Report development conversation Master of Health Professions Education Maastricht University

On 13 and 14 February 2023, the Master of Health Professions Education (MHPE) of Maastricht University has been assessed by an external panel of experts. The final assessment will be performed by NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie). In addition to the formal assessment, a development conversation has taken place at the end of the site visit. During the conversation, the programme management and the panel discussed some aspects of the programme in light of further possible improvement. Present at the conversation were the entire panel (chair, three panel members, student member, and secretary) and, on behalf of the MHPE programme, the programme management (director and two other members of the management team).

The programme management submitted two discussion topics:

1. *Flexibility is an important part of the educational vision of MHPE: We aim to enable our students to adapt their learning paths to their own learning needs and interests. However, there is a delicate balance between allowing students to freely choose electives and trying to maintain coherence between learning tasks. Our teaching staff sometimes struggle with the fact that they have limited insight in what students have already done and what they can expect as entrance level. We also see possibilities to design larger (sets of) learning tasks, but that would limit the students' ability to choose freely. How can we find the right balance?*

The panel recognizes that it is indeed challenging to balance flexibility and maintaining coherence at the same time. In line with what the panel already discussed with the teachers and programme management earlier during the site visit, the panel encourages them to explore the possibilities for creating an incidental larger elective (of more than 2 EC). A larger elective could offer the possibility to go more in-depth, which could be interesting for certain students. Since students are free to choose anyway, the panel does not see a threat for the programme's flexibility. This could become the case, however, if the programme would offer a larger number of larger electives. Therefore, that does not seem advisable.

2. *Rich feedback is important prerequisite for programmatic assessment. Ideally, our teachers would always provide elaborate, narrative feedback, feed-up and feed forward that relates both to the learning task ánd to the MHPE competencies. That is not an easy task, certainly not for (future) MHPE teachers who have not been involved in the design of this curriculum or for teachers who are only involved in a small role (e.g. external teachers involved in one or two learning tasks). How can we train and prepare teachers best for this task?*

The panel thinks that in the course of time, it will become clear that for each learning task, the feedback provided to the students by the assessors is often basically the same, as the students' work will demonstrate the same, recurring type of problems. There will be certain patterns that will be discovered. These patterns could be used to generate structured, standardized feedback that could be recycled. Of course, this feedback should always be further fine-tuned to the student in question, to make it personal. However, assessors can start from a certain basis, which could be time-saving. Also, the programme may consider creating a database for this standardized/structured basic feedback. The calibration sessions that are organized could provide input for this. After all, during these sessions

teaching staff already discuss and make explicit with each other what a student's work has to demonstrate, for instance, for a level 1, and what is missing (or should be added) for a level 2.

The programme management wonders how it can be assured that the feedback is interpreted correctly. The panel suggests paying specific attention to this, .e.g. during specific sessions or during campus 1. It may also be helpful to focus the feedback on the professional identity of the feedback receiver.

The panel, furthermore, emphasizes the importance of training new staff, PhD-students and external staff/partners in how to provide rich, elaborate feedback, -up and – forward. In the panel's view, calibration and closely watching and learning from more experienced staff are key in this respect.

In addition, the panel suggests to do research on the topic of narrative feedback.

Finally, the panel addresses another important topic related to feedback, i.e. reflection/self-assessment. The panel stresses the importance of students' ability to actively relate to/think about the feedback that they receive, in order to learn from it. Students should be encouraged to actively reflect, for instance by asking students very early on what they think of the feedback received, what they will change based on the feedback, which concrete steps they will take, etc. This could be done in a structured way, for instance by asking students to include their thoughts and approach in the minutes of the meetings with their coaches. In this context, using peer feedback and assessing another student's reflection may be helpful. Another way students' reflection abilities could be stimulated, is to encourage students to ask for feedback themselves and to determine themselves on what aspects of their work they would like to receive feedback. In other words, to activate students.