



MSc Educational Sciences
Utrecht University

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Summary

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The panel finds that the MSc Educational Sciences has a clear vision to educate academic professionals for various roles as educational scientists, with additional opportunities for students with a teaching interest or background through the MPABO and Teacher Track. The intended learning outcomes reflect the academic orientation and master's level of the programme, and are aligned with the expectations of the field. Overall, the panel thinks that the current aims and goals of the MSc ES are on a satisfactory level.

There are however opportunities to further tune the programme to the needs of various groups of prospective students, specifically those with a previous education in Educational Sciences. To further develop this, the programme should reflect on its profile, and determine on which target groups it wants to focus, and what their specific needs are. This reflection should also include further opportunities for specialization, for instance in the macro-level of education next to the micro- and meso-level. Furthermore, the panel recommends reviving the professional field committee to formalize stakeholder input from the professional field.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

According to the panel, the programme translated its intended learning outcomes into a well-designed and structured curriculum for both the full-time and part-time variants. It provides students with a broad range of concepts and skills relevant to educational scientists, with opportunities to shape the curriculum to their own interests in the electives, internship and thesis. The courses are interactive, and students can develop their professional and academic skills in multiple curriculum elements, including assignments based on challenges from professional practice. Regarding academic skills, the panel recommends monitoring the balance between quantitative and qualitative research methods in the curriculum, safeguarding that students can fully prepare themselves for both types of thesis projects.

The choice for an English-language programme is valid based on the international classroom ambitions of the programme. Full implementation of this concept is however currently impaired due to the low number of international students. The panel recommends either strengthening or reconsidering the didactic concept of the international classroom. The curriculum is feasible, and student support is well-implemented in the programme. The teaching staff form a cooperative team of professionally and academically oriented experts with relevant research expertise, and is appreciated by students for their expertise and approachability.

Standard 3. Student assessment

The programme has a thorough system of assessment, and a thriving assessment culture which the panel applauds. Assessment methods are varied and fit the goals of the programme. The assessment procedures promote valid, reliable and transparent assessment, and the Board of Examiners is in control of assessment quality assurance. There is ample attention paid to formative feedback to students, and supervisors align their assessment practices in calibration sessions. Thesis assessment is appropriate with a solid assessment procedure.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The panel finds that the master's theses as well as the job prospects of alumni demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are achieved.

Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

MSc Educational Sciences

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. D. (Douwe) Beijaard, chair

MSc P. (Peter) Hildering, secretary

Date: 6 July 2023

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 20 and 21 April 2023, the master programme Educational Sciences of the Universiteit Utrecht was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment Onderwijswetenschappen (Educational Sciences). The assessment cluster consisted of 9 programmes, offered by the institutions Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Maastricht University, Universiteit Twente, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Open Universiteit, Universiteit Utrecht and Universiteit van Amsterdam. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Educational Sciences. Peter Hildering and Fiona Schouten acted as coordinators for the cluster, and Peter Hildering (Groningen, Nijmegen and Utrecht), Mariëlle Klerks (Maastricht and University of Amsterdam), Mariette Huisjes (Twente) and Jessica van Rossum (Open University) acted as secretaries in the cluster assessment. They are all 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 3 November 2022, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

The programme composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The programme selected representative partners for the various interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would be organized in the form of thematic sessions during the site visit. A separate development report was made based on these sessions.

The programme provided the secretary with a list of graduates over the period 2019-2021. In consultation with the secretary, the panel chair selected 15 theses. He took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various tracks. Before the site visit, Academion received the relevant documentation from the programme, consisting of an extensive set of current documentation pertaining to the four standards of examination that, together with a cover letter and SWOT analysis, served as a self-evaluation report. This included a comprehensive analysis of the programme's strengths and weaknesses, and a separate and independent student chapter along with the required appendices. Before and during the site visit, the panel studied the additional documents provided by the programme. An overview of these materials can be found in 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 on 13 April 2023, the panel discussed the initial findings on the self-evaluation report and theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

Site visit

During the site visit, the panel interviewed various programme representatives (see appendix 3). The panel also offered students and staff members the opportunity for a confidential discussion during a consultation hour. One person made use of his opportunity. 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 at 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 programme 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 Utrecht University.

Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Prof. dr. Douwe Beijaard, emeritus professor of Professional Learning at Eindhoven University of Technology (chair);
- Prof. dr. Bram De Wever, associate professor of Learning and Instruction at Ghent University;
- Prof. dr. Katrien Struyven, professor at the School for Educational Sciences at Hasselt University;
- Dr. Nynke Bos, lector Teaching, Learning & Technology at Hogeschool Inholland;
- Prof. dr. Martin Valcke, professor of Educational Sciences at Ghent University;
- Prof. dr. Jo Tondeur, professor of Educational Innovation and Technology at Free University of Brussel;
- Prof. dr. David Gijbels, professor of Learning and Instruction at Antwerp University;
- Prof. dr. Piet Van den Bossche, professor of Learning in Organisations at Antwerp University and professor of Team Learning at Maastricht University;
- Prof. dr. Wilfried Admiraal, professor of Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning at Oslo Metropolitan University;
- Eline Pothoven, BSc Educational Sciences, Utrecht University (student member);
- Juliette de Groot, BSc Educational Sciences, University of Amsterdam, (student member).

The panel that assessed the MSc Educational Science at Utrecht University consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. Douwe Beijaard, emeritus professor of Professional Learning at Eindhoven University of Technology (chair);
- Prof. dr. Bram De Wever, associate professor of Learning and Instruction at Ghent University;
- Prof. dr. Katrien Struyven, professor at the School for Educational Sciences at Hasselt University;
- Juliette de Groot, BSc Educational Sciences, University of Amsterdam, (student member).

Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	Universiteit Utrecht
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Educational Sciences
CROHO number:	60099
Level:	Master
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	-
Location:	Utrecht
Mode(s) of study:	Full-time, part-time
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

Profile and aims

The master's programme Educational Sciences (ES) is organized by the department of Education at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FSB) of Utrecht University (UU). It aims to educate academic professionals that are able to contribute to both theoretical and practical problems in learning, development and education. It focuses on the micro-level (e.g. processes of learning and development, learning and instruction) and the meso-level (e.g. change management, innovation, learning in innovations) of educational sciences. Students are able to specialize in a particular domain of choice through assignments, an elective course and the choice for an internship and master's thesis. After graduation, students are able to work in a variety of roles as educational scientist, for instance as developer of educational materials, trainer in the commercial or non-profit sector, change management consultant or PhD researcher. The programme is offered in English to allow for an international classroom in which students can learn from various cultural perspectives on education.

A specific target group for the programme are students that are interested in teaching or are already working as a teacher. The MSc Educational Sciences can be followed part-time, allowing students to follow an adapted curriculum of 30 EC per year. For students that already have a teaching qualification in primary, secondary or higher education, the programme offers a Teacher Track, where students are trained to become educational innovators. They follow the same curriculum as the regular full-time or part-time students, but are offered challenges focusing on their educational field in the assignments, internship and thesis.

The MPABO is a specific implementation of the part-time variant. In the MPABO, students combine the programme with a Primary School Teacher Qualification (Pabo) in collaboration with Hogeschool Utrecht (HU). This is a two-year double degree programme in which students combine the part-time variant of the MSc Educational Sciences with the flexible part-time *Pabo* for academics at HU. The MPABO is only open to students with a relevant academic bachelor's or master's degree. At the end, students receive both the UU MSc diploma Educational Sciences and a HU bachelor's degree. The total curriculum contains 60 EC at academic master's level, and a minimum of 60 EC at professional bachelor's level depending on the prior competencies obtained by the student. Students follow the same curriculum as students in the regular part-time variant for their UU courses. The route leading to the Pabo hbo-bachelor degree is accredited at the HU Pabo (ISAT 34808). The special option started in 2022, with the first graduates expected in 2024.

The panel studied the vision and profile of the programme, and discussed this with various programme representatives during the site visit. It concludes that the aim to educate academic professionals for various roles as educational scientists is clear and well-chosen. The MPABO and Teacher Track offer interesting opportunities for students with a teaching interest or background, and the part-time variant allows students to combine the programme with a job. The panel noted that the programme attracts a limited amount of

students from the UU BSc Onderwijswetenschappen (15 students in 2022 – approximately 25% of the BSc graduates). The majority of students (42 in 2022) is admitted through the pre-master's programme and comes in with a different background. In discussions during the site visit, the panel found out that students that have already followed a BSc in Educational Sciences do not always see the added value of this MSc on top of their BSc, and increasingly choose to specialize in a specific aspect of Educational Sciences or broaden their perspective in a different field. If the programme wants to appeal to this target group, the panel thinks that it has to explain better what it has to offer to these students. The panel notes that the programme management is aware of this, and is planning a reflection on what the MSc can offer to the various target groups for the programme. The panel supports this, and thinks that this reflection should at least include possibilities for specialization in the curriculum, the focus on micro-, meso- and macro-level (see below) and the role of the international classroom (see standard 2).

The panel understands the choice to focus on the micro- and meso-level of education, which aligns with the professional environment of educational professionals that participate in the programme, as well as with the research expertise of the staff. At the same time, the panel considers the macro-level (educational system and policy) to be relevant for an all-round professional in the educational sciences. This view was supported by several students and alumni during the interviews, who would have preferred more opportunities to specialize in this area. The panel suggests to investigate possibilities to add more opportunities for specialization in the macro level to the programme, for instance in collaboration with other programmes such as public administration and organizational sciences. This might also appeal to students that want to broaden or specialize after their BSc Educational Sciences.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (see appendix 1) are divided into five groups, corresponding with the five Dublin Descriptors for higher education: Knowledge and Understanding, Applying Knowledge and Understanding, Opinion Forming, Communication Skills and Learning Skills. The first two groups are both subdivided into methodological/statistical and educationally substantive knowledge and skills. The intended learning outcomes are the same for all variants of the programme, including (the UU part of) the MPABO and Teacher Track; these only differ in terms of the teaching-learning environment.

The panel studied the intended learning outcomes of the programme and concludes that these are demonstrably formulated at academic master's level through their coupling to the Dublin Descriptors. Their connection to the domain-specific framework of reference of educational sciences ensures that they are aligned with the expectations of the field. The panel found out that the programme staff has many connections to the professional field through personal contacts, practical assignments in courses and internship, and uses these connections in an informal way to keep themselves informed on trends and expectations in the field. Until 2020, the BSc and MSc in educational sciences of the UU had an active professional field committee that provided the programme with input on the goals and content of the curriculum. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, meetings of this committee were suspended and eventually discontinued. The programme is now contemplating whether to revive this committee or to rely on the informal contacts with the field. The panel supports re-establishing the committee in order to formalize the contacts with the field, creating a group of professional stakeholders that is well-informed on the programmes and can act as a sounding board in the longer term. An additional benefit of a professional field committee is that existing external contacts can be maintained in a more sustainable way.

Considerations

The panel finds that the MSc Educational Sciences has a clear vision to educate academic professionals for various roles as educational scientists, with additional opportunities for students with a teaching interest or background through the MPABO and Teacher Track. The intended learning outcomes reflect the academic orientation and master's level of the programme, and are aligned with the expectations of the field. Overall, the panel thinks that the current aims and goals of the MSc ES are on a satisfactory level. There are however opportunities to further tune the programme to the needs of various groups of prospective students, specifically those with a previous education in Educational Sciences. To further develop this, the programme should reflect on its profile, and determine on which target groups it wants to focus, and what their specific needs are. This reflection should also include further opportunities for specialization, for instance in the macro-level of education next to the micro- and meso-level. Furthermore, the panel recommends reviving the professional field committee to formalize stakeholder input from the professional field.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

Curriculum

The curriculum of the MSc Educational Sciences consists of core courses (25 EC), an elective course (5 EC), an internship (10 EC) and the master's thesis (20 EC). The *core courses* consist of the fundamental concepts and skills of educational sciences on a master's level, whereas the *elective course* allows students to study an area of choice. Students do an *internship* in an educational non-profit or profit organization. The goal is to gain work experience as an educational scientist, and to develop a product relevant to an educational challenge within the internship organization. The *master's thesis* is split into a preparatory course (5 EC) where students write their research plan, and the individual execution of this research plan (15 EC) under supervision of a senior teaching staff member. The thesis is usually an empirical research project that provides new insights into an educationally relevant academic problem. The final project of the thesis is a research article describing the research that was carried out.

The programme has defined four learning paths throughout the curriculum: research, instructional design and assessment, learning in organisations, and job market orientation (JMO). The instructional design and learning in organization learning paths are largely covered by the core courses of the programme with the same name and complemented by the core course Educational Design and Consultancy. The research learning path consists of the courses Master's thesis plan and Master's thesis. The JMO learning path consists mainly of the course Academic Professional and the Internship. Research skills are embedded in the courses, and are highlighted during the master's thesis preparatory courses.

Students in the part-time variant (both regular and MPABO) follow the same courses, spread out over two years. Students in the MPABO variant spend the other half of their time obtaining their teacher qualification for primary education at the HU. The full-time and part-time versions of the curriculum are included in appendix 2.

The panel studied the structure and content of the curriculum of both variants. It is positive about the opportunities offered to students to develop themselves as educational scientists. The core courses provide students with a broad range of relevant concepts and skills, whereas the electives, internship and thesis allows students to develop their personal interests and skills in a specific area within educational sciences. The four learning paths provide structure to the curriculum and provide insight to students about where the knowledge and skills related to the core concepts of the programme are located. As such, the panel complies with the recommendation given by the previous accreditation committee on this topic in an appropriate way.

The panel noted from the course content that the curriculum emphasizes quantitative research skills, whereas the master's theses that the panel studied demonstrate qualitative as well as quantitative and mixed methods research projects. Students and staff explained during the interviews that qualitative research skills are embedded more implicitly in the curriculum, as smaller elements of courses and in electives. Students interested in qualitative research projects are often referred to relevant electives by their supervisor, or can be recommended additional material throughout the thesis trajectory. The panel approves that the curriculum provides opportunities for using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The theses that the panel studied demonstrated that students are able to successfully master either of these methods. The panel recommends careful maintaining and monitoring of the balance between content in qualitative and quantitative research methods on a programme level to ensure that it remains this way, as this is currently safeguarded by individual teaching staff members only.

Didactic concept and internationalization

The programme is organized along the lines of the educational model of the UU, which emphasizes student-centred and activating education. The programme aims to create an interactive learning environment, with ample opportunities for peer and staff-student interaction in an international classroom. Particular attention is paid to creating connections between theory and practice. Students practice their professional skills during the internship, as well as through authentic assignments in courses that are often based on or directly originate from the professional field. The Academic Professional course is fully dedicated to professional development. It consists of a series of assignments woven throughout the entire second part of the curriculum. Students discuss and experience authentic assignments regarding ethics and professional and scientific identity. For students in the Teacher Track or the MPABO, these assignments (as well as those in other core courses) are tailored to their specific professional context. The panel appreciates the programme's didactic concept. The connection between theory and practice is well-established, with many opportunities for students to practice their professional skills in the internship, assignments and the Academic Professional course. Students confirmed to the panel that the courses are very interactive and that there is frequent contact between staff and students.

In line with the aim to create an international classroom, the programme is offered in English. Through the international classroom, the programme aims to address topics from a diversity of perspectives. According to the programme, it is very valuable for students to learn from educational contexts in different countries and cultures. Furthermore, the academic field of educational sciences is very internationally oriented, which requires a sufficient command of English. This is particularly the case for students that aim for a career in research. The panel considers the choice for an English-language programme (as well as an English language name for this programme) to be valid based on the ambitions of the programme. The international classroom is visible in the international background of several teaching staff members, as well as in the content and literature of the courses. Intercultural learning between students is currently less pronounced due to the small number of international students in the programme (approximately 5 per cohort in a population of 70-100 students). The programme management recognizes this as an issue, and realizes that

the international student population needs strengthening for the international classroom to be fully fruitful. If this is not expected to be feasible, the didactic concept regarding the international classroom should be reconsidered. The panel supports this, and recommends taking up this issue as part of the reprofiling discussion mentioned under standard 1. If the programme chooses to strengthen the international classroom, the panel thinks that this should include a deliberate strategy to promote intercultural learning, as well as a strategy to create equal opportunities for international students to connect to the (non-Dutch) professional field of education in assignments, internships and the thesis.

Guidance and feasibility

To help students over the course of the entire curriculum, students are assigned a tutor at the start of the programme. A tutor is a teaching staff member trained for this purpose who helps students with information, advice and referral through individual conversations, either planned or spontaneous during weekly walk-in hours. The tutor helps students find their way in the programme, make curriculum choices and deal with the study. The tutor also helps with planning and progress, as well as future career orientation. During the internship, students are supervised by an internal internship supervisor within the programme, and by an external supervisor at the internship organization on a daily basis. Students can find a suitable organization on a list of regulars provided by the programme, or can suggest an organization of their own choice to their internal supervisor, who then can make further arrangements with this organization.

For their thesis project, students are coupled with a supervisor. To promote study progress, the thesis is approached as a course scheduled in a specific period, encouraging students to complete their project in the set time. During the master's thesis preparation course, students find a thesis supervisor and topic so that they can immediately start their project afterwards. Students usually find a topic and supervisor from a list provided by the programme, but can also propose their own topic and find a supervisor with expertise relevant to this topic. External projects are possible after making detailed arrangements through the thesis supervisor with an external organization. Students have multiple supervision meetings during the execution of their thesis, where they discuss progress and challenges. Depending on the number of students per supervisor, supervision meetings can either be one-on-one, or in small groups. The thesis process is concluded with a report and a conference where students present their work to an audience.

Based on the documentation, as well as the comments of students on this topic, the panel concludes that student support is well-designed in the programme and appreciated by students. The tutor system provides a strong basis for this, giving students a designated point of contact for all issues they might encounter during the programme. The structured approach of the internship and thesis promotes study progress. Students of both full-time and part-time variants consider the curriculum to be feasible, even though in particular part-time students take more time to complete the programme due to the challenge to combine studying with a job. Approximately 80% of students complete the programme within 2 years, which the panel deems to be appropriate, especially considering that one-third of the students studies part-time.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff of the programme is associated with the department of Education of FSB. Among the teaching staff are four full professors and eight associate professors; the other staff members are employed in a variety of positions related to research and education in the department. The large majority of teachers are active researchers within educational sciences. In line with the educational vision of the UU, professionalization of the teaching staff is important to the programme. The MSc aims for all teaching staff members to obtain a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). New teaching staff members are given time to obtain their UTQ as quickly as possible, and follow an introductory scheme offered by the department to make them familiar with the concepts and methods of the programme. Furthermore, teaching staff members

are encouraged to pursue a Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ), which is currently held by eight teaching staff members.

The panel studied the documents, including a manual for new teachers, and spoke with staff and students. It is very positive about the quantity and quality of the teaching staff. It is a good mix of professionally and academically oriented experts, with relevant research expertise for teaching in the MSc. There is ample attention for professionalization. Students praised their teachers on various occasions for their expertise and approachability. The panel sensed an atmosphere of cooperation and team spirit among the teaching staff throughout the site visit, and a dedication to deliver a high-quality MSc programme. The faculty management carefully monitors workload among the staff, and aims to ensure that individual staff members, even though workload can be high at times, do not become overburdened. Compared to the previous site visit, the faculty has invested in more long-term staff members that carry the programme, meeting the concerns of the previous accreditation committee on this issue.

Considerations

According to the panel, the programme translated its intended learning outcomes into a well-designed and structured curriculum for both the full-time and part-time variants. It provides students with a broad range of concepts and skills relevant to educational scientists, with opportunities to shape the curriculum to their own interests in the electives, internship and thesis. The courses are interactive, and students can develop their professional and academic skills in multiple curriculum elements, including assignments based on challenges from professional practice. Regarding academic skills, the panel recommends monitoring the balance between quantitative and qualitative research methods in the curriculum, safeguarding that students can fully prepare themselves for both types of thesis projects. The choice for an English-language programme is valid based on the international classroom ambitions of the programme. Full implementation of this concept is however currently impaired due to the low number of international students. The panel recommends either strengthening or reconsidering the didactic concept of the international classroom. The curriculum is feasible, and student support is well-implemented in the programme. The teaching staff form a cooperative team of professionally and academically oriented experts with relevant research expertise, and is appreciated by students for their expertise and approachability.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment system

The assessment system of the MSc Educational Sciences is established in an elaborate assessment plan. This is a central document that describes how the goals of the programme connect to the individual courses and learning paths, as well as the assessment of these goals. This plan also details the assessment philosophy of the programme. Important elements are constructive alignment (assessment that aligns the learning goals, the content and teaching methods of the courses), a combination of formative and summative assessment within courses, and assessment in authentic situations. The latter are often long-term assignments that students work on during the entire course. These assignments often involve students working on complex, multifaceted problems, that require the application of both knowledge and skills, for instance the

development of an educational advice or design for an organization. Most assignments are individual papers or presentations; in the case of group assignments this never accounts for more than 50% of the final grade to prevent free-riding.

The internship is assessed through two reports. The first is a legitimization report describing the work, the approach and choices, and the basis for these choices based on educational scientific literature. The second is a reflection report in which students reflect on the realization of their personal learning goals. Both reports are graded by the university supervisor, taking the recommendations of the external daily supervisor into account. The final grade is a weighted average of the grades of both reports.

The programme has various mechanisms to promote valid, reliable and transparent assessment. For each course it uses assessment plans and assessment matrices that couple the learning goals with the assignment, and each assignment and its rubric is checked by at least two teaching staff members. Course coordinators have annual meetings with the programme management to discuss and align the course assessment plans with the programme assessment plans and faculty procedures. Additionally, the programme organizes regular calibration sessions, where teaching staff members compare and discuss assessment of master's theses and other assignments.

The programme shares its Board of Examiners with the other one-year master's programmes in the Faculty. Within this committee, the programme has its own Board with programme representatives that discuss issues specific to Educational Sciences. The Board of Examiners has an important role in safeguarding the quality of assessment. The Board investigates, analyzes and advises on assessment in the programme. This is done reactively, for instance in the case of complaints or unusual results, as well as proactively, through checks on course assessment, internship reports and an annual sample of master's theses.

The panel studied the system of assessment in the programme. It is very positive on the thorough assessment plan that the programme uses, consisting of a balanced form of assessment methods corresponding with the core knowledge and skills of the programme; ways of assessment comprise thesis plan and thesis article next to exams, presentations, assignments, papers, and reflection. Particularly the long-term practical assignments in the courses are an effective way to assess students in an integrated way. The panel learnt from students that the teaching staff invests in providing students with extensive formative feedback throughout the courses, which the panel applauds. The rubrics, assessment forms and assessment procedures for the courses and the internship are up to standard, and the Board of Examiners is in control of the quality assurance of assessment in the programme.

Assessment culture in general is an asset of the programme. The panel learnt that the programme has a so-called assessment ambassador that promotes sharing of best practices, initiates projects for innovation in assessment, and acts as a guide for teaching staff members looking for help in designing of test and exams. Furthermore, the calibration sessions are a very good mechanism that ensures that assessment practices between individual supervisors remain aligned.

Thesis assessment

The master thesis is assessed by the supervisor as first examiner, and a second, independent examiner not otherwise involved in the thesis process. Both examiners independently complete an assessment form, using a rubric describing what a satisfactory, good or excellent thesis entails with regard to the separate assessment criteria. These criteria include the thesis quality (introduction, method, results, discussion, organization and style) as well as the graduation process. After completing this form, the examiners meet and jointly agree on the score per criterium, as well as on the final grade. This assessment is completed on a

new assessment form, including qualitative feedback. The final element of the thesis assessment is a presentation to an audience. This is assessed on a pass/fail basis.

The panel is positive about the solid thesis assessment procedures of the programme. The procedure where both supervisors separately score the student before engaging in discussion is appreciated by the panel, as well as the rubrics. The panel considers these procedures to be informative and useful, and to promote valid, reliable and transparent assessment. Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 master's theses and their assessment forms. It generally agreed with the assessment in all cases, and concludes that thesis assessment works well in practice.

Considerations

The programme has a thorough system of assessment, and a thriving assessment culture which the panel applauds. Assessment methods are varied and fit the goals of the programme. The assessment procedures promote valid, reliable and transparent assessment, and the Board of Examiners is in control of assessment quality assurance. There is ample attention paid to formative feedback to students, and supervisors align their assessment practices in calibration sessions. Thesis assessment is appropriate with solid assessment procedures.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 master's theses, taking care to include a variety of topics and fields. It concludes that all master's projects are of an appropriate master's level. The selection contained a mix of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, which were all of the expected quality.

Based on a recent alumni survey, over 90% of graduates find a relevant job within half a year after graduation. They often work in education (ranging from primary to higher education) as a designer, consultant, researcher or teacher. Other students work in learning & development, business, health care or the government. Alumni in general are satisfied with their education, which was echoed by the alumni that the panel interviewed during the site visit.

Considerations

The panel finds that the master's theses as well as the job prospects of alumni demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are achieved.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel's assessment of the MSc Educational Sciences is positive for both the full-time and part-time variant of the programme.

Development points

1. Work on a restrengthening of the profile of the MSc. Specific points of attention are the added value of this MSc on top of a BSc in Educational Sciences, further opportunities for specialization, particularly in the macro level of education next to the micro- and meso-level, and the role of the international classroom.
2. Revive the professional field committee to formalize stakeholder input from the professional field.
3. Monitor the balance between qualitative and quantitative research methods in the curriculum, safeguarding that students can prepare themselves for both types of thesis projects.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Dublin Descriptor	Label	Learning outcomes
		Graduates of the Master's Degree Programme in Educational Sciences are able to:
Knowledge and understanding (methodological/statistical)	DD1_1a	analyse existing academic knowledge and formulate a problem definition
	DD1_1b	design a research design
	DD1_1c	collect and analyse data
	DD1_1d	report and critically discuss research results,
	DD1_1e	have knowledge and understanding about academic integrity
Knowledge and understanding: Educationally substantive.	DD1_2a	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories of expertise
	DD1_2b	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories of learning
	DD1_2c	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories of instruction
	DD1_2d	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories of assessment and evaluation
	DD1_2e	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theories of organisational development
Applying knowledge and understanding Methodological/statistical.	DD2_1a	analyse existing academic knowledge and formulate a problem definition
	DD2_1b	design an educational research study
	DD2_1c	collect and analyse data
	DD2_1d	report and critically discuss research results
	DD2_1e	apply knowledge and understanding of academic integrity.
Applying knowledge and understanding: Educationally substantive.	DD2_2a	analyse of learning, educational and organisational problems systematically
	DD2_2b	analyse the implementation of relevant learning environments critically
	DD2_2c	give advice on the implementation of organisational changes
	DD2_2d	develop and evaluate policy, instruments and procedures on testing and assessment
	DD2_2e	deal with dilemmas related to educational integrity/ethics
Opinion forming	DD3_1	reflect critically: they can assess (educational) data critically and are capable of independently forming opinions on this data. Graduates of the Master's Degree Programme are able to point out and refute incorrect ideas and to adopt a critical attitude with regard to trends and hypes within the discipline.
	DD3_2	have insight into and a positive attitude towards ethical aspects of acting as an academic professional.
Communication skills	DD4_1	give oral presentations
	DD4_2	write various types of reports (academic articles, policy documents, project plans, poster presentations etc.)
	DD4_3	conduct substantiated discussions and cooperate with colleagues within and beyond the field of Educational Science.
Learning skills	DD5_1	further develop their expertise through self-management. Lifelong learning and personal development are an essential part of their professionalism. Graduates are able to reflect critically on their own work and the work of others and are open to new insights (self-management).
	DD5_2	draw conclusions from critical reflection of their own work in order to augment their own skill set (career and job-market orientation).

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

Full-time variant

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3 and 4
• Instructional Design and Evaluation 7,5 EC • Learning in Organisations 7,5 EC	• Research Plan Master's Thesis 5 EC • Educational Design and Consultancy 5 EC • Elective course 5 EC	• Internship 10 EC • Master's thesis 15 EC • Academic Professional 5 EC

Part-time variant (incl. MPABO)

First year

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3 and 4
• Instructional Design and Evaluation 7.5 EC	• Educational Design and Consultancy 5 EC • Research Project Master's Thesis 5 EC	• Master's Thesis 15 EC

Second year

Period 1	Period 2	Period 3 and 4
• Learning in Organisations 7.5 EC	• Elective 5 EC	• Internship 10 EC • Academic Professional 5 EC

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Dag 1

Begin	Eind	Onderdeel
12:00	12:30	Ontvangst commissie , inclusief presentaties door studenten
12:30	13:30	Vorbereiding panel (+ lunch)
13:30	14:15	Gesprek met verantwoordelijken opleiding
14:15	14:30	Pauze
14:30	15:15	Gesprek met studenten en alumni
15:15	15:30	Pauze
15:30	16:15	Ontwikkelgesprek thema 1: Doelen van de opleidingen
16:15	16:30	Pauze
16:30	17:15	Gesprek met docenten en examencommissie
17:15		Overlegtijd commissie

Dag 2

Begin	Eind	Onderdeel
9:00	9:45	Ontwikkelgesprek thema 2: Opleiden van professionals
9:45	10:00	Pauze
10:00	10:45	Developmental discussion theme 3: Teaching and learning environment
10:45	11:30	Pauze en overleg commissieleden
11:00	11:45	Eindgesprek met verantwoordelijken opleiding
11:45	13:30	Opstellen voorlopige bevindingen en voorbereiden mondelinge rapportage (inclusief lunch)
13:30	14:00	Mondelinge terugkoppeling en voorlopige oordeel

Appendix 4. Materials

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

- Profile and information for prospective students
- Intended learning outcomes
- Education and examination regulations
- Assessment plan
- Domain-specific framework of reference
- Intake and yield
- Curriculum overview
- Content, manual and evaluation of a number of courses
- Educational vision Utrecht University
- Study guide
- Thesis manual
- Internship manual
- Student support information
- Course information tutoring
- Overview student facilities
- Manual for new teaching staff members
- Overview teaching staff members
- Quality assurance manual
- Reports programme committee
- Curriculum survey
- National student survey
- Overview of assessment methods and rubrics in courses
- Reports calibration sessions
- Reports Board of Examiners
- Examples of internship reports
- Alumni survey
- Publications by students