



Research Master Media Studies
University of Amsterdam

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Summary

On 27 November 2025, the research master's (RMA) programme Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment WO OZM Mediastudies (research masters Media Studies). The panel judges that the programme meets the NVAO standards Intended learning outcomes, Assessment and Achieved learning outcomes, while it partially meets the NVAO standard Teaching-learning environment. Moreover, the panel establishes that it fulfils almost all additional aspects of the assessment framework that apply specifically to the quality of a research master programme. As a result, the panel's assessment of the programme is conditionally positive.

In addition to all positive considerations, the programme's shortcomings concern two domains: (1) the proportion of the curriculum components specific to the RMA programme is too small; and (2) the selection and admissions process requires greater transparency, stronger procedural rigour, and more systematic checks.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The RMA Media Studies in Amsterdam has a specific and ambitious profile: it stands apart from other RMA programmes in Media Studies through its focus on humanities research, the broad range of specialisations with a common goal, and the strong research culture. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) do justice to the domain, level and orientation of the programme. Moreover, its research-oriented nature is properly substantiated in the ILOs, as are its international and multidisciplinary scope. The programme explicitly caters to students who envisage positions in either academic or non-academic research. Hence, it is important that the ongoing relevance of the learning outcomes, curriculum content, and labour market opportunities are monitored and validated in the recently established Sounding Board Group.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The panel endorses the English name of the Media Studies programme, as well as the decision to offer the RMA in English. Its international orientation has been evident from the outset in the course contents and is also visible in the diversity of students and teaching staff. The foundational building blocks underlying the set-up of the teaching and learning environment are adequate. The programme is embedded in a strong research context, which reinforces its academic orientation and quality. The integration of national research schools and the strong research engagement by teaching staff ensure that students operate in an active research culture. The graduation trajectory is well designed and demonstrates a clear and rigorous completion of the full academic research cycle. Because the master thesis constitutes an important deliverable, the programme team may want to adjust the curriculum schedule to reflect not only the adequate size of the thesis, but also the spread of its effective workload. The programme's educational philosophy reflects the university's vision and the faculty's strategy, while it also aligns with the demands and features of a RMA programme. Students have access to a comprehensive system of support, guidance and information facilities at university, faculty and programme level. Because it relies considerably on the coordinating capacity of one person, the RMA programme team may want to design a back-up plan in case of force majeure. The Media Studies team consists of highly qualified, internationally recognised, didactically qualified and research-active teaching staff. Students appreciate their expertise, availability and the extensive thesis supervision.

The panel identified two weaknesses in the teaching and learning environment. First, the proportion of the curriculum components specific to the RMA programme (between 78 and 90 EC) is too small for RMA students and even more so for students transferring to the RMA after one semester of regular master's courses. The fact that RMA students follow an entire first semester of regular one-year master courses

without additional demands does not befit the character of a research master, according to the panel. Although the programme recently initiated a pilot in which additional demands are formulated for the assessment of research master students in the first semester, this is not yet transposed in formal policy and does not affect the regular master students who transfer to the RMA programme after the first semester. In its deliberation, the panel also weighs the fact that the previous panel recommended “to add mandatory and graded extra work for research master students in the first semester courses, which are taken together with master students”. Second, the selection and admissions process for both regular RMA applicants and so-called transfer students requires transparency, greater procedural rigour, as well as more systematic and clearly defined quality-control processes. The panel considers that the programme team needs to take urgent and systematic action to address these flaws.

Standard 3. Student assessment

The RMA Media Studies relies on a robust assessment system that is embedded in relevant faculty-wide policies and practices. The assessment framework is comprehensive and transparent, and the assessment methods ensure broad coverage of the ILOs. The programme has a solid view on the role of AI in education, and how it is integrated in assessment protocols. Furthermore, course and thesis assessments are of good quality. The assessment criteria are clearly communicated in course manuals, and rubrics are standardised across modules. The sample review demonstrates that thesis assessment is well structured and rigorously implemented in an insightful way. The quality assurance system for assessment is both comprehensive and effective. The new faculty-wide structure featuring a central Examinations Board, an Assessment Committee and Examination Board clusters with programme delegation is adequate and functions properly.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The ILOs are assessed and demonstrated in a systematic way: students who graduate the RMA Media Studies have effectively acquired all ILOs, while programme graduates find suitable employment in research informed positions inside and outside academia. The research master thesis constitutes a substantial test of research competence that covers all components of the research cycle and is of value to the academic and scientific discipline. The thesis review demonstrates that graduation projects are of good quality. Furthermore, Media Studies graduates display a strong trajectory into both academic and professional research. They find jobs that are commensurate with the domain and the level of their study, and do so in a variety of positions and with a broad range of public, private and non-governmental employers. The number of graduates who eventually pursue a PhD is high.

Conditions

The panel establishes that the Media Studies RMA programme partially meets the NVAO standard Teaching-learning environment, in particular the additional requirements for RMA programmes regarding admissions and specific RMA curriculum components. It is confident that the identified shortcomings can be remedied within two years through a dedicated repair trajectory. Hence, the panel puts the following conditions to the RMA Media Studies:

1. To rethink and redesign the RMA programme curriculum to ensure that all RMA students take an adequate number of RMA-specific courses.
2. To establish a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions, including the creation of an Admissions Board.

These two conditions cover the establishment of new policies and structures, as well as their effective operationalisation. At the end of the repair trajectory, the panel will judge the quality of the changes based on the measurements taken and their operational effectiveness.

Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

Research master's programme Media Studies

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

meets the standard

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

partially meets the standard

Standard 3: Student assessment

meets the standard

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

meets the standard

General conclusion

conditionally positive

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

Prof. dr. Daniël Biltereyst, panel chair

Mark Delmartino MA, panel secretary

Date: 30 March 2026

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 27 November 2025, the research master's programme Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment WO OZM Mediastudies (research masters Media Studies). The assessment cluster consisted of three programmes, offered by the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Amsterdam and Utrecht University. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (April 2024). It also followed the Specification of Additional Criteria For Research Master's Programmes (2016).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster WO OZM Mediastudies. Fiona Schouten acted as coordinator in the cluster assessment and Mark Delmartino acted as panel secretary for the assessment of all programmes in the cluster. They have 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. To strengthen consistency among the assessment panels within the cluster, the Academion coordinator ensured joint instruction for the panel members and a consistent assessment method across all site visits. This consistency was also a point of attention at all concluding panel meetings during the site visits. Finally, overlap in the assessment panels across the various site visits in the cluster further strengthened consistency. The composition of the panels was designed so that at least two panel members also served on another assessment panel in the cluster.

On 18 July 2025, the NVAO approved the panel's composition. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016) on 2 September 2025. Moreover, a common introductory briefing was held on 30 September 2025 for all panel members in the cluster. At this online meeting, the coordinator informed the panels about the assessment framework, the working method, and the planning for site visits and reports.

Preparation

In the run-up to the site visit, the programme team at the University of Amsterdam composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator and the secretary, and selected representative partners for the various interviews (see Appendix 3). It also determined that the development dialogue would be held during the site visit. The findings from this session did not impact the outcome of the accreditation exercise and have been captured in a separate report.

Furthermore, the programme team produced a self-evaluation report that outlined the programme's key elements per accreditation standard, included a student chapter, and conducted a SWOT analysis. It also made available an extensive portfolio of programme-specific and faculty-wide documents on a dedicated online drive. Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed 15 graduation works among the 44 master theses which had been successfully submitted in the academic years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The sample was representative of the final scores, the examiners involved in thesis supervision, and the three specialisation tracks offered and taken by students in the period under review: Film Studies (6), New Media and Digital Culture (6), and Television & Cross-Media Culture (3). The sample included six theses of students who

eventually graduated cum laude. The list of materials put at the disposition of the panel, as well as details on the thesis review are provided in Appendix 4.

The panel members studied the programme information, reviewed the thesis selection and submitted their first observations to the secretary, who compiled the input. This compilation served as a basis for the preparatory online meeting on 19 November 2025, during which the panel identified the programme's key strengths, challenges, and questions. On behalf of the panel, the secretary reported the main outcomes of this meeting to the team in Amsterdam on 21 November 2025. An Open Consultation Hour for students, teaching and support staff involved in the programme was scheduled alongside the panel's preparatory meeting. Eventually, nobody used the opportunity to discuss individually and confidentially with the panel.

Site visit

During the site visit on 27 November 2025, the panel interviewed various programme representatives and held internal meetings to discuss the outcome of these sessions. It used the concluding meeting to deliberate on the programme's quality in line with the assessment framework. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings, general observations and suggestions for further development.

Report

After the site visit, 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 coordinator sent the draft report to the programme team in Amsterdam for a check on factual inaccuracies. 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 Humanities and the University of Amsterdam.

Panel

The panel assessing the research master's programme Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam consisted of the following members:

- Prof. dr. D. (Daniël) Biltereyst, full professor in Communication Sciences at the Department of Communication Sciences of Ghent University Gent (Belgium) [panel chair];
- Prof. dr. S. (Sarita) Malik, associate Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research Impact and professor in Media, Culture and Communication, Social and Political Sciences at Brunel University of London (United Kingdom);
- Prof. dr. M.S. (Martine) Prange, full professor in Philosophy of Humanity, Culture, and Society at Tilburg University;
- A.M. (Annemoon) Westland, student of the research master's programme Sociology of Culture, Media and the Arts at the Erasmus University Rotterdam [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:	Spui 21, 1012WX Amsterdam
Website:	http://www.uva.nl
BRIN-number:	21PK
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	M Media Studies (research)
ISAT number:	60832
Orientation of the programme:	Academic
Level of the programme:	Master (NLQF7)
Number of credits:	120 EC
Language of instruction:	English
Professional requirements:	no
Specializations or tracks:	-
Location:	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Assessment group:	WO OZM Mediastudies
Awarded degree:	MA
Submission date NVAO:	1 May 2026

Description of the assessment

Organization

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Amsterdam is nationally profiled by a wide range of study programmes in the tradition of the classical broad university, while striving for innovation through interdisciplinary collaboration. It offers 27 bachelor's and 33 (research) master's programmes.

The Research Master Media Studies is part of the Media Studies cluster. The Programme Director ensures the quality of the degree programmes in the cluster and is supported for the RMA Media Studies by a dedicated programme coordinator and by specialisation coordinators.

Since September 2022, the faculty has had a joint Examinations Board (EB) that operates through eight EB clusters. The research master Media Studies falls under the EB cluster Media Studies. A faculty-wide Assessment Committee advises the EB on the assurance of assessment by randomly examining assessment quality. A dedicated Programme Committee consists of an equal number of students and teaching staff, and liaises among students, staff, and management.

Recommendations previous panel

In the previous accreditation round, the then panel issued a positive conclusion on the research master Media Studies. It highlighted several strengths of the programme under each standard and made nine recommendations. The self-evaluation report contains a dedicated section explaining which decisions and measures have been taken – or are currently ongoing - with regard to the recommendations. The panel has discussed the measures extensively during the site visit. It acknowledges the programme team's efforts in this regard and concludes that most of the recommendations were addressed. Still, it also finds that the programme took too long to start adding mandatory, graded extra work for research master students in the first-semester courses, which are taken together with one-year master students. The recommendations and their follow-up will be addressed throughout the respective standards in this report.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

Profile

The Research Master's Programme (RMA) in Media Studies offers a theoretically intensive and rich engagement with the contemporary and historical developments of media forms, institutions and technologies. It aims to deepen theoretical insights across different media fields through analytical and empirical knowledge deriving from - and transcending - specific media forms. The RMA exposes students to contemporary and historical research across the media landscape and approaches its objects of study primarily through critical theory, cultural studies, media archaeology, and contemporary social theory. The programme challenges students to gain new perspectives on media, how media transform historically, and how media contribute to the most fundamental cultural forms and practices.

Based on the extensive and insightful written materials and the on-site discussions, the panel establishes that the RMA programme has a specific position in the Dutch higher education Media Studies landscape and beyond. The RMA Media Studies in Amsterdam is strongly oriented toward humanities research. It offers a broad range of specialisations and perspectives and connects these approaches through transdisciplinary core courses. In addition, the programme has a strong reputation through its international ranking, the prolific scholarly output and visibility of its staff, the grant-generating nature of its research and education, and its embedding in a thriving local media culture.

A key feature of the RMA in Media Studies is the disciplinary breadth it offers through five specializations:

- *Film Studies* engages with the transformative shifts in the materiality, distribution, and exhibition of moving images, and does so from a philosophical and media-archaeological perspective.
- *New Media and Digital Culture* focuses on the web and other digital networks as sites for the study of specific online cultures and larger cultural formations, drawing on approaches such as platform studies, software studies, and political economy.
- *Global Cross-Media Culture* addresses the transformation of cultural forms and practices in the age of mobility, second screens, participatory culture, and global distribution, focusing on the inter-relation between institutions, aesthetics, and politics.
- *Cultural Data and AI* engages with the transformations brought about by the development of big data, artificial intelligence, and automation in media industries, the cultural heritage sector, and public government.
- *Archival and Information Studies* focuses on how technological and social changes have transformed the way information is stored, used, and accessed and addresses issues including privacy, inclusivity, and transparency.

The panel establishes that the programme lives up to the objectives and reputation described in the profile section of the self-evaluation report: the RMA Media Studies offers a good mixture of critical theoretical courses, tutorials and seminars that are closely connected to the expertise and ongoing research of the academic staff; students confirmed they are encouraged to translate their acquired knowledge and expertise into substantive, higher-level research, and to reflect on urgent, contemporary issues; the programme has strong connections to local and national Research Schools, which enhances not only its academic credibility but also provides students with valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Similarly, the panel welcomes the programme's integration of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, its explicit link to PhD preparedness, and its international dimension and orientation. According to the panel, these elements are not only mentioned as essential features of the profile but they are also part and parcel of the day-to-day RMA programme. Hence, the panel notices that the programme's focus on integrity, PhD preparation and internationalisation effectively reflects an advanced research culture and ensures that the objectives of the RMA connect with – and that students are exposed to – developments in the larger academic field. Students, moreover, noted that the international nature of the study offers a unique opportunity to engage with diverse cultures and nationalities. The international environment at the university, among faculty and teaching staff, is one of the reasons they choose to study Media Studies in Amsterdam.

In sum, the panel establishes that the RMA Media Studies has a very attractive profile, which it also manages to deliver: the programme offers a dynamic, intellectually stimulating, and internationally oriented academic environment where students are acquainted with a solid theoretical education and engage with cutting-edge scholarship while developing advanced methodological and analytical skills. Hence, it does not come as a

surprise to the panel that students emphasise, in curriculum evaluations, the student chapter, and discussions on site, that they highly appreciate the programme's research orientation.

Intended learning outcomes

The profile of the RMA programme has been translated into intended learning outcomes (ILOs), which are listed in Appendix 1 to this report. The programme ILOs consist of 18 general statements which are common for all students. Moreover, each specialisation has its own specific set of intended learning objectives. The common ILOs are structured along the Dublin descriptors. Hence, all students of the RMA Media Studies in Amsterdam are:

- provided with thorough knowledge and understanding of key theoretical traditions and research methods in media studies;
- encouraged to actively apply knowledge and understanding and develop their own insights into current (digital) media culture and the transformation of this culture;
- trained to judge - i.e. research, interpret, and evaluate - current and historical developments in the media landscape;
- obtaining effective communication skills, both oral and written, adhering to academic conventions;
- acquiring collaborative learning skills, encouraging teamwork and the integration of constructive feedback from peers and instructors.

Having studied the set of programme ILOs, the panel acknowledges a clear link between the 18 common ILOs and the five Dublin descriptors for master programmes: all ILOs address at least one descriptor, and each descriptor is addressed by multiple ILOs. These learning outcomes, moreover, are formulated in such a way as to do justice to the substance (media studies), level (research master), and orientation (academic) of the Media Studies programme. Hence, it is fair to state that, according to the panel, the ILOs are in line with the requirements for master programmes as described at NLQF level 7.

According to the panel, the ILOs are well formulated, reflect the vision and profile of the programme, and emphasize its research-oriented nature: students are trained to conduct independent research, apply diverse methodologies, and connect their findings to wider social and ethical contexts. The learning outcomes describe a coherent and ambitious research-oriented profile which is grounded in critical, interdisciplinary media theory. They balance humanities-based critical theory with emergent domains such as AI, datafication, and digital culture. Moreover, the five specializations are distinctive in their aims and profiles, but they share a common ambition: to train students to become independent, critical researchers who are well prepared for research-oriented careers, including the pursuit of a PhD. The international orientation of the RMA is reflected in the common ILOs and is an explicit part of the objectives for each specialisation.

In sum, the panel sees a thorough and ambitious set of intended learning outcomes that reflect the programme's profile, the research-oriented environment, the specialist, transdisciplinary set-up of the curriculum, and students' exit opportunities within and outside academia.

Professional field

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions during the site visit that the programme established a Sounding Board Group to ensure the ongoing relevance of the RMA programme and to facilitate the entry of students into the job market. The Group convenes annually to discuss structural changes and updates to the curriculum, and to exchange information on the situation in and requirements of the labour market. The members are alumni who work in the media industry and represent various sectors, including public broadcasters, cultural institutions, and design studios. In addition, during the annual Media

Studies Career Day, the programme invites representatives from relevant industry sectors to share advice with students on how to apply for positions in their sector.

The panel welcomes the establishment of the Sounding Board Group as a very valuable resource to keep the programme objectives and curriculum up-to-date. Their advice and input are directly relevant to the RMA programme in general and to the validation of its learning outcomes in particular. Moreover, it ensures that RMA students have first-hand and up-to-date information on the requirements and opportunities of the labour market.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the research master Media Studies has a specific and ambitious profile: the programme in Amsterdam stands apart from other RMA programmes in Media Studies through its focus on humanities research, the broad range of specialisations with a common goal, and the strong research culture.

The panel considers that the intended learning outcomes do justice to the domain, level and orientation of the RMA in Media Studies. Moreover, the research-oriented nature of the programme is properly substantiated in the ILOs, and so is its international and multidisciplinary character.

The programme explicitly caters to students who envisage positions in either academic or non-academic research. The panel considers that the establishment of the Sounding Board Group is an important development for monitoring and validating the ongoing relevance of the learning outcomes, curriculum content, and labour market opportunities.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

Curriculum

The RMA Media Studies is a two-year full-time 120 EC master programme taught in English. Each academic year consists of two semesters of 30 EC, which are subdivided into two blocks of 12 EC and one block of 6 EC. The programme curriculum is presented in Appendix 2 to this report. It consists of research master core courses, specialization core courses, research seminars, case studies & research projects, electives, tutorials, and National Research School courses. In the first semester students take courses in their chosen specialization: core courses (12 EC), research seminars (12 EC), and a case study & research project (6 EC). In the second and third semesters, students develop transdisciplinary perspectives in RMA core courses (24 EC) and an individual research profile through tutorials (12 EC), research school courses (12 EC), and electives (12 EC). The fourth semester is dedicated to the research master thesis (18 EC), which is supported by the thesis seminar and conference (12 EC). With the approval of the RMA coordinator and the Examinations Board, students can spend the third semester abroad as part of an exchange or a research project. Moreover, students can opt for a research internship, which then replaces one or two tutorials.

While the panel raised some questions about the rationale behind the set-up of the curriculum (where ‘individual’ specialisations come first, followed by ‘common’ transdisciplinary and research courses), the on-site discussions revealed that the curriculum and its components have been well thought through: the specialisation semester follows a coherent pattern of courses, as do the blocks and semesters leading up to the thesis. In this regard, the panel found the way students combine core courses with tutorials, electives, and research school courses particularly interesting, as this approach fosters a stimulating cross-disciplinary perspective.

According to the panel, the two-year curriculum is coherent and provides a well-balanced trajectory combining specialisation, transdisciplinary integration, and independent research practice. There is a clear connection between the educational content and the research skills to be acquired. The phased design, moving from specialisation-based methods to transdisciplinary theory and individual mastery, demonstrates deliberate scaffolding of research competencies.

The interviewed students were generally satisfied with the curriculum's setup and indicated that they have considerable freedom to tailor the programme to their individual interests: they can build their own profile through elective courses, tutorials, research school courses, and possibly an international exchange. Moreover, they can write course papers on a topic of their interest and choose their own thesis topic. Hence, the panel establishes that the RMA programme enables students to incorporate specific components into the curriculum that broaden their research interests and capacities.

Furthermore, the panel notices that the programme's research orientation is clearly emphasized. It is fully embedded in a strong research context, which reinforces its academic orientation and quality. The integration of national research schools and the strong research engagement by teaching staff ensure that students operate in an active research culture from the outset. According to the panel, the RMA Media Studies programme is attractive because it is heavy on research skills and clearly shows the breadth of media studies, as well as its epistemological, cultural, and political value.

During the visit, the panel addressed the programme team's follow-up to the recommendations of the previous panel. It was informed that the research internship option has been streamlined in recent years, which has led to a slight increase in the number of students effectively pursuing such an internship as part of the regular curriculum. Moreover, the panel acknowledges that methodological training has always been part and parcel of the entire curriculum. However, the programme team has made this more explicit in its communication to students: they are now aware that methodology training is provided not only during the specialisation semester, but also in the RMA core courses, tutorials, research school courses and electives.

The panel also discussed at length another recommendation of the previous panel, on the proportion of curriculum elements that are specific to the research master programme. The panel notes that almost all course components in the second, third, and fourth semesters are either targeted exclusively at research master students or validated as equivalent by the Examinations Board. The elective space (12 EC) can consist of master level courses. However, the entire first semester of specialisation courses (30 EC) is organised as part of regular one-year master's programmes. Hence, during the first semester, RMA students do not meet in class as a cohort but join a bigger group of regular master students individually. The previous panel already recommended in 2020 to add mandatory and graded extra work for research master students in the first semester. While the programme team has experimented with some additional work since, it was only in September 2025, i.e. three months prior to the current site visit, that the programme team decided to differentiate the assessment of RMA students from regular master students in the specialisation core courses

and research seminars. According to the programme team, this system of differential treatment has a pilot character and will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

In addition, the panel was informed that the current structure of the RMA curriculum allows high-performing students in the regular master programmes (who fulfil specific grading criteria, see the section on admission) to transfer to the RMA programme after a first semester of specialisation courses. Until the academic year 2024-2025, both RMA and transfer MA students had followed the same trajectory in the first semester, and thus entered the second semester on equal footing. As of 2025-2026, however, the transfer students could be allowed to join the RMA without the additional course and assessment load that is currently piloted among the most recent RMA cohort.

According to the panel, the proportion of curriculum components specific to the RMA programme is too small, both for RMA students and for students transferring to the RMA after one semester of regular master courses. It concerns first and foremost the 30 EC of specialisation courses during the first semester, as well as the option to pursue 12 EC of elective courses from regular master curricula. Moreover, the panel thinks that the initiative taken at the start of the current academic year 2025-2026 comes too late. Hence, the panel feels that the programme needs to remedy this shortcoming comprehensively by rethinking and redesigning the RMA programme's setup so that all students take sufficient RMA-specific courses. Based on the existing set-up, this will require a review of the specialisation semester (30 EC). Moreover, the current transfer system after semester 1 should be revised so that students who join the RMA after starting in the regular master's programme complete a study programme comprising a number of RMA-level courses comparable to those of regular RMA students.

Graduation trajectory

All RMA students write an individual master thesis on a topic of their choice under the guidance of a teaching staff member, who is qualified (PhD and UTQ) and formally assigned by the Examinations Board. The research master thesis is a written piece of research between 19,000 and 23,000 words that should have the potential for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Thesis projects involving empirical research with human subjects or personal data undergo an ethics review process. This process includes both an ethics review and a privacy protection review. It also serves as an educational measure, sensitizing students to the importance of research ethics, including respect for the decision-making autonomy of their research subjects and the careful and responsible handling of data. In cases involving vulnerable groups, students must present their projects to the faculty's Ethics Committee plenary meeting for an additional layer of rigorous review to prevent harm.

The graduation trajectory spans the entire fourth semester and comprises the RMA Thesis (18 EC) and the Thesis Seminar and Conference (12 EC). The latter course helps students develop their thesis research and position this research in broader academic and public debates. In the seminar part, students are taught, among other things, how to approach a study object through an in-depth review of existing research, and how to formulate a research question and conduct analysis. The seminar is structured loosely around the stages of thesis writing and organised as peer feedback sessions where students discuss their work in progress. The conference part takes place in the second half of the semester and trains students in thematically constructing a conference programme, writing an abstract, and presenting their work.

According to the panel, the graduation trajectory of the RMA Media Studies is well designed. It demonstrates a clear and rigorous completion of the full academic research cycle, from formulating a research question, applying appropriate theory and method, to communicating findings in both academic and public contexts. Students complete the entire research cycle within the graduation trajectory. The thesis phase requires

students to independently formulate research questions, select and justify methodologies, engage with academic and societal debates, and deliver a well-structured written product. The supporting Thesis Seminar and Conference cultivates academic communication skills and critical peer engagement, effectively bridging research production and dissemination. The programme's ethical safeguards, including GDPR-compliant ethics review and supervision by qualified PhD-holding staff, reinforce the integrity and professionalism of the research process. In sum, the combination of RMA seminar, conference and thesis forms a substantial and coherent graduation trajectory that supports both independent scholarship and peer exchange.

Students and alumni indicated to the panel that they can pursue a thesis topic of their own interest and are satisfied with the quality and quantity of supervision. They feel taken seriously as researchers and consider their teachers as peers. Moreover, students feel safe asking questions and connecting with professors about their research passions, future career plans, and ongoing research in the media studies field.

In terms of workload, the panel notices that the research master thesis constitutes an important deliverable. While it is formally scheduled in the fourth semester, students are encouraged to identify a thesis topic, meet their supervisor and start preparing for the research proposal in the third semester. The panel agrees to the size of the master thesis and to spreading the thesis trajectory over a more extended period (instead of one semester). However, the programme team may want to balance the effective workload in the respective curriculum components across the different blocks and semesters.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a sample of master theses. The outcomes of this review will be discussed in dedicated sections of standards 3 and 4. In so far as the graduation trajectory is concerned, the panel establishes that it is coherently designed and academically rigorous. Students effectively have the opportunity to complete the entire empirical research cycle within their thesis, from conceptualisation and design to data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The structure, beginning with proposal design and leading to full empirical execution allows students to apply the skills they developed across the curriculum. According to the panel, the size of the thesis and the credits allocated to it enable students to work with empirical rigour and benefit from sufficient supervision and feedback.

Language of instruction

Since its initial accreditation, the RMA in Media Studies has been taught in English. The panel understands that this was a conscious decision to reflect the programme's strong international orientation and to prepare students for a labour market, both inside and outside academia, that is becoming increasingly international. The motivation for offering the programme in English has been extensively addressed in the self-evaluation report. The combination of English as the lingua franca in the academic field of Media Studies, the increasingly international job market, the globalized media sector, the international perspective on the study of contemporary (digital) media culture, and the benefits of an international classroom are key in this motivation.

Students, moreover, emphasised in their written contribution to the self-evaluation report that they highly appreciate the international nature of the study, which creates a unique chance to engage with different cultures and nationalities. Moreover, having English as a shared language allows students to get outside of their national bubble. Teachers effectively leverage students' diverse national and cultural backgrounds in class and offer students diverse materials. In this way, the programme does not take one national perspective on media related topics but approaches the topics from different angles.

The panel endorses the English title of the programme, as well as the decision to offer the research master programme in English. The written materials and the discussions on site have convinced the panel that the RMA programme is embedded in an internationally oriented teaching and research environment. Its international orientation has been evident from the outset. It has further increased throughout the years in the courses and the programme structure, as well as in the teaching staff and the students.

Learning environment

The University of Amsterdam profiles itself as an internationally oriented, bilingual university. By attracting students from Amsterdam, the Netherlands and the rest of the world, a local, national and international audience is connected on campus. All degree programmes share the same vision on teaching and learning: education is research intensive, centred on academic development, and serves to promote further differentiation and specialization. As scientific and societal challenges often cannot be solved by just one discipline, the university strives to contribute to the development of interdisciplinary academic skills. As part of this vision, the international classroom strengthens students' critical thinking and open intellectual attitudes.

In so far as the Humanities faculty and the RMA in Media Studies are concerned, this vision on teaching and learning means that students are educated to become academic professionals with a critical and inquisitive attitude and the ability to dissect complex issues from an open and often cross-disciplinary perspective. Research intensive education prepares students for their future personal, professional, and social roles. Inquiry-based learning, with a strong emphasis on skills, is the prerequisite for this type of education, along with embedding education in an active multilingual and international research community. In its Strategic Plan (2021-2026), the faculty has formulated four ambitions: make teaching more context-oriented; embed multilingualism more firmly; use more of the international reality of the faculty; and make the faculty an accessible and inclusive environment in which everyone feels valued.

The on-site discussions confirmed the above statements from the self-evaluation report. The panel notes that the teaching methods are varied and provide students with a rich, engaging learning experience. It welcomes the emphasis on research intensive education, inquiry-based learning, interdisciplinary skills, and the international community. Students and alumni told the panel they value the international and intercultural environment at the university and in the programme. The international nature of the study offers a unique opportunity to engage with different cultures and nationalities. In contrast, the international classroom is not an abstract concept but a consciously implemented teaching approach. In sum, the panel establishes that the learning environment of the RMA in Media Studies reflects the university's vision and the faculty's strategy, while also meeting the particular demands and features of the RMA programme.

Student guidance and information

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the university and the school have a comprehensive system of support facilities in place, which allows the RMA programme to provide appropriate guidance and information to all its students. These facilities and staff also cater for the needs of specific groups, such as new or international students, as well as students with a functional impairment.

In addition, the programme can rely on dedicated staff members who provide targeted support to the RMA students: both the RMA coordinator and the RMA tutor play an essential role in the academic life of the students, and often work together organising information sessions, social gatherings and excursions for (incoming) RMA students. The coordinator is involved in all stages of the programme, while the tutor provides academic guidance on study progress and individual study plans. The previous accreditation panel recommended that student guidance should be intensified. In the meantime, budget cuts have prevented

the programme from fully implementing this recommendation. However, the panel was informed that since the COVID-19 pandemic, the RMA coordinator and tutor organise more meetings and events. Moreover, students are advised that they can always contact the RMA tutor for an individual appointment, while the RMA coordinator regularly meets individual students for procedural advice on their study plans.

The discussions on site have convinced the panel that these individuals, as well as the teaching staff, play an important role in making the study period for RMA students a success. Students and alumni indicated to the panel that they receive proper information and guidance prior to enrolment, as well as during the programme. Moreover, they feel welcome in the study, are taken seriously by the staff, and appreciate the programme's safe environment, in which teaching and support staff genuinely care about the students and their academic and personal growth.

The panel noted during the visit that the RMA coordinator plays an important role as a liaison between management, staff, and students. While the coordinator fulfils his tasks with great enthusiasm and proficiency, the panel wonders whether this structure, which seems to rely heavily on the capacity of one person, will prove sufficiently robust in the event of calamities or force majeure. Hence, it advises the programme team to design a back-up plan.

Admission

The RMA in Media Studies is a selective, research-intensive and cross-disciplinary programme targeting motivated students with a strong academic record and a demonstrable interest in conducting research in the fields of Media Studies. The admission requirements and the application procedures are clearly stipulated on the programme website. To be admissible, students need a previous (under)graduate degree in Humanities or Social Sciences with a focus on media, English proficiency, and a GPA of 7.5 on the Dutch scale. In addition, candidates should complete a detailed motivation form and add a written sample of 3000 words to demonstrate their capability to perform at research master level. The panel was informed that in the admissions process, close attention is paid to the profile of the previous degree. The data on application, admission and enrolment numbers in the self-evaluation show that the programme features a rigorous admission system. Since the previous accreditation visit, the number of applicants has grown from 213 in 2020-2021 to 331 in 2025-2026. The number of enrolments has not followed this pattern but remained stable between 20 and 25 RMA students, i.e. the size of a working group. The programme is investigating whether it can accommodate a second working group of RMA students in the future.

In addition, the programme offers particularly resourceful 'regular' master students the opportunity to transfer to the RMA programme after a first semester of specialisation courses. Candidates should have obtained at least 7.5 across the first semester courses and apply with a motivation letter. The programme data show that every year a good number of master students (between 18 and 42) applies for a transfer and eventually enrolls (between 11 and 17) in the RMA programme.

At the time of the site visit, no specific information was available on the number of RMA candidates who were admitted/refused based on their applications. Hence it is not possible to establish why applicants are refused or how many admitted candidates eventually decide to enrol elsewhere.

The discussion on site showed that the admissions process is quite lengthy and cumbersome. Moreover, much of the admissions work is handled solely by the programme coordinator. While it notes that the admission criteria are clearly defined and appropriate, the panel believes that the selection and admissions process for both regular RMA applicants and transfer students requires greater procedural rigour. Hence the panel feels that the programme needs to repair this shortcoming by establishing an Admissions Board, which

consists of more than one staff member. This Admissions Board should review and where necessary update the current admission and selection criteria for both regular RMA applicants and transfer students from the regular master's programmes. The process should also stipulate – and the Admissions Board should inform – when applicants are admitted to the RMA programme, leaving the decision to effectively enrol to the applicants.

Intake and success rate

The detailed key figures show that between 2020-2021 and 2024-2025, a total of 70 transfer students joined 129 RMA programme students after one semester. Around a quarter of these students is Dutch, while 40% is European and about a third is non-European.

The panel notices that apart from the 'COVID year' 2020-2021, the drop-out rate has been limited. Moreover, around two thirds of the cohorts finish within the nominal duration of two years while it takes graduates on average 28 months to obtain the RMA degree. These numbers show according to the panel that the RMA programme is effective in attracting the envisaged audience. The success rate moreover demonstrates that the admitted and enrolled students are invariably talented and motivated.

During the visit, the panel discussed the feasibility of the programme with several stakeholders. While the success rate is high, it was clear from the student chapter and the discussions that students are very ambitious. Studying a two-year research master programme is challenging anyway but the fact that RMA students strive for excellence adds on to the challenge. This then translates into a workload that is perceived as high, which leads in certain cases to stress and anxiety among students. The panel understands from the discussions that stress and anxiety among students are not primarily caused by the study load of individual courses, but rather by collateral factors such as a sense of insecurity about their professional future and the curriculum choices they should make to enhance their careers. Moreover, almost all students have to work on the side to pay for their studies, and some commute to Amsterdam because they cannot afford local housing. The panel acknowledges in this respect the important position of the RMA tutor, who is very approachable and valued by the students for his academic guidance and personalised attention.

Staff

According to the staff overview, the RMA programme involves 7 teaching staff members, while another 66 staff are contributing to the programme in the first semester specialisation courses. Altogether, the programme relies on a large, international, and diverse teaching staff with a variety of research specializations. The teaching staff involved in the core courses of the RMA are all members of affiliated research institutes with a solid track record in terms of scholarly publications. Moreover, they have specific cross-disciplinary profiles, as well as theoretical and research practice expertise in a particular field of media studies. The panel was informed that in the most recent external research assessment (conforming to SEP protocol), the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation to which the RMA staff belong was complimented for its interdisciplinary approach and commitment to research excellence. The institute consistently produces high-impact research, which is evidenced by its strong research output, high citation impact, notable grant success, and the broad influence of its academic contributions.

Furthermore, the panel acknowledges that the programme benefits from a strong and well-balanced group of teaching staff, which operates in a vibrant and research-embedded teaching culture. The programme's transdisciplinary breadth, spanning philosophy, political theory, film studies, cultural data, and AI, reflects the diversity and strength of its faculty. Many professors and academic staff members are accomplished researchers with a strong international reputation in their respective fields. They contribute to internationally recognised research initiatives and national research schools ensuring that teaching is

current and theoretically sophisticated. According to the panel, the presence of senior scholars alongside early-career researchers in the RMA programme creates a healthy academic ecosystem, fostering mentorship and continuity.

The Humanities Faculty pays considerable attention to professional development, including assessment. The experts at the Teaching & Learning Centre offer didactic courses, workshops and consultations. They also share expertise and best practices on challenging and engaging curricula, assessment and guidance. The seven core teaching staff all have a university teaching qualification (UTQ), while all staff connected to the RMA programme reportedly make good use of the expert services of the Teaching & Learning Centre.

The RMA programme team meets regularly to ensure that the different staff members are aware of what is covered in the various courses, that there is no overlap between courses and that there is sufficient variety in course assignments. The panel welcomes these structured team meetings and peer reflection moments to ensure alignment between staff research activities and course content. Further to the recommendation of the previous panel, the current panel notes that the workload of the lecturers is monitored and taken into account when appointing teachers for RMA-specific courses.

Students indicated in their written contribution and during the site visit that they are enthusiastic about the wide diversity of staff in terms of their research expertise and their cultural and national backgrounds. They feel that they are taken seriously by the teachers, which creates a dynamic and safe learning environment. In their master thesis, students often express explicit gratitude to their supervisors highlighting their engagement, accessibility and guidance throughout the research process.

In sum, the panel establishes that the staff on the RMA programme is of excellent quality and covers an impressive variety and breadth of topics. It appreciates the commitment of the staff to cooperate with students throughout the two-year programme. In this way, the teaching staff ensures that their academic legacy is passed on to a new generation of researchers.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the foundational building blocks underlying the set-up of the teaching and learning environment are adequate. This appreciation applies to the graduation trajectory, the learning environment, the support services and information provision, and the expertise of the teaching staff.

The panel endorses the English name of the programme, as well as the decision to offer the research master programme in English. Its international dimension and orientation have been evident from the outset in the course contents and is now also visible in the diversity of students and teaching staff.

The panel considers that the programme is embedded in a strong research context, which reinforces its academic orientation and quality. The integration of national research schools and the strong research engagement by teaching staff ensure that students operate in an active research culture. The programme is heavy on research skills and clearly shows the breadth of media studies, as well as its epistemological, cultural, and political value. The graduation trajectory is well designed and demonstrates a clear and rigorous completion of the full academic research cycle. Given that the master thesis constitutes an important deliverable, the programme team may want to adjust the curriculum schedule to reflect not only the adequate size of the thesis, but also the spread of its effective workload.

According to the panel, the programme's educational philosophy reflects the university's vision and the faculty's strategy, while also aligning with the particular demands and features of a research master programme. RMA students have access to a comprehensive system of support, guidance and information facilities at university, faculty and programme level. Because it relies considerably on the coordinating capacity of one person, the RMA programme team may want to design a back-up plan in case of force majeure.

The panel considers that the RMA programme is offered by a highly qualified, internationally recognised and research-active team. Staff invariably have good research expertise and are didactically qualified. Students appreciate the expertise of the staff, their availability and the extensive thesis supervision.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel identified two weaknesses in the teaching and learning environment. First, the proportion of the curriculum components specific to the RMA programme is too small for RMA students and even more so for students transferring to the RMA after one semester of regular master's courses. Second, the selection and admissions process for both regular RMA applicants and so-called transfer students requires transparency, greater procedural rigour, as well as more systematic checks.

According to the panel, it is feasible to remedy these shortcomings within two years through a dedicated repair trajectory in which the programme team should (i) rethink and redesign the RMA programme curriculum, including the current transfer system, to ensure that all RMA students take a sufficient number of RMA-specific courses; and (ii) create an Admissions Board to oversee a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions. The envisaged period of two years should allow the programme team to not only establish new policies and structures, but also test their operationalisation.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme partially meets standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment system

Assessment and testing in the RMA Media Studies follow the Assessment Policy framework of the University of Amsterdam. This policy has four principles: (i) alignment of forms of assessment, learning objectives and exit qualifications; (ii) transparency; (iii) multiple assessment moments; and (iv) assessment quality assurance. The RMA programme has elaborated an assessment matrix to establish the relationship between the exit qualifications of the programme, the learning objectives of each course, and the method of testing.

The panel has studied the assessment policy and notices that the assessment principles are firmly embedded in the day-to-day assessment provisions of the RMA programme. Throughout the curriculum various teaching and assessment formats are used, which enable students to integrate critical, reflexive, creative, argumentative, and data-led approaches into their research projects: these include portfolios of weekly assignments, presentations, take-home exams, argumentative midterms or final essays, empirical research and data projects, research proposals and reports, and the master's thesis. Each course has its own

syllabus featuring both learning objectives and assessment formats. At a minimum, each course features two assessment moments to test intended learning objectives in various ways. Students are informed of the assignments and the assessment criteria in class. The weighted grading criteria for each assessment, as well as the resit procedures are explained either in the syllabus or in separate examination instructions on the Canvas environment well in advance of the assignment. Individual oral or written feedback is given on all graded assignments. For weekly homework or pass/fail assignments, feedback is provided during in-class discussions. The core and specialization courses increasingly use the so-called COPs evaluation scheme, which evaluates papers on Comprehension of the literature, Operationalization of the research question, and (academic) Presentation of the paper.

Students and alumni indicated in the student chapter and/or during the visit that they are overall satisfied with the day-to-day implementation of the assessment framework. Students see a pattern in assessment structures across the different courses in the curriculum. This is much appreciated, as it allows them to anticipate how a study block will be structured: most course lecturers ask students to actively participate in class, prepare a presentation, complete a smaller assignment halfway, and produce an essay at the end of the course. If anything, students would like some teachers to mediate in-class discussions more actively, rather than relying entirely on (assessed) student input.

During the visit, the panel discussed three assessment-related topics. First, the panel wondered how GenAI is addressed in both education and assessment, and learned that the Department of Media Studies has developed strategies to counter unauthorised use of generative AI. Before the start of each semester, the Examinations Board approaches all course coordinators to include a section in their course manuals on fraud and plagiarism and to address it in class. With the increasing use of ChatGPT and other AI tools by students, the programme finds it crucial to clarify in this section and in class how the course handles the use of AI tools, and to make students aware that any unauthorized use will be considered plagiarism. The panel was informed that the programme has an established procedure to follow in case of suspected unauthorized use of generative AI. In addition, course coordinators find relevant information on the website of the university's Teaching and Learning Centre to make their assessments more AI-proof. Finally, the programme team mentioned to the panel that GenAI is becoming an increasingly hot topic in the professional world, as it formed an important item on the agenda of the most recent Sounding Board Group meeting.

Second, the panel discussed the assessment issues RMA students encounter when they participate in courses organised by research schools, notably the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA) and the Research School for Media Studies (RMeS). Contrary to what happens in the regular core and specialisation courses, students feel that the amount of credits rarely aligns with the effort they have to put into these research school workshops and courses. Moreover, it often takes a long time before the students receive their grades and it remains unclear where they have to hand in their grades in order to obtain credits. The panel invites the programme team to look into this matter and inform students on the measures taken.

Third, the panel addressed the programme team's follow-up to four assessment-related recommendations from the previous panel. The panel acknowledges that the team has considered extensively each and every recommendation, and has taken appropriate measures to make the EB more pro-active in monitoring the assessment standards of the programme and in reviewing examinations and theses. The panel furthermore supports the decision of the programme team not to grade the thesis proposal, and to maintain the credit distribution between thesis seminar and conference, and the research master thesis. Similarly, the panel thinks that the programme team is correct not to communicate separately the feedback and grades from individual assessors on the summary evaluation format students receive. The feedback students receive is invariably extensive and insightful, while the individual assessments are archived.

In sum, the panel welcomes the programme's assessment framework which is comprehensive and transparent. The assessment matrix clearly maps exit qualifications to course-level learning objectives and assessment formats, ensuring coherence across the curriculum. The panel appreciates the great variety of assessments and their progressive increase in complexity, which befits the character of a research master's programme. It also complements the department/programme on its solid view on - and effective operationalisation of - the role of AI in education and assessment.

Thesis assessment

In line with the principle of its assessment framework, the RMA programme pays special attention to the assessment of the Research Master Thesis. Faculty-wide Master Thesis Regulations describe the requirements for the final project as well as agreements concerning supervision, assessment, deadline and resit. In addition, the RMA programme features programme-specific guidelines with additional requirements. The guidelines also refer to the assessment form. For the RMA programme, key elements of the thesis assessment are research design and execution, the quality of the write-up, the student's level of independence, and the evidence that students demonstrate an advanced graduate intellectual level. To ensure consistency, the RMA thesis is assessed using an evaluation form prepared by the Examinations Board and completed by the supervisor and the second reader in an agreed order. Every year, the Examinations Board conducts a sample review to ensure the quality and consistency of assessment.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a sample of 15 research master theses and their assessment. While the quality of the master thesis will be addressed in the next standard, the panel found the quality of the thesis assessment very convincing. In almost all cases, the panel agreed on the final score and thought that the evaluation form had been completed in an informative and insightful way. Hence, the overall thesis assessment process is well-structured and effective.

Reflecting on the assessment quality of the reviewed sample, the panel notices that the level of assessment is excellent. The thesis evaluation is rigorous and multi-layered with two independent assessors completing detailed assessment forms, and discrepancies triggering a third review. The use of rubrics, moreover, promotes fairness and comparability. The panel appreciates in particular that the assessment form is targeted explicitly at final projects of research master level, and that the assessment comments are extensive and well argued for.

Quality assurance

Since the previous accreditation, the organisation of the Examinations Board has changed: instead of one dedicated board for all (research) master programmes in the faculty, there is now one faculty-wide Examinations Board. This board consists of a chair, eight internal members and one external member. It is supported by a secretary and an administrative secretariat. Each internal member in turn chairs a cluster board and looks after a number of degree programmes. Each programme delegates one staff member to the EB cluster and advises on programme-specific issues. In terms of assessment quality assurance, the RMA programme under review falls under the EB cluster Media Studies. The changes to the EB structure were accompanied by the establishment in September 2022 of an Assessment Committee (AC). This committee reports to the Examinations Board, consists of assessment specialist across the faculty, and quality checks the assessment materials of individual courses, including a yearly sample of theses.

During the site visit, the panel spoke to several EB members, who indicated that the RMA programme is doing well in terms of assessment quality. The panel notes that the board members are aware of their responsibilities and work closely with the AC. Together they actively monitor standards through random

sampling of theses and course assessments, ensuring integrity and calibration across assessors. Moreover, this cooperation is beneficial for the RMA programme as the EB does not merely perform its supervisory and quality assurance tasks but also supports together with the AC the professionalisation of lecturers and programme directors via training courses and knowledge-sharing meetings. In this way, the EB contributes to fostering a quality culture around assessment in the faculty in general, and the RMA programme in particular. The panel also endorses the composition of the faculty-wide EB and its eight clusters with programme delegates because this ensures both ownership and oversight.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the research master Media Studies relies on a robust assessment system embedded in the faculty's relevant policies and practices. The assessment framework is comprehensive, transparent, and aligns with the assessment policy of the faculty and the learning outcomes of the programme. The programme employs a variety of assessment methods, thereby ensuring broad coverage of the ILOs. The panel appreciates moreover the solid view on the role of AI in education, and how it is integrated in assessment protocols.

The course assessments and the thesis assessment are of good quality. The assessment criteria are clearly communicated in course manuals, and rubrics are standardised across modules. Its sample review of thesis assessment forms demonstrates that, according to the panel, thesis assessment is well structured and rigorously implemented in an insightful way.

Furthermore, the panel thinks highly of the quality assurance system for assessment, which is both comprehensive and effective. The new faculty-wide structure featuring a central Examinations Board, an Assessment Committee and EB clusters with programme delegation is adequate and functions properly.

Finally, the panel commends the programme team for its efforts to consider the assessment-related recommendations of the previous accreditation panel.

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

There are two ways to establish whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved: by reviewing the quality of the final projects and by looking at the professional whereabouts of the alumni after their graduation. The panel has considered both elements in assessing the quality of this research master programme in Media Studies.

Thesis quality

All courses in the RMA programme are designed to contribute to achieving the intended learning outcomes, with all common ILOs covered and assessed in the compulsory components of the curriculum. The two-year programme culminates in a research master thesis, an individual piece of research between 19,000 and 23,000 words where students show their ability to conduct independent academic research. In the thesis,

students investigate topics of their own choice within the broad field of media theory and critical media analysis.

The panel found that in all 15 cases the theses were of sufficient quality. They all reflected a level one can reasonably expect of a research master programme and their overall quality ranged from good to excellent. Hence, it is fair to conclude according to the panel that students who successfully pass the master thesis have effectively achieved the programme learning outcomes.

Reflecting on the quality of the thesis sample, the panel notices that the level is consistently high. Students are ambitious in their design, address topics of significant social relevance, show strong engagement with theoretical frameworks, and exhibit detailed attention to analytical rigour. Most theses are theoretically and conceptually well-founded, clearly written, and organized around socially pertinent themes. In addition, several theses explicitly address issues of positionality, which the panel sees as excellent practice. Finally, the panel confirms that the sample addresses a variety of topics and approaches, as was mentioned and categorised in the programme materials.

According to the self-evaluation report, students should demonstrate through their thesis that they are ready for a PhD project and their research should be publishable in a peer-reviewed journal. According to the panel, most theses indeed display potential for publication as they demonstrate depth and originality. The programme clearly achieves its intended outcomes, producing graduates with strong analytical, methodological, and independent research skills. Topics are well aligned with current research contexts and approaches, contributing well to the knowledge-base. Moreover, the RMA thesis provides tangible evidence of mastery over the full research cycle, from conceptualisation to communication. Without questioning their overall quality, the panel notices that a few theses require additional work before publication and could do with a more precise research question, greater analytical depth, or better articulation of the research design and methodological choices.

Graduate performance

The RMA programme prepares Media Studies students for different positions inside and outside academia. The panel was informed that the competences RMA Media Studies graduates acquire are suited for employment in a variety of professional settings that require research skills (such as formulating a concise research approach, oral and written reporting, etc.) and media expertise (such as handling information complexity in a specific medium as well as across media, engaging creatively and critically with media products, etc.).

The RMA programme keeps track of its alumni through surveys and a closed LinkedIn group. These sources indicate that about 40% of the graduates pursue a PhD trajectory in the Netherlands or abroad. In a later stage, these alumni end up in research and teaching positions at universities in the Netherlands, the surrounding countries, and far beyond. Other graduates find jobs in public institutions (public broadcasters, museums, schools), cultural entities (film and media festivals), private companies or government institutions that require research skills and media expertise.

During the visit, several stakeholders highlighted the programme's effectiveness in preparing RMA students for diverse professional fields and markets. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the yearly Media Studies Career Day, which is not only a networking opportunity for students but also provides insight into the evolving media landscape. The panel notes that career prospects align with effective graduate outcomes: a high PhD continuation rate, and those who seek positions elsewhere end up in jobs commensurate with the level and domain of their studies.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the intended learning outcomes are assessed and demonstrated in a systematic way: students who graduate the research master Media Studies have effectively acquired all intended learning outcomes, while programme graduates find suitable employment at research master level and related to the domain of their study.

The panel considers that the research master thesis constitutes a substantial test of research competence that covers all components of the research cycle and is of value to the academic and scientific discipline. The thesis review demonstrated that graduation projects are invariably of good quality, and that thesis topics are original, creative and well aligned with the broad thematic scope of the programme.

Furthermore, the panel considers that Media Studies graduates display a strong trajectory into both academic and professional research. They find jobs that are commensurate with the domain and the level of their study, and do so in a variety of positions and with a broad range of public, private and non-governmental employers. The number of graduates who eventually pursue a PhD is high.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel judges that the research master's programme Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam meets the NVAO Standards 1 (intended learning outcomes), 3 (assessment), and 4 (achieved learning outcomes). It partially meets Standard 2 (teaching-learning environment). Moreover, the panel establishes that the programme fulfils almost all additional aspects of the assessment framework that apply specifically to the quality of a research master programme. Consequently, the panel's overall assessment of the programme is conditionally positive.

In addition to all positive considerations, the programme's shortcomings concern two domains: (i); the RMA Media Studies should contain a substantially larger proportion of courses that are uniquely designed for its advanced, research-oriented focus; and (ii) the selection and admissions process requires greater transparency, stronger procedural rigour, as well as more systematic and clearly defined quality-control procedures.

To remedy these shortcomings, a repair trajectory is needed. The panel stipulates the following conditions for the RMA programme to be met within two years:

1. To rethink and redesign the RMA programme curriculum to ensure that all RMA students take a sufficient number of RMA-specific courses.
2. To establish a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions, an Admissions Board should be created.

These two conditions cover the establishment of new policies and structures, as well as their effective operationalisation. Hence, at the end of the repair trajectory, the panel will judge the quality of the changes based on the measurements taken and their operational effectiveness. The panel deems it feasible to address these conditions within two years.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

K1. The student has insight into the key research methods in the field of study.

The key research methods concern: methods and approaches in the field of cross-media and television studies, film studies, archival and information studies, new media and digital research and the analyses of the cultural implications of Artificial Intelligence.

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.

K3. The student can situate research results in the context of current developments and limitations of the field of study and takes his/her own position in the current debate.

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.

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.

A5. The student is able to independently identify and develop relevant questions at a level that would be suitable for publication in an academic context.

Judgement

J1. The student can connect to recent scientific practise 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.

J4. The student can use these insights to identify and shape their own potential contributions to the field of study.

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.

C3. The student is able to formulate a concise individual research approach that is embedded in current scientific research conventions.

Learning skills

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

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.

L3. The student can independently give direction to and further develop the acquired knowledge and areas of development identified in L2.

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

The RMA programme begins with students taking the courses of their chosen specializations. The first semester is thus a specialization-focused set of courses involving both specialization-core courses, research seminars, and case studies & research projects.

Film Studies			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Film Theories (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Film Research Seminar I (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Cinema Histories and Cultures (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Film Research Seminar II (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Research Project (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•

Television and Cross-Media Culture			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Infrastructures and Networks (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Aesthetics and Storytelling (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Cross-media Research Seminar I (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Cross-media Research Seminar II (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Case Studies Television and Cross-Media (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•

New Media & Digital Culture			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Digital Research Methods (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>New Media Theories (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Media Theory Seminar (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Digital Research Seminar (12 EC)</i>	•	•	•

Cultural Data & AI			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Critical Perspectives on Data & AI – Concepts (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Critical Perspectives on Data & AI – Methods (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Cultural Data Analysis – Concepts (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Cultural Data Analysis – Methods (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Data Project (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•

Archival and Information Sciences			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>Archives and Archiving (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Digital Curation (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Preservation and Access (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Recordkeeping Informatics (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Case Study Project Archival and Information Studies (6 EC)</i>	•	•	•

• Specialization-core course • Research seminars • Case studies & research projects

Second semester			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>RMA Core Course 1: Media Theory (12 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Tutorials, Electives & Research School courses (6/12 EC)</i>	•	•	•

Third semester			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>RMA Core Course 2: Research Practices in Media Studies</i>	•	•	•
<i>Tutorials, Electives & Research School courses (6/12 EC)</i>	•	•	•

• RMA core course • Tutorials, Electives & Research School courses

Fourth semester			
Courses	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
<i>RMA Thesis (18 EC)</i>	•	•	•
<i>Thesis Seminar & Conference (12 EC)</i>	•	•	

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Thursday 27 November 2025

08:30	09:15	Panel arrival and closed panel meeting
09:30	10:15	Interview programme management
10:15	10:30	Break
10:30	11:15	Interview students and alumni
11:15	11:30	Break
11:30	12:15	Interview teaching staff
12:15	12:30	Break
12:30	13:00	Interview Examinations Board
13:00	14:15	Lunch and closed panel meeting
14:15	14:45	Closing interview programme management
14:45	15:00	Break
15:00	15:45	Development dialogue
15:45	16:45	Closed panel meeting
16:45	17:15	Presentation of the panel's main findings

Appendix 4. Materials

Self-evaluation report Research Master's Programme Media Studies, Graduate School of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, 2025.

Appendices

- Teaching and Examination Regulations 2024-2025 and 2025-2026
- Curriculum overview RMA Media Studies
- Course catalogue
- Overview and CVs of core teaching staff
- Research Review report ILLC 2018-2023
- Thesis regulations
- Thesis assessment form
- Key figures student data – annual report 2024-2025
- Key figures student data - update 2025-2026
- Assessment matrix 2025-2026
- Annual report Examinations Board

Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed 15 graduation works among the 44 master theses which had been successfully submitted in the academic years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025. The sample was representative of the final scores, the examiners involved in thesis supervision, and the three specialisation tracks offered and taken by students in the period under review: Film studies (6), New Media and Digital Culture (6), and Television & Cross-Media Culture (3). It also included six theses of students who eventually graduated cum laude. Information on the thesis review is available from Academion upon request.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN RESEARCH MASTER MEDIA STUDIES

Concerning standard(s): Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

Programme(s): RMA Media Studies (RIO 60832)

Institution: University of Amsterdam

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities

Date of adoption: 31 March 2026

Adopted by: Faculty Board of the Faculty of Humanities

1. Introduction

On 27 November 2025, the Research Master (RMA) Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam was visited by an assessment panel as part of the cluster assessment WO OZM Mediastudies, conducted under the NVAO Assessment Framework (April 2024) and the Specification of Additional Criteria for Research Master's Programmes (2016).

The panel concludes that:

- Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes: **meets the standard**
- Standard 2 – Teaching-learning environment: **partially meets the standard**
- Standard 3 – Student assessment: **meets the standard**
- Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes: **meets the standard**

The overall judgement is **conditionally positive**.

The panel explicitly recognizes the programme's strong humanities-based research profile, its embedding in an active and internationally oriented research culture, the high quality and international reputation of its staff, the coherence and rigor of the graduation trajectory, the robustness of the assessment system, and the consistently strong thesis quality and graduate outcomes.

Within this overall positive evaluation, the panel formulates two conditions for meeting Standard 2:

- To rethink and redesign the RMA programme curriculum to ensure that all RMA students take a sufficient number of RMA-specific courses.
- To establish a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions, including setting up an Admissions Board.

The panel expresses its confidence that these conditions can be met within two years through a dedicated repair trajectory.

This improvement plan describes:

- which improvement points were identified by the panel (Chapter 2);
- which measures are already in place, and which additional measures will be taken to meet the conditions (Chapter 3);
- how the timeline, responsibilities and quality assurance are organized (Appendix 1).

This improvement plan is accompanied by the advice of the Programme Committee (Appendix 2).

2. Points for improvement

2.1 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

Panel judgement: partially meets the standard

Summary of the judgement

The panel establishes that the RMA Media Studies programme has a strong and coherent curriculum embedded in an active and internationally oriented research culture. The programme is delivered by highly qualified and research-active staff. The graduation trajectory is well designed and demonstrates a clear and rigorous completion of the full research cycle. Students benefit from intensive supervision and produce theses of good to excellent quality.

The curriculum consists of 120 EC in total. Of these, 78 EC are specifically positioned at RMA level, including the RMA core courses, research seminars, tutorials, research school courses and the thesis trajectory. The first semester (30 EC) is organized within the one-year and dual master's specialisations. In addition, students complete 12 EC of electives, which are usually taken from the one-year MA programme course offer.

To raise the level of the 30 EC MA-courses in the first semester to an RMA level, RMA students currently follow a differentiated assessment trajectory, involving additional and more demanding assessment requirements at RMA level. Although a substantial part of the total curriculum is clearly research-master oriented, the panel concludes that the proportion of components uniquely designed for the RMA programme is too limited.

In addition, students who transfer into the RMA after completing one semester in a regular master's programme do not complete the enhanced RMA-level assessment. As a result, transfer students may complete fewer RMA-specific assessment elements than regular RMA entrants.

Altogether, the panel concludes that the structure of the first semester and the current transfer system require adjustment. The panel therefore considers a redesign of the curriculum and the transfer system necessary to ensure that all RMA students complete a sufficient and comparable number of RMA-specific courses at research master level.

In addition, the panel concludes that the admissions and selection procedure requires strengthening in terms of procedural robustness and transparency. Although the admission criteria are clear and selective, the process relies heavily on the judgment of just one coordinator and lacks a formally established Admissions Board. The panel considers it necessary to structurally embed the admissions procedure within a robust and transparent framework with multi-headed assessment and systematic documentation.

Below, the panel's observations are summarized in concrete areas for improvement.

Areas for improvement Condition 1: Increase the proportion of RMA-specific curriculum components

- 1.1 Rethink and redesign the RMA curriculum so that all RMA students complete an adequate number of courses uniquely designed for the advanced, research-oriented focus of the programme.
- 1.2 Revise the current transfer system after semester one to ensure that students transferring from the regular master's programme complete a study trajectory comprising a number of RMA-level courses comparable to that of RMA students who start from the first semester.

Areas for improvement Condition 2: Robustness and transparency of the admissions procedure

- 2.1 Establish a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions, including the creation of an Admissions Board consisting of more than one staff member.
- 2.2 Ensure clearly defined procedural steps within the admissions and transfer process.

In this chapter, for each of the areas for improvement, we first summarize the current practice of the RMA Media Studies programme in relation to the curriculum structure and the admissions procedure. Subsequently, for each of the areas for improvement, we propose measures to comply with the conditions formulated by the panel.

3. Plan of action

In this chapter, for each area for improvement, we first summarize the current practice of the RMA Media Studies in relation to the curriculum structure and the admissions procedure. Subsequently, for each of the areas for improvement, we propose measures to comply with the conditions formulated by the panel.

3.1 Area for improvement Condition 1 (Standard 2): Increase the proportion of RMA-specific curriculum components

The RMA Media Studies is a two-year (120 EC) research master's programme with a strong research orientation. A substantial part of the curriculum is already positioned at RMA level, including the RMA core courses, research seminars, tutorials, research school courses and the thesis trajectory. In total, 78 EC are specifically situated at RMA level.

The first semester (30 EC) is organized within the one-year master's specializations. Within this semester, RMA students follow a differentiated assessment trajectory with additional and more demanding assessment requirements at RMA level. Students transferring into the RMA after one semester in a regular master's programme do not complete this enhanced RMA-level assessment. Students additionally complete 12 EC of electives, usually within one-year MA programmes.

To further strengthen alignment with the panel's condition, the programme will take the following measures:

1.1 Rethink and redesign the RMA curriculum so that all RMA students complete an adequate number of courses uniquely designed for the advanced, research-oriented focus of the programme.

- As of academic year 2026–2027, the curriculum will be redesigned so that the proportion of non-RMA-specific components is structurally reduced from 42 EC to a maximum of 24 EC.
- The first 24 EC within the MA specializations will remain unchanged in content and assessment. The remaining 96 EC of the programme will be explicitly structured as RMA-specific components, through the introduction and positioning of courses developed exclusively at research master level. In addition to the existing 78 EC educational components, the programme will add:
 - A dedicated RMA Research Sprint (6 EC) will be introduced in the first semester (Period 3). This course will be exclusively accessible to RMA students and will focus on advanced research design, methodological positioning and theoretical integration at research master level.
 - An RMA Research Seminar (12 EC) will be introduced in the second semester, exclusively for RMA students, aimed at deepening research skills, strengthening transdisciplinary integration and further preparing students for the thesis trajectory. This course comes in the place of the 12 EC elective space at MA-level.
- The revised curriculum will be formally approved by the Programme Committee, the Examinations Board and the Faculty Board and incorporated into the Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER).

1.2 Revise the current transfer system after semester one to ensure that students transferring from the regular master's programme complete a study trajectory comprising a number of RMA-level courses comparable to that of regular RMA students.

- As of academic year 2026–2027, the transfer moment will take place after period 2, i.e. after completion of the first 24 EC within the MA specializations.
- Students who are admitted to the RMA after completion of these 24 EC will subsequently follow the redesigned RMA curriculum and complete the remaining 96 EC that are positioned at research master level.
- The revised transfer procedure will be formally recorded in the programme documentation and communicated clearly to prospective and current students.

Stakeholders: Programme Director, RMA coordinator, Examinations Board, Programme Committee, Faculty Board

3.2 Area for improvement Condition 2 (Standard 2): Robustness and transparency of the admissions procedure

The RMA Media Studies applies selective admission criteria, including prior education in Humanities or Social Sciences with a focus on media studies, a minimum GPA requirement, proof of English proficiency, a motivation form and a writing sample. The programme attracts a competitive applicant pool and maintains rigorous academic standards in its selection process.

At present, the admissions procedure is primarily coordinated by the RMA Coordinator. In line with the panel's condition, the programme will further strengthen procedural rigor, transparency and sustainability by structurally embedding the admissions process within a more robust and clearly defined framework. To this end, the following measures will be implemented:

2.1 Establish a more robust, transparent and sustainable system for selection and admissions, including the creation of an Admissions Board consisting of more than one staff member.

- An Admissions Board will be established, consisting of at least three academic staff members.
- The Admissions Board will assume collective responsibility for the evaluation of all applications, including transfer requests.
- The composition of the Admissions Board will remain the same for the duration of a specific academic year, covering both the September incoming cohort and the Transfer applications submitted in December.
- Applications will be assessed on the basis of predefined admission criteria (prior degree, GPA, English proficiency, motivation and writing sample).
- Decisions on admission, rejection and transfer will be taken collectively and formally recorded.

2.2 Ensure clearly defined procedural steps within the admissions and transfer process.

- Application dossiers will be reviewed by the three members of the Admissions Board.
- Final decisions will be made after a three-way consultation between the Board members.
- The same procedure will apply to both regular admissions and Transfer applications within the academic year.

Stakeholders: Programme Director, RMA Coordinator, MA Coordinators

Appendix 1. Overview of measures and timeline

Appendix 2. Advice from Programme Committee

Appendix 3. Advice from the Examinations Board

Appendix 1. Overview of Measures and Timeline

Standard	Measure	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	Responsible
Standard 2	Redesign of curriculum (maximum 24 EC non-RMA-specific components; 96 EC RMA-specific)	●	✓	✓	Programme Director / RMA Coordinator
Standard 2	Formal positioning of remaining 96 EC as RMA-specific components	●	✓	✓	Programme Director
Standard 2	Transfer students complete remaining 96 EC positioned at research master level		✓	✓	RMA Coordinator
Standard 2	Establishment of Admissions Board	●	✓	✓	Admissions Board
Standard 2	Three-way consultation for final admission and transfer decisions	●	✓	✓	Admissions Board

Legend:

✓ = implemented / structurally in force

● = preparation / implementation phase



To: Thomas Poell
Turfdraagsterpad 1
t.poell@uva.nl

Faculty of Humanities
Programme Committees

Date	Your reference	Our reference
05 February 2026	-	fgw25u
Contact person	Telephone	E-mail
Abe Geil	-	a.m.geil@uva.nl
Subject		
Solicited advice concerning the Improvement Plan RMA Media Studies		

Dear Thomas,

The PC Mediastudies 60+120 advises positively the implementation of the Improvement Plan RMA Media Studies following the request for advice from the OPD dated 29-01-2026. The plan was circulated among the PC members for discussion from 29-01-2026 to 05-02-2026. Additionally, the PC chair participated in a detailed discussion of the plan during a meeting with the department chair, OPD, and programme coordinator on 21-01-2026.

The PC finds that the plan maintains and even strengthens the educational integrity of the RMA while addressing the two problem areas identified by the reaccreditation panel concerning the NAVO Standard 2 (teaching-learning environment). In addition to the positive assessment of the PC as a whole, it is noteworthy that the student representative for the RMA provided careful consideration of the plan from the perspective of a second-year student who also had the experience of transferring from an MA programme. With respect to the planned changes that address the proportion of RMA-specific courses ("Problem 1" in the plan) in particular, he was especially enthusiastic about the introduction of a new 12 ECTS Research Seminar to run in parallel with CC1. In addition to adding meaningful content to the RMA curriculum, the PC believes that the Research Seminar can also serve to further strengthen the bridge between CC1 and CC2. Likewise the addition of the Research Sprint (6 ECTS) in S1B3 offers a productive way for students to enter into official RMA-level course work earlier in their trajectory. The RMA student representative noted that the consequent shift of the transfer period to mid-December would enable prospective transfer students to better plan their degree.

The PC is also in agreement with the measures in response to issues with the composition of the Admission Board ("Problem 2" in the plan). As noted in the plan, the PC finds it important that the procedure for appointing the two rotating MA coordinators serving on

the board ensures transparent representation across the specializations (within staffing constraints).

The PC Media Studies 60+120 would be happy to explain this advice in more detail if desired. We look forward to providing feedback on the specific designs of the new RMA courses as they are developed in the coming year.

With kind regards,



Abe Geil (Chair)

PC Mediastudies 60+120



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM
Faculty of Humanities

University of Amsterdam
Faculty of Humanities
Examinations Board

University of Amsterdam
t.a.v. Thomas Poell, Sudeep Dasgupta, and Misha Kavka
Turfdraagsterpad 1
1012 XT Amsterdam

Date
11 February 2026

Contact person
Jacob Engelberg

Email
j.f.engelberg@uva.nl

Subject
Improvement Plan for the RMA Media Studies

Dear Thomas, Sudeep, and Misha,

Following the request for advice regarding the Improvement Plan for the RMA Media Studies, this plan was shared with the Chair of the Faculty of Humanities Examinations Board, the Chair of the Media Studies Examinations Board, and the Examinations Board Delegate for the Media Studies Research Master's.

We find that the proposed improvement plan responds directly to the feedback from the reaccreditation panel, providing workable solutions to the issues identified around the proportionality of RMA-specific courses and the expansion of the Admissions Board. We suggest that any course manuals pertaining to new RMA-specific courses are sent to the Media Studies Examinations Board for approval prior to publication for our approval. Otherwise, we have no further suggestions.

Overall, we find that the conditions set by the reaccreditation panel have been met and are happy to approve the Improvement Plan.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Jacob Engelberg (Chair of the Media Studies Examinations Board)
Dr. Mark Heerink (Chair of the Faculty of Humanities Examinations Board)
Dr. Bernhard Rieder (Delegate to the Media Studies Examinations Board)