degree enrol before starting the master's programme. Dutch students start at Radboud University and go to Glasgow for the second year; Glasgow students follow the opposite trajectory. The joint thesis is written under joint supervision and the procedure follows the RU thesis setup. The American University in Washington allows students with a RU MSc diploma to enrol, allowing them to take 18 instead of 30 EC courses.

According to the panel, the curriculum of the master's programme is clear and well-designed. The disciplinary specializations contain the necessary substantive training. The multidisciplinary specialisations offer a unique opportunity for students to approach another discipline while remaining rooted in the Political Science domain. Both categories offer students ample academic and professional skills. The panel appreciates that job market orientation is emphasized towards the end of the programme. It is understood from students and alumni that they don't always have a clear idea of the use that the skills they acquire will

have for them in their future careers, in spite of the fact that the programme does state this explicitly in various courses and projects. The panel learned that the programme is considering introducing a focus or learning line on personal and professional learning, so that students are made aware of 'employable skills' from the start. The panel thinks this could be a positive new development.

The panel is impressed with the way the multidisciplinary tracks are designed and executed. By collaborating with students from another discipline, students gain insight into this discipline while becoming more aware of their own identity as political scientists. Moreover, the tracks are quite well-designed, involving careful and structural collaboration with other departments within NSM. Staff members from both disciplines frequently meet both formally and informally to discuss the contents, structure and daily affairs in the tracks, and the communication lines between the various departments are short. The panel congratulates the programme and faculty with the way in which a truly interdisciplinary approach has been achieved here.

#### *Didactic approach*

The *bachelor's programme's* educational approach can be summarized by the concepts quality, social cohesion, activation and clarity. The programme aims to offer high-quality and well-designed teaching with activating teaching methods that involve collaboration and contribute to community-building among students and staff. This didactic approach leads to a variety of teaching methods. Students follow lectures, participate in group projects and assignments, excursions, poster presentations, game-based learning tools, (computer) lab sessions, peer discussions during lectures and practical application assignments.

As part of the BSc's didactic aims, students are offered many opportunities to shape and enrich their own learning trajectories. They have the possibility to choose between two tracks after the first year, and are able to use their elective space for following courses in and outside the university, doing an internship or going abroad. If they opt for an internship, students themselves search for an internship position and submit an internship plan to the Examination Board, which evaluates its relevance to political science and allocates the appropriate number of EC (12 curricular EC maximum, with an optional extracurricular 6 EC). Internships take place in a variety of organisations and companies, such as the Dutch parliament, political parties, NGOs, consultancy firms and research agencies. Students opting to go abroad can make use of the university's international exchange contracts with 51 accredited universities abroad.

Ambitious students who seek additional academic challenges can enrol in one of the selective honours programmes, either university-wide or faculty-specific. In addition, all students in the programme are offered the possibility to obtain a Sustainability Testimony. With this testimony, students can demonstrate that they explicitly explored 'sustainability issues' during their bachelor's programme. The testimony is granted if students successfully complete at least 21 EC of electives that are linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and if they write their bachelor's thesis on a sustainability topic.

The panel is positive on the bachelor's programme's didactic aims and appreciates the variety of teaching methods. It considers the freedom of choice and the number of options offered to students a very positive aspect of the BSc: students are enabled to shape their learning trajectory according to their own preferences. The panel learnt from students and alumni that they highly appreciate substantive courses where, alongside larger-group lectures, they work in smaller seminar groups. Students point out that such seminars allow them to discuss and reflect on the theory imparted in the lectures. Although such seminars are organised in part of the courses, particularly in year 1, students would like to see this combination of lectures and seminars throughout the programme. The panel recommends investigating whether more collaborative seminars in smaller groups could be introduced in the courses that do not yet offer them, to the benefit of



both students and staff. The programme may have to make conscious choices to make space for this in the curriculum.

The *master's programme's* didactic aim is that, throughout the year, the teacher-student relationship increasingly resembles one between peers. This is stimulated by small class sizes, engaging lecturers, appropriate didactical instruments and an engaged academic community. The most important tool to achieve this consists of intensive and interactive small size seminars (15-25 students). Within the seminar context, different didactic tools are applied, such as simulations and role play, negotiation exercises, student-designed gaming activities, group discussions, open-form assignments, academic articles and popular scientific contributions, book reviews, policy briefs, presentations, etc. Consistent with the objective to tutor students into peers, students are often encouraged to take on a leadership role in class.

MSc students also have options to tailor the programme to their needs and wishes. All specializations except IPE include a 6 EC elective, which allows students to take an elective course or to pursue an internship relevant to political science. Electives can be chosen from all master's level courses at Radboud University, including courses from the other master's specializations. Courses from other universities can also be taken. The chosen elective is subject to permission from the Examination Board. It is possible to expand internships and apply to the Examination Board for 6 additional extracurricular EC, although students are advised that this may lead to study delay. The department itself offers internal research internships that allow students to collaborate with staff members on their academic research. Students can also further specialize via the Radboud Honours Programme. Finally, the programme offers its students dual degree options in Washington, Glasgow, and, in future, Bamberg; unfortunately, these options have not been tried by many yet due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

The panel appreciates the master's programme's aim towards peer to peer education and the many teaching methods, which activate students and contribute to preparing them for a career in or outside academia. The panel discussed the didactic approach and setup of the master's programme with students and alumni. They pointed out to the panel that they would like to have more electives. However, the panel agrees with the programme management that this is not desirable. The one-year duration requires a more fixed structure, especially in the case of the multidisciplinary specializations, where students become acquainted with an additional discipline. The panel also understands that IPE has no electives, due to the level of economic knowledge students need to acquire here. The panel finds that the programme offers students sufficient opportunities to shape their learning trajectories through opting for one of the many tracks and through the theme and approach they choose in the thesis.

The 6 EC elective can be used for an internship, and many students choose this option. Larger internships are allowed, but are counted as extracurricular beyond 6 EC (with a maximum extracurricular value of 6 EC) and cause students to delay graduation. Also, the elective is usually scheduled in a particular period, depending on the student's chosen track. This makes it harder to combine the course with internships that are on offer outside the university (e.g. in The Hague). The panel is positive about the fact that students can follow an internship in the master's, but suggests investigating how students could use this chance in the most meaningful way possible.

#### *Feasibility and guidance*

The *bachelor's programme Politicologie* offers students guidance and support to allow them to progress smoothly through the curriculum. In their first year, students have a mentor in the course *Academische Vaardigheden*. In smaller groups of around 12 persons, they meet with their mentor twice a week and discuss how to successfully organise and schedule studying activities, and how to prepare for exams. Students also

have individual meetings with their mentors. If the mentor notices problems, the student is referred to the study advisors. In years 2 and 3, monitoring by the study advisors continues. They proactively track student progress and play a coordinating role, serving as a first point of contact for general questions about education, study progress, study load, study behaviour and educational choices. Students at risk of not completing the programme successfully are invited to a meeting with the study advisor. If necessary, the study advisors can refer students to a range of supporting services offered by the faculty, such as study trainers, student psychologists and career advisors. Furthermore, the Radboud Writing Lab offers support and coaching for students with their academic writing skills. Finally, as students pointed out to the panel, the teaching staff in the BSc is helpful and accessible.

In order to further promote feasibility, the BSc is designed to facilitate smooth progress throughout the curriculum. Courses and exams are programmed in such a way that peak moments are avoided. The mandatory semester-spanning course Introduction to International Political Economy is run during the flex-semester, and includes a distance-learning option for students who spend this semester abroad. The bachelor's thesis is designed as a course with clear deadlines. Students are offered a choice in topics and assigned a supervisor accordingly. This clear procedure contributes to the majority of students successfully completing their thesis in a timely manner (although the Covid-19 pandemic caused these numbers to drop from 75 to 66 % completion after four years).

According to the panel, guidance and feasibility in the bachelor's programme are well-designed, intensive and effective. It learnt from students and alumni that they appreciate the mentor structure and the streamlined thesis trajectory. Students are especially positive about the role of the study advisors. The panel understood that they introduce themselves to new students in order to ensure everybody knows about them. When they find that many students approach them with similar questions, they organize joint activities to inform all. The panel applauds the study advisors' efforts to lower the threshold for students to approach them, as well as their proactive attitude.

From its conversations with students, staff and management, the panel learnt that students consider the flex-semester a positive aspect of their programme, but also point out that opting for courses within their own faculty is the easiest way to guarantee their programme is feasible. Choosing electives elsewhere may cause scheduling issues, and a stay abroad or an internship comes with similar schedule-related challenges. An additional concern for students following the 12 EC internship is that they still have to follow 12 EC of electives. The students experience the parallel combination of an internship with courses at university as challenging. The panel recommends considering whether the programme could be adapted to reduce this stress, for instance by allowing the internship to count for more than 12 EC while, at the same time, reducing the number of electives these students have to follow. It advises the programme to carefully monitor the progress of students opting for the internship.

In the *master's programme Political Science*, students have access to the same proactive and involved Political Science study advisors who monitor their progress. The small-scale nature of the tracks (their intake varied between 3 and 26 students in the current academic year) leads to much additional, informal contact between students and their teachers. In order to guarantee that all incoming students are able to finish the programme on time, the MSc has admission criteria in place that include English level and prior education. Students who do not entirely meet the requirements may be admitted after completing the Radboud pre-master's programme in Political Science. Since IPE requires a basic understanding of elements of economics, students opting for the IPE specialisation need to have completed 18 EC in economics at bachelor's level.

In the previous site visit, delays in writing the master's thesis were highlighted as a possible point of improvement. Since then, all tracks have revised the thesis trajectory. The thesis is now integrated in the Master Thesis Course, which includes in-class meetings and practical resources to aid and structure the thesis writing process, as well as optional methods workshops. The course starts in November and coaches students towards a first thesis idea, based on which supervisor is selected. Supervision meetings start in January, when students also have to submit their preliminary thesis proposal, and continue until the first deadline in June. The length of the thesis was reduced from 20,000-35,000 words to 15,000-25,000 words. These measures have resulted in an increase in the number of submitted and approved theses at the end of the academic year, and a higher completion rate within two years (around 80%, where previously this was 50%).

The panel discussed feasibility with students and staff, and concluded that all tracks are intensive, but feasible. Students appreciate the clear structure and coherence. As in the bachelor's programme, students feel supported and seen by the study advisors, as well as by the teaching staff. The thesis trajectory is effective and clear, and allows students enough space to choose their own topic and direction. The panel does point out that the programme's clear structure and deadlines may sometimes cause study delay instead of preventing it. In the internship, students are limited by the timing of the elective and the restricted number of credits assigned to it. In the thesis trajectory, students can only write the thesis in Spring and do not receive additional supervision during Summer. As a result, those who miss the final deadline have to re-enrol in the course in the next academic year for further supervision from January onwards, causing a gap in the thesis process. In practice, this is usually the case with students whose thesis is not yet nearing completion. In exceptional cases, students only just missing the final deadline can apply to the Examination Board for adapting deadlines. The panel appreciates the role of the thesis trajectory in improving structure and study success, but recommends ensuring as much as possible that students are allowed continuity in thesis supervision.

#### *Quality assurance and academic culture*

The panel would like to highlight that quality assurance and academic culture are further aspects of both programmes that contribute to the quality and feasibility of both programmes. The Political Science department ensures continuous feedback through course evaluations, the Programme Committee, and frequent meetings with the active Advisory Board, which contains members from academia and the professional field, including alumni. Moreover, the BSc organises biannual open discussion (TOP) meetings where students and staff are all invited to discuss and evaluate the programme. Likewise, the master's programme has an annual Big Talk, a townhall-type meeting that aims to provide a platform for open and critical discussion and that allows staff and students to jointly discuss the programme.

In addition, both programmes are integrated into an active academic community. During the academic year, various activities (e.g. research seminars, guest lectures, masterclasses) are organized to promote a sense of community, including a joint kick-off meeting at the beginning of the academic year. The programmes also have an active study association that hosts its own activities, including a career event. At the end of the academic year, the 'Big Braai' is organised for the master's programme. This is a festive closing event for both staff and students.

The panel found that Political Science in Nijmegen combines a solid and warm community of staff and students with a strong motivation for continuous improvement through open dialogue between all participants and stakeholders. Quality is assured by looking ahead and anticipating developments, and by continuous reflection on education. The panel compliments both programmes with this active, welcoming and open quality culture. It learnt from students and alumni that they feel at home in the department. This

community feeling contributes to a safe and supportive learning environment. The community has been impacted somewhat by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, but the programmes are proactively dealing with this and paying attention to students' participation and welfare.

#### *Language*

The *bachelor's programme Politicologie* is offered primarily in Dutch, but a number of its more advanced courses are taught in English to ensure students are well prepared for relevant master's programmes and able to function in a broad field of potential occupations. Students choose between examination in Dutch or English and are offered support through freely accessible courses at Radboud into Languages. The official language of the *master's programme Political Science* is English (as visible in the programme name), given that English is increasingly a competency expected of graduates pursuing professional careers in mid-management, both in the private as well as the public sector. Also, it is the research language of the international Political Science community that the programme wants students to be able to engage with and feel part of. In addition, this competency enables students to become globally engaged and employable citizens. Teaching staff employed in both programmes have command of the English language at the C2/Cambridge Proficiency of English (CPE) level.

The panel agrees with the choice of language in both programmes. It appreciates the way the bachelor's programme builds up the English proficiency of its students, who are well prepared for their master's and the professional field. The panel agrees with the master's programme management that command of English is expected and necessary in the professional and academic fields that Political Science prepares for.

#### *Teaching staff*

The programmes are taught by a core staff of five full professors, ten associate professors, and eleven assistant professors. Additionally, there are fourteen auxiliary teaching staff members, including (junior) lecturers and PhD-candidates with teaching tasks. The core staff and seven auxiliary staff members hold a PhD degree. The student-staff ratio is 21.8, based on the active core teaching staff. All course coordinators and lecturing staff have obtained a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or Senior Teaching Qualification, or are in the process of doing so. The panel finds that the quantity as well as the didactic and substantive expertise of the staff are clearly sufficient to teach the programmes. The research expertise of staff members and their accessibility and openness add to the quality of the programmes.

The panel learned from its conversations during the site visit that the number of staff members has recently increased significantly. The programmes have seen an influx of younger staff members. In the hiring process, the programmes take into account diversity, not only regarding gender but also in terms of nationality and specific regional expertise. The panel is positive on the achieved gender balance (almost 50-50 overall) and appreciates the aim to find teaching staff with complementary substantive backgrounds. It noted with appreciation that NSM aims to offer all of its tenured staff a 55%-45% education-research balance and that all tenured staff are offered a period (or semester) without educational duties each year. The faculty and programme policies are forward-looking and long term oriented, and young staff members are offered the chance to grow and develop, which the panel finds laudable.

As mentioned above, students and alumni spoke highly of the programmes' staff members during the site visit. They feel at home and supported by staff, who help them achieve their aims proactively and provide useful connections and networks. Students also consider their teachers to be knowledgeable and strong researchers who serve as good examples to follow. The panel considers the staff-student community one of the key factors in achieving and maintaining a strong quality culture.

## Considerations

According to the panel, the curricula of both the bachelor's programme Politicologie and the master's programme Political Science have been well and carefully designed to allow students to achieve the intended learning outcomes in a structured way that promotes feasibility. In both programmes, students receive much guidance and support from study advisors and staff members (and in the bachelor's, from mentors during the first year). Changes have been made in the bachelor's and master's thesis trajectory to ensure less delays. Teaching methods are fitting and varied, and often provide a link with both the academic and the professional field. Students are taught by expert and accessible staff members whose quantity and quality are clearly sufficient. The panel highlights the programmes' academic quality culture, where students and staff form a community that works on continuous improvement in an open and warm atmosphere, as a clear strength of the Political Science department in Nijmegen.

The BSc offers students five strands or foci that feed into and build upon each other, particularly where the combination of research methods and substantive courses is concerned. The panel appreciates the activating teaching methods, and suggests introducing seminars in all courses where larger-scale lectures are offered to stimulate active learning. The programme provides students with the possibility to tailor their learning trajectories to their wishes by allowing them a flex-semester with electives, an internship or a stay abroad. The panel is pleased with these options. It recommends considering whether the programme could be adapted in such a way that students doing an internship don't have to follow too many courses in parallel, for instance by enlarging the internship. It advises the programme to carefully monitor the progress of students opting for the internship.

In the MSc, students choose one of seven tracks and, except in the IPE track, have one elective. The panel agrees that the brief duration of the programme creates the need for fixed curricula and finds that students have sufficient options to tailor the programme to their needs and interests. It is particularly impressed with the four multidisciplinary tracks, which are organized well between NSM departments and achieve solid interdisciplinary education. The panel suggests ensuring that the clear curriculum structure and deadlines, which have had a positive effect on feasibility, do not stand in the way of study progress. It suggests looking for more continuity in thesis supervision in case of a missed deadline.

## Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 2.

## Standard 3. Student assessment

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

## Findings

### *Assessment system*

Assessment in both programmes follows policies in NSM. Each of the two programmes has an assessment plan which provides an overview of the forms of assessment for each course and which matches faculty- and university-wide policies. Senior lecturers develop the tests and assignments, making use of peer review in test composition. Lecturers evaluate papers and exams on the basis of criteria and answer models, assessment matrices or grading rubrics. Students are informed about these criteria and often practice with sample questions. After exams have been evaluated, lecturers always organise a moment for perusal of the exam.

In the *bachelor's programme*, exams consist of a combination of knowledge and essay questions to assess the learning standards in terms of both theory and application; that assessment types are varied; that group and individual assessment are mixed, allowing each student to individually demonstrate their knowledge and skills, while also learning how to collaborate professionally in a team; that a mix of written and oral examination forms is used to enable students to learn how to communicate about political science research; and that over the course of the bachelor's programme, all students pass through the empirical research cycle at least once. Assessment in the programme is activating and varied in nature, for instance through the frequent use of small-scale working groups (in which participation is obligatory), presentations and creative assignments (e.g., the use of gamification to apply qualitative research methods).

Active participation in the course is often either a requirement to access the exam or can be used to acquire bonus points towards the final grade. Assignments during or in preparation of lectures stimulate students to engage with the course material early on and spread their workload. Final assessment usually takes place in written form, either with written exams, research reports, a campaign strategy or policy advice. When papers are used in courses, providing and receiving feedback from co-students and lecturers is an important part of the learning process.

In the *master's programme*, assessment is organized in such a way that significant attention is paid to writing, in accordance with the learning standards Communication and Reflection. Most courses are entirely or partially tested with assignments, papers and written exams consisting of essay questions. This also reflects the importance attached to reflection on and critical assessments of knowledge, in accordance with the learning standards Theory and Reflection. Furthermore, students have to show that they are able to present and 'translate' academic knowledge, through composing academic papers, policy advice and a book review. Many courses include oral assessments, such as in-class presentations and conferences, in order to prepare students for different functions inside and outside academia. The programme fosters active preparation of and participation in in-class discussions. Participation is rewarded by rounding the grade or is a condition for passing the course. All courses test students' knowledge at an individual level, sometimes combined with a small proportion of group work.

Both the bachelor's and the master's programmes offer internships as an option. These are evaluated with a standard assessment form developed by the internship coordinator. The assessment form is designed to allow for an adequate assessment of the different aspects of the internship. The internship is graded by the departmental supervisor, based on the internship report (which includes a scientific reflection on the internship), an assessment interview with the student and an assessment by the supervisor in the internship organisation.

The panel looked at the programmes' assessment plans and discussed assessment practices with various stakeholders during the site visit. It concludes that assessment in both programmes is well-designed, varied and in line with the learning outcomes of each programme. Students in each programme appreciate the fact that they are prepared well, through the assignments in their methods and substantive courses, for embarking on their thesis process. Master's students highlight the value of job market-oriented assessment forms, such as policy briefs. Alumni confirmed to the panel that the skills learned and applied here are relevant in their jobs post-graduation.

#### *Final level*

Bachelor's as well as master's theses are assessed based on an assessment form with set criteria. The thesis is always evaluated by two examiners: the supervisor/first reader and a second reader who has not been involved in the supervision process. Glasgow dual degree theses have one supervisor for each university. The

thesis course coordinator assigns supervisors and second readers, and ensures variation to prevent the occurrence of fixed couples of assessors. Following their independent assessment of the quality of the thesis, the supervisor and the second assessor discuss the thesis and decide upon the final grade, as well as its justification. After this, the supervisor fills out the evaluation form based on both of their input, and both assessors sign the form. In case they strongly disagree concerning the grade (>1 point), the examination board selects a third assessor. In case of junior lecturers supervising theses, a third assessor, always a senior lecturer, is involved to double-check the thesis assessment. Each thesis is checked for plagiarism. If the outcome is problematic, the Examination Board starts an inquiry.

The panel discussed this working method with staff, students, alumni and the Examination Board. It also studied 15 filled-out thesis assessment forms per programme. Based on this input, the panel concludes that thesis assessment takes place in a suitable and thorough way in both programmes. The panel found the thesis forms and criteria to be insightful and noticed that supervisors often provide ample feedback to students on these forms. The panel generally agreed with the marks given.

#### *Examination Board*

The programmes fall under the responsibility of the department's Examination Board, which checks quality of assessment and assigns the examiners. As part of a regular 'meta-assessment', the Examination Board monitors the quality of the examination of the courses and takes random samples of the assessment of individual examination products. These samples include thesis courses. If small shortcomings are found, the Examination Board offers advice to the staff member. In case of major shortcomings, the Board asks the staff member to elaborate an improvement plan. For the review, the Examination Board selects either courses for which the standard course evaluations raise questions, or previously unreviewed courses if there are no specific questions raised. Reactively, in the cases where students, the OLC or the faculty flag potential problems concerning the examination of a course, the Examination Board conducts an extraordinary assessment of the examination of individual courses.

The panel found the Examination Board to be in control and proactive. The meta-assessment methodology ensures sufficiently detailed and structural quality control. The panel learnt that the Board is dealing with a high workload, partly due to the fact that the software system it works with does not permit a fast and standardized approach to simple and straightforward tasks such as dealing with frequent student requests. The panel recommends strengthening the Examination Board, and investing in a better electronic support system.

#### *Considerations*

The panel approves of the system of assessment in place within the programmes, which is transparent, valid, reliable and varied. Tests in the programmes match the respective bachelor's and master's levels. Assessment of internships and theses is done well, and the Examination Board is proactive and in control through its 'meta-assessment' of courses. The panel recommends strengthening the Examination Board, and investing in a better electronic support system.

#### *Conclusion*

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 3.

## Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

### Findings

#### *Theses*

The panel read 15 bachelor's and 15 master's theses in preparation of the site visit. It found that all theses attest to the quality of the programmes, and demonstrate the level and quality that may be expected of bachelor's or master's theses in Political Science. The panel noticed that the bachelor's theses tend to follow a similar setup, reflecting the accent on empirical research in the research methods course. This leads to well-executed and solid theses, some of which achieve a high quality. In the master's theses, the panel found the level to be high overall. The theses reflect the nature and content of the various specializations, and can be qualitative or quantitative, or, in case of the PT specialization, theoretical.

#### *Alumni performance*

Graduates of the bachelor's programme mainly move on to a master's programme. They are regularly accepted into research master's programmes, and have occasionally been admitted to prominent foreign universities. Alumni the panel met with said they felt well-prepared for their master's.

Alumni of the master's programme usually find employment in a relevant work environment. 55% do so within six months after graduation; another 25% pursue a second Master's degree. Most graduates find employment with businesses, consultancies, governments and international organisations at different administrative levels (local, provincial, national and EU); this is followed by those who find employment as a researcher (university/PhD; think tank). The remaining graduates find employment with NGOs and media and in politics. Alumni that the panel interviewed look back on their master's with warmth and appreciation. They say it provided thorough and proper training for their careers and a solid foundation for future development.

### Considerations

According to the panel, the theses and alumni of both programmes clearly demonstrate that the learning outcomes are achieved. The bachelor's theses have a solid set-up and quality, and the master's theses demonstrate the breadth of the programme's spectrum of specializations and are generally of high quality. Bachelor's alumni move on easily to master's programmes in the Netherlands and abroad, and master's graduates find their way to positions in research or the working field. Alumni look back with appreciation and warmth on the programmes.

### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programmes meet standard 4.

### General conclusion

The panel's assessment of the bachelor's programme Politicologie and the master's programme Political Science is positive.



## Recommendations

1. Re-name or re-focus the BSc's Democracy track to define its focus and content in relation to the Conflict track.
2. Monitor the feasibility of the newer master's tracks, also in view of the work pressure of staff members invested in them.
3. Continue the reorientation of especially the MSc towards other perspectives than the traditional Western one, doing so in a conscious manner and making choices on where these perspectives can be located in the curriculum.
4. Investigate whether more flexibility surrounding the scheduling and deadlines of the internships and theses could be introduced in both programmes to enhance feasibility.
5. Strengthen the Examination Board and invest in a better electronic support system for improved standardization in dealing with straightforward student requests.

# Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

## **BSc Politicologie**

At the end of the programme, student are capable of:

Theory - 1. explaining and applying the main notions, theories and concepts of the various subfields of political science (Comparative Politics, International Relations, Conflict Studies and Political Theory):

- a. in analyses of contemporary views and phenomena at regional, national, European and international levels; and
- b. relating them to basic knowledge of (international) constitutional and administrative law, (international) economics and modern history.

Research - 2. using the most important concepts and techniques in the field of social science and policy research when critically evaluating empirical research and when conducting (parts of) political science research.

Application - 3. performing a critical-reflective analysis of a political science problem by designing, conducting and interpreting survey research, quantitative-comparative research and (comparative) case studies.

Communication - 4. communicating and reporting adequately on political science research, scientific analysis and policy proposals by working systematically when gathering and processing information and reporting on it in writing and orally to both specialists and non-specialists.

Reflection - 5. reflecting on:

- a. the role of power, political institutions, political actors, and principles of justice in society;
- b. the assumptions and uncertainties underlying theoretical-empirical research.

## **MSc Political Science**

At the end of the degree programme, students are capable of:

Theory

1. within their own specialisation, explaining the most important trends, approaches, recent focus areas and scientific debates, and explaining, applying and critically assessing the substantive methodological and normative aspects in their specialised field.

Application

2. analysing political phenomena at national, subnational, regional and international levels and interpreting them in the light of empirical and normative theories in political science by:
  - a. applying the comparative method to and commenting on the development of modern democratic systems and the political participation of citizens (CP); or
  - b. conducting an analysis of the interaction between political (and economic) phenomena at the international, regional, European, national and subnational levels (IR); or
  - c. conducting an analysis based on philosophical perspectives that are compiled into a coherent vision of fundamental concepts of political theory and translating this vision into the establishment of a political community (PT); or

- d. conducting an analysis of conflict and (post) conflict resolution (CoPoPo); or
- e. using approaches from economics and political science to analyse contemporary social and political problems (IPE); or
- f. conducting an analysis which addresses fundamental questions in international, European, national or subnational politics from a gender and diversity perspective (GEP); or
- g. conducting an analysis of the politics, governance, and legitimacy of EU policy-making and the EU's impact on domestic and global power dynamics (EUPG).

#### Research

- 3. autonomously designing an empirical (quantitative and/or qualitative) study or political-theoretical study, implementing and assessing the study, and in this way contributing to the growth of scientific knowledge.

#### Reflection

- 4. reflecting on the role of power, influence, actors, institutions and scientific research in a national and international scientific context and in modern and classical approaches to the state.

#### Communication

- 5. in a scientifically credible fashion, communicating and reporting on analyses and research, and adequately accounting for this analysis and research, in writing and orally, in both academia and in a professional environment.

## Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

### BSc Politicologie

#### Bachelor's curriculum: 2022-23

Year	Semester 1		Semester 2		EC
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	
Year 1	Inleiding Politicologie	Inleiding Conflictanalyse	Internationale Organisaties	Filosofie van de Managementwetenschappen	60
	Onderzoeks- en Interventie Methodologie A	Economie van de Managementwetenschappen	Onderzoeks- en Interventie Methodologie B	Project 1: Verklaringen van Politieke Houdingen en Politiek Gedrag in Nederland	
	Academische Vaardigheden Politicologie		Nederlandse Politiek in Vergelijkend Perspectief		

#### Macht en democratie (Power and Democracy)

Year 2	Theory and History of European Integration (EN)	Geschiedenis van het Politieke Denken	Comparative Politics: Democratisation (EN)	Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy (EN)	60
	Political Science Research Methods I (EN)	Political Parties: Origins, Transformations and Future Prospects (EN)	Political Science Research Methods II (EN)	Hedendaagse Politieke Filosofie	
	Project 2: European Governance		Project 3: Democracy and Representation (EN)		
Year 3	Elective	Elective	Bachelor thesis (12 EC)		60
	Elective	Elective	Political Communication (EN)	Politics, Ethics and Practice (EN)	
	Introduction to International Political Economy (EN)		Theories of International Relations (EN)		

#### Macht en conflict (Power and Conflict)

Year 2	Theory and History of European Integration (EN)	Geschiedenis van het Politieke Denken	Comparative Politics: Democratisation (EN)	Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policy (EN)	60
	Political Science Research Methods I (EN)	Political Parties: Origins, Transformations and Future Prospects (EN)	Political Science Research Methods II (EN)	Negotiations and Peacemaking (EN)	
	Project 2: Conflict Management (EN)		Project 3: Democracy and Representation (EN)		
Year 3	Elective	Elective	Bachelor thesis (12 EC)		60
	Elective	Elective	Polymaking for Conflict-affected Societies (EN)	Hedendaagse Politieke Filosofie	
	Introduction to International Political Economy (EN)		Theories of International Relations (EN)		

Focus International Relations = blue / Focus Comparative Politics = yellow / Focus Political Theory = green /  
 Focus Conflict Studies = orange / Focus Research Methods = pink / Faculty wide courses = grey  
 EN = courses taught in English / EC = European Credits / Courses count 6 EC unless stated otherwise.

## MSc Political Science

Master's curriculum: 2022 – 2023

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Period 1 (September - October)	Period 2 (November - January)	Period 3 (February - March)	Period 4 (April - June)
<b>Comparative Politics</b>			
Sociology, Philosophy and Ethics of Research Theories of Comparative Politics: Structure, Identity and Choice	Advanced Research Methods Elective <i>or</i> Internship	The Politics of Reform Democratic Theory	Master's Thesis
<b>International Relations</b>			
Sociology, Philosophy and Ethics of Research Current Debates in International Relations Theory International Security	Advanced Research Methods Global Political Economy	Elective <i>or</i> Internship Global Governance	Master's Thesis
<b>Political Theory</b>			
Sociology, Philosophy and Ethics of Research Power in Political Theory Contemporary Debates in Political Theory	Advanced Research Methods Urban Political Theory	Elective <i>or</i> Internship Democratic Theory <i>or</i> Just War theory	Master's Thesis
<b>International Political Economy</b>			
Current Debates in International Political Economy Societal Challenges in Economics Methods of Empirical Analysis	Culture & Institutions <i>or</i> Inequality & Development <i>or</i> Macroeconomics & Policy Global Political Economy	Global Political Economy of Climate Change Global Governance	Master's Thesis
<b>Conflict, Power and Politics</b>			
Conflicting Theories: Applying Theoretical Approaches of Conflicts Theories of Comparative Politics: Structure, Identity and Choice	Advanced Research Methods Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding	Elective <i>or</i> Internship Just War Theory	

International Security

Master's Thesis

Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Politics

Gender and Diversity in Organisations	Advanced Research Methods	Elective <i>or</i> Internship
Power in Political Theory	Political Socialisation	Gender, Conflict and Security
Political Representation and its Challenges		Master's Thesis

European Union: Politics and Governance

Sociology, Philosophy and Ethics of Research	Advanced Research Methods	EU Policy in Practice
The EU Executive Order	Elective <i>or</i> Internship	EU in Global Politics
Politicization in the EU Arena		Master's Thesis

N.B. All courses are 6 EC; the Master's thesis counts for 18 EC

## Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

### Day 1 23 February 2023

13.00	13.15	Welcome
13.15	14.45	Internal panel discussion, including office hour
14.45	15.15	Interview management
15.15	15.45	Tour
15.45	16.15	Internal panel discussion
16.15	17.00	Interview students BSc
17.00	17.45	Interview teaching staff BSc

### Day 2 24 February 2023

09.30	10.15	Interview students MSc
10.15	11.00	Interview teaching staff MSc
11.00	11.30	Internal panel discussion
11.30	12.00	Interview Examination Board
12.00	12.45	Interview Advisory Board and alumni
12.45	13.30	Lunch and preparation second management interview (panel)
13.30	14.15	Final interview management
14.15	15.45	Preparing preliminary findings (panel)
15.45	16.15	Development dialogue
16.15	16.45	Oral report

## Appendix 4. Materials

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

- Self-evaluations BSc and MSc
- Subject specific reference framework
- Structure of the Bachelor's and Master's programmes
- Overview of the teaching staff
- Composition of the Advisory Board 2022
- Internship regulations and assessment form
- Overview of Internships 2021-23
- Bachelor's Thesis guide and assessment form 2021
- Master's Thesis guide and assessment form 2021
- Annual report of the Examination Board 2021
- Annual report of the Programme Committee 2021
- Exit data Bachelor's programme
- Bachelor's-Master's throughput
- Exit survey Bachelor's and Master's programmes 2021
- On COVID-19
- Alumni survey Bachelor's and Master's programmes 2019
- Brightspace course information
- Previous assessment reports and NVAO decisions