

memo

Date

18 April 2019

Subject

Accreditation: Development dialogue dd. 18-04-2019 of the following programmes:

Bachelor Sociale Geografie en Planologie Bachelor Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning CROHO code 56838
Bachelor Technische Planologie Bachelor Spatial Planning and Design CROHO code 56194
Master Culturele Geografie Master Cultural Geography CROHO code 60656
Master Economische Geografie Master Economic Geography CROHO code 60657
Master Real Estate Studies CROHO code 60659
Master Population Studies CROHO code 60658
Master Sociale Planologie Master Socio-Spatial Planning CROHO code 66653
Master Environmental and Infrastructure Planning CROHO code 66194

During the development dialogue, the panel reflected upon a number of issues put forward by the Faculty and the various programmes.

- Main changes with regard to the English names of programmes

Panel: The panel agrees with the intended changes, with some considerations:

- BSc Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning: change to Human Geography and Planning and drop the “urban and regional” part of the name. The panel saw no problems regarding this name change.
- MSc Socio-Spatial Planning: change to Society, Sustainability and Planning, this is a broader name. The old name now attracts students interested in the human part, this may be less clear with the new name. The panel advises to keep the focus on the human factor.

FSS: concerning the latter, the programme focus will be on society and sustainability, but will explicitly take into account the human part. The new name still covers the contents of the programme. However, it is better recognizable for the ‘outside’/international world.

- Using the Sustainable Development Goals in profiling the programmes

Panel: The panel doubts whether a more globally oriented audience will recognize this sufficiently. Would these SDG’s be taken up in the learning outcomes? If so, this may help positioning the programme in the world. An alternative is to use the societal challenges defined in the EU Horizon 2020 programme as foci.

- Use the structured bachelor project format in the master programmes

FSS: The observation that Bachelor students finish their project in time but Master students do not, suggests to use a similar format for Master students as well. What is the opinion of the panel?

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Panel: The project for a Bachelor student covers the whole research cycle. In the master thesis the science part is more important, yielding a more specific or even personal result, it is more “slow science”. Next, research networks are important and developing these take time. Lastly, for Bachelor students there is a more pressing need to finish as they want to continue in a master programme.

- Internships for master students

FSS: Bachelor students are doing fine with respect to internships, but how to deal with master students who want to combine the internship with their thesis.

Panel: As the internship is an elective it can cause some planning problems for Master students. An issue is how to evaluate both the internship and the thesis when taken in combination. For internships a reflection report has to be written. With combining both confusion might be created for students making it more difficult for them to opt for such a combination.

- Internationalisation

FSS: There may still be a need for additional courses only in Dutch for some specific issues (e.g. Dutch legislation). This may cause exclusion among students.

Panel: Offer such a course as an optional part or as an elective. Your alumni stressed that there is a need for such courses. Offer a matching elective course in English on the same issue, but more internationally orientated (e.g. EU legislation).

- Adjusting learning outcomes of Master programmes

Panel: Some programmes have already started to reflect on the learning outcomes. A review is always useful with the aim to make them more abstract, i.e. higher level learning outcomes. Take a step by step approach.

- Employability

FSS: How to better show students that employability already has a lot of attention in programmes.

Panel: Keep explaining explicitly to students what you do and how much you do that. It has to do with the gap in perceptions. Students do not see all these activities in this light. Your alumni were happy in their jobs and well prepared. They have faith in their skills and know what to expect. In that respect the gap is one in perception indeed and disappears once alumni start working.

- Real Estate Studies

FSS: In this programme it takes students a long time to finish. Often an internship becomes a job and finishing then becomes more difficult. How to improve this?

Panel: It is a strong market, and interns are cheap labour for companies. Stay in close contact with students and companies. It is in a student's own interest to finish, and stress this when students start the programme. But also make the companies aware of this. Beware for open ended internship contracts. An idea might be to let the student association play a bigger role in this; they can keep up social contacts with the students and provide a stimulus to finish on time.

- Qualitative and quantitative tracks for Population Studies

Panel: a strong point in the programme is that it provides a combination of both types of methods. It is part of the interdisciplinary nature of the field.