Report development dialogue
Bachelor Management, Society & Technology (BSc)
Master European Studies (MSc)
Master Public Administration (MSc)

University of Twente, 9 November 2023

Introduction

On 8 and 9 November 2023 the bachelor programme Management, Society & Technology and the master programmes European Studies and Public Administration have been assessed by an external panel of experts. The final assessment will be performed by NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie). In addition to the formal assessment, a development dialogue has taken place on 9 November 2023. During this conversation, the programme management and the panel discussed some aspects of the programme in light of further possible improvement. Present at the conversation were the assessment panel and programme representatives.

This report summarises the topics posed by the programme management and the takeaways from the discussion with the panel members.

Discussion topics

The programme management submitted the following discussion topics:

1a)   The scope of the graduation thesis (bachelor and master).

1b)   The graduation thesis as a necessary component of rounding off the study

1c)   The scale of the graduation thesis and suitable replacements

2a)   The elements of the programme that should make (more) room for new developments

2b)   The trends we should explore further for long-term further development

Discussion takeaways

1a) The scope of the graduation thesis (bachelor and master)
- A suggestion is to experiment with master theses, for example through contracts with partners in the public sector on doing relevant research for them. We could use our alumni-network for this.
- The master programmes (especially ES) should offer the students enough room for flexibility, for instance by offering the possibility to choose electives.

1b) The graduation thesis as a necessary component of rounding off the study
- For the master the graduation thesis is a necessary element for reaching the objectives of the learning lines and therefore for graduation.
- Additional forms of graduation for the master and the bachelor programme could be a live podcast, a policy brief, a management summary or a Living Lab with public or private partners.

1c) The scale of the graduation thesis and suitable replacements
- For a one year master a 15 EC thesis can be considered instead of a 30 EC thesis.
- For the bachelor as well as the master thesis a preparatory methodology course which includes writing the research proposal should remain part of the curriculum.

2a) The elements of the programme that should make (more) room for new developments
- Co-creation and co-delivery are important for students, especially for students that also work besides their study programme.
- The social and ethical aspects of dealing with technological issues, like robotization and block chain should be an integral part of the curriculum.
- As a university we have to stay relevant in a world that increasingly offers non-academic substitute products, like virtual professors. Especially the University of Twente has opportunities to do this, because our programmes are embedded in a university of technology.
- Digitalization and privacy-issues are key elements for providing more realistic knowledge to our students about the working of information systems.

2b) The trends we should explore further for long-term further development
- The power of Big Data should be explored further, because it plays an increasingly larger role in decision-making procedures, with an eye for normative issues like the democratic embeddedness as well as an empirical (not post-modern) approach.
- Next to the focus on Big Data and the ethical issues involved, collaboration with other programmes and faculties at the University of Twente is important.
- We should also investigate the positive role of Artificial Intelligence (AI), for instance making it more community-based (compare the research of Bram Verschuere in Gent, Flanders).
- We should not try to do what everything else does, but strengthen a niche as Public Administration in a technological environment and look for more internationally oriented classes and subjects.
- We should improve our visibility on Google, because our programmes are now hard to find.
- We could use the possibility for our one year master students ES and PA to do an Erasmus exchange after the 60 EC programme, by staying enrolled in the next semester and receive the diploma later.

We thank all the involved for their valuable input.