

Master programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage

University of Amsterdam

Advisory report

16 april 2026



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1. SUMMARY

The site visit of the master's programme Conservation and Restoration at the University of Amsterdam was performed on December 11 and 12, 2025, by a panel of peers. Below the main findings and recommendations of the panel are summarised.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

The programme's objectives align well with academic and professional expectations in the field, including international standards set by E.C.C.O. and ENCoRE. The broad range of conservation specialisations and the strong emphasis on diagnostic skills are considered unique strengths. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are coherent, comprehensive, and set at the appropriate EQF 7 level.

Standard 2 – teaching-learning environment

The curriculum is intensive, both practice-oriented and theory-based, and supported by excellent facilities at the Ateliergebouw and at the labs of the Bushuis. Small group sizes, interdisciplinary skill trajectories, and the recent curriculum redesign contribute to high educational quality. The programme provides strong supervision and attention to student wellbeing.

The panel recommends the programme to closely monitor the work load of staff while at the same time paying sufficient attention to career perspectives offered by the programme.

Standard 3 – student assessment

The assessment system is robust, transparent, and aligned with programme goals. The assessment matrix and rubrics are well developed, and practical skills are thoroughly evaluated with multiple assessors. Improvements have been made since the previous accreditation, including clearer thesis supervision guidelines.

The panel recommends continuing with annual sample reviews on the quality of assessment of the master thesis and considering to (temporary) increase the amount of samples to be reviewed by the examinations board.

Standard 4 – achieved learning outcomes

Master theses are generally of good quality and demonstrate that graduates meet the intended learning outcomes. Some theses were considered particularly innovative. Alumni feel well prepared and are successful in entering the Advanced Professional Programme or working in cultural heritage institutions.

Overall Conclusion

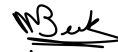
The panel concludes that the programme meets the four NVAO- standards and rates its overall quality as positive.

The chair and secretary of the panel hereby declare that all members of the panel have considered this report and agree with the judgements recorded in the report. They confirm that the assessment was carried out in accordance with the requirements regarding independence.

16 april 2026



Kitty Zijlmans
(chair)



Marlies van Beek
(secretary)

2. INTRODUCTION

Procedure

The University of Amsterdam has appointed Odion Onderzoek to coordinate the external quality assessment of the master's programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage.

Drs. Marlies van Beek from Odion Onderzoek acted as secretary.

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the procedures and standards of the NVAO's "Assessment Framework for the Accreditation System of Higher Education in the Netherlands" (Government Gazette 2024, no. 6405). It concerns an existing master's programme and the institution, the University of Amsterdam, holds a positive institutional audit decision on quality assurance.

The panel was asked to evaluate the programme using a self-evaluation report and on-site interviews with its representatives, including a tour of the facilities of the Ateliergebouw and the Bushuis). The assessment was performed according to the four standards outlined in the NVAO assessment framework.

The master's programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage was reaccredited in 2026. This site visit was performed on December 11 and 12, 2025. The programme composed a panel of peers for the evaluation:

- Prof. dr. Kitty Zijlmans (chair), art historian and Emeritus Professor Contemporary Art History and Theory at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. Irene Brückle (panel member), Professor and Head of the programme Conservation of Works of Art on Paper, Archives and Library Materials, at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design;
- Prof. dr. Arjan Mol (panel member), Professor on Corrosion Technology and Electrochemistry, Delft University of Technology;
- Gert van Gerven (panel member), owner of Studio van Gerven, researcher and conservator-restorer, Structural Conservation of Panel paintings, Amsterdam;
- Simon Zwijnenburg (panel member), master student at Maastricht University, Arts and Heritage: policy, management and education, Architectural Intern at Origin Architecture & Engineering, Bruxelles, Belgium.

Prior to the assessment process, the panel chair completed a training course on the NVAO's "Assessment Framework for the Accreditation System of Higher Education in the Netherlands" (2024). The secretary discussed the standards, procedures, and responsibilities with the chair in accordance with the "Profile of the Chair" (NVAO, 2016) and the guidelines provided in the NVAO training course "Train the Chair."

The other panel members received instructions by the secretary during a kick-off meeting, where the secretary and chair informed them about the content and purpose of the assessment framework, as well as the procedure, intended attitude, working methods, and timeline within the cluster.

Prior to the site visit, the master's programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage submitted a list of final theses/reports of recent graduates. In consultation with the secretary, the panel chair selected 15 final theses/reports, taking into account a spread of final grades, and assessors. The panel reviewed 15 selected final theses and accompanying assessment forms. The panel assessed the theses in accordance with the NVAO guidelines for the review of final projects (Implementation Regulations, September 2024). An overview of the reviewed materials, including the selected theses, is provided in Annex 4.

The documentation was made available in a secured online environment to the panel on October 10, 2025. In the run-up to the site visit, the panel studied the self-evaluation report and several supporting documents. A list of all documents examined by the panel is available in Annex 4. The self-evaluation report provides insights into the programme and a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses per NVAO standard. The panel shared their first impressions with the secretary, who made an overview of these first impressions and shared these with the panel members. The panel members discussed their impressions and identified key topics during an online preparatory meeting on November 20. On December 11 and 12, discussions took place between the panel and various representatives of the programme at the site visit. An overview of the site visit programme is attached in Annex 5. At the end of this site visit, the panel deliberated on findings, considerations and recommendations concerning strengths and areas for development related to the four NVAO standards. Subsequently, the chair presented the initial conclusions reached by the panel to the programme management team and a delegation of the various representatives. A draft version of the report containing the panel's findings and considerations was prepared by the secretary after the site visit and was sent to the panel members for comments. The draft report was then edited based on the panel's comments and subsequently endorsed by the chair. After that, the secretary sent the report to the University of Amsterdam to review any factual inaccuracies. Upon their response, this report has been finalised and endorsed by the chair.

Staff members and students of this master's programme at the University of Amsterdam were informed by the faculty in advance about the possibility to speak confidentially with the panel. Participants could register with the secretary by email. A week prior to the site visit, an open consultation hour was scheduled for registered participants. No responses were received whereby the open consultation hour was cancelled.

Institution and programmes

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) is an internationally oriented, bilingual university with a strong commitment to academic diversity and international engagement. By attracting students from the Amsterdam region, the Netherlands, and abroad, the university fosters a learning environment that supports critical thinking and open intellectual exchange. Students are encouraged to develop in-depth expertise within their chosen discipline while also engaging with broader academic perspectives and educational approaches.

The Faculty of Humanities (FGw) holds a strong national position and offers a wide range of programmes grounded in the tradition of the comprehensive university, combined with a clear emphasis on interdisciplinary innovation. The faculty provides undergraduate and graduate education across 17 programme clusters, encompassing a broad variety of tracks and specialisations, with more than 8,000 students enrolled in 27 bachelor's and 33 master's programmes.

The master's programme and the Advanced Professional Programme (APP) Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage were established in 2005 through a merger of the existing four-year HBO+ training at Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN) in Amsterdam, and the five-year post-graduate training at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Limburg Conservation Institute, SRAL) in Maastricht. The entire programme for becoming a conservator now consists of two parts, the two-year master's programme and the two-year Advanced Professional Programme. The programme for a technical art historian consists of the two-year master's programme only. With the exception of graduates from the Technical Art History specialisation, students who have completed the master's degree in Conservation and Restoration can apply for the Advanced Professional Programme (APP). APP-admitted students receive a modest grant to cover the tuition fees and living costs.

In addition to the master's programme and Advanced Professional Programme (APP), UvA Conservation and Restoration offers a 30 ECTS minor within the bachelor's programme in Art History.

Within the Faculty of Humanities (FGw), the master's programme and the APP Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage occupy a distinctive position. This is due to the programme's structure, which is characterised by a high number of contact hours, a strong integration of theoretical and practical components—including the development of manual skills in line with professional requirements for conservators and technical art historians—and a substantial emphasis on project placements, on-site practical training, and internships.

3. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

Standard 1: intended learning outcomes

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

Finding and considerations

UvA's programmes in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage are dedicated to optimising preservation and access to tangible cultural heritage through its programmes of academic, research-oriented education, integrated with practical skills training and supported by the research of its faculty. In the education programmes, this master's programme, the Advanced Professional Programme (APP) and the minor, aim to prepare conservators, conservation researchers and technical art historians for leading roles in cultural heritage care – both public and private, promoting an ethical stance based on humanistic and scientific concepts that are translated to and connected with excellent practical conservation skills. The material object is central to the activities, the programmes see this material object as including the various meanings and values it has for different stakeholders.

The broad range of conservation specialisations taught at an academic level by UvA Conservation and Restoration at master's and APP- level is unique and is mentioned by applicants as one of the important reasons why they choose to apply to study conservation in Amsterdam.

The two year master's programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage at the UvA offers ten specialisations: nine in different conservation specialisations and one in Technical Art History. Students in Technical Art History finish their education upon completion of the 2-year master programme. Students from the nine conservation specialisations continue into the Advanced Professional Programme, in order to qualify them for independent practice adhering to the international standards set by the European Network for Conservation Restoration Education – ENCoRE.

The nine conservation specialisations in the master's programme are:

- Book and Paper (BP),
- Contemporary Art (CA),
- Glass and Ceramics (GC),
- Historic Interiors (HI),
- Metals (ME),
- Paintings (PA),
- Photography (PHO),
- Textiles (TE) and
- Wood and Furniture (WF).

The aim of the master's programme is to equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills, and disciplinary understanding required to operate independently and professionally at an advanced academic level. Graduates acquire the competences necessary for admission to doctoral programmes, as well as for positions involving scientific research and scholarly publication.

The programme further provides students in the conservation and restoration specialisations with eligibility for admission to the Advanced Professional Programme (APP) in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage. The Technical Art History (TAH) specialisation prepares students for a professional career as a technical art historian by equipping them with the requisite knowledge, skills, and analytical capacities, while also offering a solid foundation for doctoral research in this field.

Upon completion of the master's programme, students across all specialisations are expected to have achieved full independence in research practice and to demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively at an academic level. Within the conservation specialisations, particular emphasis during the master's phase is placed on the development and autonomous application of diagnostic and analytical skills.

Intended learning outcomes

The professional field's ethical standards, as laid down by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (E.C.C.O.) and the international standard formulated by the European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education (ENCoRE) guided the formulation of the master's and advanced programme's aims and objectives, the specialisations and the specific exit qualifications. The ENCoRE's Clarification of Conservation/Restoration Education at University Level or Recognised Equivalent (2001) specifies education at minimum EQF 7 as the minimum level for practising conservators.

The two year master's programme educates students to EQF 7. It is a first step towards fulfilling the ENCoRE description of the knowledge, skills, and insights of professional conservators. Fulfilling all ENCoRE descriptions of knowledge, skills and insights of professional conservators requires completion of the APP programme (two years on top of the master's programme). Apart from these specific frameworks, the master's programme's exit qualifications are based on the Dublin Descriptors. (see annex 2 for the exit qualifications of the master's programme).

According to the panel there is a strong orientation towards the whole field of conservation and restoration; the programme clearly intends to respond to the needs within the conservation field. The master's programme is a unique programme, nationally and far beyond. The specialisations largely cover the field of materials deployed in art and cultural objects and the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) allow students to gain knowledge of all the techniques available. In addition, the panel finds it commendable that in the exit qualifications of the master's programme there is a significant focus on intricate diagnostic skills.

Conclusions

Based on the documentation and conversations the panel concludes that the master's programme **meets standard 1: Intended learning outcomes**.

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.

Finding and considerations

Admission

Admission to the master's programme is possible with the following requirements. The applicant has

- an adequate knowledge and understanding of the field of study
- academic skills at a university Bachelor's level
- presented proof of English language skills (CEFR level C1).

Students with a bachelor degree at a Dutch university of applied science (HBO Bachelor), need to prove their academic skills by successfully completing:

- the course Academic Skills from the pre-master's programme of the Art History department,
- the art history course 'Kunst, Cultuur en Samenleving' (Art, Culture and Society), and
- the Minor Conservation and Restoration.

International diplomas are assessed by UvA's Admissions Office, which issues advice on their compatibility, which is taken on board in the selection.

Candidates are further assessed on: motivation to choose the master's programme, level of knowledge in chemistry, manual skills and academic abilities.

The programme does not offer all specialisations every year. The intake follows a two-year cycle with relatively small cohort sizes. The programme receives about 90 to 150 applicants per year, of which a first selection of a maximum of 12 students per specialisation is made, based on a series of online tests, a digital portfolio, a motivation letter and academic records. The selected candidates are invited for the second phase, which includes an online practical assignment observed by the specialisation lecturers, and an interview with the specialisation lecturers and the professor of Conservation and Restoration.

Based on the documentation, the panel wondered whether the entrance level is not too much based on science (theory) rather than developed manual skills. During conversations with the programme, the panel learned that the practical admission assignment for selected candidates is actually a test in which candidates need to show their manual skills. These skills are closely related to the many basic skills students further develop in the first year of the master's programme. Although the panel appreciates the attention given to the development of manual skills at the entry point of the master's programme, it encourages consideration of whether additional steps could further support students in this area. Possible suggestions include an entrance internship or a preparatory programme focused on skills development. Strengthening the entry level in manual skills could help ease the teaching load in the first year and may support students in experiencing a smoother transition into the master's programme.

The curriculum

Students apply for one of the nine conservation and restoration specialisations, or the Technical Art History specialisation. The Technical Art History specialisation has a setup that differs from the other specialisations. For an overview of the curriculum, see Annex 3. C&R has a two-yearly cycle: every year, five specialisations take on new students. This means that a specialisation is either teaching a second year's master group (and an APP second year's group), or a first year's master group (and a first year's APP group).

The programme is characterised by a contact-intensive, student-centred approach. The maximum group size for conservation specialisations is six students and eight for the specialisation TAH.

Because of the importance of manual skills development and contact with objects, materials and techniques, online teaching is limited to supervisory meetings, peer review sessions, and occasionally an online lecture.

There has been a redesign of the curriculum recently in which the programme developed five course-overarching learning trajectories that function as a linking pin between the general level represented in the exit qualifications and the learning goals of each course. These five trajectories are:

- Material, object, and collection
- Academic skills
- Conservation/TAH practice
- Science of materials
- Professional attitude

The programme consists of courses that are mainly theoretical (T), courses that have a roughly even balance between theory and practice (TP) (the practice including workshops exploring materials/techniques), and courses of a distinctly practical nature (P). The curriculum includes C&R-specific electives, and individual projects, such as the thesis and internship (for an overview of the curriculum see annex 3).

The core units of the master's programme are the Skill Building for Conservation (SBC) courses and the Conservation Principles and Practice (CPP) courses. SBC are a series of thematic courses taught as a combination of lectures and practical workshops that all the students follow. Conservation Principles and Practice (CPP) courses are specialisation-taught courses, where students focus on specialist knowledge and techniques as well as object investigation and treatment and specialisation-specific excursions and workshops.

The panel commends the programme for the effort put into the redesign of the programme. The aim of this redesign was to support and strengthen collaboration in areas of common interests between specialisations, while keeping sufficient room for specialisation-specific education. During conversations with staff, the panel was pleased to learn that teachers notice the effects of a broader interdisciplinary basis on the students, who are showing greater contextual awareness in examining and discussing objects they study in their CPP courses. Furthermore, it was explained that in this new curriculum more interaction between teachers is needed and therefore taking place. Students also benefit from having

more teachers involved providing them with feedback from different perspectives. Although the panel finds these first results of the redesign of the curriculum very positive, it would also like the programme to take into account the implications on the workload of the staff. Since one of the aims of the redesign was also lowering the workload, the panel advises the programme to closely monitor these effects in that respect. Besides the teaching hours within this new curriculum with overarching learning trajectories, staff invest additional effort in helping students place the various curriculum components into context, which can be demanding but is essential for effective learning.

Study guidance

Student progress receives close attention from the lecturers and supervisors, assisted by specialisation coordinators and the master coordinator. Students receive detailed and varied feedback on each of the five areas of learning described in the Visible Learning Trajectory. Work placement, internship, and the research project are supervised by teaching staff from within the student's discipline, with whom students meet regularly. Research projects offer additional support from UvA C&R's two professors, with chairs in Conservation Science and in Conservation and Restoration.

Because of the connection between the master's programme and the APP, and the impact a delay in the final stages of the master's programme could have for entering the APP, extra attention is paid to student progress during the master's thesis. Students receive more intense supervision than typical in the FGw and the master's thesis course is cut into clearly distinguished phases with intermediary deadlines (including the submission of a subject choice template, research proposal, two chapter submissions, two peer review sessions). On top of regular meetings with their supervisor, students have two scheduled consultations with the C&R professors.

The panel is positive about the counselling system and the attention given to students' wellbeing. During their studies, students have their own tutor for two years. Every student is offered an individual meeting with their tutor in October-November, followed by voluntary meetings for which students are invited through Canvas. The tutors are the first point of contact for students when they want to discuss issues relating to their study progress or personal wellbeing, etc. Student progress may also be monitored by the tutor (tutors are all C&R lecturers). The faculty also has dedicated study advisers, who collaborate with academic staff to support students when extra assistance or advice is needed.

During conversations with students and alumni the panel was also pleased to hear that students, in relation to wellbeing, described the programme/staff as very receptive. Students mentioned that they felt really supported by their teachers, also in case of personal circumstances.

English language

Since conservation is a small but highly international and interdisciplinary field, where English is the working language of professional communication (conferences, etc.) and publication, the panel finds it appropriate that the name of the programme, and the language used, is English. During their studies, students develop their skills in reading and writing in English and become accustomed to English terminology.

The English taught programme is very attractive for international students and The Netherlands needs a programme in conservation and restoration of cultural heritage because of its own cultural heritage. The number of conservators and TAHs needed to fill this demand, however, is relatively small, which would make a Dutch-language programme very fragile due to limited professional prospects and limited influx. When UvA C&R transitioned to English-Language education in 2015, the English proficiency of all the scientific staff was assessed by the British Language Training Centre (BLTC). All staff attended BLTC training, which focused on the 'technicalities' of teaching in English, assessment in English for non-native speakers, as well as on the international classroom. For new staff an excellent command of English, both spoken and written, is a requirement.

The panel is positive about the ambitions in the Strategic Plan of the Faculty, which, among other, states “to embed multilingualism more firmly; use more of the international reality of our faculty; and make our faculty an accessible and inclusive environment in which everyone feels valued and in which we can welcome new groups of prospective students.”

During the site visit, the panel met a very international and engaged student community. Some students also shared reflections on their first experiences after arriving in the Netherlands, noting that they occasionally felt less included when fellow students spoke Dutch among themselves or when some literature and presentations were offered only in Dutch or in a mix of English and Dutch. In view of the Faculty’s ambitions mentioned above and these student experiences, the panel encourages the programme to continue exploring ways to further support an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students within the master’s programme.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff of this master’s programme consists of professional conservators, scientists, and scholars in the humanities. The large majority of teaching staff have obtained their University Teaching Qualification (BKO in Dutch), some are in the process obtaining this qualification. Two members of staff have a Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO).

At the last accreditation in 2019, the panel at that time recommended further promoting the research done by staff. The programme has been taken steps to increase the research capacity, and more positions have been created that combine teaching with research. During conversations with programme management, the panel learned that the programme’s revision/redesign also allows for increasing this number and creating an even better balance between education and research which the panel finds positive. Based on conversations with the teaching staff however, the panel does recommend the programme to keep monitoring the workload of staff and at the same time offering them sufficient career perspective. The panel sees a potential risk in staff leaving the programme, since the panel observed a very dedicated and involved team with relatively small contracts, spending a lot of their time on good student’s guidance, while at the same time experiencing a lack of perspective on their future careers within the programme.

Facilities

The panel views the facilities as an absolute strength, enabling students to be embedded in a rich environment in terms of objects, materials and techniques. Students learn in UvA's dynamic and diverse conservation studios in the Ateliergebouw, and in the Humanities Labs. During the site visit the panel took a tour around the Ateliergebouw and visited the various studios with different material and techniques studied while students and staff explained more about certain objects and classes within the offered conservation specialisations. In addition to the conservation studios in the Ateliergebouw, students have access to the Humanities Labs, which include the Technical Art History Lab, the Technical Lab, the Media Art Lab, and the Photography Darkroom. The panel is impressed by the facilities and sees this as a big asset of the master's programme.

The Ateliergebouw hosts UvA's conservation laboratories, the conservation and material research laboratories of the Rijksmuseum, the scientific department of the RCE. These all collaborate in the newly formed Netherlands Institute of Conservation, Art Science (NICAS), with additional NICAS partner TU Delft. The strong collaboration between conservators, conservation scientists, and art historians in the three institutes shows an interdisciplinary and inspiring environment.

Conclusions

Based on the documentation and conversations the panel concludes that the master's programme **meets standard 2: Teaching-learning environment**.

Standard 3: student assessment

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

Finding and considerations

Assessment practices

Assessment practices are based on the four principles outlined in the UvA's solid assessment policy; 1) alignment of forms of assessment, learning objectives and exit qualifications; 2) transparency; 3) multiple moments of assessments; and 4) quality assurance of assessment.

The assessments in the master's programme are described in an assessment matrix. Most assignments in the programme are graded individually.

The panel finds the assessment matrix exceptionally comprehensive and elaborate, with detailed descriptions of the courses (per specialisation), the assessment methods and intended output. This clearly shows alignment between the exit qualifications of the programme, the course objectives and the assessment methods.

Since the panel considers it very important to have sufficient attention paid to manual skills in the programme, the panel finds it positive that there are many practical assessments for manual skills and practical decision making. Furthermore, all practical work is assessed by two assessors of the specific

specialisation. Assessors make use of standardised assessment forms which emphasise on the student's progress. Individual feedback moments are periodically scheduled at the beginning and at the end of a specialist course, in which there is room for feedback, feed up and feedforward.

During the site visit in 2019, the panel at that time recommended the programme assuring timely publication of results of exams and assignments. These results are now made available in Canvas (digital learning environment of the UvA) and monitored by the programme coordinator. Attention is paid to timely communication to students about the publication of these results.

The panel is positive about the fact that the assessment forms have been improved recently (with support of the Teaching & Learning Centre), aiming to make these forms more transparent on student's progress, while at the same time making it more efficient for staff to use. These rubrics clearly show on which criteria students are assessed and on which level they are currently performing for each criterion. The rubric also clearly describes the expected level for each criterion.

Examinations Board

The Faculty Examinations Board consists of a chair, eight members and one external member. The internal members also chair a cluster. C&R is part of the Arts and Culture cluster. Each programme has a delegate who checks the graduation programmes and advises on programme-specific issues.

The Examinations Board is responsible for appointing examiners to conduct exams and assess student's work. Before making these appointments, the Board assesses whether the individual has adequate qualifications to serve as an examiner. The Board actively monitors the quality of assessments, identifies areas of improvement and reports to the programme director and the College/Graduate School directors. The panel is positive about the fact that the quality of assessments it randomly checked, including theses.

The Examinations Board randomly checks the theses annually. A sample of ten percent is taken from each programme each year, aiming at a distribution of marks. An Assessment Committee was established as of 1 September 2022 to support the Examinations Board. This Assessment Committee is formed of the faculty's assessment specialists.

Thesis supervision and assessment

The panel finds it commendable that there are significant contact hours in supervision during critical study phases, and that certain complex study requirements such as the master thesis are subdivided into manageable tasks.

During the site visit in 2019, the panel at that time recommended introducing more objective schedules for the master thesis supervision. In response to this recommendation the programme has taken several steps for improvement: detailed information about the supervision is now shared with students, such as information on the roles (student, supervisor, external parties) and communication. Apart from that, during the thesis process, there are two fixed moments in which students hand in drafts to their supervisor for feedback.

While reviewing selected master theses, the panel encountered one filled out thesis assessment form that showed difficulties in the supervising process, where there seemed to have been very little contact

between the supervisor and student. Related to supervision the examinations board explains that there are few cases in which the supervisors have a hard time contacting students in order to guide them properly. Although the syllabus provides the information on the supervision process, and handing in drafts is mandatory, this seems not always be the case. The panel understands that these are exceptions, and at the same time encourages the programme to make sure there is a procedure for these cases as well, also because the process is part of the final grade of the master's thesis. The panel is positive about the fact that students also come to class while writing their thesis, and apart from the syllabus, the programme discusses expectations of the master's thesis supervision in a kick-off meeting, in which also the number of hours a supervisor is allotted per student is discussed (35 hours per student). Faculty thesis regulations, such as the minimum supervision requirements, are also made available to students via Canvas.

Related to the above mentioned assessment form the panel encountered in the review of selected theses, the panel finds this thesis to be of insufficient quality, while the student did just pass. During conversation with the examinations board, the panel learned that this thesis somehow slipped through and that this should not have been the case. During the annual (2023-2024) random check by the board of the assessment of three master theses, grades were well justified and feedback was adequate in addressing the different aspects assessed. While the panel sees this case as an exception, it is reassured by the fact that the examination board re-investigated the causes of this result and seems to be well aware and able to prevent this in the future. The panel does however recommend the programme continuing with annual sample reviews on the assessment of the master thesis and considering to (temporary) increase the amount of samples to be reviewed.

The master thesis is assessed by the thesis supervisor and an appointed second assessor (a lecturer from another specialization who was not involved in any supervisory/advisory activities). The second assessor prepares an individual assessment report including a grade proposal, and shares this with the first assessor. The first assessor, after reading the completed thesis, independently proposes a grade as well.

While reviewing selected master theses, the panel is positive about the fact that this procedure is reflected in the assessment forms. On one occasion however, there seemed to be a disagreement between the two assessors on the forms. In conversation with the examinations board, the panel learned that there used to be one final assessment form communicated to the student, and this changed over the years to two separate forms. This because Faculty-wide it was felt that separate feedback could be very useful for the student. The examinations board, together with the programme, is working on improving the exact procedure of consolidation and assuring this procedure is followed properly. This procedure already includes that, in case of disagreement between assessors, a third assessor (professor) is involved who, in discussion with the assessors, takes care of (agreement on) one filled out final assessment form.

Conclusions

Based on the documentation and conversations the panel concludes that the master's programme **meets standard 3: Student assessment**.

Standard 4: achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Finding and considerations

Master theses level

In the second semester of year 2 of the master's programme, students work on a final research project (18EC). This final project is a master's thesis of between 16.000 and 18.000 words on a topic of their specialisation. For the nine conversation specialisations this topic is related to the diagnostic phase preceding conservation decisions or interventions. For the students in TAH, the topic of the thesis falls within the field of TAH.

The panel selected and reviewed a total of 15 theses of final research projects, varying in grades (5,8 – 9) and in specialisations (see annex 4 for the selection). These selected theses were overall considered to be of good quality (with one exception, see Standard 3, *thesis supervision and assessment*). The theses met all four qualifications, knowledge and understanding, applying, making proper judgments and communicating properly. Some of the theses positively stood out in their relevance for the professional field, going well beyond the current state-of art. Pioneering research into a new field was encountered in a thesis, giving very rich insight into new art forms.

Alumni

The majority of the master's graduates enter the APP (except for students of TAH). During conversations with alumni, the panel learned that students benefit a lot from the facilities and materials offered by the programme and the time spent on objects during their studies. The panel is positive about the fact that overall these alumni say they feel well prepared for their future career paths.

The programme's alumni survey (2024-2025) shows positive results about the career prospects of these alumni. The vast majority of graduates is active in the field of cultural heritage. Most of them work as a conservator, some in another profession in cultural heritage and some of them continue in a PhD position. Future employers include Dutch museums (the Rijksmuseum, Mauritshuis, Van Gogh Museum, the Allard Pierson, the National Museum of Antiquities the Wereldmuseum (Amsterdam and Rotterdam)), and alumni work in archives including UvA Special Collections, and at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). The panel noted however that, although the programme has

set the goal to educate for the international museum field, the majority remains in the Netherlands with a large percentage within private practice.

Conclusions

Based on the documentation and conversations the panel concludes that the master's programme **meets standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes**.

Final conclusion

The NVAO approved panel has assessed the programme against four standards. The panel concludes that the master programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage meets all standards (intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, student assessment and achieved learning outcomes) and thus rates the overall quality of the programme as positive.

Standard	Judgement
Intended learning outcomes <i>Standard 1: 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.</i>	Meets the standard
Teaching-learning environment <i>Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Meets the standard
Student assessment <i>Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of assessment in place.</i>	Meets the standard
Achieved learning outcomes <i>Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.</i>	Meets the standard
Final conclusion	Positive

In the preceding paragraphs, the panel has discussed and substantiated its positive comments on the programme for each standard. The programme is commended for the following features of good practice:

- The programme has a strong orientation towards the professional and academic field of conservation and restoration;
- The exit qualifications of the master's programme have a significant focus on intricate diagnostic skills;

- The effort put into the redesign of the programme that aims to support and strengthen collaboration in areas of common interests between specialisations, while keeping sufficient room for specialisation-specific education;
- The counselling system and the attention given by staff to students' wellbeing;
- The involvement and dedication of the teaching staff;
- The facilities: the panel views these as an absolute strength, enabling students to be embedded in a rich environment in terms of objects, materials and techniques.
- The assessment matrix of the master's programme, providing an exceptionally comprehensive and elaborate description of the alignment between the courses (per specialisation), the assessment methods and intended output;

In this report, the panel makes several suggestions and observations, which are not strictly recommendations.

Related to standard 2:

- The panel suggests considering ways of improving the entrance level on manual skills. Examples are an entrance internship or a pre-programme dedicated to skills development;
- The panel encourages the programme to continue exploring ways to further support an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students within the master's programme.

Related to standard 3:

- the panel encourages the programme to make sure there is a clear procedure in place for the supervision process during the thesis module, specifically for cases in which students do not attend, or there is little/no contact between supervisor and student

The panel recommends several follow-up actions to further improve the programme. These recommendations do not detract from the positive assessment of the quality of the programme:

Related to standard 2:

- The panel recommends the programme to closely monitor the work load of staff while at the same time paying sufficient attention to career perspectives offered by the programme

Related to standard 3:

- Continue with annual sample reviews on the quality of assessment of the master thesis and consider to (temporary) increase the amount of samples to be reviewed by the examinations board

4. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Administrative data

Institution	
Name in RIO	Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage
Address	Spui 21, 1012 WX Amsterdam
Website	www.uva.nl
BRIN number	21PK
Status of Institution	Publicly funded
Result of institutional assessment on quality assurance	Positive

Programme	
Programme name in RIO	Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage
International name	Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage
Location	Amsterdam
Programme number in RIO	60335
Orientation and level	WO Master (NLQF Level 7)
Research master	No
Language of instruction	English
(Legal) professional requirements	No
Specialisations	Book and Paper (BP) Contemporary Art (CA) Glass and Ceramics (GC) Historic Interiors (HI) Metals (ME) Paintings (PA) Photography (PHO) Textiles (TE) Wood and Furniture (WF) Technical Art History (TAH)
Joint programme	No
Distinctive feature	No
Degree awarded and addition to the degree	Master of Science
Study load in EC	120 EC
Variant(s) (full-time, part-time, dual)	Fulltime
Working with units of learning outcomes (full-time, part-time, dual)	No
External assessment group classification	No
Submission date of accreditation report	1 May 2026

Annex 2: Exit qualifications master's programme

The TER/OER lists these in Article B2.2, starting with the exit qualifications that concern all Master's programmes in the faculty, to which the programme has added programme-specific additions:

1. Knowledge and understanding

- K1. The student has insight into the key research methods in the field of study.
- K2. The student builds on previously acquired knowledge and in particular acquires insight into some specialist parts of the field of study and/or parts of (other) fields.

Programme-specific additions:

- K3. The student exhibits broad theoretical, historical, and practical knowledge of materials used in the making of objects, chemical and physical change of these materials over time, and of the techniques and context of making or collecting.
- K4. The student has knowledge and understanding of professional and ethical standards (as formulated by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations: E.C.C.O.'s professional guidelines).

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- A1. The student is able to independently carry out research in the field of study. The student is able to independently formulate questions with regard to the field of study, to operationalise those questions and represent them in a research plan.
- A2. The student is able to assess the academic practice in line with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice (see the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity on the website of the UvA: Academic Integrity).
- A3. The student is able to answer scientific questions using knowledge of a specialism within the degree programme.
- A4. The student can connect the scientific knowledge and insights gained in the field of study to social issues and apply them within a broader or multidisciplinary context.

Programme-specific additions:

- A5. The student is able to document the conservation object's condition before, during and after treatment (A5 applies to the conservation specialisations only).
- A6. The student is able to apply broad knowledge of conservation and TAH techniques/methods relevant to their field in practice and has mastered basic manual skills necessary for the execution of these techniques/methods.

3. Judgement

- J1. The student can connect to recent scientific practice within the field of study, interpret and assess its results, and take up their own position within it.
- J2. The student is able to assess relevant academic literature.
- J3. The student is able to reflect on the implications of the insights in their own field of study for relevant institutional contexts and contemporary societal issues.

Programme-specific additions:

- J4. The student is able to propose methods to examine, analyse and value objects and/or collections in relation to their material, social and historical contexts, applying an interdisciplinary approach.

- J5. The student is able to evaluate change in materials and constructions based on knowledge of their chemical and physical properties and is able to assess the impact of external factors that may lead to physical and chemical change.

4. Communication

- C1. The student is able to report orally and in writing on independent research in a way that complies with the common academic conventions in the field of study.
- C2. The student is able to present any scientific knowledge and insights gained during the degree programme and transfer them to an audience broader than the academic community.

Programme-specific additions:

- C3. The student is able to actively participate in a critical discourse with professionals, academics, scientists, curators, and art historians.
- C4. The student is able to adapt and explain their own thinking and practice through reflection based on historical awareness of changing values, methods, and approaches in conservation/TAH.

5. Learning skills

- L1. The student is able to work in a team and to provide and incorporate feedback in a constructive way.

Programme-specific addition:

- L2. The student is able to reflect on their own position in the field of study of the degree programme, and on the knowledge that they have acquired and to identify areas of development.

Annex 3: Curriculum overview

Curriculum overview conservation specialisations

	<u>YEAR 1</u>	YEAR 2	
COURSES	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	EC
Skill Building for Conservation 1: Imaging and documentation	■		6
Conservation Principles and Practice 1 (per specialisation)	■		6
Chemistry of Materials in Art		■	6
Theory, Ethics and Approaches in Technical Art History/Conservation		■	6
Art Technological Source Research		■	6
Skill Building for Conservation 2: Approaches to cleaning		■	6
Conservation Principles and Practice 2 (per specialisation)		■	6
Skill Building for Conservation 3: Adhering, consolidation and (re-)attachment		■	6
Conservation Principles and Practice 3 (per specialisation)		■	6
Preventive Conservation: risk assessment		■	6

■ Compulsory course ■ Elective

	YEAR 1	<u>YEAR 2</u>	
COURSES	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	EC
Skill Building for Conservation 4: Loss compensation and visual reintegration	■		6
Analytical Tools and Techniques	■		6
Free-choice elective		■	6
Conservation Principles and Practice 4 (per specialisation)		■	6
Programme-specific elective		■	6
Mechanical properties of Materials in Art		■	6
Conservation Principles and Practice 5 (per specialisation)		■	6
Master's Thesis Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage		■ ■ ■ ■ ■	18

■ Compulsory course ■ Elective

Curriculum overview Technical Art History specialisation

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

COURSES	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	EC
Technical Art History: Defining the field	■		6
Skill Building for Conservation I: Imaging and Documentation	■		6
Chemistry of Materials in Art		■	6
Theory, Ethics and Approaches in Technical Art History/Conservation		■	6
Art Technological Source Research		■	6
The World of Materials I		■	6
Imaging, Sampling and Microscopy		■	6
Historical Reconstructions		■	6
The World of Materials II		■	6
Preventive Conservation: risk assessment		■	6

■ Compulsory course ■ Elective

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

COURSES	SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	EC
Analytical Tools and Techniques	■		6
Object Analysis: Scientific Examination and Interpretation	■		6
A Material History of Art		■	6
Technical Art History: Field Work		■ ■	12
Free-choice electives	■		6
Restricted-choice electives: Programme-specific electives		■	6
Master's Thesis Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage		■ ■ ■	18

■ Compulsory course ■ Elective

Annex 4: Documents

Materials made available before the site visit:

- Self Evaluation Report and appendices:
 - Appendix 01a. TER Part A
 - Appendix 01b. TER MSc 2025-26 C&R
 - Appendix 01c. TER APP 2025-26 C&R
 - Appendix 02. Links to course catalogue C&R MSc and APP
 - Appendix 03a. Assessment matrix C&R MSc
 - Appendix 03b. Assessment matrix C&R APP_251010
 - Appendix 04. Overview core teaching staff
 - Appendix 05. Technical analysis proposal (graded) assessment form
 - Appendix 06. Assessment Form Practical Work
 - Appendix 07. MSc Thesis syllabus Canvas
 - Appendix 08. MSc thesis assessment form
 - Appendix 09a. APP Research Proposal course syllabus
 - Appendix 09b. Research Project and Paper Course Syllabus
 - Appendix 10a. app2_researchpaper_assessmentform2526
 - Appendix 10b. app2_researchproject_assessmentform2526
 - Appendix 10c. app2_internship_assessmentform2526
 - Appendix 10d. app2_oralexamination_assessmentform2425
 - Appendix 10e. app2_monthlyreport_assessmentform2526
 - Appendix 11. Visible Learning Trajectory Goals Revision C&R
 - Appendix 12. Structure of non-revised UvA C&R Programme
 - Appendix 13. Key Figures MSc C&R

Examencommissie:

- Jaarverslag Examencommissie FGw 2023-2024
- Reactie DB op Jaarverslag EC FGw 2023-2024
- Regels & Richtlijnen Examencommissie FGw 2024
- Scriptiereglement GSH masteropleidingen 2025

Facultair beleid:

- AI geletterdheid-implementatieplan
- AI in format studiehandleiding
- Facultair Strategisch plan FGw 2021-2026
- Handboek Kwaliteitszorg Onderwijs Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
- Memo Studeren met een Functiebeperking 2024
- Onderwijsurennormering FGw
- Taakstellingsmodel FGw

Jaarverslagen opleidingscommissie:

- Annual report PC C&R 2023-2024

- Annual report PC C&R 2024-2025
Toetsbeleid:
 - NL_UvA Kader Toetsbeleid 2022
 - NL_UvA Toetsbeleid bij FGw_2024
 - NL_UvA Addendum Toetsbeleid Aandacht voor GenAI en toetsing 2025
UvA Onderwijsbeleid:
 - NL_UvA Instellingsplan 2021-2026 Inspiring Generations
 - NL_Kader Onderwijskwaliteitsbeleid UvA 2024
 - NL_UvA Beknopt kader Studeren met een functiebeperking en/of chronische ziekte 2024
 - NL_UvA Beleidskader GenAI 2025
Course material:
 - Chemistry of Materials in Art
 - CPP2 G&C
 - CPP2 Paintings
 - CPP6 TE
 - Elective Oral History and Artwork Life Stories
 - SBC2 Approaches to Cleaning
 - SBC5 Professional skills for Conservators
 - Technical Art History – Fieldwork
 - Theory, Ethics and Approaches
-
- Rapport UvA MA Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage 2020
 - Rapport UvA APP Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage 2020

Final theses

The received list of final theses contains 79 final theses in the period June 2022 until July 2025. Out of this list the following selection of 15 final theses was established:

Rating sequence	Total number	Selected
5,5-6,9 sufficient	17	3
7,0 - 8,4 good	44	9
8,5 - 10,0 very good	18	3

Specialisations	Total number	Selected
Textiles	8	2
Wood and Furniture	11	2
Photography	3	1
Book and Paper	11	2
Historic Interiors	8	2
Metals	11	2
Technical Art History	7	1
Glass and Ceramics	6	1
Paintings	7	1
Contemporary Art	7	1

Annex 5: Site visit programme

University of Amsterdam
 Faculty of Humanities
 Site visit Conservation and Restoration

Day 1: Ateliergebouw
 Day 2: Bushuis/Oost-Indisch Huis

<i>Time</i>	<i>Interview</i>
10:45 11:00	Panel arrival / welcome
11:00 11:30	Faculty management
11:30 11:45	Break
11:45 12:30	Programme management
12:30 13:30	Lunch
13:30 14:30	Students and alumni MA and APP (incl. Programme Committee)
14:30 16:00	Guided tour AG facilities and break
16:00 17:25	Teaching staff MA and APP (incl. Programme Committee)
17:30 18:00	Closed panel meeting

Day 2

<i>Time</i>	<i>Interview</i>
09:00 09:15	Arrival panel
09:15 10:00	Examinations Board
10:00 11:00	Break and guided tour BH facilities
11:00 12:00	Preparation final interview management
12:00 12:30	Final interview management
12:30 14:30	Deliberations panel including lunch
14:30 15:30	Development dialogue
15:30 15:45	Panel presents main findings
15:45	Drinks