

Title

Board of Education Annual Report 2022/2023



ANNUAL REPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION 2022/2023

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Preface

The goal of this annual report is to inform the Wageningen University & Research Executive Board about the Board of Education's activities within the policy framework set by the Executive Board.

The Board of Education (BoE) is responsible for content, quality and innovation in Wageningen University's Bachelor's and Master's programmes, accredited by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), with the exception of the Joint Degree programmes. The Board of Education also provides the Executive Board with advice on a number of specific educational matters.

The Board of Education has the following tasks and responsibilities (*source: BBR 2021, Article 23*):

- annually establish or modify the educational content of the degree programmes in response to proposals from the relevant programme committees;
- create quality standards for the education programmes;
- regularly assess the degree programmes' educational content based on the established quality standards;
- adopt plans to innovate the degree programmes;
- establish the budget for the degree programmes;
- consult with the programme committees when recommendations from the programme committees are requested (*specified in Article 28.1 of the BBR 2021*);
- inform the Executive Board of final decisions.

Furthermore, the Board of Education provides the Executive Board with advice regarding:

- a. the establishment and discontinuation of degree programmes;
- b. the educational frameworks;
- c. general education issues and strategies;
- d. the establishment, modification and assessment of the Education and Examination Regulations;
- e. the establishment, extension and discontinuation of chairs.

This annual report concerns the core activities of the Board of Education in the 2022–2023 academic year. Some selected topics are also reported on.

On behalf of the Board of Education,

Prof. Arnold Bregt, Dean of Education and Chair of the Board of Education
Carlijn Braam MA, Secretary of the Board of Education
Pim van Hengel, Secretary of the Board of Education

Executive Summary

This annual report covers the 2022–2023 academic year of the Board of Education (BoE) and provides an overview of the key developments and decisions. Chapter 2 reports the main results of the various education evaluations that took place as part of Wageningen University's quality assurance system. Chapter 3 describes the main outcomes and decisions made by the Board of Education concerning modifications to programmes and courses in 2023–2024 (the Education Modification Cycle). Chapter 4 highlights the most important topics on the BoE agenda in relation to the quality of education, as well as the collaboration of the BoE with Programme Committees, Examining Boards and Science Groups. In the Appendix, 5.1, the composition of the Board of Education is described.

In general, the Board of Education concludes that the quality of education at WUR in the 2022–2023 academic year was good and consistent. The BoE has carefully monitored the quality of education in collaboration with Programme Committees, Examining Boards, Programme Directors, Education & Student Affairs (ESA) staff and the Science Groups' general directors.

During this academic year, attention was given to various topics, including the implementation of the current educational vision (e.g. the BSc skills), the introduction of a new assessment policy, adjustments in the annual budget cycle, the quality and assessment of internships and theses, decolonisation of WU education, the introduction of the BSc programme in Marine Sciences, and the preparation of a BSc programme in Data Science related to Life Sciences. How to deal with new techniques in artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT) in higher education was also discussed.

One of the Board of Education's main responsibilities is the internal quality assurance system. In 2022–2023, the quality assurance system, including its various monitoring programmes, was in place and functioned well. Another of the Board of Education's main responsibilities is the annual approval of educational modifications to the NVAO accredited programmes (the Education Modification Cycle (EMC)). At the end of March 2023, the Board of Education decided on the proposals for study programmes for the 2023–2024 academic year, including programme budgets, changes to BSc minors, elective courses, Supply Initiated Programme (SIP) courses, Code 4 courses, field trips, and data science education. The budget has been allocated to programmes within the available budget space. All study programmes were updated conform with the education framework criteria.

In addition to further implementing the current educational vision, the BoE will also participate in shaping a new educational vision for the 2023-2024 academic year. The BoE will continue to focus on clarifying the division of roles and responsibilities between the programme directors, programme committees, and the BoE within the educational governance system of Wageningen University.

Additionally, the refinement of the budget cycle and adjustments to the Brascamp model will be addressed.

1. Meetings

In the Academic Year 2022–2023 the Board of Education had 24 meetings. Two monthly meetings were held between September 2022 and August 2023. Eleven of these were general meetings to discuss and approve educational policy, educational quality topics, the progress of several working groups and overall strategic developments.

Three meetings were entirely devoted to the EMC. The last of those three gave Programme Committees (PCs) a chance to discuss the proposed budgets with the BoE.

Representatives from the 25 PCs were consulted separately, and relevant topics were discussed with them. About three PCs per meeting, eight meetings in total.

The BoE continued to use a tailor-made agenda for the BoE-PC meetings. Preparatory meetings with two BoE members and a delegation of the PC are central to this approach. Prior to the PC-meetings student members of the BoE also have an informal lunch meeting with PC-members. Both the Board of Education and the Programme Committees were able to put items on the agenda; there was no veto on topics.

This year, two lunch meetings with the BoE, PCs and Education & Student Affairs(ESA) were organised. These meetings were arranged owing to the need to have a greater level of exchange with each other.

In October 2022 one of the topics was Post Corona Education. Several aspects of Learning Skills were discussed in May 2023.



2. Quality Assurance

2.1 National Student Survey (NSE) 2023

The response rate of WUR-students in 2023 was slightly lower than previous year(s). The questionnaire was filled out by 4366 students (33% compared to 34% in 2022).

Also in 2023 WU students are generally satisfied about their education: 82.2% of the students indicate they would choose the same programme again based on their experiences so far (=ultimate question) and average scores on general satisfaction (4.16) and atmosphere of the programme (4.38) are above national average of Dutch universities and have increased compared to 2022 (mainly among MSc students). Average agreement with the ultimate question slightly decreased (among BSc students).

Like previous years, WU-average scores of the 6 themes in the core questionnaire are higher than the national average of Dutch universities. WU-average scores of 4 variable themes are also higher than the average of universities in the variable benchmarks. The biggest difference is measured on the theme International aspects. For the other two variable question blocks there is no (good) variable benchmark available.

The least evaluated theme remains 'connection to professional career', followed by the theme 'reflection' (on a scale from never (1) to always (5)). This was also the case in previous year(s). For connection to professional career it is also the case for the national average. WU-average theme scores are still above the national/variable average of Dutch universities.

Noteworthy positive developments include (but are not limited to) students' evaluations of study facilities, curriculum flexibility (mainly among MSc students), opportunities to do an internship abroad (mainly among MSc students) and equal treatment and safe climate. In addition, decreased evaluations of last year (mainly among MSc students, possibly as an aftermath of online education during Covid times), did not continue or were reversed in 2023 among MSc students; concerning (reduced) study pressure and items related to engagement and contact.

Noteworthy aspects for which evaluations decreased in 2023 include (but are not limited to) several items related to 'Content and organization of teaching' and 'Teachers'. The decrease is especially visible among BSc students and also across the national average of universities. While evaluations of these aspects are still high (and no programmes have average scores below 3.0 on these aspects), it is important to monitor whether students' evaluation of these aspects do not decrease further.

Every programme committee and programme director received a factsheet with the evaluation results of their programmes. The results serve as input for the annual PC visit to the Board of Education.

2.2 Education monitor 2023/2024

The Education Monitor provides a quantitative report on the number of enrolled students, developments regarding study success in the BSc and MSc programmes, and drop-out rates at Wageningen University.

Regarding the BSc, there was a 6% increase in first-year BSc students in 2023 compared to 2022 (based on the numbers as of the cut-off date of October 1st). In 2023, a new (international) BSc programme started with 90 first-year BSc students, significantly contributing to the increase in BSc enrolment.

The first-year enrolment of Dutch BSc students increased from 1235 to 1310, while the enrolment of EEA-students declined very slightly from 96 to 93, and non-EEA enrolment increased from 57 to 74. With regard to the MSc, the number of first-year students also increased by 6%. An increase is observed for Dutch, EEA and non-EEA students.

Concerning the success rates, it can be observed that for BSc students from cohort 2020, the success rate after the nominal three-year period, remained more or less stable at 26% compared to the 2019 cohort. However, this success rate is lower for cohorts prior to 2019. For students from the cohorts 2019 and 2020, it is expected that there still is a (delayed) corona effect. The one-year dropout rate in the BSc for the 2022 cohort remained relatively stable at 13%, but overall, the dropout rate in the first year increased from 9% in 2015 to 13% in 2022.

The two-year success rates for the MSc, within the nominal period, for the cohorts from 2015 to 2021, fluctuate between 32% and 20%. Notably, the success rate for the 2018 cohort after two years was unusually low at 21%. This can be explained by delays in the thesis and internship caused by the corona-outbreak. The most recent cohorts (2020 and 2021) also exhibit similarly low success rates after two years (respectively 21% and 20%). The BoE will attempt to try to uncover the causes.

2.3 Student evaluation of lectured courses 2022/2023

Based on the management report of the results of the student evaluations of lectured courses in 2022–2023 the Board of Education concluded that the perceived overall quality of the courses remained good. The average satisfaction of students across 1,086 evaluated courses was 3.9 on a scale of 1–5. Average student evaluations of the aspects related to course quality, student effort and examination quality also remained good. In 2022-2023 there was a rise in the number of courses with an attention point on ‘the level of the course was too low’, after which the Board of Education requested programme directors to reflect on the level of (a selection of) these courses.

2.4 Student evaluation of MSc thesis courses 2022/2023

Based on the outcomes of the student evaluations of MSc theses in 2022-2023, the Board of Education concluded that the perceived quality of the MSc thesis courses is generally good. Overall satisfaction with the organization of the thesis process at Wageningen University remained good (with an average score of 7.6 on a scale from 1 to 10), and 89% of the responding students confirm that the atmosphere at the chair group is comfortable.

Average evaluations of the more specific aspects of the thesis (the start, supervision, thesis ring, assessment and facilities) were also positive. A point of attention remained the high reported delay to complete the thesis, although for a large majority of respondents the reported delay was less than 2 months. As of 2021, delays longer than 2 months are no longer allowed according to the EER. Based on the evaluation results the BoE requested additional insights to determine potential enhancement measures on structural, undesired and unexpected delay. An analysis will therefore be made of registered delays in 2023/2024 in OSIRIS (first year with usable data in OSIRIS).

2.5 Student evaluation MSc internship courses 2022/2023

Based on the outcomes of the student evaluations of MSc internships in 2022-2023, the Board of Education concluded that the perceived quality of the MSc internships is generally good. Overall satisfaction with the organization of the internship process at Wageningen University was good (with an average score of 7.2 on a scale from 1 to 10). Students also valued the experience gained (4.4) and the alignment of the internship with their study programme (4.1 on a scale from 1 to 5). Evaluations of the more specific aspects of the internship were also positive and stable. Potential points of attention remain some aspects related to the start and orientation of the internship and the number of contact moments between the WU and host supervisor. The BoE thinks that most issues will be solved once the updated course guide is available. The internship course guide should be available on the chair group websites as well.

2.6 BSc first year student evaluation 2022/2023

While students’ general assessment of the first-year of their BSc programme in 2022-2023 remains good, the response rate was too low to draw general conclusions on how students perceived their education of the first year of the BSc programmes. The working group Evaluation of Education is

currently implementing a mix of response enhancement measures and it will be interesting to see how these will impact response rates (of all educational evaluations at WU) in the future, although a large increase is not expected considering the declining response rates across Dutch universities and universities of applied sciences. The working group is also developing a new 'landing at WU' survey, which will replace the current BSc first year evaluation as of 2024/2025.



2.7 National Alumni Survey (NAE) 2022

The National Alumni Survey (NAE) is a survey among recent MSc graduates of Dutch universities (alumni) who obtained their degree 1-2 years ago. The NAE gives information about recent MSc graduates about the quality of education, the transition to the labour market and the current labour market situation.

The NAE 2022 is about the cohort of graduates in 2020/2021. This cohort contains students who graduated during the corona-outbreak. Two Dutch universities participated in the NAE 2022. This summary does not include a comparison at the national level, which will be done next year when all Dutch universities participate again.

The unemployment rate for the most recent graduating cohort is lower than for the previous graduating cohorts. For the 2020/2021 graduating cohort, 3% are part of the unemployed workforce, whereas for the five preceding graduating cohorts, this percentage ranged between 6% and 8%.

2.8 External quality assurance

The BoE was informed about the plans and status of the transfer to a new system with Institutional Accreditation. A start was made to explore the implications of the proposed system for Wageningen University.

2.9 Improvements regarding policy and implementation of Double Degree programmes

In the 2022-2023 period, several developments occurred regarding existing and new international double degrees. The double degree programmes were incorporated into the EMC and the list of MSc programmes on the WU website. Regular quarterly meetings were held with various internal stakeholders to share information and best practices.

Progress was made on specific programmes. Contracts were finalized for cooperation with SLU (Sweden) for the BSc Forest and Nature Management, aiming to start a double degree programme in 2024-2025. Unfortunately, funding applications for the European Masters Animal Breeding and Genetics (EMABG) and Information and Communication Technologies for Development were not granted through the Erasmus Mundus Joint programmes.

Negotiations began for WU to join EnvEuro (Environmental Science, Soil, Water and biodiversity), related to the MSc Earth and Environment, with an intended start in 2025-2026. Additionally, WU agreed to join the MSc European Forestry (EF) consortium, planning to submit an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes proposal in 2024.

2.10 Advice on the draft Education and Examination Regulations (EER) 2023–2024

In the period December-February (2022–2023), the Board of Education discussed the EER 2023–2024 drafts on two occasions and provided feedback to ESA and the Executive Board. This year programme directors and the MT of ESA were asked for desired changes in the EER first.

Programme Committees and the Student Council were requested to provide feedback and approval to relevant parts of the EER as well.

The most important change in the EER 2023/2024 is the implementation of WU's new resit policy. From the academic year 2023-2024 onwards, students have one instead of two resit opportunities per course per year. All resits are scheduled in one of the three resit periods (February, May, or July). Furthermore, adjustments have been made regarding the assessment of the MSc internship, thesis, and research practice.

2.11 Top ten priorities of third accreditation cycle

Based on the recommendations of the external panels who reviewed the degree programmes for their accreditation in 2018 and 2019, a top 10 priorities of topics to enhance or develop at university wide level was selected in 2019. Progress is being made at all 10 priorities (e.g. enhancement of thesis, internship, Examining Boards, workload of lecturers, and assessment methods). In November 2023 a final update was provided. After the programme visits in 2024 and January 2025 a new list of WU-wide priorities to improve education at Wageningen University will be made.



2.12 Peer review

In the academic year 2020/2021, the Board of Education decided that all courses should be peer reviewed. Peer reviews are organised and paid for per calendar year. In the year 2022 144 courses (individual courses and sets of courses) were being peer reviewed by both internal and external peers, funded with budget from the Quality Agreements (total k€ 288).

2.13 Overall conclusion

The BoE concludes that the internal quality assurance system and its monitoring programmes are in place and work well. Signals regarding quality issues are addressed by Programme Committees and programme directors and, in general, the quality of education at WUR is good.

3. Education Modification Cycle 2023–2024

3.1 Study programmes

On March 28 the BoE decided on the proposals for the 2023–2024 study programmes, during an extra meeting dedicated to the Education Modification Cycle (EMC).

Every study programme met the criteria of the education framework and was approved. The BoE was pleased to see that the Programme Committees took the opportunity to update and improve their programmes.

3.2 Budget 2023–2024

The Executive Board (EB) set the budget for the 2023–2024 EMC at M€ 65.5, based on a predicted inflow of 1,400 BSc students (including 50 students in the new BSc Marine Sciences) and 2,725 MSc students, including 60 students in the Distance Learning specialisations.

This amount is broken down at certain points:

- M€ 1.2 is set aside for minors (as by prior decision making);
- k€ 253 is set aside for the MWT programme;
- k€ 101 is set aside for correcting possible miscalculations in the BMS and MDS programmes, to be allocated by the Dean of Education;

This results in M€ 64.0 for the BSc- and MSc-programmes including the Distance Learning programmes.

For the second year both the EB and Social Sciences Group provide, together an extra budget of k€ 200 for the transformation of the MSc Management, Economics and Consumer studies (MME) into five separate specialisations.

The Teaching Methods for Funding (TMF) have been adjusted to reflect the Executive Board's decision to reduce the number of interim examinations from 3 down to 2 annually. This is in line with the idea that through the Brascamp funding methods, the actual teaching effort is funded. To mitigate the budget reduction that was set for 2023/24, 75% of the savings were used to fill this gap, with which the cancellation of approximately 40 courses was avoided.

The BoE decided to create a strategic BoE-policy budget to assign extra budget to some programmes that need to make essential modifications. For 2023/24, this has been set at €150,000, which has already been subtracted, prior to entering initial budgets in the EMC tool.

3.3 Changes in BSc minors

During the EMC meeting in March 2023, proposed changes to the minors offered at Wageningen University were discussed and approved.

- One minor was cancelled: 'BSc Minor Healthy Aging in Humans and Model Species'. It expired in September 2023 and was not resubmitted.
- Seventeen minors were changed in its composition. These include changes from compulsory to restricted optional courses (and v.v.). Also, courses were replaced because they no longer fit into the schedule or other were found/developed that fit better into the minor.
- Two new and three resubmitted minors will start in 2023-2024 and one thematic minor will be changed to a programme minor.

3.4 Elective courses

Chair groups can submit proposals to the BoE for 'partly financed elective courses'. Of these, only the student-dependent part is financed if the courses meet the criteria for partially funded courses, determined by the BoE. These elective courses are not part of any programme or minor and can be used by students to shape their studies. The Board of Education decided to accept 10 new elective

courses, and 10 courses were cancelled. In total, 3 of the 10 discontinued courses will continue in a different form/setting. Next to that, 1 course will continue as a PhD course.

3.5 Supply Initiated Programme courses

Wageningen University has received Van Rijn and Sectorplan funds to increase the educational capacity of beta and technical degree programmes. These funds are to be used to appoint additional staff in chair groups, increase educational capacity and reduce the workload of current staff. Chair groups also have the opportunity to develop new courses with the remaining resources: the ‘Supply Initiated Programme courses’ (SIP courses).

These SIP courses have been developed in consultation with a Programme Committee as part of the regular EMC procedures since 2020–2021. They can be mandatory or restricted but must be part of the programme as code 3 (in depth) or code 4 (MSc advanced course) courses. Chair groups have to offer the new courses for at least three years.

In the 2023–2024 EMC, the BoE accepted eight new proposals to be included in the programmes: seven new courses and one existing partly financed code 5 course to be recoded. Furthermore, two existing SIP course have been recoded to code 4 courses as part of the code 4 pilot.

3.6 Field trips

Each year, the Executive Board sets the budget for field trips as part of the budgetary cycle. In 2022 a total of EUR 1,242,891 was allocated from the budget, resulting in an EUR 174,747 surplus. 135 courses applied for funds from the budget field trips.

For 2023, the Executive Board was asked to reserve EUR 1,457,000, anticipating a further resuming of field trips after the COVID pandemic. The proposed allocation is contingent on the condition that the new Study Handbook includes fieldtrips in the teaching methods.

3.7 Overall conclusion

The BoE concludes that all study programmes were updated and meet the set criteria of the education framework. In the 2023–2024 Education Modification Cycle, the allocation of budget to programmes by the BoE has been done within the available budget space, including minors, free choice and SIP courses, field trips and a new BSc programme Marine Sciences.



4. Selected other topics from 2022-2023

4.1 Thesis and internships

Evaluation report MSc thesis, Internships and Research Practice

In June 2022, the BoE discussed this report. For two aspects, the BoE established working groups:

1. Clarification of the Professional Internship

There is a lack of clarity regarding its content, the desired level, and the assessment process. To address these issues, the BoE formed a working group. The terms of reference for this group were approved in November 2022. An update was presented to the BoE in July 2023.

During the research, it quickly became evident that there is no clear distinction between a research internship and a professional internship. Therefore, it has been suggested to consolidate them into a single type: the academic internship. This new approach should be developed with carefully crafted learning objectives, agreements, and an assessment procedure, all of which should be finalised by autumn 2023.

2. Guidelines for thesis supervisors

A widely recognised need for guidelines for thesis supervisors emerged. In March 2023, the draft version of these guidelines was presented to the BoE. The BoE approved the guidelines and advised that they be widely distributed among the staff. Managing delays will require careful communication with thesis supervisors, as an overly formal approach could quickly lead to resistance.

Quality assurance BSc theses

While the Examining Boards are responsible for guaranteeing the quality of bachelor's theses, one of the tasks of the Board of Education (BoE) is to regularly assess the educational content of degree programmes based on established quality standards. Following several indicators, including feedback from a visitation panel that found over 10% of the theses were marked too high, the BoE discussed how to ensure the quality of BSc theses. A working group, *Quality Assessment of BSc Theses*, was established after the February 2023 meeting. This group is tasked with further exploring the specific issues and identifying the most appropriate solutions.

In the April meeting, the terms of reference (TOR) for this working group were presented. The group identified two phases: an inventory phase and a proposal phase. The inventory phase was expected to be completed by the summer of 2023. The BoE advised conducting an inventory of the learning outcomes of the BSc theses to understand their nature and reflect on these in the context of the overall learning outcomes of the study programmes.

Internship contract problems

There is a UNL internship contract that is endorsed by WUR. However, some companies and governmental organisations insist on using their own internship contracts and refuse to work with the UNL version. This causes delays for students, as the alternative contracts must be reviewed by Corporate Governance & Legal Services (CGLS).

At the May meeting, three scenarios were presented to the BoE, all of which preferred the use of the UNL contract. The scenarios varied in how to handle the alternative contracts, and the extent of input required from CGLS. Unfortunately, it is not possible to enforce strict requirements in this matter, but the BoE strongly encourages adhering to the UNL contract whenever possible.

4.2 Implementation of BSc Skills Learning Trajectories

The implementation of skills-related learning pathways in all Bachelor's programmes is a key ambition of the WUR Vision for Education. Since 2020, a process supervisor and support team have been in place to facilitate this implementation.

In October 2022, the working group on longitudinal courses presented their report. A longitudinal course may be well-suited to certain skills; however, incorporating such a course into the current educational framework remains challenging.

In November, discussions took place on how to better facilitate the implementation of BSc skills. There are variations across programmes in how skills are integrated. It was agreed that skills would become a regular discussion point during Programme Committee (PC) visits, and that materials and staff training would be developed accordingly.

In January, the Programme Director (PD) of the BSc Biology programme visited the BoE to explore the possibility of turning their Skills portfolio setup into a 0-ECTS course that could still receive funding via Brascamp. The BoE supported this proposal.

Over the course of the year, more BSc programmes have been implementing and refining their skills learning trajectories. In July 2023, the Skills Coordinator met with the BoE to share the different approaches used across the field, which were narrowed down to three scenarios, varying by the degree of integration within regular courses. Discussions also covered funding and tools. The BoE expressed a desire to remain involved, as it is their responsibility to ensure that skills are implemented across all BSc programmes.

4.3 New approach to allocate budgets

One of the Board of Education's main tasks is to allocate budgets to the degree programmes. In May 2020, the Board of Education installed the Budget model working group to develop a simple and effective model. After intensive discussions with the Board of Education, the sounding board and programme directors, it was concluded that no single model could cover the large differences in quality needs between the programmes. First, the model needs to be accompanied by additional information to ensure fair and responsible budget decisions. Second, the budget model should support the Board of Education in deciding on the programme budgets as opposed to simply dictating decisions. Finally, budgets should increase or decrease gradually in order to avoid affecting programme quality.

Following on from these discussions, the Budget model working group developed a new approach and provided programme characteristics to interpret current programme costs. In addition, the working group developed an annual cycle that enables the Board of Education to make well-considered choices and alter budgets gradually while guaranteeing quality education. The new approach implies a significant change for everyone involved in budget distribution, especially the Board of Education. In future, it will play a more substantive and prominent role in balancing interests and allocating programme budgets fairly and responsibly. The Board of Education approved the final report in December 2022.

In the Academic Year 2022-2023 this way of working was first applied for the budget distribution of year 2024-2025.

4.4 New BSc programmes

BSc Marine Sciences

In January 2022, the BoE provided advice on the macro efficiency application for the new Marine Sciences Bachelor's programme. They support this new programme's focus on an interdisciplinary approach to the marine and coastal system; this is necessary from a policy perspective and is scientifically innovative too. Since the macro-efficiency application was approved by the CDHO, the programme has also passed the "Toetsing Nieuwe Opleiding" (TNO, review of the new study programme) by the NVAO this year. Therefore, the new BSc programme will start in September 2023.

BSc Data Science for Life Sciences

WUR has begun preparing a macro-efficiency application for a new bachelor's programme, Data Science for Life Sciences (working title). The intended start date of the programme is September 2025. With this new bachelor's programme, WUR aims to contribute, among other things, to the recommendations outlined in the recently published LANDSCAPE report (April 2023). In June, the working group briefed the BoE on the status of the design and preparation of the new programme.

4.5 Evaluation of education

In 2021/2022, the Board of Education installed the Evaluation of Education II project group. The main tasks were to review the BSc-first-year evaluation and the MSc graduates evaluation and explore how to enhance the response rate for the PaCE (course) evaluations. During the July meeting they presented their advice on a mix of response enhancement measures and the renewal of the MSc graduates evaluation.

The BoE agrees with the working group that it is difficult to gauge labour market preparation. The proposed measures to increase response rates are supported, but it remains challenging. The project group will implement the proposed measures in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.



4.6 ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence-tools

In the beginning of 2023 AI methods that support high-cognitive tasks such as data analysis have become increasingly available. Particularly, those that produce and analyse text based on large language models can be powerful tools for all kinds of purposes, offering exciting new possibilities for research and education at WUR.

A small working group prepared an advice for the Dean of Education and the rector, recommending a number of short-term steps to adjust educational assessments and provide support for teachers and students. In the long term, they suggested developing ideas on how to incorporate these developments into our education.

This was discussed with the BoE in April 2023. The BoE agreed with the proactive approach proposed to embrace developments in AI but also emphasised the necessity of learning to be critical of outputs generated by AI methods. Furthermore, the BoE stressed the importance of not only communicating advice on assessment but also on how teachers and students can employ and use AI methods.

4.7 Decolonisation

In July 2022, the Board of Education discussed the subject of decolonisation of the WUR study programmes. The Board of Education called upon the Executive Board to support the need to decolonise WUR education; students need to learn about the diversity of knowledge and values.

The EB provided k€ 25 for a pilot. Because the programmes International Land and Water Management (BIL/MIL) and International development (BIN/MID/MDR) already were working on this issue they were asked to write a project plan for the spending of these funds which was presented in March 2023 to the BoE.

These plans included the creation of an online Knowledge Base for sharing resources WUR-wide and the organisation of a conference. The BoE emphasized the need to consider creating an online hub, as there is a clear demand for a platform where people can connect. Regardless of whether the hub is online, it is crucial to provide information, raise awareness, and build a community. Linking with the library and publishing examples of methods and tools in the hub would be beneficial, especially since many teachers and others are interested in decolonising education at WUR but don't know where to begin.

4.8 New assessment policy

In March, the BoE approved a new assessment policy to replace the one from 2017. The primary goal is to enhance learning through various assessment-related ambitions. These ambitions are based on ongoing developments at Wageningen University and beyond, supported by relevant literature and practical examples.

The ambitions include:

- Strengthening formative assessments to guide students in their learning process.
- Conducting assessments in more realistic and less standardised settings.
- Conducting assessments in the context of longitudinal development.
- Using digital resources to enhance students' learning experiences during assessments.
- Making assessment an integral part of the educational vision and ensuring it reflects any changes in education delivery.

These ambitions aim to create a more flexible, relevant, and supportive assessment system that aligns with current educational trends and technology. After the EB also approved the new policy, examining became one of the priority areas in the April 2023 innovation call.

4.9 Longitudinal courses

In October 2022 the working group Longitudinal courses presented to the BoE a report on the potential added value of longitudinal courses in degree programmes. A longitudinal course is one way of giving shape to a continuous learning trajectory, with the latter being a didactic model and the former a way of organising such a trajectory in the form of a course running parallel to other courses, over an extended period of time. Four scenarios were presented for a longitudinal course of 3, 5, 5 or 10 credits, including an impact analysis for each scenario. Of the ten recommendations given, the BoE agreed to nine. However, the complications that come with implementation were deemed so disruptive, that further elaboration was thought necessary. This will be the task of a new working group, starting September 2024.

4.10 Education Post Corona

Between March 2020 and February 2022, the possibilities for education at WUR were highly limited by the restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The restrictions caused many adjustments in the educational setup, with regularly changing regulations and conditions. Education became far more blended, teachers used new tools and didactics, and students developed new expectations and wishes.

In January 2021, Education & Student Affairs installed a working group to gain insight into how the lessons learned from the Corona period can add value to the quality of our education. The working group inventoried the broadly supported, broadly criticized, and controversial changes. The controversial changes were discussed during the bi-annual meeting on 11 October 2022 with the members of the Board of Education and around 60 members of the Programme Committees. The polls and discussions confirmed that there is no consensus on the extent to which students should be able to determine their own blend and whether WUR should invest in hybrid education. The working group therefore concluded that the new Vision for Education should contain an aim and comprehensive concept for the long-term future of university teaching.



4.11 Interaction with Programme Committees

Every year, the BoE asks Programme Committees to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their programme(s) and to identify the most urgent issues for improvement. As of 2020, the Programme Committees and Programme Directors have created an annual report and annual plan, which are discussed in the annual meetings between the Programme Committees and the BoE. The annual reports provide a good overview of activities and insights into future plans and ambitions. The annual report/plans have been appreciated by the panels in recent external accreditations of programmes as well.

The BoE has organised biannual thematic meetings since 2021. These meetings involve all PCs and focus on sharing information and inspiring one another about topics that are relevant for both the BoE and the PCs.

During the meeting in October 2022, two topics were discussed:

1. In April 2022 the Executive Board received a letter from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science about extra resources for employee and student participation. Until 2025, all higher education institutions will receive additional resources to further strengthen employee and student participation. During this meeting the possible use of these additional resources were investigated in order to boost employee and student participation will be discussed.

With the additional funding from the Ministry to strengthen the role of the Programme

Committees, it was decided to appoint an executive secretary (starting per academic year 23/24). This secretary will help the PC's and play an important role in communication matters, coordination and advising and coaching the PCs in their role as participation bodies.

2. Education Post Corona was the other topic. See the relevant chapter on that topic for more information.

In May 2023 implementation of skills in WU education was the topic. Considerable progress has already been made in implementing skills education within most BSc programmes. In five different workshops, many examples and good practices were discussed that participants could use to inform their ideas and plans for incorporating skills into both BSc and MSc programmes. Topics included how to develop and implement these skills into the curriculum, the didactical approaches used, and the focus on 'responsibility' skills.

4.12 Meeting with the chairs of the Examining Boards

In February 2023, the BoE and the chairs of the four Examining Boards had an exchange meeting to discuss the annual report and other relevant topics.

One of the items on the agenda was the effect of ChatGPT/AI on the examination of theses and take-home exams. The assessment of internships, the proportion of multiple-choice questions within an exam and the unrest at the beginning of BYOD exams were also discussed.

4.13 Meeting with the directors of the Science Groups

Since the last academic year (21/22), an annual meeting has been established between the directors of the Science Groups and the Board of Education to share information and discuss current topics.

The agenda included the portfolio analysis to be carried out in 2023, focal points that directors would like to include in these analyses, along with WU's responsiveness to the education ecosystem. The annual cycle for determining programme budgets was also discussed.

One key outcome was the recognition of a need for greater cohesion among all bodies involved in programme changes.

4.14 Communication with the Executive Board

Interaction with the Executive Board occurs regularly through several channels.

The Dean of Education, who chairs the Board of Education (BoE), meets weekly with the Rector Magnificus and the ESA manager. The BoE's secretary provides updates on the BoE's decisions and recommendations, including sending a list of decisions to the Executive Board every three months. The Rector, as a member of the Executive Board, frequently participates in BoE meetings as a guest. Additionally, the Executive Board, through the Rector, can request meetings with the BoE to seek advice on educational matters.

4.15 BoE Strategy Day 2023

On the afternoon of 10 July 2023, the first part of the BoE's strategy day was held in Hermonde, Bennekom. The primary aim was to discuss the theme of flexibility, enabling the BoE to contribute to the working group tasked with developing the new Vision on Education. This new vision must be finalised by September 2024, one year ahead of the anticipated accreditation renewal.

Additionally, the session addressed the identity of WUR. Understanding its identity is crucial for creating a coherent vision. WUR emphasises its unique identity by fostering close-knit connections between students and teachers, promoting a non-hierarchical and collaborative atmosphere. Cohort building is also a vital aspect of the WUR community, providing a sense of belonging across various levels, including among international students.

5. Appendices

5.1 Composition of the Board of Education



The Board of Education consists of eight members: four professors and four students. From each of the four domains represented by the Examining Boards. The following people were members of the Board in the 2022–2023 academic year:

- Prof. Bettina Bock
- Prof. Ellis Hoffland
- Prof. Jan Kammenga
- Prof. Dick de Ridder
- Judith Kikkert
- Gerwin Pol
- Anchu Regi (from 1 November 2022)
- Marloes Rodewijk (until 1 November 2022)
- Marieke van Vonderen

Technical chair: Prof. Arnold Bregt, Dean of Education

Secretaries: Carlijn Braam
Pim van Hengel (from June 2023)

Assistant: Lonneke Bentinck (until December 2022)
Eefje van Dael (from January 2023)

Regular guests: prof. Arthur Mol (Rector Magnificus), two members of the Student Council

5.2 Overview of relevant working groups and steering committees

Working group	Chair/Secretary
WG Education Assessment Policy	Mieke Latijnhouwers (Chair) [No secretary]
WG Longitudinal courses	Anja Kuipers (Chair) Sabien van Harten (Secretary)
WG Budget model	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Jetske ten Caat (Secretary)
WG Brascamp	Marjolijn Coppens (Chair) Jetske ten Caat (Secretary)
WG Erkennen & Waardenen	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Theo Jetten (Secretary) Sabien Harten (Secretary)
WG Post-Corona education	Jetske ten Caat/Stijn Heukels
WG Professional Internship	Ellis Hoffland (Co-chair) Dick de Ridder (Co-chair)
WG Guidelines for Supervisors of MSc theses	Focus group: Marjolijn Coppens Ellis Hoffland Arnold Moenen Dick de Ridder
WG Evaluation of Education II	Heleen van Dijk (Co-chair) Bernadette Dijkstra (Co-chair)
WG Code 4 courses	Jetske ten Caat (Secretary)
WG BSc Thesis	Bert Bruins (Chair) Irene Faas (Secretary)
WG Social Safety	Joyce van der Velde (Chair)
WG Advice AI methods	Ageeth Lindner (Chair)

Steering committee/ Advisory board	Chair/Secretary
Steering committee Skills learning trajectories	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Renske Dijkstra (Secretary)
Supervisory Board Online Learning Environment	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Andre Groenewoud (Secretary)
Advisory board Student challenges	Ernst van den Ende (Chair) Rio Pals (Secretary)
Advisory board digital examination	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Gerard Folkerts (Secretary)
Admission Policy Committee (APC)	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Sabien van Harten (Secretary)
Regiegroep Quality Agreements	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Eva Verschoor / Irene Faas (Secretary)
WUR 4TU.CEE	Perry den Brok (Leader) Emiel van Puffelen (Coordinator)
Innovation Board (education)	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Stijn Heukels (Secretary)

Taskforce Corona	Jetske ten Caat (Secretary) (Chair)
Steering Committee Social Safety	Wouter Hendriks (Chair)
Steering Committee Open Educational Resources	Arnold Bregt (Chair) Sabien van Harten (Secretary)
Board of Professional Education	Ulrike Wild (Chair) Klaar Vernailen (Secretary)



Photography:

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