(PDCA 2019-2020)

School/College: Graduate School of Social Sciences
Onderwijsdirecteur: Annette Freyberg-Inan

Overzicht Opleidingen/tracks: 11 programs with 25 tracks in total

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-year Master Programs</th>
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<td>Conflict Resolution and Governance</td>
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Additional teaching organized under the auspices of the GSSS

1. Summer Programs of the GSSS Summer Programs Office (SPO)

In 2019 the SPO served 519 students of 71 nationalities across 23 programmes. The SPO also organizes the Methodology Crash Course in Summer for incoming Master’s students with minor methodological deficiencies.

It should be noted that the GSSS Summer Programmes are a significant component of the education provided at the UvA, comparable in size to larger bachelor programs. The SPO also serves other domains at the FGM and even accommodates courses proposed from within other faculties. Its courses are generally evaluated highly to very highly. We are proud of the quality of both the education provided here and the organization provided by our SPO office. Last not least, the summer programs are a significant source of income for our domain.

For details concerning the SPO’s activities see Year Report 2019 of the SPO. Available upon request.
2. PhD teaching

The director of the GSSS also bears responsibility for the educational element of the PhD trajectory offered at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR). Information on PhD education is contained in the annual report of the AISSR. Available upon request.

3. Life-long learning

Until January 1st 2019, the life-long-learning course offers by the Amsterdam Advanced Graduate School (AAGS) also operated under the auspices of the GSSS. Since then, the AAGS, now known as the UvA Academy, operates under the auspices of the FMG.

The Education Desk Social Sciences – first points of contact for help-seeking students
1. Jaarverslag academisch jaar 2018-2019

Inleiding met belangrijke ontwikkelingen school/college

Please note: Given that the working language of the GSSS is English, this report is written in English.

The 2018-19 academic year was my second full year in office as GS director. In this year, and also since, much of my time has been taken up with tasks related to financial management. In March 2019 we let our financial manager go because she had not been functioning to full satisfaction. We hired an interim financial manager, who received the task to develop a new financial planning and accounting system for our domain. For the College director and myself this meant that we had to work on setting up the policy parameters for this system, together with our colleagues in the BSS (Board of Social Sciences), and we had to guide and supervise the interim financial manager on a daily basis. In the meantime, our financial management assistant was gradually leaving into retirement, so that also on the operational side we were challenged by scarcity of time/personnel. As of the current academic year we have a new financial management assistant. The interim financial manager is leaving at the end of February 2020, and we have hired a new permanent financial manager who will start around April 2020. The new financial planning and accounting system is nearly fully developed, and already being partially implemented. The hope is that the year 2020-21 will be one of stabilization in the financial domain.

Overall, the year 2018-19 went well again for the GSSS study programs. Total student numbers went slightly down in 2019, but are expected to increase again in 2020; no program experienced disruptive fluctuation in student numbers; the finances of the GSSS are relatively sound; and no crises affected our teaching programs. For details on the individual master programs see section 1.2 below. In December 2018 the Masters in Cultural Sociology and Anthropology and in Medical Anthropology and Sociology passed inspection. MAS received a ‘good’ on standard 1. For the remainder both programs scored ‘satisfactory’. In January 2019 the Master Sociology passed inspection with a ‘satisfactory’ on all standards. In April 2019 the Masters Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning passed reaccreditation with much praise (the system had shifted to issuing pass or fail only). There has been no case in which the re-accreditation committee issued any significant concern or warning. Generally speaking, we often get the feedback that our programs are well thought out and set up, staff is of high quality, and assessment and quality control are fine. However, re-accreditation committees do tend to pick up on the high workload among our staff (and sometimes also our students) and regularly remind us to do our best to address this issue. An important issue of concern at the GSSS (and also the College of Social Sciences) is that our teaching staff and also our support staff is stretched to the limit. Workloads and perceived work pressure are high. As we also remain under financial pressure as a domain and faculty, this problem remains difficult to address.

With respect to the functioning of the teaching support office, we can report improvement. The year 2018/19 brought some upheaval as a result of a work pressure investigation carried out by two experienced OBP colleagues from outside our domain. After their concluding report was shared with the staff, there were complaints both about the process through which the report had been drawn up and about its content and tone. This added to a context in which there was already too much discontent. The teaching directors and head of the teaching office have applied themselves to improving the work sphere at the office, especially by encouraging grievances to be openly expressed and fostering mutual understanding across layers and sections of the organization. In 2019/20 we have worked with two external advisers on a project we have called “onderwijsbureau in verbinding”. In this project every single member of staff receives voice to express past and present grievances, and people are getting to know each other and each other’s work and perspectives better. I perceive this process so far as successful. There have been a number of important frank conversations, and I believe I can speak also for my colleagues when I say that this has also been an important learning experience for the management of our teaching domain. On another note, financially, we have remained within our budget parameter of spending no more than 15% of teaching income on teaching support. This would not have been possible without the incredible commitment of our support staff.
Our most significant challenge in the teaching domain is how to continue to do as well as we do with ever decreasing financial resources per student. In my opinion, several important considerations need to be kept in balance in this context:

1. We cannot go on to spend more than we have.
2. We want to maintain what we believe is good teaching quality.
3. We cannot (nor would we want to) let go of permanent staff, which means that these staff costs are fixed (and increasing over time).
4. We want to protect research as well as teaching (i.e. not play them out against each other).
5. We want to maintain a level of solidarity within our domain (i.e. between teaching and research, between the four departments, between teaching programs, and between research groups).

For me as director of the GSSS this has more concretely meant that I have worked towards the following goals:

1. Protect our teaching programs, staff, and students against hasty interventions, maintain sufficient stability to safeguard program quality and workability, and ensure that we deliver our programs to our students as promised. To this end our program directors are not asked to make significant changes within ongoing academic years. However, they are consistently asked to maximize the use of sitting staff, minimize the use of external staff, and keep seminar groups at the size of ideally 25 (maximally 35) students.

2. Maintain solidarity within the domain of the Social Sciences and avoid a situation in which each teaching program needs to constantly maintain financial self-sufficiency. At the same time, unless there is good reason and strong support, there must be no “black holes” in the domain which are consistently loss-making and place a structural burden on other activities. We continue for the time being to grant our research master programs 125% of teaching hours (thereby cross-subsidizing them structurally), because there is good reason and support to do so. New teaching norms might, however, make this unnecessary in future (see section 2.1 below).

3. Support the programs in searching for and implementing ways to make teaching more efficient while simultaneously maintaining, ideally even improving, quality. There is no general recipe to accomplish this, as programs and their goals differ greatly. (Some specific planned measures are laid out in sections 1.2 and 2.1 below.) Important to me is that cost-reduction measures in teaching should generally be decided on at the level of the program itself. Those who run the program know best where savings can be realized without causing damage. To help program directors assess their programs’ financial viability, we have introduced a new step in planning the teaching for every upcoming academic year: Our financial manager prepares an estimate of expected income (within a multi-annual perspective), based on expected student numbers and graduation rates;¹ our program directors are then asked to plan a program that, once fully staffed, can be financed with 95% of the expected income (leaving also a little buffer). In other words, we are aiming to align the teaching planning process more closely with the (expected) available resources. This also makes financial constraints more transparent and can thereby increase the support for cost-cutting measures where absolutely necessary. At the same time, a fourth goal is to:

4. Protect the room in the teaching programs to focus on the primary processes. Program directors, PC members, and other key persons in the programs need to understand the constraints under which they need to work in order to function well, but they should not be asked to reveal, to manage, or to enforce them. The financialization of university life needs to stop at the level of institutes, if we want to protect the core norms of the university.

In addition, in the year 2019/20 two important policy documents have been written and approved for the GSSS. One, the “GSSS Ethical Guidelines for Students” (see Appendix C) creates clear guidelines for students across the whole GSSS and regarding the entire spectrum of research ethics concerns. The second, the by now FMG-wide “Policy on Free Speech and Safe Space” (see Appendix D) offers crucial orientation for teachers and students at a time when norms of communication, at the university and beyond, are in flux.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, “graduation rates” in this document refers to the Nominal+1 graduation rates which serve as KPIs.
### 1.1 Kwantitatieve reflectie op ontwikkelingen academisch jaar 2018-2019

#### Kwantitatieve doelen

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<tr>
<td>&gt;90% (instellingsplan) 87% (Convenant FMG)</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>91,9%</td>
<td>90,4%</td>
<td>87,2%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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#### KPI3: Rendement research master: % C+1 rendement (masters)

| >90% (instellingsplan) 90% (Convenant FMG) | 89% | 76,2% | 84,3% | 87,3% | 88% |

| % tevredenheid over studie-inhoud (NSE) | Doel gesteld in Facultair plan: >70% (score onder algemene beoordeling) | 75% | 76% | 69% | 75% |

#### Instroom en ingeschrevenen

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<td>Intern Development st (res)</td>
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#### Studieprestaties

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<td>Totaal</td>
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<td>628</td>
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#### Studiepunten

| Bekostigd | 37.082 | 38.603 | 37.000 |
| Niet Bekostigd | 5.953 | 5.869 | XXXXXX |
| Totaal | 43.035 | 44.472 | XXXXXX |

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\(^2\) Meetmoment is 28-10-2019. Door correcties op het aantal inschrijvingen kan de definitieve telling licht afwijken van deze voorlopige telling.
Reflectie op kwantitatieve prestaties school/college

Student intake 2018/19 and 2019/20 according to own data

I will here reflect on the strongest points in our performance as well as on those points for attention where, in my opinion, there are some risks of continuing insufficient performance. I will leave out of the discussion points where performance is satisfactory and there is, for all intents and purposes, not much to say.

Any issues raised in the heatmaps of the risk analysis will be treated in section 1.2, where I go through the programs one by one. Generally speaking, the heat maps revealed no serious problems in the GSSS programs.

As for strong points, in spite of a slight drop in 2018/19, we remain happy with the graduation rates of our one-year master programs. Some attrition is of course unavoidable and also desirable. Important in terms of policy is that we strive not for “maximum rendement” but for “maximum studeerbaarheid” (ease of study) and maximum motivation among students and staff. This means that we aim to minimize unwanted loss and delay...
among students, while accepting that there is some loss and delay that is wanted, by the student and/or by the staff. Increasing the graduation rates of our one-year programs beyond 90% is therefore not a goal of the GSSS. We do, however, aim to get back up to the 90%.

Our research master programs have struggled to reach desirable graduation rates, although we can see that the rates have been increasing. Given that fact that those programs are already quite expensive and rely on cross-subsidization from the one-year programs, one priority for the future is to work on **continuing improving graduation rates in the research master programs**. To this end, close supervision of students during the period of research and writing for their final thesis is important, as is a good more general support structure centered around the invaluable work of the study advisors and a constructive sense of community in the programs. In some cases, also the curriculum can be further simplified (e.g. by having fewer but longer courses) and/or some content dropped to improve ease of study. Our research master students tend to express a high, sometimes alarming, level of stress. It is important to build the insight into the programs that sometimes “less is more”. This issue is being tackled now with the support of quality impulse funds (see below).

As regards student numbers, they inevitably fluctuate year by year. Over the past years, however, they have overall been sufficiently stable. That being said, there are some programs for which **safeguarding sufficient intake** must be a priority. Those are the programs at risk of falling (or in fact falling) under the number of 25 students (in the past years especially the RM Urban Studies). It is desirable for all programs to attract 25 students (or multiples thereof). However, achieving this is of course tricky, given the unpredictability of admitted students actually joining the programs. We address this challenge by forecasting attrition rates based on previous years, and by working to optimize communication with admitted students in the run-up to their arrival. While this is a point of attention, I foresee no need to discontinue any programs at this point. Regarding total student numbers at the GSSS, I am optimistic for the coming years, last not least because I expect that the introduction of the bilingual bachelor programs in Political Science, Sociology, and Anthropology, and the increase in bachelor graduates they bring with them, will have a pay-off also for enrolment in our Master programs. This will be felt for the first time in 2020/21, when the fastest of the first cohort of the bilingual bachelor Political Sciences have their bachelor diploma.

**Reflectie op uitkomsten NSE en andere (student)evaluaties**

In section 1.2 this will be covered individually for the eleven programs. Generally speaking, the following remarks can be made: The numbers of participating students in the NSE are generally too low and their representativity is questionable. Unfortunately, they receive publicity and find their way into rankings and can therefore not be ignored. Last year, irritatingly, as a School we fell just below the KPI threshold. One frequently mentioned complaint concerns the facilities, in particular the availability of study places (by which students seem to also mean places to simply hang out with each other). I have to agree with the critical students that this is still a problem. Hopefully continuing improvements in and around the REC will help here. Another recurring complaint, also in UvA-Q evaluations (although, interestingly, less so in the alumni surveys) concerns preparation for the labor market. I will reflect on this point separately below, as it is a topic which not only the individual programs but also the GSSS as a whole see as a priority. A final complaint that recurs and that needs to be taken very seriously given our didactic aims is feedback. Students generally want both more and quicker feedback on their work. Next to the manifold work done within the programs to improve feedback, the GSSS and CSS support the programs in addressing this issue, by means of supporting innovations in didactics such as increased use of peer feedback, organizing workshops and trainings, providing needed infrastructure and infrastructural support such as through Canvas, and organizing comparison and exchange of best practices.

Other negative evaluation results are incidental. I find it most heartening that the quality of our teaching staff, curricula, and courses is evaluated almost without fail as high to very high, and that students generally feel that they are learning and developing.
1.2 Kwalitatieve reflectie op ontwikkelingen academisch jaar 2018-2019

I will here provide an overview program by program. This mainly summarizes the issues discussed at the yearly program talks (and other exchanges) of the GSSS director with the program directors (PDs) and program managers (PGM) as well as the chairs of the relevant program committee (PC) and examination board (EB). Points of attention raised by the last program assessment visits (visitaties) are also included in the overview. Priority points are indicated by bold print. Some passages remain in Dutch to save time on translation.

M Cultural Sociology and Anthropology (last assessment 2018; PD Kristine Krause, until July 2019 Alex Strating)

It is with extreme gratitude that we said good-bye to Alex Strating as program director after many years of excellent leadership of the program.

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

- Welcoming the broadly defined transferable skills, the panel advises to consider adding specific anthropological and ethnographic skills and to communicate these skills in more pronounced terms.
- The panel advises to encourage and facilitate internships through establishing and sustaining contacts with relevant organisations and institutions that may need and use anthropological skills and methods.
- Although the assessment scoring forms include relevant criteria and are transparent, the panel proposes to have examiners add written comments and to use proportional weighting of clusters of criteria.
- Some of the theses may have been marked slightly too high. One thesis was found by the panel to be unsatisfactory, but the panel considers this thesis to be an outlier, not being representative of the general quality of the theses.
- The panel suggests to collect more information about the professional field and graduates’ careers.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

- Issues coming out of the exit survey:
  - startup problems in the Visual Anthropology track, such as unclear supervision roles, assignments not being particularly tailored to visual anthropology, and high workload > separate course outlines will now mark Visual as a recognizable track; the separate track identity needs to be gradually built up; **Kristine wants to set up separate Theory course for the track from Feb 2020** > Matthijs needs hours for that, which have to be found in the teaching hour budget or the quality impulse money;
  - preparation for work > monthly **Building-Up Applied Anthropology Meeting**, open also to general track, is a promising innovation;
  - some student feedback very critical – “maltreated”, “rejected” > we discuss this and conclude that these are incidental cases.
- Course evaluations: Oddly, Designing Fieldwork received a 7.8 in the first semester, but a 6.6 in the second, even though the teacher was the same. Students indicated that they would prefer more clarity on the course schedule and assignments. This is being picked up.
- N+1 graduation rate > keep an eye on this.
- Visual anthropology track: now only 2 of 6 students left. That seems like extreme attrition, but Marieke explains it is due to various personal issues. Should a clear idea about a research project be a requirement before entering the master? And should there be a deadline for changing one’s idea about one’s project? The relevant people should discuss this (**action point Kristine**). Screening room needs resources > quality impulse money? (can also be used for equipment). Use of GIS lab needs to be considered once more, as does the possible use of the Humanities’ film lab (**action point Kristine**).
- Applied track: Good idea to also include international organizations in commissioning organizations portfolio. Manual for supervisors to come — good (Laurens makes this). How to integrate feedback of the commissioning organization into the assessment of the end products? They cannot be formal assessors or give grades. Only the examinators can do that. But the examinators and of course the students should see the feedback from the organizations.
- Intake general track: how to turn good reaccreditation assessment into attractiveness for potential students? Meetings with students are planned to discuss this question (and yes, use the OC students for this). Could be linked to accreditation recommendation to sharpen exit qualifications regarding specific anthropological/ethnographical skills. (**action point for OER**?)
- Main EC topic should now be, according to Annette: how to assess end-products of applied and visual tracks. Workshop for staff will take place in Jan-Feb - Can we use alumni for that, also to not have to spend money on external experts? We also need written guidelines and assessment forms. EC has a strong role here. Once Thijs Sunier is no longer external member, maybe the next one should be someone with expertise in visual?
- Tracks need to be sufficiently broadly carried in the department – this is not only a workload issue but also a sustainability and quality one.
- Annette supports the reactions to the reaccreditation feedback. To collect more information about the professional field and graduates’ careers > use alumni network (stimulate and support alumni to stay in touch).
- Look into accreditation recommendations and formulate reaction (**action point Kristine**)

**M Medical Anthropology and Sociology (last assessment 2018; PD Kristine Krause, until December 2019 Trudie Gerrits)**

*In January 2020 we said good-bye to Trudie Gerrits, as we had a little earlier to Rene Gerrets, as long-time and much-cherished co-directors of this program. We are extremely grateful to them.*
Points of attention raised by last assessment:

- The panel suggests to promote further integration of the program within the wider professional field.
- The panel advises to monitor class sizes.
- Although the assessment scoring forms include relevant criteria and are transparent, the panel proposes to have examiners add written comments and to have proportional weights attached to clusters of criteria.
- In the panel’s view, some of the theses may have been marked slightly too low and would have merited somewhat higher marks.
- The panel suggests to collect more comprehensive information about the professional field and graduates’ careers.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

- Course evaluations: Following classes by skype? Better not! Trudie was disappointed with the results for MAS in Action, but there is nothing to worry about.
- Career workshop – good idea!
- Good inflow, good graduation rate; great assessment results.
- Developing a new winter school course as proposed seems like a good idea.
- Website improvements are planned and Anne Geelhoed can help.
- Annette was hoping to use the quality impulse hours 2020 for the PREP+ program. But Trudie will need them for external thesis supervisors again (9-10 needed). The PREP+ program now receives a small extra budget from the GSSS.
- E-courses tuition fee: 400 Euro per course. The money now goes to the College but should go to the GSSS (action point Lex and Yvette). Also the PREP+ income in future should go to the GSSS.
- Special compliments to Yvette as program manager for being indispensable.
- Look into accreditation recommendations and formulate reaction (action point Trudie and Kristine)

M International Development Studies (last assessment 2018; PD Courtney Lake)

Points of attention raised by last assessment (note: the program was also assessed on the EADI/IAC criteria and received an EADI/IAC accreditation):

- Relate program objectives more clearly to subjects, issues and perspectives from the Global South.
- Although students come from various countries, the panel proposes to try and increase student group diversity, particularly from the Global South. The panel also advises program management to offer scholarships, enabling lower-income students to enroll in the program.
- The panel suggests to improve the information about the fieldwork and especially about the costs involved and to improve the organization of the fieldwork, starting the fieldwork with sound research questions.
- The panel advises to add detail to the thesis assessment form, as this is rather concise.
- The thesis research projects were strong on data collection and data analysis, but some of the projects could be strengthened in terms of the conceptual framework and the reflection on methodology. In addition, in some cases the panel found the formulation of the research questions to be too broad.
- In the panel’s opinion, the program should remain attentive to the preparation of the graduates for positions on the labor market.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

IDS (including some overlap with RMIDS)

- Good intake and graduation rate; last year unusually many (21) from UK, this year 7.
- New graduation format with communication product, also in RMIDS, working well; good idea to let excessively nervous students video themselves beforehand to encourage them to attend; slides will be put together by Courtney next year to make the process more efficient.
• OC proposal for linking with alumni – good; but careful with mailing out contact list: personal data can only be shared after express permission by everyone on the list and only for the purpose for which permission was given; use analytic potential of your own LinkedIn group (Nynke knows how): you can also search for things in the LinkedIn data.
• Assignments in the program need to be reduced and coordinated; feedback timeliness and amount/quality should be improved; this is being picked up.
• Course evaluation: Policy and Practice seminar was not well-evaluated last year, but this was incidental, due to specific circumstances; feedback in Core Issues course was partly bad (one of the three lecturers) - this is being addressed.
• Research Training and Fieldwork preparation course: students want literature assignment not to be too early; the course has been reorganized and this should no longer be an issue.
• Overlap between preparatory crash course in the summer and Research Methods course in the program: a two-part approach to this issue: better scrutiny for applicants (probably fewer will be sent to crash course) and innovations to Research Methods course (e.g. analyzing projects by alumni).
• Exit survey: “students are floundering around trying to find a suitable thesis topic and supervisor”; now Canvas is used to present options, which should help; also, second readers will now be assigned to students.
• Some bad experiences with (external) supervision (also in RMIDS): some have been blacklisted; in general: need to make sure they work up to standard. This year: 16-18 externals needed for the 1-year master, 6-7 can be covered by quality impulse money, but that needs to be spent in this calendar year and put on the special WBS element (action point Courtney and Eva). Look also for supervisors in other SS domains (e.g. migration POL, education SOC).
• Admission of non-EER students: wording on website: “we strongly encourage XXX to apply…”; need to look at OER (action point Karen); it’s fine to keep using motivation letters, but keep in mind that they are not always written by applicants themselves.
• Preparatory possibilities: definitely do not make it more complicated.
• Risk analysis: spread of grades around 7 too low (EC notes this for the course Migration, Security and Mobility). Need to speak to staff (action point Courtney).
• EC: external member J.P.L. Burgers (for the RMUS) stopped > talk to Richard about this (action point Annette). Now two external members: Daan Romein and Natascha van der Zwan (test assessment experts).
• EC suggestion: Standardize the regulations for grade reduction for handing in assignments late (0,5 or 1 point); Karen says that this is in the rules and guidelines of the EC > check up on this (action point Mirjam).
• EC suggestion: Don’t accept theses that are more than 10% over the word count – Annette advises to allow supervisors to make exceptions to this rule; but other EC suggestions are fully endorsed.
• EC question about its role for ethical issues – see GSSS Ethical Guidelines for Students; was on agenda for meeting of all ECs on November 28th 2019.
- Teaching norms are tight, and four-week courses are intense
- High work pressure among staff
- Offer an English-language preparatory program
- Feedback comes sometimes late or is not detailed; also on the thesis evaluation form feedback/explanation of the evaluation is necessary for the sake of transparency (even if it has been shared with the student by other means)
- Better let each thesis evaluator fill out an own form, to improve transparency
- Need to set up formal procedure for ethics check in case of data collection by students
- Students feel insufficiently prepared for the labor market

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

Curriculum:
- From 21/22 there will be a revised program - good timing because then the first bilingual cohort arrives at the master doorstep.
- The following revisions are planned: more courses shared across tracks (“zwaluwstaarten”); methods teaching combined with thesis; start staffing from thesis groups, which include methods teaching (with decent hour compensation for staff); January should be contact hour free. Some track identities should remain in place. Input Annette: the idea of “active pluralism” as one of the underlying ideas of the program > possibility to move away from fixed tracks to specialization through students’ choice of courses (substance and method; i.e. this could mean that all student are in the “general track”). There would then be no “learning pathway”, but that is difficult in a one-year program anyway; the common element could then be sociological theory at master’s level, which all students would have to follow. Students who want a more guided program could go to the study advisor and make a study plan. Downside: if something is not a track it cannot have an own webpage on the UvA site, and we should be able to attract students by showcasing our strong specializations. Advice to Marguerite: talk to Hebe and also to Luc, because what you envision for sociology is similar to how political science is organized.
- Also revised policy/curriculum for labor market orientation has to come, but this is on hold right now; the old practices have been discontinued but a new design has to wait for the new program to be developed. We want especially that students gain more insight into the competences they have acquired. Advice by Annette for this year of transition: organize an evening with alumni, to give this year’s students something along the lines of labor market orientation.
- When new program is designed, see if MEST exchange option can be kept alive even if there is no formal COLS track anymore.
- Internship is mentioned as option in study guide in such a way that expectations might be created that this will be organized for the students (especially international students may expect this). Maybe adjust language? Also, internship supervision gets too little compensation > issue to be taken up in the discussion about new teaching norms.

Students:
- Influx declining; this seems to be a country-wide phenomenon for sociology; we agree that we should hold on to the disciplinary master (we are in the best position to offer it: broadest, most cutting-edge, best-ranked);
100 students coming each year is the “magic number” to aim for.
- First bilingual bachelor cohort to reach master in 21/22 > likely to increase numbers (we are agnostic about how it will affect the share of internationals); we should market the newly revised program well to own last-year bachelors next year > action point team SOC.
- Graduation rates good; keep “de-stressing the program” in mind in revision of program.
- Evaluations generally ok, but feedback (also point of attention EC and OC) and work pressure get really low scores for some courses > need for follow-up; Karen advises to make an overview of assessments in the program (a calendar of times and forms of assessment) – make this from the start for the revised program, to help staff coordinate and also so that students can better plan out their year.

Other issues:
- “Feedback on demand” – it is quite ok to give detailed feedback only on demand as long as everyone gets basic feedback.
- Peer feedback should be formative but not evaluative (Annette agrees with EC position). OC has good idea that the quality of feedback given should also receive feedback.
- Thesis evaluation with two independent graders (as per reaccreditation committee feedback): Annette’s advice is not to do that, but to make sure grades are well argued for in the evaluation forms and otherwise defend our current, more collegial practice. We decide that we should **add the phrase “aanvullend op het eindgesprek” to the thesis evaluation form** > **action point EC**; **there should be more clarity about the role of the eindgesprek and how it counts for the final grade** > **action point EC**; second reader should not have been involved in the supervision process; EC is disappointed about the lack of cooperation of staff in the toetsdag > this should probably be brought up at a staff meeting by the head of department
- New graduation format > seems a keeper.
- Prep program: open up (part of) the preparatory program for international students? (most courses in English already). Perhaps whole prep program can be in English, but we also want to remain open to HBO inflow; also, to be attractive for internationals the whole prep program would have to be doable in sem 2; so: it’s complicated! > **action point Annette: plans follow-up meeting (with the whole group).**
- Quality impulse funds: continue to use for program revision (compensation for time spent). Make sure to put on right wbs element. Olga & Marcy are busy with this till December 2019.
- EC: external member Marinus Verhagen – working very well and apparently for free. EC and OC are happy with Jan-Paul as assistant. He even helped create the new “fraud vs. serious fraud” policy at the central UvA level.

**M Human Geography (last assessment 2019; PD Hebe Verrest)**

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

The panel:
- encourages the program to keep paying attention to intensifying and/or pointing out the connections with the work field
- noted that the students constitute a heterogenous group, in which differences in previously acquired levels of methodological skills have been notable, especially in the *Research Methods & Techniques* course. The program management is taking measures to allow for more extensive preparation and differentiation. The panel supports these plans.
- suggests that the program look into ways of documenting the findings of the supervisor and the second reader more transparently. Additionally, it proposes that wider calibration could contribute to further alignment of the thesis assessment process and criteria, for instance, by organizing staff calibration sessions on thesis assessment.
- In a few theses, the panel found the socio-spatial perspective rather implicit, and it advises bringing out this element more explicitly.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

**HG (includes some overlap with URP)**
- Influx: total numbers on low side and uneven distribution over tracks (political and economic lowest); almost everybody who applied is accepted; a relatively high percentage of those also comes (except for Urban track); retention percentage can probably not really be increased > focus on better marketing (more applications) > work with Anne on website and social media. **Action point Annette: ask Anne to signal if there is more demand on her than she can fulfill.** Voorlichting now uses a film, which seems to work well. Wouter: the organization should actively use the publicity created by scientific staff.
- **Existence of tracks costs little.** Students take 39 EC from their track, of which 12 EC in coursework and 27 as thesis; teachers get a low ‘vaste voet’. Karen warns that students are not listed in the right tracks in SIS > **action point Inge: check how this is done and if it is done well.** Plenary elements: only Napels and preparation for it and Professional Geographer are taught to the full cohort; other courses divide the students into two groups.

- **Increasing numbers of prep students – they are diverse and perform well.**

- Evaluations: NSE low satisfaction with content (!) and facilities; separate courses are usually evaluated well, but the whole program less so; **environmental track has to do better at expectations management;** there is little group feeling > **there should be more group building activities;** feedback as an issue (for both programs; also raised by OC); little enthusiasm about fieldwork excursion to Naples > **better expectations management? Let students co-organize?** Hasty atmosphere experienced by some students > could be incidental; may be because of too many assignments > **Karen recommends making an overview of assignments in the program and their timing.** What is striking about the evaluations is that they show relatively little enthusiasm among the students.

- Methods teaching: students want different things: some need more GIS training than others, some more quant, some more qual; what is clear is that the program wants to teach GIS, but maybe not from scratch. Perhaps use a GIS MOOC and ask students without any GIS experience to complete that before the start of the program? Or teach basic GIS and advanced GIS in two separate groups? If the latter, maybe quant and qual could be wrapped into the GIS courses (to no longer be separate courses)? Or allow students to do a test in qual or quant and if they pass it they can use that grade for the ECs instead of taking the course? Or give them a choice of GIS qual or GIS quant? Or four options: GIS basic qual, GIS basic quant, GIS advanced qual, GIS advanced quant?

- **Curriculum:** Research Methods course still work in progress (here sits the diversification project financed with quality impulse money). Thesis seminar (now Professional Geographer course) > gets help from loopbaan advies centrum. Part of this are the ‘workshops arbeidsmarkt’.

- Thesis defense is kept, also possibility of second deadline, with stricter conditions. New graduation format seems a keeper. Next time the tables will be placed in the rotonde, as originally planned (was not possible this time due to renovation work); plenum speaker should explain something about the building.

- Graduation rates N+1 good.

- **With URP:** Quality impulse project ‘praktijkgeorienteerde afstudeerphase’ or ‘City lab’: start with one project this year (with PBL, also for HG; 6 places; can be combined with internship); students provide motivation letter; end product is the same as other projects (no challenge for assessment) + extra product for the external; “studenten moeten meer een krijgen meer”; now also internship cooperation with the city of Amsterdam; bachelor starting thesis project cooperation with city of Amsterdam. Hebe has gotten this project off the ground but needs support > **action point Hebe: find someone for coordinating the ‘praktijkgeorienteerde afstudeerphase’ in Bachelor and Master.**

- **OC:** Bram Buskoop never came last year; do you want ODO/BoS students to come? **Action point Wouter: to find out what the OC wants.**

- **Seminar assignments grading by random sample (in bachelor):** Not advisable! Already stopped.

- Risk analysis: **feedback and NSE results as points for attention.**

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**M Urban and Regional Planning (last assessment 2019; PD Hebe Verrest)**

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

The panel:

- encourages the program to keep paying attention to intensifying and/or pointing out the connections with the work field. It fully supports the plan for an alternative thesis trajectory that directly involves the planning practice. In its view, the students’ ability to reflect critically on the planning practice would benefit from substantial first-hand experience with the planning practice itself.

- suggests that the program look into ways to document the findings of the supervisor and the second reader more transparently. Additionally, it proposes that wider calibration could contribute to further alignment of the thesis assessment process and criteria, for instance, by organising staff calibration sessions on thesis assessment.
Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

**URP specific**
- Influx: on low side > better marketing; **we want a film for URP, too.**
- Curriculum: new course Research Methods works better, still it remains difficult to optimize the timing.
- EC: grades in course Planning Methodologies were high and too clustered.
- Evaluations: better than HG; NSE: below KPI but better than HG, low for facilities; it is important not to give students the impression that their evaluations don't matter (because they do).
- Graduation rates N+1 good

**M Political Science (last assessment 2017; PD Luc Fransen)**

Points of attention raised by last assessment:
- Make the program more inclusive and provide more guidance to international students at the start of the program, to make them feel at home more quickly.
- Feedback on assignments and exams should be delivered within the designated limit of fifteen working days at the latest.
- To fully guarantee the independence of the second thesis examiner, he/she should be appointed by the program director or Examinations Board, rather than by the supervisor.
- The new standardized thesis assessment form should be developed further by clarifying the relative weight of items per category and separating the grades for the thesis seminar and the thesis itself.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

**Political Science (includes overlap with CR&G)**

**Basics:**
- Enrolment and graduation rates are fine for both programs and all tracks; first cohort of double bachelor coming up in 2020; also requirement of POL background lowered to 30 EC > Annette expects that enrollment will at least stay stable if not grow a little 2020/21; **think about how much we can/want to grow;** do we want to enforce a total program capacity limit? Where should that lie? At 300?
- in Dec 2019 there was an evaluation and it was decided that a new Comparative Politics track will start as of 2021/22; in Fall 2020 (new program director) there will be an evaluation of further track proposals > at that moment also the status of the PE track will be looked at; **action point David:** informally talk to PPG about possible growth ambitions there and let Luc and Annette know
- There is something wrong with the NSE evaluation figures > **action point Karen:** get the correct figures to us if possible
- Exit evaluations filled in by too few students; interesting comments but overall no reasons to worry about anything in particular; per track info doesn't seem very useful if you read the general ones, but Luc says it's good for internal conversations, and anyway we it will keep being produced
- Course evaluations generally good; feedback as issue, esp. in Global Environmental Governance; issues also in Trans Sust Gov and Int Migr; also in CGR some orange issues > advice by Annette is for Luc or OC (please coordinate) to take red and also orange course evaluation results as a reason to have a conversation with the teacher of the course

**Marketing:**
- For marketing both programs want to make a video
- Do we want targeted commercial marketing, esp. for Brits? Annette says not now in any case, but other targeted activities, like travel to fairs, contact with universities etc. are good and can always be proposed; they will be funded by the GSSS within reasonable limits
Admission:
- Admission process has been streamlined, but it is noted that our admissions standards and processes should not adapt to technological limitations, but the other way around; CRG has until recently used letters of recommendation, but this was an oversight, because the GSSS BoS decided in 2014 (Karen informs us) that those would be no longer asked of students; the most that can be asked for, according to that decision, are names of possible recommenders, not letters themselves
- Suggestion from admissions: if accepted for first track choice, do not switch until semester start (and then via study advisor) > this was rejected, but a counter-proposal made: once a student is admitted there should be no more admissions committee check for another track (just move from one track to another and communicate this to track coordinators); establish a workable deadline for doing this and take the track capacity limits into account
- Students confused about grading standards > taken up at GSSS level in time for 2020 intake (standard explanation is coming for the whole GSSS, orienting ourselves by Nuffic and avoiding idiosyncratic standpoints and endless discussions) > action point Annette

Graduation:
- Format for POL has been partly unsatisfactory; borrel in CREA Café does not work well; consider doing a whole day in KIT format; Inke is there to help (and to make sure there is OWAS support for Catherine); update: graduation moves to the KIT as of 2020

POL specific:
- Transnational Governance now being further developed by Floris with Hester (lectures more in-depth; focus of portfolio assignments and their review by the examiners with more time for reflection on research design). Evaluation of this year shows no improvement. Annette points out that it is not strictly necessary to hang on to the shared course at all.
- Methods classes are developing further, this year offering a combination of video classes and flipped classroom seminars.
- Two cross-track electives on offer focusing on professional skills; those are the pressure cookers spoken of by the OC.
- EC monitoring grade variation across tracks.
- Earlier thesis deadlines > to be evaluated early next academic year.
- Someone wants to reopen discussion about two admission moments – we did not discuss this.
- Monitoring delayed students is good.
- Quality impulse money: be careful; this money is not meant to pay staff for what they anyway do.

**MSc Conflict Resolution and Governance (last assessment 2017; PD Luc Fransen)**

Points of attention raised by last assessment:
- “Formulation of the exit qualifications in terms of perspectives and approaches instead of theories, in order to express even more clearly what is intended.” This will be considered by the coordinator of CR&G, David Laws, and the PC.
- “The panel suggests two ways to strengthen the students' theoretical knowledge base: by providing a preparatory reading list and assessing the students' knowledge at the start of the program, and by giving a stronger focus and more coherence to the theoretical base in the 'Capita Selecta' course.” This will be considered by the coordinator of CR&G, David Laws, and the PC.
- “The panel advises emphasizing from the beginning of the research project, the importance of commenting on the possibility of generalizing the outcomes of the case and/or relating the research outcomes back to the theoretical framework.” We agree and will work to strengthen this aspect.
- “The panel advises requiring students to report explicitly on the ethical aspects of their research in the methods section of their thesis.” The GSSS agrees that this is important, not only for theses in this program.
- “Feedback on assignments and exams should be delivered within the designated limit of fifteen working days at the latest.” This generally happens already, but there should be no exceptions.
- “To fully guarantee the independence of the second thesis examiner, he/she should be appointed by the program director or Examinations Board, rather than by the supervisor.” Here the GSSS does not agree with the
committee: We see nothing wrong with the current practice, and, given the number of theses, assigning this task to the EB or OD would mean considerable additional bureaucracy and work for them.

- “The new standardized thesis assessment form should be developed further by clarifying the relative weight of items per category and separating the grades for the thesis seminar and the thesis itself.” The latter is already the case, given that the thesis seminar counts in the process component of the thesis grade. For the rest, the GSSS disagrees with the committee. We find the current evaluation form already excessively detailed. The current EB is working on improving the format to create a balance between the needs of teachers for realism and ease of use, of students for transparency and appropriate detail, and of the EB for accountability.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

- Need for staff stability. Michelle is totally gone now > One more staff member is needed for stability. Yet more staff is prerequisite for possibly doubling the program size (as are sufficient applications). Once program wants to grow then we can also implement the idea of a personal admissions letter.
- Alumni network to help recruit applicants; we discuss this and decide to try to do this in cooperation with UvA Alumni network (members have to pay 35 euro per year); action point Karen and Annette: lobby with UvA Alumni Network to get this new network affiliated; action point David > check with Jam Stamnes about how the social geographers do it (they are both part of the UvA network and separate).
- Target new bachelor populations, esp. in humanities and FPS; ideas are good but who is doing this? Staff who teach over there help, theme humanitarian crisis attracts, with practitioners; next theme to be knowledge-intensive controversies.
- Minor Conflict Studies seems to move to ISS > action point David and Luc: talk to Marcel about this.
- Risk analysis: ‘Gemiddelde score tevredenheid over wo-master in het algemeen (NAE 2017)’ low (5.8); very low responses and inconsistent with what we know to be true and with the alumni network feedback > we are puzzled and override this info.
- Less of admitted internationals come; we are not sure what to do about that.
- EC wants to make the double chair permanent; this is refused, pending new teaching norms, but for 2020/21 the double hours are granted once more
- Both POL and CRG are within budget in PLAN. That is very good.

RM International Development Studies (last assessment 2015; PD Courtney Lake, until August 2018 Michaela Hordijk)

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

- “Wel merkt de commissie op dat ‘mixed methodology’ op dit moment geen kenmerkend onderdeel van de opleiding is; de opleiding heeft een duidelijke kwalitatieve bias. De commissie heeft er waardering voor dat de opleiding bereid is de eindkwalificaties en het programma aan te passen, mocht de nadruk in de (nabije) toekomst meer op kwantitatieve methoden van onderzoek komen te liggen. […] De commissie stelt vast dat studenten met name methoden van kwalitatief onderzoek wordt bijgebracht, maar dat de studenten ook graag meer aandacht voor kwantitatief onderzoek, specifiek gericht op IDS zouden zien. Het management herkende het verzoek voor meer kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden waarmee het daadwerkelijk aanbieden van vakken specifiek gericht op kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden binnen IDS vaak minder groot is dan van tevoren wordt gedacht. De commissie heeft begrip voor deze situatie en geeft de opleiding in overweging om een vak, specifiek gericht op kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden binnen IDS verplicht te maken. De commissie beveelt de opleiding aan om in de verplichte methodologievaken een meer directe verbinding te maken tussen kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden en voorbeelden uit het IDS vakgebied en beveelt aan een vak specifiek gericht op kwantitatief onderzoek binnen IDS verplicht te maken voor alle IDS onderzoeksmaster-studenten.” The qualitative bias in the program is partly a result of the staff composition. Attempts to attract more quantitatively oriented staff to the program have failed. This will not be easily changed now given the financial situation. A quantitative course has been developed, elected by a significant portion of the RMIDS students. The course is offered by non-IDS staff and has run last year for the second time. The overall strengthening of the mixed methods profile is also taken up in
the Research Design Mixed Methods course, and will be a feature of the ‘fieldwork profile’. The proposal to set up a required course on quantitative methods has not been followed up, as it goes against the spirit of the program, which encourages students to broaden the methodological scope of their bachelor background. Students with a quantitative background should have the choice to acquire qualitative and/or GIS skills. And each student should have the possibility to develop his or her preferred profile.

- “De commissie heeft waardering voor de inzet van het management om binnen de kaders van tijd en middelen een passend opdrachtenpakket aan de onderzoeksmaster-studenten aan te bieden. Zij beveelt de opleiding echter ook aan om te zorgen voor verdiepende en/ of meer complexe opdrachten voor onderzoeksmaster-studenten in de vakken die zij samen met reguliere masterstudenten volgen. Zwaluwstaart: De commissie heeft vastgesteld dat de opleiding differentieert tussen onderzoeksmaster-studenten en reguliere masterstudenten in de vakken die zij samen volgen, maar is ook van mening dat dit verschil nu meer gaat over extra opdrachten en niet zozeer verdiepende noch over complexere opdrachten. De commissie heeft begrepen dat de opleiding ieder jaar opnieuw kijkt naar het extra takenpakket voor onderzoeksmaster-studenten en beveelt de opleiding aan dit punt hierin mee te nemen.” This issue has been resolved in a different way. Electives that are shared with the one-year master IDS now constitute only 10% of the program. There are no additional tasks assigned to the RM students in those courses. The EB’s concern is whether the exit qualifications of the RM IDS are met by its students. It believes that this is the case and therefore sees no problem with the current situation.

- “Beoordelingsformulier: De commissie beveelt de opleiding aan de hogere eisen voor de onderzoeksmaster te expliciteren op het beoordelingsformulier, of een apart beoordelingsformulier voor de onderzoeksmaster te gebruiken. De commissie ziet het formulier voor de beoordeling van de scriptie als een verbeterpunt. Voor de reguliere masters en de onderzoeksmaster wordt nu hetzelfde formulier gebruikt. De commissie begrijpt dat de opleiding in eisen en beoordeling wel degelijk differentieert tussen beide studentenpopulaties, maar beveelt de opleiding aan deze differentiatie expliciet zichtbaar te maken op het beoordelingsformulier.” This has been addressed with a new evaluation form for the research master.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

- RMIDS exit survey only filled in by one unhappy student > need make an effort in the coming two years to have higher response (before reaccreditation visit) – Iris may have to apply for students’ diplomas earlier, because then they get the exit survey email (last year it may have been too late); also make students aware of importance, also by discussing how you responded to earlier comments.
- Course evaluations: Mixed Methods feedback not good, also indicating overlap with Undertaking Fieldwork course > focal point, work in progress.
- Mieke Lopez Cardozo (extra-curricular) course Critical Development and Diversity Explorations. This is her Comenius project, also continued this year with the idea to make it self-sustainable as a student-run initiative. Seems to be going well.
- Batch starting 2017 with difficulties; low graduation rate; but all remaining students expected to graduate by end of this academic year.
- November 2018 to March 2019 instability period is behind us.
- New thesis evaluation form – good. Check if format is reasonably consistent across three RMs (action point Courtney).
- RMIDS Canvas page and Eva in control: both improve communication with students.
- Special thanks to Iris as OC and EC secretary!

RM Urban Studies (last assessment 2015; PD Richard Ronald)

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

- “Een punt van aandacht is de voorbereiding van studenten op niet-academische carrières. Hoewel het bewustzijn bij de opleiding over dit onderwerp groeit en er wordt nagedacht over te nemen stappen, geven studenten aan op dit moment een disbalans te ervaren. Hoewel bijna één derde van de alumni van RMUS aan een promotie begint, gaan ook veel alumni aan de slag in een niet academisch werkomgeving.” This is a bit of an odd problem. There is quite a difference between the satisfaction levels on this point of the three Research Masters (RMSS satisfactory, RMIDS barely acceptable, RMUS too low). How come the students do not
recognize that they are preparing for a career in research (whether academic or not)? The GSSS is considering creating a yearly special Research Master event about the labour market for Research Master graduates. Perhaps this can even more usefully be a faculty-wide event? To be discussed.

- “Keuzevakken: Studenten, maar met name alumni, gaven aan dat kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden evenwel een steeds grotere rol krijgen in het vergelijkend stedenonderzoek, onder meer in de vorm van big data. Ze zouden dit ook in het programma terug willen zien. In het gesprek met docenten en management blijkt dat dit signaal ook bij hen is terechtgekomen. Echter, op het moment dat keuzevakken worden aangeboden blijken weinig studenten daadwerkelijk het vak te (willen) volgen. De commissie meent dat dit een gevolg is van de voorkeur voor meer kwalitatieve (en gemengde) methoden bij studenten die deze opleiding volgen. Ze stimuleert de opleiding ontwikkelingen in het veld blijvend te volgen en hier in de keuzevakken ruimte voor te maken. Tevens is het van belang dat studenten al tijdens hun opleiding het nut van deze methodologieën voor hun verdere carrière onderkennen. Natuurlijk staat het de leiding van de opleiding ook vrij om deze kwantitatieve onderzoeksmethoden verplicht te stellen.” This is good advice. However, updating the methodological skills taught requires updating the expertise of the staff first (or taking on different staff). This is a challenge. One improvement which can be made easily: The RM Social Sciences developed an additional mandatory course (in the second semester of its first year) focused on developing a mixed methods research design. This can be offered as an additional elective to RM US students also. More generally, if we invest in developing new cutting-edge methodological courses at this level they should be offered across all RM programs to optimize the cost-benefit ratio and to make sure they draw sufficient enrolment. This requires some coordination between the programs, which will be stimulated by the GSSS.

- “Global South: Studenten waren tijdens het bezoek van de commissie enthousiast over het buitenlandverblijf en gaven aan dat er voldoende mogelijkheden zijn. Wel vinden ze het jammer dat de mogelijkheden in de Global South vooralsnog beperkt zijn. Juist voor deze locaties zijn interessante kwesties die aan de hand van een comparatieve benadering tussen twee steden kunnen worden onderzocht. De opleiding is zich hier van bewust en gaf aan hier druk mee bezig te zijn; zo zijn al afspraken gemaakt met instellingen in India en Zuid-Afrika.” The program is indeed constantly working to expand and improve the range of destinations abroad, inter alia to create more opportunities in the Global South.

- “Beoordelingsformulier: Een punt van kritiek is dat de navolgbaarheid van invullen van beoordelingsformulieren duidelijk beter kan. De commissie is ervan overtuigd dat studenten mondeling een uitgebreidere terugkoppeling ontvangen dan de formulieren die de commissie heeft ontvangen, maar formeel is dit niet af te toetsen. De commissie adviseert de opleiding dan ook de scriptiebegeleiders te stimuleren de formulieren op een navolgbare en informatieve wijze in te vullen.” The PD and EB are working to create improvement on this point.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

1. Current situation: revised curriculum in effect as of this year – we need to see how that works; graduation rates now good. Strategy: now re-accreditation process; once re-accreditation process is complete, we can consider major changes if they seem needed, but not until then.

2. Intake: we need to get 20 students per cohort into the program, per 2020/21 and then consistently; this means we should admit 60 > we need at least ca. 25 more applications! Pool in NL is limited; of course, market to it also, but aim for growth of applications to be mainly international. “A solid basis in the field of urban studies (30 ECTS)” has been taken out of admissions criteria, we now instead ask for “demonstrable affinity” with urban studies in OER and something similar on website. 20 EC methods as prerequisite are still in OER, though. Action point Robert and Richard: In this year’s OER process make sure to adapt the OER to the website (and that both say what you want); make sure to check exit qualifications to see if you make true on them, if necessary adjust; have a good story about why methods entry requirements for RMUS are not as strict as in other two RMs.

3. Evaluations: diverse and often negative feedback from students, albeit low participation rate; two previously worst evaluated courses are now thoroughly changed; “Urban Debates” also being revised; two staff members received official letters from the OC to support student feedback; advice by Annette: find a way to also evaluate Urban Lab courses (seeing that students like those) - perhaps by means of an end of year 1 curriculum evaluation? This can also support exchange of best practices by staff. Risk analysis also points to curriculum evaluation as an issue.

4. Labor market: make more concrete what students might be doing afterwards, if not academia; give alumni examples on website; have alumni come visit (e.g. in Urban Studies in Practice, now taught by Richard) – that’s is indeed the plan; also show students the positive labor market figures for RMUS.
alumni; Marco Bontje has put together list of alumni > keep using them (use OC students as alumni curators); make that structural (including handover from one cohort of students to the next); learn from IDS practice (Iris knows more)

5. Website refurbishment (website task force to meet in December 2019); make a video, too! other quality impulse activities: shared cohort day(s) in June to come; also: beginning of block 4: first-year students together with the second-year students giving a briefing on the exchange period (that already happened and works well > to be kept!); participation in GPIO-wide Labour Market Skills workshops (every June; needs more directorship > action point Inge). Annette will need more info about how money has been spent > action point Richard.

6. Exchange universities consolidation – in progress. Action point Heleen: schedule meeting with Richard and Inge about this; use those contacts for marketing; use your own students as ambassadors there, and also those who come to us.

7. EC proposals: Urban Lab: more transparency on assessment and link with learning objectives (make nature of this work clearer) > action point Richard as course coordinator; maybe on paper already good, but needs to be implemented across the board.

8. End of studies: defense and graduation: PD should be present at graduation ceremony, or else someone from the EC; rethink the format; maybe graduation with the GPIO masters in KIT > action point Iris. Info about how second reader is selected and how defense works needs to be in thesis manual > action point Richard in consultation with EC and Karen.


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**RM Social Sciences (last assessment 2015; PD Alex van Venrooi)**

Points of attention raised by last assessment:

- “Een punt van aandacht is de voorbereiding van studenten op niet-academische carrières. Hoewel het bewustzijn op dit onderwerp groeit en het opleidingsmanagement nadenkt over te nemen stappen, geven studenten aan op dit moment een disbalans te ervaren. Hoewel een relatief hoog percentage afgestudeerd van RMSS aan een promotie begint, is de verwachting dat het aantal promotieplaatsen in de toekomst niet zal stijgen.” This is a challenge for all Research Master programs, although there is quite a difference between the satisfaction levels on this point of our three Research Masters (RMSS satisfactory, RMIDS barely acceptable, RMUS too low). Students need to feel that they are preparing for a career in research (whether academic or not). The GSSS is considering creating a yearly special Research Master event about the labour market for Research Master graduates. Perhaps this can even more usefully be a faculty-wide event? To be discussed.

- “Tutoren: De commissie is van mening dat deze tutorrol een grote bijdrage levert aan de kwaliteit en cohesie van de opleiding. Ook studenten zijn positief over de tutoren en geven aan dat ze via de tutor een duidelijke connectie met de specialisatie en de daarbij behorende onderzoeksgroep hebben. Het feit dat er één tutor per specialisatie is, bevordert de peer groep. Echter, tijdens de visitatie kwam ook een risico naar voren. Als doorziekte of vertrek deze tutor wegvalt, kan dit tot grote problemen leiden voor de betrokken studenten. Het management heeft dit probleem recentelijk opgepakt en heeft besloten een schaduwpersoon achter de tutor te plaatsen om voor snelle en adequate vervanging te zorgen. Een tweede punt van aandacht met betrekking tot de rol van tutoren is de wijze waarop de vijf tutoren hun taak invullen. Hoewel studenten expliciet aangaven dat de kwaliteit van de tutor in geen van de gevallen onder de maat is, zou de onderlinge communicatie over taakuitvoering beter kunnen. De commissie adviseert hier aandacht aan te besteden.” The introduction of the back-up tutor addresses the first issue raised by the committee. The second issue is addressed by ensuring more frequent meetings and better coordination between the tutors.

- “Beoordelingsformulieren: De beoordelingsformulieren behorende bij de scripties waren niet altijd even informatief, in de meeste gevallen ontbrak een substantiële schriftelijke terugkoppeling. Daarbij heeft de commissie bij de in totaal acht scripties maar liefst vier verschillende beoordelingsformulieren ontvangen. Scriptiebegeleiders moeten worden gestimuleerd de formulieren op een navolgbare wijze in te vullen. Hoewel studenten zeer waarschijnlijk mondeling een relevante terugkoppeling krijgen, moet deze ook beter schriftelijk vastgelegd worden. Met name als een student niet akkoord gaat met het gegeven cijfer, is dit van belang.” The PD and EB are working to create improvement on this point. And all teachers should now be using the same evaluation forms.
Beoordelingsprocedure: Ze vindt de beoordelingsprocedure in principe voldoende maar ook voor verbetering vatbaar, met name de procedurele aspecten. De student hoeft de scriptie niet te verdedigen, hetgeen de commissie een gemiste kans vindt. De rol van zowel de eerste als de tweede beoordelaar dient helder te zijn. Voor de commissie was het niet navolgbaar op welke wijze de twee beoordelaars ieder onafhankelijk tot een eindoordeel komen en op welke wijze tot een eindoordeel is besloten. For the staff itself the procedure is quite clear. It is unfortunate that it did not become clear to the committee. Greater care must be taken to clarify the procedure before the next assessment. The program is slightly too large to make a thesis defense easy to introduce, as doing so would require additional time commitment from an already highly burdened staff. In principle, nobody dislikes the idea of a thesis defense, but we need to carefully consider if it is worth spending the extra time and energy on.

Points of attention raised in yearly program talk with GSSS director:

Strategy: curriculum has undergone many changes; now let it rest and see how it goes; only once results of reaccreditation are in consider possible changes again; exception: dit jaar is samenhong en opbouw van het programma binnen de kwalitatieve methodenspecialisatie een punt van aandacht (with input from EC en OC) > advice to focus on reducing overlap and improving Designing Ethnographic Fieldwork (within courses changes); gaat in januari vernieuwd aan start > dan kijken hoe het liep; misschien vervangen, deels door Interviewing and Focus Groups bij CW (maar 5 plekken voor ons) en door The Practice of Qualitative Research bij RMUS; Alex en Alyt willen keuze aan vakken voor studenten kwali hebben in blok 3.

Curriculum:
Renewal in force effective 2018/19: versterken van de Mixed Methods track en bevorderen van het interdisciplinaire en multi-methode karakter van de opleiding:

2. Nieuw introductievak getiteld The Social in the Social Sciences; afgelopen jaar te eenzijdig antro, nu verbeterd, licht in toetsing (zachte landing) – overzicht over programmagroepen heeft wel gelukt, vooral goed voor studenten van buiten, maar niet iedereen vondt het nuttig; Annette geeft advies dat het belangrijk is om een sterke docent op het vak te zetten die de langskomende programmagroepen inhoudelijk inbedt.
4. Thematische vakken allemaal 6 EC.
5. Workshops Academic & Professional Skills aan het eind van het tweede jaar; thesis seminar daarvoor met 3 EC verkleind.

Nieuw per 2019/20:
1. Empirisch-analytische track met andere opbouw: vak Advanced Multivariate Modelling verplaatst naar blok 1; vak Causality verplaatst naar blok 4 en keuzevak geworden (Causality is geen verplicht vak meer voor deze track, maar een elective elective. Studenten in deze track hebben dus iets meer keuzeruimte gekregen). Fixed and Random Effects verplaatst van blok 1 in jaar 2 naar blok 5 in jaar 1.
2. Core Specialisation Courses in blok 2 zijn vervangen door thematische electives; goal to make choice more flexible to strengthen multidisciplinary character: no longer specialized > has to be changed in OER (OC heeft alleen adviesrecht, omdat het curriculum is); I advise: course outline should clarify disciplinary background docent and andere disciplines die aan bod komen. Are they co-taught as recommended by OC? No, because they are so small.
3. Now all required courses in year 1 to make room to go abroad or do internship in year 2 – is that true for all tracks? Yes; except in kwali het terugkomvrek en voor iedereen het thesis seminar.

Student life:
- Canvas cohort pages help information provision.
- Since 2018/19 tutor in year 2 cut and more study advice in place – does that work well? Yes.
- Since 2019/20 studenten gekoppeld aan tutoren n.a.v. de intake door de studieadviseur > earlier start – how did that go? It went well. Tutors also work to match students with supervisors no later than end of year 1. ACTIE: Hier moeten Alex en Alyt bovenop zitten.
Open source software? (OC punt) Aantal vakken ja, maar ook nog Stata vakken; sommige docenten willen niet mee; **ACTIE: Karen vindt uit stand van zaken Stata.**

**Evaluaties:**
- NSE 2018 omlaag, but not dramatic.
- Exit evaluation: Annette is concerned about accusations of dogmatism among some staff and students (intersectionality discussion); we don’t want such staff in this program; current students seem to be less problematic.
- Course evaluations (more interesting): low response > advice to do evaluations in class. Vakken die met name slecht scoren in de evaluaties zijn Advanced Network Analysis (three years in a row a 5) en Social Science Perspectives on Financialisation. De opleidingsdirecteur is met de betreffende docenten hierover in gesprek gegaan. Annette: maybe someone can join/assist in ANA?

**Intake:**
- Aim for 40-45 > means that you can accept 90 (if so many qualify); need to differentiate internationals Dutch > **ACTIE: Annette asks admissions to calculate retention rates separately for nationals and internationals** > so we know what to aim for in both categories.

**Rendement is goed.**

**Program management:**
- OC: nu goede samenstelling en ondersteuning.
- EC: belangrijk dat het RMSS-docentid ook in commissie studentverzoeken zit – is ook zo; does thesis evaluation form of the RMSS still need to be adjusted? It’s been revised but OC still has to check it off. Supervisor finds second reader > this is a bit risky for the reaccreditation – be prepared; at least don’t always have the same couples; clarify roles of supervisor and second reader also on paper – **ACTIE: Franca takes this to EC to compare practices in RMs.**
- Quality impulse money: Binnen dit project ontwikkelen en implementeren 1-2 stafleden een plan om het curriculum te “ontstressen”. Maybe Alex has to be the second person. More info is needed here, and and the money for 2019 has to be spent within this calendar year > **ACTIE Alex**
- Alyt gets an A+ for being a great program manager

**Overarching Issues**

- The financing of our pre-master/schakel trajectories remains an important issue. We have pushed, together with the domain POW, via our faculty, for better financing for HBO pre-master trajectories, which encompass 60 EC of which we are forced to cross-finance roughly half. Internally, the GSSS pays for those costs to the College of Social Sciences. While the university board has pushed us to keep our pre-master programs running, it has not yet improved their financing. This situation is not really sustainable, and also very unfortunate, given the express policy goals of university, faculty and GSSS of diversity, including, as I understand it, an open and welcoming approach to students coming from HBO. This issue remains on the agenda. We have in the past years surveyed all our pre-master/schakel practices and are in the process of developing alternative policy options, to be implemented depending on the decisions made at national, university, and faculty levels regarding the financing of these trajectories.
- There is overlap in our teaching programs regarding the field of urban studies. Urban studies are taught in the RM US, in the M URP, in the track “Urban and Regional Planning” in the M SOC, and in the track “Urban Studies” in the M HG. This overlap may translate to some extent into internal competition. We need to think about where and how urban studies expertise can most usefully be translated into teaching offer while minimizing destructive internal competition and maximizing synergies and complementarities among the programs. This is work in progress.
- We now admit flex students in four of our programs (M CSA, M SOC, M HG, and M URP). They raise no concerns so far. We do, however, continue to wonder whether flex students are included in cohort graduation rate figures we receive from the UvA and how we receive money for them (EC income only? Partial diploma bonus?); for small programs this could make a major difference. We are still waiting for clear information on these points.
Functioneren OC’s en EC’s

Overview PCs and EBs Responsible for GSSS Programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PC</th>
<th>EB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Science and CR&amp;G</td>
<td>Political Science and CR&amp;G</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA and MAS and CAS</td>
<td>CSA and MAS and CAS</td>
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<td>HG and URP</td>
<td>HG and URP</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDS and RM IDS</td>
<td>Common meetings of RM PCs</td>
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<td>IDS and RMUS and RMSS</td>
<td>IDS and RMIDS and RMUS and RMSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM US</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RM SS</td>
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</tbody>
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The yearly reports of the PCs and EBs have been submitted and their content has been discussed in the yearly program talks. The most important points raised have been summarized above per program. Generally speaking, our PCs and EBs all function to satisfaction, as also becomes apparent by the consistently positive evaluation of our quality control system in reaccreditation processes.

Betrekken van alumni en werkveld

The GSSS and the CSW together have an Advisory Council which includes mostly alumni but also non-alumni and serves as both an alumni council and a ‘werkveldadviesraad’. As incoming GSSS director, I took on the task of revitalizing this institution. To this end, it has been entirely reformed and expanded and a new way of using the Council and making more of it has been developed together with the PDs. In 2018 we began working with our new and improved Advisory Council. The Council has visited us four times so far:

June 12th 2018: Initiation Visit
- 15:00-16:15: Participants: Council members, directors College and Graduate School, program directors, ODO and BoS students, teaching quality officer: Getting to know each other and inventorying the topics that deserve our attention in the coming months and years.
- 16:30-18:00: Open to all staff and students in the Social Sciences: Panel conversation on the reasons why one might want to study a social science and what good that can do one later in life and on the job market. Advisory Council members reflect on the links between their study experience and what they have done since and answer questions from the audience.
- 18:15: Dinner with Council Members

October 29th 2018: Topic Change-Making
- 15:00-16:15: Participants: Council members, directors College and Graduate School, program directors, ODO and BoS students, teaching quality officer: What does change-making mean? How can the relevant qualities and qualifications be taught or practiced? What are didactic methods/ways of working that help students develop the abilities to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems/make change? What are examples of topics that allow us to practice those abilities? How can this sort of student work be assessed? Whom outside the university could and should we involve in such activities?
- 16:30-18:00: Meeting with Students and Staff: What does it mean to be a change-maker and why is this particularly relevant for social science students? How are the students’ studies empowering them become a change-makers? What is especially important to seek out or avoid if you want to empower yourself in this way? Tips and tricks from the advisory council members.
- 18:00-19:00: Drinks and Snacks with Students and Staff

April 17th 2019: GSSS Career Day
- Participants: GSSS and CSW students and staff
- Advisory Council members supported us as workshop leaders and at the networking borrel

November 18th 2019: Topic Exit qualifications
Participants: Council members, directors College and Graduate School, program directors, ODO and BoS students, teaching quality officer
- Advisory Council members gave us feedback on the exit qualifications of all of our programs, especially with respect to how they relate to (preparation for) the labor market.

The upcoming meeting with our Advisory Council is again the GSSS Career Day, which this year takes place on May 7th, 2020.

Our individual programs all conduct their own activities to keep contact with their alumni and use them to inspire and guide current students. However, one of my priorities has been to make more of the possibilities which alumni can offer to improve labor market orientation and preparation for our students. To this end, I am working to inventory all that is being done in the different programs to these ends; identify best practices as well as good ideas which require organization at GSSS or higher scale to be feasible; and develop new initiatives at GSSS level (and push for activities at still higher levels) to improve alumni contacts and labor market orientation and preparation. In the process, I want to remove redundancy among and improve the economies of scale of our programs’ activities while placing no limitations on program-specific initiatives.

SAVE THE DATE
7TH OF MAY 2020

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES CAREER EVENT

A day with panels, lectures, workshops, meeting alumni & more!*

For all Social Sciences Bachelor’s & Master’s students of the UvA!

*More information will follow soon!

Promotional material for the 2020 Career Day of the GSSS, in circulation February 2020
Internationalization

I am adding this as a separate point because I find it important to report also on the activities we have carried related to this important policy issue. Obviously in the GSSS we have very many international students and a tradition of the international classroom. **Currently, almost 50% of our students have acquired their previous degree outside the Netherlands.** What is less visible is our outgoing mobility.

At the GSSS, we have the following possibilities for our students to spend time abroad during their master’s program:

1. **Exchange**
   Formal exchange possibilities exist for:
   - Students in the Research Master Urban Studies, who spend a semester at one of our partner universities in a compulsory mobility window (3rd semester)
   - Students in the MSc Sociology track Comparative Labour and Organisational Studies, who can opt for a short-term stay of approximately 3 months at one of the universities in the collaborative European Master Labour Studies programme
   - Students in the Research Master Social Sciences, who can opt for a year-long program as a third year of studies, or part of the year, in the collaborative Transatlantic Forum Programme.

2. **Fieldwork**
   A compulsory component in the program for students in the programs IDS, MAS, CSA, and Research Masters (IDS, US, SS): a period abroad (sometimes also possible in the Netherlands) between 3 -6 months.

   Our International Office is working to expand our network with key universities in the Global South, to benefit in particular the programs in International Development Studies and Anthropology by providing reliable on-location support for student fieldwork abroad.

3. **Internships**
   With the exception of the Research Master Social Sciences, where students complete a compulsory academic internship in their third semester, our programs do not have a “mobility window” for internships. To accommodate students who wish to complete an internship for which they have to be students, we advise them to start the internship before the formal end of their program, postponing graduation, and allow them to re-register in their study program the subsequent year. In this way a letter of enrolment from UvA can be issued. For some formal internships, like at embassies, the approval of the study program is a requirement.

1.3 **Reflectie stand van zaken belangrijke thema’s uit onderwijsvisie**

*In het najaar van 2017 is na een brede consultatieronde binnen de UvA-gemeenschap de geactualiseerde onderwijsvisie van de UvA vastgesteld. In deze actualisering van de onderwijsvisie zet de UvA in op de verdere aanscherping en concretisering van de uitgangspunten voor het onderwijsbeleid uit 2012. Daarnaast vragen de veranderende context en nieuwe uitdagingen binnen de samenleving en het hoger onderwijs om aanvullingen. Dit heeft geresulteerd in vier ambities voor het UvA onderwijs, die hieronder vetgedrukt gepresenteerd staan. We vragen u om te reflecteren in hoeverre uw school/college de ambities van de UvA-gemeenschap vervult en waar er nog kansen liggen. De kernbegrippen bieden u verdere handvatten voor het uitwerken van de tekst. Besteed in ieder geval aandacht aan de onderstreepte begrippen.*

**Ambitie 1: de UvA richt zich op de ontwikkeling van gemotiveerde en ambitieuze studenten door het aanbieden van kwalitatief hoogwaardig en innovatief onderwijs.**

Kernbegrippen:
- Studiesucces
- Activerend onderwijs/Blended learning
- Innovatie
- Differentiatie (o.a. honours, schakelonderwijs)
Ambitie 2: De UvA is een brede onderzoeksintensieve universiteit die studenten opleidt om met kennis en kunde te floreren in een steeds complexere wereld.

Kernbegrippen:
- Onderzoeksintensief onderwijs
- Invulling keuze- of minorruimte (mobility window o.a. minor, stage, exchange)
- Academische vorming/21st century skills
- Disciplinair en discipline overstijgend onderwijs

Uitgelicht voor 2018-19 => graag uitvoeriger beschrijven

Ambitie 3: De UvA streeft ernaar een open en diverse gemeenschap te zijn waarin alle studenten zich thuis voelen en gelijke kansen krijgen.

Kernbegrippen:
- Toegankelijkheid (selectie bachelor en master)
- Taalbeleid (curriculumkeuzes en geboden taalondersteuning)
- International classroom
- Studiebegeleiding
- Diversiteit en inclusiviteit

Ambitie 4: De UvA belegt de verantwoordelijkheid van het onderwijs zo dicht mogelijk bij docenten, met veel aandacht voor ondersteuning, kennisdeling en docentprofessionaliteit.

Kernbegrippen:
- Docentprofessionaliteit
- Kennisdeling

I am addressing this point by responding with my own educational vision, written to orient my work as teaching director and revised annually. It is my personal vision, yet informed by ongoing discussion with the program directors of the GSSS and my other colleagues. The text explicitly engages with the key points formulated in the UvA’s vision document and positions the GSSS in relation to them. Embedded in this vision are two GSSS policy documents formalizing consensus in the Board of Studies, i.e. explicitly supported by all program directors, on research intensive teaching and academic diversity.

1.4 Reflectie op het proces van de totstandkoming van de plannen van de kwaliteitsafspraken

Beschrijf hier de wijze van de totstandkoming van de plannen.
- Hoe is het proces verlopen? En wie waren erbij betrokken?
- Welke rol had de OC bij de totstandkoming van de plannen? Heeft de OC positief geadviseerd op de plannen?
- Welke aandachtspunten voor verbetering zijn er geïdentificeerd voor het opstellen van nieuwe plannen?

The plans are proposed to me by the program directors after they have developed them internally in their programs and acquired the approval of their OC. Exactly how the process unfolds and who is involved differs across the eleven programs. In all cases the OCs support the plans.

The main concern is that the process of making the plans and reporting on them is costly, and we would rather just get the resources without having to plan and account for them separately from our usual work.
2. Jaarplan academisch jaar 2020-2021

2.1. Ambitie academisch jaar 2020-2021

On a higher level of abstraction my ambitions are formulated in my educational vision (see Appendix A). More specifically, I have six main goals for the academic year 2020-21:

1. Continuing the process of improving admissions/selection procedures for all our programs; this also involves some streamlining which will improve the efficiency of and reduce the risk of error in our admissions processes.
2. At the other end of our programs: completing a process, begun last year, of sharing best practices around thesis supervision, thesis deadlines, thesis defenses, and graduation and other end-of-study events; also this will bring with it some streamlining and improvement of economies of scale, e.g. by organizing graduation ceremonies for clusters of programs.
3. Ensure that collectively the programs of the GSSS remain within budget. This will require us to a) further improve the teaching planning process, i.a. by providing timely and reliable data on expected income to our PDs; b) look at each program individually to identify ways of saving on cost while maintaining quality.
4. Continue a process of revising our teaching norms for College and Graduate School. The ambition here is to make norms simpler and more transparent and thereby improve predictability and ease of planning and reduce administrative work load and staff frustration.
5. Continuing to intensify cooperation between our programs and the world of work and society, by mobilizing and making full use of our renewed Advisory Council, by intensify connections with our alumni and involving them more in labor market orientation and preparation for our current students, and by more generally keeping interaction with society high on the agenda in all our programs.
6. In connection with the above, work to make more obvious to the world outside the university how the work done in the Social Sciences, by both staff and students, is of great practical importance and societal value.

2.2. Kansen en verbeterpunten academisch jaar 2020-2021

Besides the points already mentioned above, per program in section 1.2 and more generally in section 1.2, 2020/21 will be the year of reaccreditation for our three research master programs.

Student intake should stabilize for Sociology and increase for the Research Master Urban Studies.

The Sociology program will adopt a new track structure and curriculum. This is a revision process stimulated by the fact that the current structure has been more a result of institutional path dependencies than of scientifically or didactically motivated choice, by the large differences in popularity between the different tracks, and by the need to reduce costs. The new version of the program is also meant to be more attractive to potential students, especially international ones, in order to prevent student intake from further declining.

The year 2020/21 should also be the first year in which we can put our new financial planning and accounting system fully to work. Together with the coming into office of our new financial controller, this should improve the transparency and governability of our finances.

A big change will be the departure of Richard van der Wurff as director of the College at the end of September 2020. We are busy hunting for a new director, who inevitably will need time to settle in.

For the teaching support office, the year 2020/21 should be the year in which irritations from the past can finally be put behind us, the organizational structure and personnel composition can continue to stabilize, and work pleasure can increase.
Ambition 3 is addressed in the educational vision. In particular our positions on the international classroom, study support, diversity and inclusivity can be found there. On Accessibility please see Appendix B (the memo “Toelating masteropleidingen Graduate School of Social Sciences”). As far as language policy is concerned, all GSSS programs have been English-language for many years. The non-selective programs typically allow for papers and theses to be written in Dutch, to the extent that this can be accommodated by staff.

2.3. Actiepunten 2020-2021

This has already been addressed per program above in section 1.2 and more generally in other sections of this report. With respect to Ambition 3, we see no need for action. The one aspect of diversity that we would like to improve on is the percentage of non-EEA students, especially students from the Global South. We would like this percentage to be higher, especially in programs which also include a substantive focus on the Global South. However, in the absence of resources for scholarships and given Dutch immigration law, this ambition is very difficult to realize.

2.4 Kwaliteitsafspraken

Below I present an overview of the use of the quality impulse funds in the programs of the GSSS for the years 2019 and 2020. The plans for 2020 still need to be finalized with the program directors and submitted to the faculty. I highlight in bold the plans addressing specific ambitions laid out above: reducing student stress in the RMSS, revision of sociology program, improving labor market preparation, re-thinking the teaching of urban studies, and addressing diversity concerns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>External thesis supervision by experts (lack of substantive expertise in house)</td>
<td>External thesis supervision; writing workshops; theory walk-in sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturele Antropologie</td>
<td>Track development visual anthropology and applied anthropology</td>
<td>Continued from 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESMA Social Sciences</td>
<td>Curriculum revision and action for stress reduction for students</td>
<td>Continued from 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociologie</td>
<td>Curriculum revision including amendment of track structure</td>
<td>Integration of methods teaching with supervising theses; internationalization; labor market preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicologie</td>
<td>Pressure cookers in electives; revising ‘Specialization Module IR’ and ‘Transnational Politics’</td>
<td>Continued from 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution and Governance</td>
<td>Workshop labor market; diversification in M&amp;T teaching</td>
<td>Not known yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociale Geografie</td>
<td>Developing practice-oriented graduation phase</td>
<td>Not known yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planologie</td>
<td>External thesis supervision by experts (lack of substantive expertise in house)</td>
<td>Project “Decolonizing IDS”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>Workshop labor market; Working group to rethink the teaching of urban planning and urban studies; combined day with first and second year students</td>
<td>Working group to rethink the teaching of urban planning and urban studies; combined day with first and second year students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A
Educational Vision of the Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS)
– version February 2020

What is the GSSS?

The GSSS is the institute responsible for providing graduate education in the social sciences at the University of Amsterdam. This means first and foremost running our master’s programs. We have eight one-year master’s programs – in Political Science, Conflict Resolution and Governance, Sociology, Urban Planning, Human Geography, International Development Studies, Cultural and Social Anthropology, and Medical Anthropology and Sociology. Next to that, we also have three two-year-long research master programs – in International Development Studies, Social Sciences, and Urban Studies. To enable students to join our programs who do not yet quite qualify in terms of previous education, we offer different pre-master programs and preparatory courses. In this manner we put considerable effort into accessibility. On the other hand, some of our programs are selective. But in their different ways, both selective and non-selective programs consistently aim at high quality and at motivating students to put in their best effort.

Our programs belong to four different disciplinary departments: political science; sociology; anthropology; and geography, planning, and international development studies. Some of them, especially but not only the Research Master Social Sciences, work across various social science disciplines. At the GSSS, we believe in the value of multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary research and teaching and actively support them.

Aside from the day-to-day management of our teaching programs, the GSSS is also part of the larger governance structure of the University of Amsterdam and the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences within it. This means that we are a conduit for and actively contribute to ideas for how to improve the education we provide that come from both above (the university and faculty levels) and below (the departments, the staff and students). In this larger structure, we strive to optimize the way in which we function as a unit within the university and faculty as well as to represent our staff and students and their interests within them. In this process, we orient ourselves primarily by the satisfaction of our students and staff. The university is for them. And we have learned that their satisfaction depends not only on offering high-quality and interesting teaching programs but also on giving staff and students strong voices within the governance structure: we are committed to a high level of subsidiarity and internal democracy that grants meaningful powers and autonomy to those who do the primary work at the university: the teachers, the researchers, and the students.

Diversity

Students entering the Graduate School already have experience with what it means to be a student, to work towards and to obtain at least an undergraduate or even a (previous) graduate degree. They have that in common. But beyond that, they are a diverse crowd, and that is how we want it. All of the groups sketched below are equally welcome, and it is the very diversity of the student (as well as the teaching) body that helps make studying at the GSSS such an intellectually stimulating and socially rewarding experience.

Most of our students have completed an academic bachelor degree in the field in which they go on to study for the Master, or in a related one. Those students tend to experience a relatively high degree of continuity in the expectations they have as well as those they face regarding the content of their studies and the performance criteria applied to them. Some others have their academic background predominantly in another, less or even non-related field – those students have had to invest in extra preparation for their Master’s program in some variant of pre-Master training. Their learning curve has to be steeper, if they want to achieve at the top in their new specialization. Some students have backgrounds in two or even more fields. This facilitates multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinarity and breadth of intellectual formation. For those students especially, the challenge tends to be to strike the right balance between breadth and depth, and choose the place to go deep that is right for them.

Some students come from a vocational education background. They are the best young exemplars of life-long learning and have demonstrated strong motivation by being admitted to the Graduate School. For them, the
main challenge tends to be to continue to quickly internalize and adapt to the specific performance criteria applied in the university environment.

Many of our students come from UvA Bachelor programs. They are familiar with the city, the institution, and its unique culture. They may also already know relevant people and locations and are able to navigate practical challenges around campus and city life easily. That helps. Others come from locations elsewhere in the Netherlands. Amsterdam can be quite a shock. As can the UvA – it is huge, and learning how it functions takes time. And many and increasingly more of our students come from abroad, which presents greater challenges but enriches the educational experience we can offer enormously (see also section on internationalization below).³

**Policy on Diversity in Academic Performance**

*As adopted by the GSSS Board of Studies, June 26th 2018*

The GSSS offers eight one-year master programs and three research master programs. Within all of them, diversity within the student population is an issue. We use admissions criteria to try and ensure that students possess academic experience (habitus), sufficient previous background as concerns both the substance of their field of study and social science methodology, and sufficient English language skills. We also offer various forms of pre-master preparatory programs to help students meet these criteria. Still, given that our students come from different academic (and vocational) backgrounds and all parts of the world, diversity in the classroom remains high. This can be an asset, as students can learn much from each other, but it is also a challenge, for our teachers and our support staff.

We can identify a few general trends: Many programs report that students without a bachelor degree in the discipline of their master program tend to perform less well. Also, we nowadays see that Anglo-Saxon students tend to lack active research experience and have some catching up to do in this regard. There are furthermore students who perform less well not because they lack previous knowledge or aptitude but because they do not or cannot put in the work, often due to personal circumstances. We do not define any students as “weak”, but it is certainly the case that some students struggle at some time or structurally within their program, some drop out along the way, some fail to graduate, and some graduate with results they find disappointing.

What then do we do about students who struggle to succeed? First, it is important that once we have admitted students to our programs we do not take the attitude that they should not have been. We rely on our admissions process and take the position that all our sitting students belong into their programs. This means, second, that we see it as incumbent upon us to support students who struggle. On the one hand, our students are adults and have to do their part to complete their studies successfully. On the other hand, we put significant resources into supporting each individual student in the process. To this end, we offer some remedial courses, we provide ample study and academic advice, and we are embedded within a university-wide pastoral support structure (e.g. student psychologists). We enforce the rules on students’ rights to resits. At course level, students are often supported individually or in separate groups with extra reading and extra tasks, whether it be to catch up or to provide an extra challenge for those who want to go further. The latter practice allows those students who can and want to to achieve performance above the level of program goals. Strong students can also pursue graduation cum laude, which requires that the weighted average grade must be at least 8.0 prior to any rounding, none of the courses receive a grade lower than 7.0, the master thesis is graded with at least a 8.0, and the master’s degree is completed within the nominal time of study. Last not least, our examinations committees can be approached to request formal extensions and exemptions, and grant (or deny) them based on clear rules discussed, and sometimes formally co-decided upon, with student representatives every year.

We are overall content with the results, as we can see that graduation rates for both on-time graduation and graduation within the nominal time plus one year have been consistently improving over the years (see table

³ Our students (and our staff) are of course also diverse in a variety of other ways. We welcome this diversity and treat any accusations of discrimination very seriously. In addition, we strive to improve the accessibility of our physical and virtual study environments to persons with disabilities and employ a range of measures to support such persons in their studies.
below; figures for one-year programs only). We now exceed our target of 90% graduation within nominal time plus one year, also in the research master programs; moreover, the majority of students who take longer than the nominal time take only a few months longer. The drop-out rate lies at an acceptable level of 6-7%. Cum laude percentages are similar in non-selective programs, but tend to be higher in the selective programs.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Startjaar</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>12 maanden (%)</th>
<th>24 maanden (%)</th>
<th>36 maanden (%)</th>
<th>Nu diploma (%)</th>
<th>Nu actief (%)</th>
<th>Nu uitval (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
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<td>82.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>62.3</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/14</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>14/15</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>65.0</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>16/17</td>
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<td>81.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>17/18</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation rates in one-year master programs of the GSSS (source: UvAData)

**Internationalization**

“Internationalization is not a separate activity or goal in its own right but is completely interwoven with teaching and research and contributes to the strengthening of the quality of both.”

It is a truism that international mobility is increasing and becoming ever more important for a successful work life among the highly educated. To do well on the labour market, our graduates don’t necessarily have to go abroad – although that may also be the case, but they have to at least be able to work together with people from other countries, to be able to deal with differences in language, cultures, and customs, to understand and be able to function with the human and social diversity that exists beyond (and indeed within) their home country. One of the key benefits of studying in an “international classroom” (i.e. to study with students and also teachers from different countries) is the practice it provides in doing so. Vice versa, for the many foreign students and teachers coming to us, their study and work in Amsterdam mean a significant broadening of their horizons. This is a win-win situation. While together at Grad School, our students build up international networks which may support them a lifetime – a process we in turn support with our policy to actively maintain relations with and among our alumni.

Another important benefit of the “international classroom” is that rather than only reading about perspectives from e.g. the Global South or the Middle East, you can actually have them present in your conversations. We firmly believe that for understanding events or processes that involve other human beings, it is important to study their perspectives and to learn about the social contexts in which those events and processes unfold. International students (and teachers) help us with that, because they bring us into contact with their perspectives and social contexts. This is how “the presence of international students contributes to a more ambitious study culture. In this way an important impulse is provided for improvement of the quality of teaching.”

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6 VSNU, Gezamenlijke Visie Internationaal, Den Haag, May 2014, p. 3.
5 For evidence see e.g. Researchcentrum voor Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt (ROA), De arbeidsmarkt naar de opleiding en beroep tot 2018, 2013.
8 VSNU, Gezamenlijke Visie Internationaal, Den Haag, May 2014, p. 15.
from (much of) the world, institutions of higher education, the UvA among them, are at the forefront of the opposite trend: We help open the country to the world, and the world to Dutch citizens. If you don’t like to meet people from elsewhere, don’t want to learn about the world outside what is familiar to you, our Graduate School is not for you.

Many of our academic staff members also come from outside The Netherlands. That is because the UvA and its social science departments are highly reputable and their conditions are attractive enough to draw top scholars from around the world. And it is the best scholars and teachers we want. The diversity they add also strengthens the benefits of internationalization, as laid out above. To make internationalization possible, the language in our graduate programs is English. We have a long history of teaching English-language programs and staff with excellent (if not native) English-language capacities. Our entrance criteria for incoming students also help ensure a high level of English in the classroom. In this manner, also our language policy is an important aspect of preparing students for successful careers – there are after all few good career opportunities imaginable nowadays for which good English is not a prerequisite.

In sum, we offer an academic environment that is not only open to the world but that actively brings the world into our classrooms. We support international mobility of our students and staff. And we believe that this benefits our students greatly later in life, as they become accustomed and equipped to operate in diverse and international environments.

Policy on Research-Intensive Teaching
As adopted by the GSSS Board of Studies, June 26th 2018

The GSSS offers eight one-year master programs and three research master programs. In all of them the teaching is research-intensive. What this means to us concretely is a) that our teaching contributes self-consciously and consistently to students’ passive and active research competence and b) that it does so by drawing on teachers’ and students’ own research activities. To develop their passive research competence, students hear and read about and discuss the research of others, develop their understanding of the many ways in which social science research can be conducted, and train to evaluate research quality, responsibility, and relevance. To develop their active competence they conduct research themselves, individually and sometimes in groups, receive feedback from teachers and sometimes peers, and iteratively develop their skills further. Teaching always draws on the research competences, and where appropriate on the research production, of teachers and makes use of the research experiences of students (through feedback and guided reflection). In this way, teaching and research are tightly interwoven in our programs.

1. What do we expect of students beginning our programs?

All of our programs have relatively high expectations concerning students’ passive as well as active research competence when they begin. Of course, student beginning our programs have already earned a bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) in the same or a related field. In addition, all programs ask incoming students to have completed a minimum of 20-30 EC of coursework in social science methodology. Students who come close to fulfilling this requirement, and are otherwise eligible to join the desired program, are offered a comprehensive methodology crash course to catch up in the summer, just before beginning their master study. Students in Cultural Sociology and Anthropology and in Medical Anthropology and Sociology are instead offered an online methodology course focused specifically on methods characteristic of those fields as taught at the GSSS. Additional remedial teaching and resources are also available and recommended to students who want to close specific gaps in their previous education.

In addition, several of our programs are selective (Medical Anthropology and Sociology, Conflict Resolution and Governance, International Development Studies, Research Master Urban Studies, Research Master International Development Studies, Research Master Social Sciences). All of those programs select inter alia on the basis of GPA and of a writing sample, both of which are further evidence of incoming students’ research qualifications.

We therefore expect our student population to already possess a level of research competence, both active and passive, as can be expected of bachelor graduates in the social sciences. This includes passive familiarity with a broad range of epistemological and methodological approaches and methods, with the role and use of theory in empirical research, and with considerations of research design and ethics (see also our Ethical
2. What do we teach our students, and how?

All our programs ask students to conduct their own individual research projects and write them up in the form of a thesis, as the capstone of their master study. In this process they are guided by a supervisor yet autonomous in their choice of research interest and able to demonstrate their aptitude and skills while continuing their learning process. Passive and/or active research competence is additionally strengthened in all other components of the curricula, by means of reading, assignments, papers, presentations, and discussion. Feedback by teachers (and sometimes also by peers) is crucial in this process. The programs of course differ as concerns the specifics of teaching methods and content.

Both our one-year and our research master programs equip students to be researchers. The difference between these types of programs is one of degree, not of principle. The two-year research master programs are all selective, attracting especially high-performing students, and allow for more time than the one-year programs to deepen both substantive knowledge and research skills. They are thus arguably able to achieve learning outcomes that go beyond the Dublin descriptors for master’s degrees.

Our research master programs also tend to attract proportionally more students who at least consider doing a PhD and allow more time to instill in students the habitus of the academic. That being said, all our programs prepare students for research careers either in academia or without, as academically trained professionals. Graduates from all our programs are regularly able to gain PhD positions, while the majority of graduates in all programs go on to pursue a broad range of other careers, most often involving at least some research-related tasks.

3. What does research-intensive teaching deliver for our graduates and teachers?

Our graduates are able to understand, analyze, and evaluate social science research designs, processes and outcomes, at a minimum within their own fields of study but usually across a broader range of social science fields. They are furthermore able to design and conduct own research projects independently, in a competent and responsible manner, and to communicate their findings in writing and orally to both specialized and broader audiences.

Compared to teaching in the bachelor programs, where large parts of the curricula are compulsory and basic, teaching in our master programs generally aligns more closely with teachers’ own research interests as regards both substance and level. For most courses and thesis supervision arrangements it is fair to say that teachers engage the students with their own specific area of expertise. This means that we achieve maximum pay-off for education from our strengths and resources as a research institution and can provide students with high-quality and cutting-edge programs. It also means that we allow teachers to reflect on their own research, hone their relevant skills, and strengthen their professional motivation, by teaching by means of and about their own research. We thus capitalize on the unique advantages of being a graduate school within a top research university.

Challenges and Opportunities

All our graduate programs are of top quality. The results of the regular (re)accreditation examinations, student evaluations, research performance and reputation of our teaching staff, and outcomes of a whole range of measures of quality control we have in place are all evidence to back up this claim. The main responsibility of the director of the Graduate School is to keep it so. But that is hard work. Four challenges in particular make it difficult to keep up top quality in teaching.

First, the very diversity of the student and teacher body described above challenges those who design the programs and courses to accommodate diversity while simultaneously being rigorously fair and applying the same high standards to everyone. Our program directors, program teams, and teachers, backed up by the
Examination Boards and Program Committees, do a fantastic job with that as a rule, and I am extremely proud of the work they do. In addition, we work hard to qualify our teaching staff optimally for the international and diverse classroom by means of didactic and language training and by facilitating not only student but also staff mobility.

Second, our one-year Master programs operate with a constraint of 60 EC and one year of regular study duration. There is so much that our teachers want to teach and that our students want to learn, but only so much that fits into these constraints. This means that important choices have to be made and constantly reconsidered about what goes and what does not go into our programs and courses. Much work goes into that process, because we care deeply about optimizing students’ education in the time we and they have available. We would welcome the option of offering non-research master’s programs with a longer duration.

Third, our efforts to offer the highest quality of graduate education in our fields also push us to keep abreast of the latest technological developments and didactic insights that can be relevant for our teaching. The aim to make the most of the time and resources we have to allow our teachers and students to learn from each other is leading us to explore the manifold possibilities of Blended Learning – the combination of online digital media with traditional classroom methods. We do not explore these technologies just because they are trendy, or because we fail to see how important real contact between teachers and students is. We do so because and to the extent that we find them to enrich and improve our students’ (and teachers’) learning experience and/or student assessment. For example, if we can use online technologies to enable students to track their own improvement in certain skills over the course of the whole program, or to enable them to discuss course content with each other also outside the classroom, these seem like great ideas and we support their implementation. We embrace innovation where we find it inspiring, because it is true that “if we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.”

Fourth, while we would rather have limitless resources to offer our programs, we don’t. Teaching institutes like the GSSS get money for delivering study credits (ECs) to students and for handing out diplomas, but the Dutch government and the central university management say how much that is going to be, and, naturally, resources are limited. Teaching programs may not be too small – otherwise they become too expensive. But programs also must not grow too fast – otherwise they become more expensive too quickly (before they can get cheaper again). There are many factors that go into the costs of a program, from how expensive the teachers are (full professors cost more than assistant professors, for example), via how nice the rooms are which we rent to teach in (which is of course an absurd situation to begin with), to how much individual attention students get. In the end programs must not be too expensive to run – otherwise we have to shut them down. This means that a lot of people have to work hard to design programs in an efficient way, which still protects our high expectations of quality. It also means that in fact a lot of the teaching staff (and also support staff) do a lot of things for free, because they care about providing top quality teaching. This is something to be proud of: at the GSSS we collectively do our very best to provide top-quality academic education even under financially difficult conditions – and we succeed. But it is also something to carefully monitor and actively limit. The work pressure and work stress experienced in our departments are high and must not get higher.

Didactic vision

The Netherlands offer a “teaching and research culture in which freedom of expression, intellectual independence, curiosity, and the right to raise critical questions are central.”

Social Sciences at the UvA offer an intellectual environment that is extremely vibrant, cutting-edge, and high-quality. This becomes immediately obvious if you go practically anywhere else and compare. One important feature of the UvA’s broad vision on teaching and research is to maintain a close link between the two. Our teaching programs are research-intensive, both in the sense that the research skills and activities of our staff inform our teaching programs and courses, and in the sense that we teach our students to themselves become able to perform scientific research at a high level upon graduation, whether this be in an academic or any other public or private sector work environment. After all, as John Dewey put it, “Scientific principles and laws do not lie on the surface of nature. They are hidden, and must be wrested from nature by an active and elaborate...

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We teach those techniques. The strong basis in research of our teaching is supported by the excellent research performance and reputation of our scientific staff, as evidenced every year in the reports issued by our research institute, the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research.

The UvA also has a reputation of being progressive, and it is well deserved: We are normatively committed and political, in the sense of reflecting on the broader societal purposes to which our teaching and research can and should contribute, and acting on those reflections. We analyse societal challenges and opportunities, and design and conduct research to address and take advantage of them. This is pragmatic, action-oriented academic research, even where it may simultaneously be theoretical or fundamental.

Similarly, broad aims of all our teaching are to help educate critical and active citizens, who are able to pursue their own ideals, ideas, and interests in society and who are perhaps less likely than others to fall prey to demagogues or dogmas. We teach critical skills: the abilities required to assess incoming information in such a way that we can master it, instead of it mastering us. We provide an open and pluralistic learning environment, in which extremely broad ranges of ontological, epistemological, methodological, and theoretical approaches are given fair hearing, so that our students can develop broad horizons, intellectual versatility and the ability to communicate with diverse scholarly communities and other audiences as well as the broad background required to make their own, more specific choices in a well-reasoned way. This is also clearly reflected in our Policy on Free Speech and Safe Space (see Appendix D). If there is an ideal GSSS graduate, then she is ever curious, ready to challenge conventions and received wisdom, ready and able to think across disciplinary and other scholarly boundaries, able to function in diverse scholarly and work environments, and keenly aware of the societal relevance and implications of her work. This fits in neatly with the UvA-wide Vision on Teaching, which asks us to educate our students for a world in which knowledge is no longer certain and in which they should be alert for opportunities to apply their critical thinking skills.

Our place in society

"Anyone who has begun to think, places some portion of the world in jeopardy."[n]

In my view as teaching director, the university should be open to society and should function as a knowledge commons, as opposed to an ivory tower. What does that mean? For the research done at the university it means that we should always consider its utility for societal purposes and seek to actively link up and work with the world outside the university to find out what it may need from us, and what we can do for it. For our teaching, it means that we do not want to create a detached elite, but graduates who are brought up with this same ethos: graduates who are motivated and prepared to put their knowledge, insights, and skills to work in ways that have normatively defensible and practical effects in the real world. Our vision of teaching aligns with that of John Dewey, who held that "education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself."

To achieve the goal of the open university, we take a number of measures. One is to regularly bring people from outside the university into our programs to interact with our students and staff. This serves a number of useful purposes simultaneously: it lets us learn about the needs of practitioners, for example city planners or social workers, and can thus guide us towards useful research topics; it can give our students ideas for possible future careers; and it lets us meet people to integrate into our networks – possibly the person who once gave a guest lecture in one of your courses might be the one to offer you an internship or a job later on.

So, we try to bring the outside world to us. But the other way around, we also need to bring ourselves to the world and demonstrate our value. Many of our programs contain elements for which students leave the campus and go out for fieldwork or other kinds of off-campus activities, sometimes right here in Amsterdam, sometimes half way around the globe, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for half a year. They are our junior

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10 E.g. the last AISSR Annual Report of 2016.
11 Universiteit van Amsterdam, Onderwijsvisie (universitaire beleidsnotitie), 2012. Of course our individual programs each have a list of more specific ambitions to add to those very general didactic goals.
12 Attributed to John Dewey. Time and place of the statement unknown.
ambassadors, because they help us let the world know what we do at the UvA and what the things we do might be good for. It is important to let society know that and how the knowledge created at the university through teaching, research, and the learning they both foster is useful and important. Why else, after all, would taxpayers want to finance the public universities?

Behind these ideas lies a vision of the university as a knowledge commons. The “commons” is a general term for shared resources in which each stakeholder, in our case all of society, has an equal interest. In other words, the university is not just for the people who research, teach, and study there. At the university, collective goods are being produced in the form of knowledge, insight, and skills which are not only useful for the individual which acquires them but which can and should be useful for the society in which that individual lives and works more broadly. That is why our societies fund us. And it has two important implications, in my view: One, the university as a knowledge commons deserves protection. This means in particular that the value of the activities that take place at universities should not be judged by market logic, at least not exclusively so. Universities, research, and study programs should not be judged the way businesses are judged on the market and left to go bankrupt if they fail to be profitable. For example, fundamental research in medicine, which does not immediately deliver pay-offs but only might do so later, when its results become applied, must remain supported. And closer to home in the GSSS: Social scientific research that criticizes current conditions can easily appear irrelevant or even offensive from a societal mainstream point of view. But critical social sciences are vital for maintaining an open society, for speaking truth to power and developing alternative ways of thinking and organizing ourselves. Even if we cannot see how they deliver practical or marketable conclusions in the short term, they must be supported for the sake of the long-term health of our societies – indeed this is our very calling.

But it also, vice versa, demands something of us, and this is the second implication: We have to do our best to really produce collective goods (as opposed to focusing single-mindedly on our particular interests). This means we have to keep ourselves actively informed about societal needs, we must not enjoy the privileges of sitting in an ivory tower with the windows closed, but rather expose ourselves to and learn by continuous interaction with society-at-large.

What does that mean concretely? In the coming years we will work to expand and make better use of our international network of alumni and friends of the social sciences at the UvA. We will bring in people from the outside world to give life to the open university, and we will gather input from our broader network for improving our research and teaching priorities. For example, our network can help us inventory once a year which are the most important societal challenges – at home and around the world - at that time. Then we can inventory internally what we are doing to address those, in both research and teaching. And then we can let the world know that and how we are doing that, getting word out in a variety of media. The point of such activities is to connect research and teaching more closely with both the challenges and the opportunities that exist in the societies around us. This helps motivate both students and staff, it makes clear to us why we are putting in the effort, and it supports the status of our education and our expertise in society – which is important for our survival and the job prospects of our students.

I see the vision of the open university and the knowledge commons as absolutely vital for our students, because it a) allows them to see what they are actually doing when studying social sciences and what good can come of it, but also b) by establishing closer interaction with people from outside the university and the labour market more generally, shows them how they can go further after graduation. It is preparation for the field of work, professional orientation in the best sense.

**Lifelong Learning**

“The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning.”

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15 For example, wikipedia is the result of the production and maintenance of a common good by a contributor community in the form of encyclopedic knowledge that can be freely accessed by anyone.

The GSSS not only houses all master’s programs in the social sciences, it also holds responsibility for the teaching of our PhD students. As the Association of Dutch Universities also affirms, we find it important that PhD students “are given the room to independently give shape to their research and that next to this freedom they are also given sufficient opportunities to develop.”17 This occurs inter alia through the courses and workshops we offer together with the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, in which the research activities of our PhDs and staff are housed.

The GSSS also hosts our Summer Programs Office, which offers an inspiring range of intensive summer courses in, across, and beyond the social sciences to students from all over the world (including Amsterdam) and at all levels. We have also housed (until January 2019) the Amsterdam Advanced Graduate School, now UvA Academy, which is the FMG’s institute for post-initial education. This means that courses are offered here for persons who have already completed their education and worked, and now seek to develop themselves further and learn something new. This institute is expanding. Its activities, alongside the close networking with our alumni, will be important for establishing the closer relations we want to have with the world of work, in the city of Amsterdam and (far) beyond.

In sum, while our master’s programs are at the heart of the GSSS, they are part of a larger structure in which we seek to put our students on a path of life-long learning, keep in touch with them, and actively strive to connect the worlds of research, teaching, and professional practice in all our activities.

Concluding

I am privileged to have taken over a social science graduate school with a vibrant intellectual climate, well-designed programs, committed and highly qualified staff, and a wonderful mix of inspiring students. The challenge for the years to come is, next to addressing more specific priorities, to keep the quality of our programs high, our operations sustainable, and our staff and students happy. I welcome any and all ideas and advice on how to achieve those shared ends.

Annette Freyberg-Inan welcoming one of the three Summer Programmes cohorts of 2019 in the Aula. Photo: Ilsoo van Dijk.

Appendix B
Toelating masteropleidingen Graduate School of Social Sciences (GSSS), UvA
September 2019, Karen Schiffner en Annette Freyberg-Inan

Aanleiding/Inleiding
Mastertoelating via een toelatingsonderzoek geschiedt bij de opleidingen die vandaag de dag onder de GSSS vallen al sinds midden jaren 1990 (internationale opleidingen) en sinds de invoering van de bachelor-master structuur in 2010-2012 voor alle masteropleidingen. Over de jaren heen zijn de doelen van deze mastertoelating niet gewijzigd, maar de juridische omstandigheden, de procedures en de maatschappelijke belangstelling voor het onderwerp wel. Daarom is de voorliggende notitie geschreven.

Context: GSSS masteropleidingen
De GSSS biedt thans 11 masteropleidingen aan:
- Master Cultural and Social Anthropology (CSA) (3 tracks)
- Master Medical and Social Anthropology (MAS)
- Master Political Science (MPol) (6 tracks)
- Master Conflict Resolution and Governance (CRG)
- Master International Development Studies (IDS)
- Master Human Geography (HG) (4 tracks)
- Master Urban and Regional Planning (URP)
- Master Sociology (MSoc) (6 tracks)
- Research Master International Development Studies (RMIDS)
- Research Master Social Sciences (RMSS)
- Research Master Urban Studies (RMUS)

Alle masteropleidingen worden in het Engels aangeboden. De masteropleidingen die van oorsprong een aansluiting op een UvA-bacheloropleiding vormden (CSA, MPol, MSoc, HG, URP) bieden toetsing, waaronder de masterscriptie, in het Nederlands aan.

Juridisch kader

Doelen van een toelatingsonderzoek
Het doel van een toelatingsonderzoek is om de juiste student op de juiste plek te krijgen: een toegelaten masterstudent wordt in staat geacht om de opleiding binnen de nominale termijn met succes af te ronden. Dat betekent dat de student het juiste programma voor zijn/haar talenten en ambitie kiest en dat de vooropleiding/eerder verworven kennis en vaardigheden de student ook in staat stellen om met succes te studeren, met uiteraard de aanvulling dat dit ook leidt tot een vruchtbaar vervolg op de arbeidsmarkt (binnen en buiten de universiteit).

Geschiktheid
Opleidingen hebben een eindniveau, uitgedrukt in eindtermen: hetgeen de afgestudeerde minimaal kent/kan. Dit eindniveau wordt zes-jaarlijks getoetst en beoordeeld door de NVAO. Om dit eindniveau te bereiken, hebben de masteropleidingen in de Sociale Wetenschappen een eenjarig, de Research masteropleidingen een tweejarig curriculum. Het toelatingsonderzoek borgt dat alle toegelaten studenten het ingangsniveau hebben dat het bereiken van het eindniveau binnen de curriculaire tijd waarschijnlijk maakt.

Dit ingangsniveau wordt gespecificeerd in vooropleiding/voorkennis (niveau en inhoud): de toelatingseisen. Deze toelatingseisen worden verankerd in de Onderwijs- en Examenregeling van de opleiding. Bij de masteropleidingen van de Sociale Wetenschappen gaat het hierbij om basiskennis van de discipline/het onderwerp, basiskennis van algemene academische vaardigheden, basiskennis van methoden en technieken van de Sociale Wetenschappen en Engelse taalvaardigheid. In het kort komt dit neer op:

18 Engelse terminologie: Eligibility (hetgeen de lading beter dekt dan het Nederlandse woord).
- Een academische bacheloropleiding (of equivalent): algemene academische vaardigheden
- Een verwante bacheloropleiding (of equivalent): discipline/onderwerp 30-40 EC
- Methoden & technieken relevant voor de Sociale Wetenschappen van 20-30 EC (waaronder: dataverzameling, statistiek, kwalitatieve onderzoeksmethoden)
- Engelse taalvaardigheid

De (research)masteropleidingen die vanaf hun start (vanaf midden jaren 1990) internationaal en selectief waren opgezet, kennen aanvullende toelatingscriteria die moeten waarborgen dat de studenten in deze veeleisende opleidingen succesvol zijn:
- Minimaal cijfer GPA (7, resp. 7,5 voor Research masteropleiding)
- Blijk van motivatie
- Capaciteit om een academisch paper te kunnen schrijven (CRG, Research Masters)
- Beschikbaarheid van academische aanbeveling (Research Masters)

Het toelatingsonderzoek dient ertoe om de beslissen of de kandidaat wel of niet voldoet aan de toelatingseisen. In veel gevallen, vooral bij internationale studenten is hiervoor een individueel onderzoek nodig. Bij afgestudeerden van verwante academische bacheloropleidingen in Nederland is de toets op geschiktheid vooral een administratieve verwerking, resp. wordt nog naar de aanvullende toelatingseisen gekeken.

Tabel 1: Overzicht aanmelding, toelating en instroom 2019-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opleiding</th>
<th>Aanmeldingen¹⁹</th>
<th>Toelatingen</th>
<th>Instroom Master²⁰</th>
<th>Instroom pre-Master ²¹</th>
<th>Instroom Totaal</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bron: Admission office GSSS, Oktober 2019

Tabel 1 laat zien hoeveel kandidaten zich (t.b.v. instroom 2019) hebben aangemeld bij de GSSS master opleidingen, hoeveel er zijn toegelaten, en hoeveel de opleiding dan ook zijn begonnen. In het algemeen valt op dat er bij alle opleidingen veel toegelaten kandidaten toch niet komen (2019 is geen uitzondering). Dat heeft te maken met het feit dat studenten zich voor meerdere opleidingen aanmelden en er dan later een van kiezen. Ook is te zien dat selectie, zoals die plaatsvindt bij de zes opleidingen onderaan in de tabel, niet altijd een groot effect heeft. Hoe groot dat effect kan zijn hangt af van de verhouding tussen het aantal geschikte geachte aanmelders en de opleidingscapaciteit.

Selectie door capaciteitslimieten

¹⁹ Het gaat hierbij om serieuze aanmeldingen, niet alleen de eerste melding in StudieLink. Die is hoger, maar een deel van de kandidaten kiest er niet voor om de nodige vervolgstappen (indienen aanmelddossier) te doen.
²⁰ Instroom op basis van aanmelding voor dit jaar. Daarnaast zijn er nog inschrijvingen van voormalige pre-Masterstudenten.
²¹ Deels gaat het hierbij om een prognose: sommige pre-Masters beginnen pas in februari. Deze studenten hebben het aanbod geaccepteerd.
In een ideale wereld zou de GSSS alleen op geschiktheid toetsen: alle geschikte studenten worden toegelaten. Helaas is dit bij sommige opleidingen (of tracks binnen opleidingen) niet mogelijk, omdat wij dan een te grote instroom zouden hebben ten aanzien van de capaciteit van wetenschappelijke staf. Ook is het nodig om een redelijk stabiele instroom na te streven, omdat de capaciteit van wetenschappelijke staf niet ad-hoc kan worden uitgebreid of ingekrompen. Dat betekent dat wij voor een aantal opleidingen een bovengrens (=capaciteitslimiet) hebben ingesteld. Hierbij wordt rekening gehouden met klas-intervallen (30, 60 etc.), zodat kleinschalig onderwijs mogelijk en betaalbaar blijft.

Gelukkig wordt bij de meeste opleidingen de bovengrens tot op heden niet gehaald, resp. is de natuurlijke instroom rond de limiet (Research Masters, MAS). Bij twee opleidingen is het echter wel het geval: CRG en IDS. Hier is het aantal geschikt geachte kandidaten hoger dan de beschikbare plaatsen. Daarom moet hier worden geselecteerd. In dat geval worden de ‘meest-geschikten’ geselecteerd, dat wil zeggen de studenten met de meest overtuigende (academische) achtergrond. Hierbij wordt niet alleen gelet op de beste cijfers, maar tevens werkervaring (cv), motivatie, academische aanbeveling, en niveau van academische schrijfvaardigheid. Vanwege het hierboven beschreven effect van ‘wel toegelaten – maar toch niet ingestroomd’ worden er meer studenten toegelaten dan de eigenlijke limiet.

Wat betreft de toegankelijkheid van een bijpassende master voor eigen bachelor afgestudeerden, zo is deze gewaarborgd door het feit dat de MSoc (voor bachelor sociologie), HG en URP (voor bachelor Sociale geografie en planologie) en CSA (voor bachelor antropologie) geen capaciteitslimieten kennen. Bij de MPol zitten wel capaciteitslimieten op trackniveau, maar kunnen studenten een tweede track kiezen om nog wel in de opleiding terecht te komen.

**Procedure**

Kandidaten melden zich aan voor een masteropleiding via een online systeem, waarbij zij ook documenten moeten uploaden. Dit geschiedt parallel aan of eerder dan de melding in StudieLink. Hierbij gelden strenge deadlines die verschillen naar doelgroep, voor de meesten geldt: 1 maart. Zo moeten visumplichtigen of beursaanvragers zich eerder aanmelden, omdat anders de nodige procedures niet tijdig kunnen worden afgerond. Indien na de deadline nog plaatsen beschikbaar zijn, wordt voor niet-visumplichtigen de aanmeldperiode verlengd.

Het dossier van de kandidaat wordt door het admissions office van de GSSS gecontroleerd op volledigheid en betrouwbaarheid (diplomaarwaardering, originele cijferlijsten e.d.) en vervolgens doorgezet naar de admissions board van de opleiding. De admissions board is gemaandateerd om namens de decaan (tevens onder verantwoordelijkheid van de examencommissie) over toelatingsverzoeken te besluiten. In de admissions board heeft wetenschappelijk staf van de opleiding zitting.

Begin juni uiterlijk worden kandidaten bericht over hun toelating. Het kan hierbij gaan om een toelating, een voorwaardelijke toelating of een afwijzing. Kandidaten kunnen in beroep gaan tegen dit besluit (hetgeen een enkele keer per jaar voorkomt). Een voorwaardelijke toelating kan betekenen dat de kandidaat nog missende informatie moet inleveren (zoals afgerond bachelordiploma), maar kan ook inhoudelijk zijn: de kandidaat voldoet dan bijna, maar niet helemaal aan de toelatingsseisen. Het verschil is echter zo klein (<60 EC) dat het mogelijk is om de deficiëntie binnen maximaal een jaar weg te werken: ofwel door het zelf te regelen, ofwel door het volgen van een door de GSSS (resp. College of Social Sciences) aangeboden pre-Masterprogramma. Dit is bij voorbeeld vaak het geval bij een relevante vooropleiding op HBO niveau. Bij succesvolle afronding van een dergelijk pre-Masterprogramma zijn de studenten toegelaten tot het specifieke masterprogramma in het afsluitende collegejaar (ongeacht capaciteitsbeperkingen e.d.).

Bij toelating zijn de kandidaten toegelaten tot een specifieke masteropleiding (evt. track) in het collegejaar volgend op het toelatingsbesluit.

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22 Ook voor afgestudeerden in onze vijfde bacheloropleiding, Interdisciplinaire Sociale Wetenschappen, bestaat daarmee voldoende keuze aan toegankelijke passende masteropleidingen (met de juiste minor als voorbereiding).
Conclusie
De toelatingsprocedures zoals die voor onze masteropleidingen gelden zijn wetconform en houden de waarden van toegankelijkheid, onderwijskwaliteit, studeerbaarheid en hanteerbaarheid in balans. Naast opleidingen met slechts de gebruikelijke toelatingseisen op academische achtergrond, heeft de GSSS ook opleidingen (waaronder de Research Masters) met aanvullende toelatingseisen, gericht op de specifieke doelen/doelgroepen van die opleidingen. Ten slotte zijn er bij sommige opleidingen capaciteitslimieten nodig om de onderwijskwaliteit te waarborgen. Daardoor moet er bij een tweetal opleidingen daadwerkelijk tussen geschikte kandidaten worden geselecteerd. Naast internationale topstudenten aan te trekken blijven onze opleidingen breed toegankelijk - ook voor de Nederlandse (HBO en WO) student. Zij bieden op die manier een “international classroom”, waarvan niet het minst de Nederlandse student kan profiteren.
Appendix C
Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Amsterdam
Ethical Guidelines for Student Research

In force with start of academic year 2019/20

The purpose of this document is to provide students and their supervisors with support for ethical reflection upon students’ research plans, for the master’s theses or other research projects. It is based on the AISSR Integrity Protocol and Ethical Procedure and Questions documents (2017) and the hitherto used CSS and GSSS Guidelines for the Ethical Review of Research Conducted by Students (2012).

In the first part of this document, academic integrity is defined. Its principles should guide all GSSS students’ conduct during the whole process of their studies, and ideally beyond. The second part of the document offers a list of questions to help students to think through their research plan and complete the ethical reflection section or chapter of their thesis or paper. The third part describes the procedure for obtaining ethical clearance for a student research project, in cases where this is required by the degree programme. The fourth and final part describes the procedure for acquiring permission for fieldwork or research work placements outside of the Netherlands, in cases where this is required by the degree programme.

I. Academic Integrity

The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018), which the UvA endorses, breaks academic integrity down into five core principles: honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence (impartiality), and responsibility. Although these principles ought to be integral to the conduct of every researcher, this is not always the case; they are sometimes violated in various ways: by introducing fabricated or falsified data, secretly omitting certain findings, plagiarising and wrongly presenting oneself as an author, intentionally misusing methods or misinterpreting results, being culpably careless in the conduct of research or permitting and concealing the misconduct of other researchers. None of these practices are acceptable for our students or staff in any way, shape, or form.

For student research projects in particular, five issues related to academic integrity are most relevant: 23

1. Scientific Fraud

Scientific fraud is understood as conscious deception in the form of cheating and misrepresentation of research procedures or results of research. This may involve not only serious manipulation of data or results but also “subtler” forms such as reporting empirical results consistent with one’s findings and arguments, while being aware of but not reporting less favourable results.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of scientific fraud that concerns use or reproduction of another person’s text, data (including audio, visual and other forms of material), code or ideas without properly acknowledging the source. Plagiarism may not only take a form of conscious deception (e.g. presenting someone else’s work as one’s own) but also negligence (e.g. failure to clearly indicate quoted or paraphrased text, material, ideas etc.). This means that you should take great care to indicate direct quotations properly and to provide full information on your sources wherever in your work you rely on the work of others. The requirement to acknowledge intellectual indebtedness to others applies to non-academic sources, too. “Submitting papers obtained from a commercial agency or written (whether or not for payment) by another person” 25 is also considered to be plagiarism.

3. Self-citation Standards

Students may build their research upon their own previously published work. In such instances, though, they must properly indicate that this is the case, so as to avoid “self-plagiarism.” If you want to build on some of your own earlier non-published work, such as older term papers, this must be discussed with your supervisor and should in any case be minimized.

4. Conflicts of Interest

23 For elaboration on these topics, please refer to the AISSR Integrity Protocol on which this section is based.
24 In addition to the AISSR Integrity Protocol, this section draws from the UvA’s Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students. Please refer to this document for details, binding definitions and regulations currently in place.
25 Regulations Governing Fraud and Plagiarism for UvA Students, article 3h.
Conflict of interest occurs when a student has relationships or allegiances external to the given project that may make them steer the research towards a particular outcome. These relationships may be of several kinds: economic, political or even personal. Their sole existence, nonetheless, does not imply that the project cannot be conducted at all. Rather, it is important to recognize that such affiliations and normative priors might affect one’s results and to take steps to ensure that empirical work can yield findings beyond or against such priors. Hence, where relevant, the student should be transparent and explicit about such possible conflicts of interest, in the direction of full disclosure.

5. Research Data Management (RDM)
Practices to prevent and identify fraud in empirical research and the need for replicability require information about and, where possible, access to the data used in research. However, for various practical and ethical reasons, making data available is not always possible. The AISSR thus advises you to follow the motto “open when possible, closed when necessary.” Supervisors may ask you to make data available, for example as an appendix to your thesis, and you should be prepared to explain why any given data cannot be disclosed. At the same time, you have the responsibility to protect your sources where necessary, for example by anonymizing interview subjects when they have so requested, or when making their identities public may lead to their coming to harm. Making decisions about which data to disclose and which not may be difficult. When in doubt, it is important to discuss these questions with your supervisor. (See also section II.3.)

And what happens to your own papers and theses?
We employ a plagiarism check software called Turnitin. Usually, when you are asked to submit a paper, and certainly when you are asked to submit your master thesis, you are asked to submit it via this software (which is integrated with our electronic teaching platform Canvas). Turnitin stores your work within its database. However, their terms of operation stipulate that the data in this database can be used only for purposes of future plagiarism checks (for example, to see whether someone else rips off your thesis in the future). Your thesis does not in this way end up in the public domain. After graduation, theses are also stored digitally in the administrative archives for accreditation purposes (this is required for seven years) and, if you give express permission, also in the UvA library. However, you keep the intellectual property right over your own work. This also means that there are no problems with presenting (parts of) our thesis or paper at a conference, or even publishing (parts of) it.

II. Questions for Ethical Reflection
The following list of questions comes from the AISSR support document for ethical review of research plans. Its purpose is not to provide the student with a standard form to be filled in and submitted, although different degree programs inside the GSSS may well use such a form. Nor are all the questions necessarily relevant for each project. Rather, the list offers a structure for reflection upon your research plan. You should discuss these questions in a one-on-one conversation with your supervisor early on in the process. You can also use them to write a section on research ethics, if that is required as a part of a research proposal or final thesis.

1. Who and what to study
1a. Approaching people
Social science research frequently involves working with informants, participants or interviewees – and their rights are to be respected. How will you recruit these people? Will you be working through other institutions (e.g. healthcare facilities, schools)? If so, how will you make clear your relative independence from these institutions (so that they will not treat those who participate in your research differently from those who do not)? Are you thinking of handing out money or other rewards for participation in your research? If so, why? What consequences will this have? What alternatives might there be? What other issues of decent conduct will arise at this point and how will you handle them?

1b. Not neglecting people
If in your research you work with publicly available data, if you study built environments, infrastructures or practices (e.g. mobility patterns, neighbourhood dynamics), or if otherwise you do not directly depend on people and their willingness to talk with you: how will you still incorporate in your work respect for the interests and concerns of those whose lives your work may affect? How do your research questions address, reflect on, critique or otherwise relate to the concerns of the various people to whom your research pertains? How do your concerns map onto or clash with those of relevant others? How will you explain your research and its purposes not only to social scientists but to the people it concerns or affects?
2. Relating your research back to the social world

2a. Impact on people
Will your information gathering have the potential to harm people? If so, do you intend to protect your research subjects/informants (etc.) against the potential negative consequences of their participation? If so, how? If not, why not? This may become pressing in situations where your informants are ‘undercover’ (e.g. illegal) and/or where states or other organisations are at least as curious about them as you are. What kinds of risk-reducing measures will you take? What other harms might there be in store for them, and how will you avoid and/or reduce these harms? If you are not sure you can avoid harm, does your goal merit the risks?

2b. Establishing ground rules with your research subjects
Will you ask people for their consent to be researched? If so, what exactly will you ask them to consent to? At what stage in the process? What about your research procedure or the use of your research will you share with them or leave open? If you would like to ask for signatures on forms, do you think that it is indeed wise: what kind of burden might that represent for them, and is that burden warranted? If you want to work with forms, which shape do you give these? If paperwork is not opportune in the settings where you will be working, in which other way will you show you are respectful or provide guarantees?

2c. Tough cases
What extra safeguards will you use if your research subjects/informants are minors, or otherwise in a more vulnerable position, or are less able to understand what is going on?
Will you find yourself in a situation where you are passively observing, so that your research subjects might not be aware that you are doing research? If so, how will you still work towards decency, fairness, and safety for yourself and your research subjects?
And if you will not directly face and talk with the people to whom your research pertains, how will you attend to their interests and concerns?

2d. Beyond establishing ground rules
Your responsibility does not end with shifting decisions and choices to your research subjects/informants. How will you avoid or reduce the risk that your research process will harm them? That is, what will you do to protect your research subjects/informants against the potential negative consequences of their participation? What might such negative consequences be?
How will you protect yourself and other researchers and research assistants involved against potential negative consequences of the research process? Situations of illegality come to mind here. But the risks may also be social (e.g. being confronted with violence) or mental/psychological. If this is relevant in your case, what kind of personal and emotional preparations and support will you organise for yourself and other researchers (assistants, fellow students, etc.)?

3. After assembling your data

3a. Data storage
How will you deal with the materials you have assembled? How will you store/archive them so that they are protected against theft (e.g. using password protection)?

3b. Data accessibility
Once you have data, there may be tensions here between keeping these hidden to ensure the privacy of respondents/informants or sharing them with fellow researchers and/or other publics. How will you balance keeping sensitive issues from inquisitive eyes with proving enough openness to assure others of the truthfulness of your results? In other words, how will you handle the potential tension between the ethical ideal of data protection and the integrity ideal of data sharing?
If you intend to open up your data, when will you do so – immediately, or after a certain embargo time? Will others be able and invited to use them? Will you also preserve your data for later reuse (e.g. after a few decades)? Or will it be better in your case to destroy your raw materials so that the original research subjects/informants are better protected, or for another reason (if so, which reason)? Here, the same tensions arise but, as the timeline is longer, specificities may change.

3c. Analysing data
How will you work with the data you gather? How will you do justice to them, both in the sense of bringing out true results and in that of attending to relevant concerns?
4a. Communicating your choices
How will you explain and lay out the methods that you used to gather, treat and analyse your data? What, in your case, are the relevant ethical issues in this context?

4b. Your audience
Where, when and for whom will you write? Where do you think your work should be circulated and in which language(s)? How does this relate to your concerns, to the concerns of your research subjects/informants, and/or to what is relevant in the practices that you studied?

4c. Implications of your findings
How will you ensure, overall, that your research products will be good in the ethical sense of the word? Are you sure that they will not harm those who have put their trust in you? Have you considered what might happen to your results, what others might do with them? Have you taken into account what role you might play in this? If you want to express criticism, will your criticism be clearly directed, well-argued, and respectful of the individuals concerned?

III. Procedure for Obtaining Ethical Clearance for a Student Research Project

Sometimes, research may get you into dangerous situations. If you feel that you are in any sort of danger (physically or emotionally), or if you feel that it might be better to conceal your purpose or identity – get out of that situation immediately! If you cannot be honest about who you are and what you are doing without feeling at risk, you are doing something wrong. Stop it, and get in touch with your supervisor to talk about how to adjust your work and get back onto safe ground.

GSSS degree programmes may decide to ask students to obtain ethical clearance for a research project. If this is the case, the following procedure applies.

Ethical review of research conducted by students
If a proposed research project (research proposal) fails to comply with the ethical standards presented in this and the referenced documents, the GSSS degree programme may reject it. Approval must always be granted by the supervising lecturer or thesis supervisor. Supervisors have the authority to veto certain topics and types of research based on the principles expressed here. (For example, your supervisor may not want to you to interview traumatized children if you do not have the proper skills in order to prevent their being harmed by your research.) The lecturer/supervisor is the person who can give ethical clearance, based on having been declared competent to do so by the Examinations Board. It is then the responsibility of the student to behave in line with the terms of the clearance in all phases of the research. In the event of doubt whether a proposed research project is ethically justified, the lecturer/supervisor may first consult a colleague, the director of the relevant AISSR research programme group, or the programme director. In the event of continuing doubt, or if the lecturer/supervisor and the student fail to reach a mutually agreed solution, the proposed research project will be submitted to the Examinations Board for review. If the Examinations Board is unable or unwilling to make a judgement, or if the student or lecturer lodge an objection against the proposed decision of the Examinations Board, the Examinations Board will submit the research proposal to the AISSR Ethics Committee for advice. Based on the advice issued by the AISSR Ethics Committee, the Examinations Board will decide after consulting the GSSS director. An appeal may then be brought against the decision of the Examinations Board, following the customary appeals procedure.

Step-by-step procedure:

- The lecturer/supervisor reviews the ethical acceptability of the research proposal.
- If it is rejected, the student must revise the proposal.
- In the event of doubt, the lecturer/supervisor consults a relevant colleague.
- If doubt continues, or student and lecturer/supervisor cannot come to an agreement on the needed changes, the proposal is submitted to the Examinations Board.
- The Examinations Board reviews the research proposal and will either issue approval or a rejection.
- If the Examinations Board cannot come to a decision, of if the lecturer or the student object to the approval or rejection, the Examinations Board will submit the case to the AISSR Ethics Committee.
- Having heard (and following on from) the AISSR Ethics Committee, the Examinations Board will reach a final judgement.
- The usual appeals procedures relating to decisions of the Examinations Board apply to any further steps.
If you submit a master thesis to a programme requiring ethical clearance without having received such clearance, you have not met one of the important learning outcomes of your degree programme: awareness of your ethical responsibilities as a researcher. This means that you do not qualify for the degree, even if your thesis exhibits no other weaknesses. In practice, it means that your thesis will not be assessed. You receive no credit for it and have to start from scratch.

IV. Guidelines for Research Work Placements and Fieldwork Outside the Netherlands

As a rule, the supervising lecturer grants approval for fieldwork or research work placements outside the Netherlands as part of the degree programme. S/he has been declared competent to assess the feasibility and safety of the proposed research project abroad by the Examinations Board. In the event of doubt, approval will not be granted. In that case a new research proposal must be drawn up (with a different location for gathering data) and approved by the lecturer.supervisor. If the student disagrees with the rejection, the student may approach the Examinations Board, and the Examinations Board may overrule the lecturer/supervisor. In any case no approval will be granted for a formal study component abroad if the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a warning ‘advising against non-essential travel’ for that particular country or region (a so-called “code red”). If the Ministry issues such a warning in the period between approval of the research proposal and the student’s actual departure, the approval will have to be revoked. Students are perceived to have an individual responsibility to adhere to the advice issued by the Dutch embassy (or by their country of origin, if they are non-Dutch nationals) for the relevant country or region. In cases where hardship results from such a revocation of approval (e.g. because flights have been paid for), the student may approach the GSSS International Office with a plea for extra financial support (which is, however, not guaranteed).

If a student travels abroad despite consent not having been granted, the proposed research plan will be deemed unapproved and the rights to supervision and assessment of the research project will lapse. The student is responsible for acquiring the proper type of visa for the stay abroad, as needed. Extracurricular stays abroad fall outside the scope of the degree programme and, in principle, will not be approved by the degree programme. This is based on the principle that a student should be available full-time to complete their degree programme within the duration defined by the relevant programme.

Step-by-step procedure:

- The lecture/supervisor and the student assess the safety-related aspects of the research destination.
- If the Ministry has issued a warning ‘advising against non-essential travel’, the proposal is rejected.
- In the event of doubt, the lecturer/supervisor rejects the proposal and discusses this with the student.
- If the student disagrees with the rejection (and continues to do so after discussion), the proposal may be submitted to the Examinations Board.
- The Examinations Board reviews the research proposal and will either issue approval or rejection.
- If, despite a negative decision, a student still goes ahead with the research in accordance with the rejected plan, the rights to supervision and assessment lapse.

For up-to-date travel advice please consult https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reizen/reisadviezen (in Dutch).
Appendix D
Policy on Free Speech and Safe Space
Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of Amsterdam, November 2019

Engaging with potentially controversial issues in diverse environments, such as we do in our university programmes, can sometimes lead to tensions, even conflict. This creates a dilemma: On the one hand, we seek to provide a study environment in which UvA students and teachers feel safe and respected; on the other hand, we subscribe to the fundamental value of academic freedom, which requires freedom of expression. In this policy document we clarify our response to this dilemma: We reject the approach of seeking to prevent or control conflict through censorship or directives. Instead, we promote the values of diversity, freedom of speech, and respect, and we foster open engagement to negotiate inevitable tensions in a process of mutual learning.

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At the University of Amsterdam, students are exposed to the highest standards of research-inspired academic teaching. Our study programmes are dynamic learning spaces relying on both physical and virtual interaction. In all our programmes we encourage active learning by establishing meaningful human contact and interaction between students, teachers, and sometimes guests in diverse, inclusive, and inspiring environments. Often, our programmes include students from different nationalities and are conducted in English. Then we speak of working within an “international classroom.”27 We strongly welcome diversity in our programmes. We are convinced that national and other forms of diversity enhance the learning experience for everyone involved and help our students to develop useful networks and inter-cultural and communication skills. By creating a diverse and dynamic learning environment we want to help our students grow into well-informed and open-minded citizens capable of creating new knowledge and insight and becoming drivers of innovation in tomorrow’s world. We want to see our graduates move on to play pivotal roles in devising solutions to societal problems and in breaking down societal divides, locally and globally.

Diversity – national, gender, political, religious, sexual, racial/ethnic, ability-related and other forms – enhances learning because people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and views bring different perspectives to a discussion and help everyone to see the issues discussed in novel ways.28 Being confronted with other perspectives in that way can be truly eye-opening and transformatory. It can also help us make the world a better place by fostering mutual understanding and laying foundations for cooperation. However, being confronted with other perspectives can sometimes also be uncomfortable and trigger negative emotions. There has in the past years been much discussion and debate within academic circles in which people try to balance the value of free speech with that of a “safe space” in which people will be protected from being upset.29 Different academic institutions strike a different balance in this debate. This document clarifies the position we take at the University of Amsterdam’s Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

We ascribe to the value of free speech, without the fear of censorship, discrimination, or condemnation. In our programmes, all students – no matter where they come from and what their experiences have been – are encouraged to speak up, write freely, listen critically, challenge each other, and in this way learn. This reflects Dutch educational culture which, in international comparison, tends to value inquisitiveness, assertiveness, and taking position. We expect that students and faculty will be engaged in discussion, debate, and sometimes disagreement. In the latter case, the ultimate outcome of discussion may be “agreeing to disagree” — it may not be possible to come to a shared judgment, and that is fine. Important is respect for each other’s views and the

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27 This document draws on an advice prepared in June 2018 by the UvA-wide “Taskforce International Classroom” and entitled “Amsterdam’s Global University in the Classroom”.

28 In study programmes where this is relevant, notably in the social sciences and humanities, the curriculum itself can be diversified for the same reason: to give space to different perspectives linked to, for example, different historical experiences.

29 The notion of “safe space” is at its core aimed at protecting people against active marginalization, stereotyping, or discriminatory abuse, but often extended to promise protection against other forms of provocation or emotional disturbance (e.g. by reminders of possible personal trauma).
feeling that we can exchange those views openly. It also means being able to raise supposed taboo issues, defend unpopular opinions, or use scientific argument to question common sense. Students and teachers should feel safe to express themselves and be brave enough to do so — that is the meaning we at the UvA give to “safe space” in academia.\textsuperscript{30}

**The limits to free speech are given by the principles of civility and mutual respect.** Responsibility to uphold these principles lies with both staff and students. The freedom of expression does not include the freedom to insult or threaten others. However, people may perceive differently when a line has been overstepped. Important for creating our safe space is that everyone can speak up if they feel that the tone of the conversation has become too hostile, the conversation is biased, or if they are otherwise made uncomfortable. Also, if someone wants to be addressed differently, for example in a differently gendered or non-gendered way, we want them to feel safe to ask. We do not, however, place restrictions beforehand on our teachers about what they can speak about or how. They may raise topics or make statements that shock you. As a student you should understand that this is not done to offend you, but to make you think. If you want to object, you are invited to do so openly.

Our position on academic freedom entails that we do not require the use of “trigger warnings” as they are now in place in some academic institutions, i.e., alerts given to students by teachers prior to presenting or discussing any material that might be potentially controversial or upsetting. At the GSSS, each faculty member can, at their own discretion, preface the presentation of potentially upsetting material with a content warning. If such an explicit warning is given, any student has the right to excuse themselves temporarily from the class. However, this is NOT a required or routine practice. We believe that learning is inherently a process of questioning and grappling with controversial, sometimes difficult and negatively laden topics. We want to provide a supportive and open environment in which to do so. Shielding students from this process is antithetical to our pedagogical principles.

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In conclusion, we do not aim for a space that is made safe by fear of speaking one’s mind, a space where topics or opinions are pre-selected as acceptable, suspicious, or condemnable. Instead, we aim for a brave space that is made safe by mutual openness and respect, a genuine acceptance of diversity, and a shared desire to learn with and from each other, a space where all students, irrespective of their background, are made to feel welcome and engage, and where we equally respect the professionalism and humanity of our teaching staff.

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\textsuperscript{30} This notion is sometimes referred to as “brave space” as opposed to “safe space”. Other definitions of safe spaces are, of course, also legitimately in use at the university. Students and staff may, for example, apply the term to events or areas on campus that provide space for a particular group (e.g. women or sexual minorities).