



M Information Studies
University of Amsterdam

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Project code P2419

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Summary

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The panel found that the master's programme Information Studies offers an attractive combination of computational science and its embedding in human processes, combining technical skills with social and societal reflection. Within this context, the Data Science track focuses on data-driven challenges and the Information Systems track on complex information systems. The current set-up of the tracks results from a redeveloped identity and profile, aiming to focus on an interdisciplinary, reflective approach towards computer science, focusing on socio-technical systems and the embedding of IT systems and data in human processes. The panel supports this development, feeling that graduates who combine technical and social/societal reflection can fulfil an important role in society. It encourages the programme to keep developing this profile and work on commitment within and outside the programme to be able to fully reshape the programme in this direction. The intended learning outcomes of the programme are relevant and reflect the academic orientation and master level of the programme. The programme is well connected to the professional field and uses its input in keeping the ILOs up-to-date. The panel advises to reflect on the alignment of the MSc with the requirements for Information Systems programmes, and to consider whether it still aims to align with the core of this field.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel considers the curriculum of the MSc Information Studies to be coherent, offering two attractive tracks that focus on developing information systems or data-driven solutions in a social context. The programme offers an appropriate combination of relevant knowledge and professional and academic skills. It combines technical knowledge and skills with reflections on social aspects of technology. At the same time, the panel found that this socio-technical integration could be more explicit, noting that students can opt for a mainly technical programme through specific curriculum choices. It recommends bringing the interdisciplinary aspects more to the forefront and to emphasize the integrative nature to prevent the social aspects from being seen as an add-on to a technical course. Furthermore, the programme should reflect on whether social science research skills are consistently taught and assessed across the curriculum. Teaching methods are varied, and encourage active engagement, and the application of theory in practice. The parttime variant is coherent and is an attractive option for students combining their studies with a job. The choice to use English as the language of instruction and in the programme name is valid in relation to the international character of the professional and academic field.

Student guidance and support in the programme is well organized, with students experiencing a low-threshold, supportive environment. Facilities are up to standard, including information provision, support for students with functional impairments and an attractive new building with labs and opportunities for collaboration. Admission requirements are broad, fitting the interdisciplinary character of the programme. The resulting diversity of the intake is well managed, resulting in a feasible curriculum for all admitted students. The teaching staff is academically and didactically well qualified, and the programme is well managed. The teaching staff has been expanded in response to the recommendations of the previous panel, allowing for more research-led teaching and a more interdisciplinary teaching staff. The panel advises to take the need for more interdisciplinary and social sciences-oriented staff members into consideration in discussions on the ambitions of the programme to become a more interdisciplinary socio-technical programme.

Standard 3. Student assessment

The system of assessment in the master Information Studies is reliable, valid and transparent. Assessment methods are varied, and checks and balances are in place to ensure course and thesis assessment quality. The Board of Examiners is in control and fulfils all of its legal duties in a satisfactory way. Thesis assessment is up to standard, with the consistent use of a four-eye principle in grading and the use of an insightful rubric to substantiate the grades. The programme has a realistic and proactive approach towards generative AI in assessment, and has several measures in place to ensure the validity of assessment, including testing in curated environments, a greater reliance on oral exams and a requirement for students to regularly engage with their thesis supervisor. In this light, the panel supports the planned introduction of an oral defence for the thesis. Finally, the panel advises the faculty management to ensure ongoing attention to the capacity of the Board of Examiners, which can expect an increase in workload associated with further future-proofing the system of assessment regarding generative AI.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The quality of the graduation projects and the performance of graduates show that students of the MSc Information Studies realize the programme's intended learning outcomes. The graduation projects, many of which have resulted in academic papers, demonstrate solid research skills and reflect the interdisciplinary profile of the programme.

Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

M Information Studies

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

The assessment panel has reviewed the report and agrees with its contents. On behalf of the panel,

Prof. dr. S. (Sally) Wyatt
Chair

Peter Hildering
Secretary

Date: 26 March 2026

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 21 and 22 January 2026, the M Information Studies programme of the University of Amsterdam was assessed by an independent peer review panel. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (April 2024).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Peter Hilderling acted as secretary for the assessment of the B and M Information Studies programmes of the University of Amsterdam. He has been certified and registered by the NVAO.

Panel composition

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members.

On 19 November 2025, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chairs on 14 October 2025 on their role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016).

Preparation

The programme composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The programme selected representative partners for the various interviews, and took care that the parttime and fulltime variants were covered in the relevant interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would be made part of the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programme provided the secretary with a list of graduates over the period 2023-2024. In consultation with the secretary, the panel chair selected 15 theses. They took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various tracks. Of the Data Science track, 11 theses were selected and of the Information Systems track, four theses were selected. Five theses were of the part-time variant and 10 of the full-time variant. This selection reflected the number of graduates in each particular track and variant proportionally. Prior to the site visit, the programme provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. It also provided the panel with the information file and additional materials (see Appendix 4).

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

Site visit

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

Report

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the coordinator for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the M Information Studies programme, in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalized the report, and the coordinator sent it to the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Computing Science of the UvA.

Panel

The panel assessing the M Information Studies at the University of Amsterdam consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. S. (Sally) Wyatt, Full Professor Digital Cultures at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University [Chair];
- Prof. dr. A. (Albert) Ali Salah, Full Professor Social and Affective Computing at the Science Faculty of Utrecht University;
- Prof. dr. G.H.L. (George) Fletcher, Full Professor Computer and Data Science at the Department Mathematics and Computer Science of the TU Eindhoven;
- J. (Jasper) Kleine, bachelor's student of the B Information Sciences of Groningen University, [Student member];

Each panel member, the panel secretary and the programme have filled out the Statement of Impartiality and non-disclosure agreement, as required by the NVAO. They can confirm that the assessment was carried out in complete independence.

Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	University of Amsterdam
Address:	Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, 1018 WS Amsterdam
Website:	www.uva.nl
BRIN-number:	21PK
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Information Studies
ISAT number:	60229
Orientation of the programme:	Academic
Level of the programme:	Master (NLQF7)
Number of credits:	60 EC
Language of instruction:	English
Professional requirements:	no
Specializations or tracks:	Data Science Information Systems
Location:	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime, parttime
Awarded degree:	MSc
Submission date NVAO:	1 May 2026

Description of the assessment

Organization

The master's programme Information Studies (IS) of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) is organized by the Graduate School of Informatics in the Faculty of Science (FNWI), which organizes eight master's programmes in the computing sciences. Staff associated with the programme is mainly provided by the Informatics Institute (IvI). It shares its Programme Committee and Examination Board subcommittee with the BSc Informatiekunde. This Examination Board subcommittee falls under the faculty-wide Examination Board.

The programme is primarily housed in the recently constructed LAB42 building at Amsterdam Science Park, which also hosts IvI, as well as various research labs, start-ups, research institutes and tech-policy organizations. The programme falls under the responsibility of a programme and education director, supported by a programme coordinator, study advisor and two track coordinators. Educational support is provided by the faculty's Education Service Centre (ESC) and a Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) that stimulates initiatives in educational innovation and teacher professionalization. The MSc Information Studies admits a maximum of 150 students per year, of which roughly 70% registers for the Data Science track, and 30% for the Information Systems track. This cap was recently introduced to mitigate the high number of students enrolling into the programme.

The programme can be followed in either a full-time or part-time variant. The part-time variant offers the same content as the full-time variant, but is delivered over a longer period. Approximately 25% of students follow the programme part-time, usually because they combine the MSc with a job. In the remainder of this report, the discussions and conclusions concern both the full-time and part-time variants, unless explicitly indicated otherwise.

Recommendations previous panel

In 2019, the previous accreditation committee provided the programme with several recommendations. These included better aligning the two tracks in the programme at that time, strengthening the research basis of the business and social sciences part of the programme, expanding the teaching team, better separating the contributions of the two examiners of the master's final project, and providing more written comments on the master thesis assessment. The programme presented the actions taken based on these recommendations to the panel. Based on this information and discussions during the site visit, the panel concludes that the recommendations have been taken to heart by the programme. Where relevant, these will be discussed in more detail in the respective standard.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

Aims and profile

The master's programme IS is a 60 EC programme offered both in a full-time (one year) or part-time (two year) variant. It aims to educate students in understanding and solving complex societal and organizational problems through systematic and strategic use of ICT. The programme focuses on three core areas: technology, human factors, and organization/society, respectively. It focuses primarily on computational

sciences, but also has interdisciplinary connections to psychology, cognitive science, public policy, communication, and behavioural sciences. Graduates can work in industry, research, or the public sector in positions related to translating core principles of information systems and data science to organizational and societal practice.

The programme offers two tracks to students:

- *Data Science (DS)* focuses on data-driven problem solving, teaching students to translate scientific, societal and business challenges into computational solutions. Students are educated to be data scientists in many different sectors.
- *Information Systems (IS)* centres on the human dimension of technology, particularly on how people interact with technology and media, and how they can be supported, influenced or hampered by technologies. Graduates can work as consultant, analyst or designer, often as liaison between IT and non-IT employees and customers.

The IS track used to center around technical aspects of information systems, but was recently overhauled to focus more on human-computer interaction and its relation to data science. This was implemented in response to developments in the field, particularly the rise of data science and AI, as well as the low student numbers in the IS track. The new design expands focus to the ability to engage ethically, critically and creatively with complex societal challenges. This also aligns with the research group Digital Interaction Lab (DILab) at Ivi that was launched in 2021 to strengthen research on human factors in technology. Furthermore, the connection with DILab is aimed to address the concern of the previous accreditation committee on the limited research integration of the IS track.

The panel has studied the profile of the programme and the two associated tracks. It feels that the profile is appropriate and offers an attractive combination of computational science and its embedding in human processes. Both tracks combine technical skills with social and societal reflection, with DS focusing on data-driven challenges and IS on complex information systems. During the site visit, the panel spoke with programme representatives on the recent redesign of the IS track. It appreciates the strengthening of the research integration of this track through alignment with the DILab, and the reshaping of its identity. The panel feels that this identity discussion is important given the current position of the field of Information Studies, and appreciates the rigorous way in which the programme approaches the discussion. It supports the general direction chosen by the programme to position both the IS and DS tracks as socio-technical programmes, focusing on human-computer interaction and the embedding of IT systems and data in human processes. It feels that this interdisciplinary, reflective approach to computer science is essential for modern society where digital technology permeates all aspects of life. According to the panel, graduates who combine technical skills with social and societal reflection can fulfil an important role in society. It encourages the programme to continue developing this profile, and work on internal and external commitment for this renewed profile in order to fully reshape the programme in this direction.

Intended learning outcomes

The aims of the programme have been summarized in a set of 18 intended learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs are grouped in five categories related to the Dublin Descriptors on master's level. These are:

- 1) understand information systems as complex socio-technical systems
- 2) apply knowledge and data systems to address and solve real-world challenges in diverse domains
- 3) make informed, socially aware and human-centered decisions in data-intensive environments
- 4) communicate professionally with both technical and non-technical audiences
- 5) reflect critically on their continuous learning and adapt to changing technological landscapes.

The programme presented an overview to the panel where all ILOs were connected to qualifications related to the Dublin Descriptors, which in turn correspond to NLQF level 7.

To align its ILOs with the requirements of the professional field, the programme uses the input of the Professional Advisory Board (PAB) which it shares with the BSc Informatiekunde. Programme management meets with the PAB twice per year to discuss the relation between the programmes and the professional field. This is supplemented with insights from exit surveys sent to all students upon graduation.

The panel studied the ILOs and their alignment with the academic and professional fields. It concludes that the ILOs are well designed, relevant and up to date. They reflect the academic orientation and master's level as described in the NLQF Framework level 7. The panel appreciates the alignment with professional field requirement through the Professional Advisory Board, and noted that this is complemented with many informal connections of the programme to the professional field. For example, the programme organizes an annual thesis fair together with the BSc Informatiekunde, where external organizations can present their projects to students. Although the programme name Information Studies is broad enough to cover the current interpretation of the programme, the ILOs are also currently aligned with the Association for Computing Machinery Framework for Information Systems (ACM IS). Compared to the programme this framework has a narrower focus on information systems connected to business studies. The panel notes that therefore alignment to ACM IS might be difficult to maintain in the light of the new developments in the programme's profile. The programme is already loosely connected to the entrepreneurial aspects of the ACM IS Framework, and will further move towards a socio-technical programme. The panel advises the programme to reflect on whether it wants to maintain its ACM IS alignment and take this into consideration in future redesigns of the ILOs.

Considerations

The panel found that the master's programme Information Studies offers an attractive combination of computational science and its embedding in human processes, combining technical skills with social and societal reflection. Within this context, the Data Science track focuses on data-driven challenges and the Information Systems track on complex information systems. The current set-up of the tracks results from a redeveloped identity and profile, aiming to focus on an interdisciplinary, reflective approach towards computer science, focusing on socio-technical systems and the embedding of IT systems and data in human processes. The panel supports this development, feeling that graduates who combine technical and social/societal reflection can fulfil an important role in society. It encourages the programme to keep developing this profile and work on commitment within and outside the programme to be able to fully reshape the programme in this direction. The intended learning outcomes of the programme are relevant and reflect the academic orientation and master level of the programme. The programme is well connected to the professional field and uses its input in keeping the ILOs up-to-date. The panel advises to reflect on the alignment of the MSc with the requirements for Information Systems programmes, and to consider whether it still aims to align with the core of this field.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

Curriculum and didactics

The curriculum of the MSc Information Studies consists of 60 EC and comprises course work, electives, collaborative projects and a final thesis. Students choose the track Data Science or Information Systems at the start of the curriculum and follow the associated courses. Both tracks have 24 EC of track-specific mandatory courses, 12 EC restricted-choice electives, a 6 EC Data Systems Project, and a 18 EC Master Thesis.

The *mandatory courses* cover the essential domain-specific knowledge, whereas the *restricted-choice electives* allow students to tailor the curriculum to their own interests. Typically, students can choose one out of four or five courses on offering. Many of the electives can be chosen by students from both tracks. Upon request and after approval from the Board of Examiners, students can also follow other courses within the faculty or elsewhere. The didactic concept of the courses emphasizes blended learning and project-based education. Courses are designed to balance face-to-face interactions with technology-supported instructions. Teaching methods include lectures, group work, peer feedback, simulations and discussion-based sessions. Furthermore, teaching staff members are encouraged to include their own research topics in education and connect education to contemporarily relevant problems. In the *Data Systems Project*, students from both tracks collaborate in project groups of 4-5 students on challenges supplied by external organizations. They work on the design of a prototype for addressing a specific organizational challenges. Students are trained in teamwork, stakeholder engagement and methodological rigour. The *Master Thesis* is the capstone of the programme, and requires integration of theoretical, methodological and applied knowledge. Students work individually on a research project either at Ivi or at an external organization. In both cases they are supervised by an UvA teaching staff member. Students can choose a project from a list of projects provided by either staff members or external organizations. Students can also attend the annual thesis fair, where external organizations present their projects.

The panel considers the MSc curriculum to be coherent, offering two attractive tracks that focus on developing information systems or data-driven solutions in a social context. The programme offers an appropriate combination of relevant knowledge and professional and academic skills. The electives, as well as the master thesis, allow students to tailor the programme to their own interests. The two tracks are organized separately, but have many points of overlap, mainly in the similar programme structure, shared electives and the joint Data Systems Project. The latter is the main integrative element of the programme, where technical and soft skills, as well as computational and social aspects are integrated in a real-world challenge.

The panel appreciates the integrative nature of the Data Systems Project, but also noted that the interdisciplinary integration between technical and social aspect is not as apparent in the rest of the courses. Based on the course names and short descriptions, the panel found the mandatory courses in both tracks to appear predominantly technical. The electives offer a combination of technical and socio-technical courses. The panel considers this an attractive offer, but also notes that students are allowed to choose mainly technical courses, which would lead to limited exposure to the interdisciplinary socio-technical balance that the programme advocates. From discussions with staff members, the panel understood that several courses with technical names still offer social and societal perspectives on the subject and require students to

develop data and information systems responsibly. The panel encourages the programme to bring these social and ethical elements more to the forefront, and to make them more visible and prominent in the presentation of the courses and curriculum, including the course names. This will prevent the social aspect from being seen as an add-on to a technical course. In doing so, the panel advises the programme to refrain from labelling courses as either technical or social. This binary labelling is not always helpful, especially given the interdisciplinary, integrated focus of the program. To emphasize this integrative nature, the programme management could consider team teaching and coordinating courses, where several faculty members with different disciplinary backgrounds jointly organize a course and integrate the social and technical elements of a subject. In addition, the panel found that social science research skills appear not as prominently included in the curriculum as technical research skills, even though the ILOs require students to be able to work across disciplines. It recommends an analysis of course content and assessment (see Standard 3) to ensure that social science research skills are consistently taught and assessed across the curriculum.

Based on discussions during the site visit, the course description, and samples of course materials, the panel is positive about the teaching methods used in the courses. It found that the teaching methods encourage active engagement and allow students to apply theoretical content in concrete contexts. Project and group work allow students to practise collaboration and professional skills. For the future development of the programme, the panel notes that Bloom's Taxonomy has recently been enriched with computer-related elements and suggests that this be used in possible future considerations of the programme's teaching methods. From discussions during the site visit, the panel noted with appreciation that the MSc is considering to further develop an educational vision with critical thinking as a key element, focusing on using and developing technology responsibly in all aspects of the programmes. The panel thinks that this would open up new opportunities for co-creation with other fields and partners, and encourages the programme to keep exploring this.

Part-time variant

Full-time and part-time students follow the same education, with part-time students spreading the course load out over two years. Students in the full-time variant follow two courses per teaching block, whereas part-time students follow one course or project per block. Furthermore, part-time students spread the work on the thesis over a longer period to allow them to work on it part-time. The panel understood that the part-time variant is generally used by students combining the programme with a job (often in IT). It appreciates this offer and feels that this makes the programme more attractive to students in the professional field. It found the part-time curriculum to be coherent and appropriate for students combining the programme with a job.

Language of instruction

The programme is offered in English and uses an English language name. Many of the organizations in which graduates can be expected to work, both professional and academic, are situated in an international environment where English is the language of operation. Using the English language prepares students for this context. Furthermore, the English language allows for an international classroom: 40% of the students are international. The panel approves of the rationale to use English as language of instruction and in the programme name. It agrees that many organizations are internationally oriented, and that being able to navigate an English-language environment is an important skill for graduates.

Intake, admission, and feasibility

Students can be admitted to the MSc Information Studies with a relevant bachelor's degree in exact or social sciences, such as Computer Science, AI, Psychology or Communication Studies, complemented with

demonstrable course work related to academic skills, statistics, programming and human-computer interaction (Information Systems) / data modelling (Data Science). Furthermore, students are encouraged to complete an assignment to check their own level in programming and statistics in order to provide a realistic picture of the level that can be expected in the programme. The programme's Admission Board decides on the eligibility of prospective students.

On average, 57% of students graduates nominally, and 81% within one year delay. This is relatively stable in the past years, although the programme notes an increasing difference between Dutch and international students; Dutch students increasingly combine their studies with other activities such as a job and tend to take longer to graduate as a result.

Based on student experience and graduation rates, the panel concludes that the admission requirements are appropriate and the curriculum is feasible. It appreciates the broad admission requirements, which the panel believes are consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. It has heard from staff and students that the diversity of the intake leads to differences in the workload experienced, particularly in the first semester, depending on students' initial skills in programming and data science. Students from related bachelor's programmes, such as the BSc Informatiekunde, tend to find the programme very manageable, while students from social sciences often have to work hard to bring their skills up to the same level. In the end, however, the panel heard from both staff and students that the programme does a good job of bringing all students up to the same level. Among other things, the programme deliberately mixes students from different backgrounds in project groups, not only to promote interdisciplinarity but also to allow students to learn from each other.

On average, student intake is about 70% male and 30% female. Although not balanced, this is relatively favourable compared to other computer science masters. The programme is undertaking several initiatives to attract more female students to the programme, including highlighting female students and staff as role models and targeted recruitment. This has not yet resulted in a more gender-balanced student population, but the panel appreciates the efforts and encourages the programme to keep this challenge on the agenda, especially in light of the overall declining student population. In this context, the panel also encourages the programme to consider other elements of diversity as untapped potential, such as different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The programme could for instance explore whether course materials could be adapted to better address the needs and interests of a diverse group of students.

Guidance and support

Support is available to students on several levels. The programme coordinator is the first point of contact for programme logistics, whereas the track coordinators offer guidance on the track-specific curriculum and teaching-related questions. The thesis support coordinator helps students find a thesis project and supervisor. Furthermore, the programme employs senior teaching assistants, staff members solely focusing on teaching, to support the course lecturers and provide additional thesis supervision and support under guidance from the thesis support coordinator. This includes thesis sessions during the thesis phase of the curriculum. During these sessions, students can get guidance on academic skills and engage in peer feedback with other students working on their thesis. Finally, the study advisor guides students with study planning, choices and personal issues that affect their studies. Students can contact the study advisor themselves, but the study advisor also monitors student progress and can proactively invite a student when issues are suspected.

General facilities for students for functional impairments are available through the study advisers. The programme has several students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), for whom specialized counselling is

available through the study advisors. Furthermore, there are social activities that are open to all students, but specifically tailored to ASD students. The faculty also offers contemplation rooms, quiet, low-stimulus places where students can retreat if they want to. Information about the programme is available through various digital sources, such as the digital learning environment Canvas where all course information and study announcements is communicated. The digital system Datanose is used for project and graduation project management, as well as for digitally submitting and grading of assignments.

The panel is very positive about the student guidance and support in the master Information Studies. Students praise the short lines of communication in the programme and the low-threshold formal and informal support they receive for both study related and personal issues. The provision of information is adequate and there is sufficient support for students with functional impairments. In particular, the panel found the facilities for neurodiverse students to be exemplary.

Since 2022, the programme has been located in the new Lab42 building on Amsterdam Science Park. This building houses several research groups and educational programmes in digital science and artificial intelligence, as well as several start-up companies and research labs. During the site visit, the panel had the opportunity for a tour through the building, including a visit to the Human-Computer Interaction Lab. The panel was impressed by the facilities and the opportunities for collaboration in the building, and considers this to be an asset of the programme.

Teaching staff

The teaching team of the MSc Information Studies consists of 16 core staff members associated with research institutes Ivi, supplemented by three senior teaching assistants. These are teachers with a temporary four-year contract that fully engage in teaching. They support the other teaching staff members with many supporting teaching activities, as well as coordination and administrative tasks. The team includes 2 full professors, 3 associate professors and 10 assistant professors. All staff members, including the senior teaching assistants, are required to obtain a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ; Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs - BKO). Furthermore, staff members engage in monthly meetings where education and didactics are discussed, such as the sharing of teaching methods and alignment of courses. The previous accreditation panel recommended the programme to expand the teaching team. The past six years marked a significant growth of Ivi due to investments in computer science and growth in student numbers in the related bachelor's and master's programmes. As a result, the staff at Ivi grew from 167 to 298 fte between 2019 and 2024, which allowed the programme to expand, and also to diversify its teaching team.

The panel is positive about the quality of the teaching staff of the master Information Studies and found the programme to be well managed. The staff is well qualified in terms of both research expertise and didactic skills. There are sufficient opportunities for professional development, such as the UTQ course and the monthly teaching meetings, which the panel found to be well attended. It appreciates the expansion of the teaching staff in response to the recommendation of the previous panel and the developments within the associated departments. All of the courses are now taught by staff members with a research background, leading to a high emphasis on research-led teaching. This is also reflected in the high number of scientific papers that were published from master's theses. At the same time, it was found that the senior teaching assistants are highly valued and important to the functioning of the programme. They are valued by staff and students alike for their contribution to courses, particularly in terms of integration across courses, and for their close connection with students.

The expansion of the teaching staff with new researchers from research groups with broader expertise, such as human-computer interaction, contributes to the interdisciplinarity of the programme. At the same time,

the panel advises the programme to be mindful of the expertise of its staff as it strives to become a more interdisciplinary, socio-technical programme. This will require the continued engagement of interdisciplinary and social science-oriented staff. Future plans for the programme should take this into account. In addition to hiring new staff, the programme could consider collaborating with other departments and faculties at the UvA to accomplish this.

Considerations

The panel considers the curriculum of the MSc Information Studies to be coherent, offering two attractive tracks that focus on developing information systems or data-driven solutions in a social context. The programme offers an appropriate combination of relevant knowledge and professional and academic skills. It combines technical knowledge and skills with reflections on social aspects of technology. At the same time, the panel found that this socio-technical integration could be more explicit, noting that students can opt for a mainly technical programme through specific curriculum choices. It recommends bringing the interdisciplinary aspects more to the forefront and to emphasize the integrative nature to prevent the social aspects from being seen as an add-on to a technical course. Furthermore, the programme should reflect on whether social science research skills are consistently taught and assessed across the curriculum. Teaching methods are varied, and encourage active engagement, and the application of theory in practice. The parttime variant is coherent and is an attractive option for students combining their studies with a job. The choice to use English as the language of instruction and in the programme name is valid in relation to the international character of the professional and academic field.

Student guidance and support in the programme is well organized, with students experiencing a low-threshold, supportive environment. Facilities are up to standard, including information provision, support for students with functional impairments and an attractive new building with labs and opportunities for collaboration. Admission requirements are broad, fitting the interdisciplinary character of the programme. The resulting diversity of the intake is well managed, resulting in a feasible curriculum for all admitted students. The teaching staff is academically and didactically well qualified, and the programme is well managed. The teaching staff has been expanded in response to the recommendations of the previous panel, allowing for more research-led teaching and a more interdisciplinary teaching staff. The panel advises to take the need for more interdisciplinary and social sciences-oriented staff members into consideration in discussions on the ambitions of the programme to become a more interdisciplinary socio-technical programme.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

System of assessment

The system of assessment of the MSc Information Studies is described in the assessment plan of the programme and operationalized in the Teaching and Examination Regulation. Assessment design is aimed at constructive alignment between learning objectives and assessment. Course coordinators choose assessment methods that fit the various course objectives, and publish the assessment types and associated expectations in the study guide. Assessment methods include written exams and assignments, group

projects, individual reports and presentations and peer evaluations. The programme takes care that for each course, except for the Data Systems Project, individual components account for at least half of the final course grade. To ensure the quality of assessment, written exams are peer reviewed by another staff member after their design by the course coordinator. The rise of generative AI is driving a shift within the programme towards written exams in controlled environments, as well as a rise of oral forms of assessment, such as presentations and discussions. To support the privacy-aware and independent use of AI in education, the UvA has rolled out a customized GenAI service, UvA Chat, over the past year.

The panel is positive about the assessment system in the master Information Studies. It is well documented for students, promoting transparency of assessment. Constructive alignment and quality assurance mechanisms such as peer review of exams contribute to a reliable and valid assessment system. Assessment methods are varied; the panel particularly appreciates the attention to the validity of assessment in the light of generative AI. Assessment in a controlled environment and greater reliance on oral exams are important measures to ensure that students' skills can be reliably assessed. In general, the panel found that the programme is handling the rise of generative AI well. The programme is realistic about the possibilities and risks of generative AI and has a good grasp of both the potential and the challenges associated with this technology. The panel encourages the programme to continue to monitor this area in light of rapid developments and good practices across the Dutch universities, as it remains an important topic for both education and assessment.

Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners (BoE) of the programme is shared with the BSc Informatiekunde, and is part of a larger faculty-wide BoE. This Board is responsible for general assessment policies and procedures, whereas the subcommittee for Informatiekunde/Information Studies is responsible for the programme-specific quality assurance of assessment. This includes validating any individual study plans and handling fraud and plagiarism cases. To ensure the quality of course and thesis assessment, the Board takes annual samples of course assessment and theses and evaluates the assessment on validity, reliability and transparency. The insights gained are discussed with the programme director, who uses these to improve the quality of assessment. Based on the recommendations of the previous accreditation, the BoE has formalized its procedures regarding fraud and plagiarism cases, and has established an escalation ladder for first and repeated offenses.

Based on the documentation and discussions during the site visit, the panel concludes that the Board of Examiners fulfils all of its legal duties in a responsible and satisfactory way, and is in control of assessment quality. The quality mechanisms allow the Board to monitor course assessment quality in the programme and exit level of students. The recommendation of the previous panel to formalize procedures for fraud and plagiarism have been taken up in an appropriate way.

A concern over the past years has been the staffing of the Board of Examiners. Frequent changes in members and secretarial support for various reasons and subsequent issues in timely filling the resulting vacancies have led to limited administrative support. During the site visit, the panel understood that these issues have been largely resolved in recent months and that steps have been taken to make the capacity of the Board of Examiners less dependent on individuals. The panel supports this and advises the faculty management to keep this issue on the agenda. The impact of generative AI on the assessment system is already putting pressure on the workload of the Board of Examiners, underlining the importance of sufficient capacity for quality assurance of assessment.

Graduation project assessment

The graduation project is assessed by two assessors: the student's supervisor and a second assessor from within the UvA not otherwise associated with the project. If the project is conducted externally, the daily supervisor at the external organization is an advisor to the assessors. Both assessors need to be formally appointed as examiner. In line with the recommendations from the previous accreditation panel, the two assessors each deliver a separate evaluation in DataNose. The student then receives the reviews, and has the opportunity to give a rebuttal, providing explanations or clarifying certain aspects. After taking the rebuttal into account, the assessors complete their grading. Ten subcategories are considered and graded by both assessors, distributed over the main categories research (60%), written thesis (30%) and attitude (10%). The final grade is the average of both grades, and a passing grade is required for each subcategory. If the grades differ by more than 1.0 point, the assessors are required to discuss their differences and bring the difference in assessment back to 1.0. If no agreement is found, a third assessment is done by a different assessor, with the final grade being the average of all three grades provided that the third assessor gives a passing grade.. To support grading, the programme developed a rubric that defines the different grades per assessment category. A project is only eligible for grading when the student has engaged in regular meetings with the UvA supervisor to ensure the authenticity of the work in the light of the possible use of generative AI. The programme is considering re-introducing the oral defence to further support this.

The panel examined the thesis assessment procedures and a sample of 15 completed assessment forms. It concludes that the assessment of the thesis is up to standard. The four-eyes principle is consistently applied, requiring the involvement of at least one formal examiner, which adds to the validity of the assessment. The panel also liked the opportunity that students have for a rebuttal of the first evaluation of the examiners, which functions as a written thesis defence, but also agrees with the programme that the introduction of an oral defence might be necessary in the light of generative AI. The rubric categories are insightful and provide sufficient justification for the grades. Based on the differences in project types that the panel encountered in its sample, it suggests that the programme consider recognizing differences in 'project difficulty' in the rubric. For example, some datasets that students work with are readily available and cleaned up, while other datasets require significant work before they can be analysed. The resulting differences in the "quantity and quality of the results" could be taken into account when grading the students' work.

Considerations

The system of assessment in the master Information Studies is reliable, valid and transparent. Assessment methods are varied, and checks and balances are in place to ensure course and thesis assessment quality. The Board of Examiners is in control and fulfils all of its legal duties in a satisfactory way. Thesis assessment is up to standard, with the consistent use of a four-eye principle in grading and the use of an insightful rubric to substantiate the grades. The programme has a realistic and proactive approach towards generative AI in assessment, and has several measures in place to ensure the validity of assessment, including testing in curated environments, a greater reliance on oral exams and a requirement for students to regularly engage with their thesis supervisor. In this light, the panel supports the planned introduction of an oral defence for the thesis. Finally, the panel advises the faculty management to ensure ongoing attention to the capacity of the Board of Examiners, which can expect an increase in workload associated with further future-proofing the system of assessment regarding generative AI.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Master's theses

In preparation for the site visit, the panel studied a selection of 15 recent master's theses. It found all theses to be up to standard. The works demonstrated solid research skills and were of an multidisciplinary nature; ranging from technical projects to more social science oriented works. The panel also noted with appreciation that many master theses have led to scientific publications: 60 theses in the past five years have resulted in accepted conference or journal papers. Students and alumni told the panel that supervisors often encourage students to submit a paper based on their project after graduation. The university covers the conference costs, should the student present the paper at a conference. The panel considers the quality of the final products to be convincing proof of the realization of the intended learning outcomes by graduates.

Performance of graduates

Exit evaluation data and a recent alumni survey show that graduates are generally satisfied with the programme and the acquired knowledge and skills. 70% of students find a job within four months after graduation in either the professional field (65%) or as PhD student (5%). 21% of the students were already employed in a position relevant to the programme during their studies. The most often mentioned areas valued by alumni are data literacy and analytics, technical programming skills, research and critical thinking, domain-specific knowledge and professional communication skills. The alumni the panel interviewed during the site visit expressed satisfaction with their education, and felt that it prepared them well for the professional field. The panel concludes that the performance of graduates shows that graduates have obtained the required competencies for entry into the professional field.

Considerations

The quality of the graduation projects and the performance of graduates show that students of the MSc Information Studies realize the programme's intended learning outcomes. The graduation projects, many of which have resulted in academic papers, demonstrate solid research skills and reflect the interdisciplinary profile of the programme.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel judges that the master's programme meets all four standards. The panel's assessment of the programme is therefore positive.

Recommendations

1. Make socio-technical integration in the curriculum better visible for students, emphasizing the integrative nature in all individual curricula regardless of elective choices to prevent the social aspects from being seen as an add-on to a technical course. This includes course content, but also presentation in course names and descriptions.
2. Reflect on whether social science research skills are adequately taught and assessed across the curriculum.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

The graduate	
Knowledge and Understanding	
KU1	is able to explain information systems as complex systems that function in a dynamic context in relation to people, organisations, society, and technology.
KU2	knows and understands concepts and theories relevant for Information Systems, incorporating disciplines such as computer science, economics, psychology, social science and humanities, and can relate these associated theories to theories on Information Systems.
KU3	knows and understands technologies that can be used to establish Information Systems.
KU4	is able to creatively and innovatively enhance knowledge within the state of the art to further enhance the domain of Information Studies.
Application of Knowledge and Understanding	
AKU1	has the ability to identify problems in, with, or between information systems and formulate adequate (research) questions.
AKU2	is able to design, plan and execute a project to answer the questions, using the appropriate methodology.
AKU3	is able to critically apply the transition processes from data to information by using a knowledge- and/or data-driven approach.
AKU4	is able to work autonomously and with others in interdisciplinary teams and is able to apply his or her problem solving abilities on authentic problems.
AKU5	able to integrate his or her own knowledge and understanding to facilitate, design, and implement a useful and innovative solution.
Making Judgement	
MJ1	is able critically evaluate relevant theories of computer science, economics, psychology, social science and humanities.
MJ2	acts according to scientific and industrial standards in order to function adequately and autonomously in his or her future profession.
MJ3	is able to assess the completeness of available information and to make judgments on the basis of existing information.
MJ4	can analyze and evaluate newly created solutions and his or her own actions critically and in a systematic way.
MJ5	is aware of the limitations and the ethical and social implications of the created solutions and their activities.
Communication	
C1	is able to clearly communicate findings and conclusions with solid argumentation to expert and non-expert audiences, making use of appropriate media.
C2	possesses organizational sensitivity in the sense that he or she is able to listen carefully and considers the different perspectives of groups in an organisation that use information and ICT as well as those that produce data or design, build and maintain ICT applications.
C3	is contextually sensitive, a careful listener and is able to take the perspectives of the different stakeholders and acknowledge differences in goals and values.
Capacities to continue Learning	
CCL1	is capable to reflect independently and with an open mind on his or her own performance and can continuously expand his or her academic development and affluence with ICT tools.

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

Curriculum fulltime variant

	MSc Information Studies 2024-2025 - Fulltime overview										
	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3	Period 4		Period 5		Period 6	
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	
Data Science track	Fundamentals of Data Science (6EC) - Fernando Pascoal dos Santos		Applied Machine Learning (6EC) - Ana Lucic			Big Data (6EC) - Hazar Harmouch					
	Statistics, Simulation and Optimization (6EC) - Joost Berkhout		Applied Forecasting in Complex Systems (6 EC) - Erman Acar			Data-Driven Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship (6EC) - Angelo Tomaselli					
			Modelling System Dynamics (6EC) - Debraj Roy			Perspectives on Information and Society (6EC) Arjan Vreeken					
			Shaping Digital Life (6EC) - Hamed Alavi			Policy Making and Rule Governance (6EC) - Tom van Engers					
			Human-AI Interaction (6EC) - Katja Rogers			Societal Complexity and Designing with Data (6EC) - Hamed Alavi					
			Causality (6EC) - Sara Magliacane								
Information Systems track	Information Organisation (6EC) - Daphne Miedema		Modelling System Dynamics (6EC) - Debraj Roy			Societal Complexity and Designing with Data (6EC) - Hamed Alavi					
	Intelligent Interactive Systems (6EC) - Frank Nack		Applied Machine Learning (6EC) - Ana Lucic			Big Data (6EC) - Hazar Harmouch					
			Applied Forecasting in Complex Systems (6 EC) - Erman Acar			Data-Driven Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship (6EC) - Angelo Tomaselli					
			Shaping Digital Life (6EC) - Hamed Alavi			Perspectives on Information and Society (6EC) - Arjan Vreeken					
			Human-AI Interaction (6EC) - Katja Rogers			Policy Making and Rule Governance (6EC) Tom van Engers					
			Causality (6EC) - Sara Magliacane								
All	Data Systems Project (6EC)										
					Master Thesis (18EC)						
		Core Courses									
		Restricted-Choice Electives / Electives									

Curriculum parttime variant

MSc Information Studies 2024-2025 - Parttime overview										
	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3	Period 4		Period 5		Period 6
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Data Science track - Year 1	Fundamentals of Data Science (6EC) - Fernando Pascoal dos Santos		Applied Machine Learning (6EC) - Ana Lucic			Big Data (6EC) - Hazar Harmouch		Elective (6EC)		
						Data-Driven Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship (6EC) - Angelo Tomasei				
						Perspectives on Information and Society (6EC) Arjan Vreeken				
						Policy Making and Rule Governance (6EC) - Tom van Engers				
						Societal Complexity and Designing with Data (6EC) - Hamed Alavi				
Data Science track - Year 2	Statistics, Simulation and Optimization (6EC) - Joost Berkhout		Applied Forecasting in Complex Systems (6 EC) - Erman Acar							
			Modelling System Dynamics (6EC) - Debraj Roy							
			Shaping Digital Life (6EC) - Hamed Alavi							
			Causality (6EC) - Sara Magliacane							
			Human-AI Interaction (6EC) - Katja Rogers							
Information Systems track - Year 1	Information Organisation (6EC) - Daphne Miedema		Modelling System Dynamics (6EC) - Debraj Roy			Societal Complexity and Designing with Data (6EC) - Hamed Alavi		Elective (6EC)		
						Data-Driven Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship (6EC) - Angelo Tomasei				
						Perspectives on Information and Society (6EC) - Arjan Vreeken				
						Policy Making and Rule Governance (6EC) Tom van Engers				
						Big Data (6EC) - Hazar Harmouch				
Information Systems track - Year 2	Intelligent Interactive Systems (6EC) - Frank Rack		Applied Machine Learning (6EC) - Pascal Mettes							
			Applied Forecasting in Complex Systems (6 EC) - Erman Acar							
			Shaping Digital Life (6EC) - Hamed Alavi							
			Human-AI Interaction (6EC) - Katja Rogers							
			Causality (6EC) - Sara Magliacane							
All - Year 1	Data Systems Project (6EC)									
All - Year 2		Preparation Master Thesis / Master Thesis (18EC)								
		Core Courses								
		Restricted-Choice Electives / Electives								

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Wednesday 21 January 2026

10.00-10.30	Welcome + panel preparation
10.30-11.15	Interview programme management
11.15-11.30	Panel preparation – break
11.30-12.15	Interview BSc teaching staff + thesis
12.15-13.15	Panel preparation + Lunch
13.15-14.00	Interview BSc students + alumni + OC
14.00-14.15	Internal panel session – break
14.15-15.00	Interview MSc students + alumni + OC (parttime and fulltime)
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.00	Interview MSc teaching staff + thesis
16.00-16.15	Panel preparation
16.15-16.45	Q&A programme management BSc Informatiekunde en MSc Information Studies

Thursday 22 January 2026

09.00-09.30	Panel preparation
09.30-10.00	Board of Examiners
10.00-10.15	Break
10.15-11.15	Thematic session Informatiekunde – Viability of the programme
11.15-11.30	Break
11:30- 12:15	Thematic session Information Studies – Professional Values and Professional Competencies in the MIS programme
12.15 13.30	Internal panel session (incl. lunch)
13.30 14.15	Concluding session programme management
14.15 15.45	Concluding panel session
15.45 16.30	Oral report panel + drinks

Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request.

The panel also studied other materials, which included:

- Reading Guide and Roadmap documents
- SWOT Analysis
- Student chapter
- Report previous accreditation
- Information on redesign of Information Systems track
- Annual report 2023-2024 and annual plan 2025-2026 College of Informatics
- Teaching and Assessment forms
- Visible Learning Trajectories
- Student intake and outflow
- Study guide
- Teaching staff overview
- Infographic UvA student support
- Teaching and Examination Regulations
- Course and curriculum evaluations
- Manual Master Thesis Project
- Annual report Examinations Board and Programme Committee
- Assessment plan
- Thesis Rebuttal and Grading Rubric
- Course grade and success rates overview
- List of student publications
- Alumni survey results
- Faculty and UvA Strategy Plan
- Course Catalogue
- Course materials for selected courses (Applied Machine Learning, Data Systems Project, Fundamentals of Data Science, Information Organisation, Social Complexity and Designing with Data)