

COBRA REPORT

Study programme: Master of Western Literature

Drawn up on: December 16 2019

KU Leuven uses the [COBRA method](#) to work on the quality of its study programmes. In this report the programme committee reports every four years on the quality of its programme(s) and describes the identified strength(s) and planned action(s) of its programme(s). **Master of Western Literature.**

Strengths of the study programme(s)

— The Master in Western Literature has a strong and clear profile: it is a multilingual and **research-driven** master that succeeds in motivating and activating the students at an early stage through the intensive use of group work, papers, presentations and active participation in ongoing research. **Intercultural** scholarly competences and skills (more than just knowledge acquisition) are central to the programme.

The master programme is characterised by a pronounced **transdisciplinarity**: the dialogue between the various literary disciplines and approaches is strengthened by the fact that the core course units are taught in team teaching, but also by the fact that the student group is composed of literature students with diverse and international profiles. In addition, a significant part of the programme is organised jointly with the Dutch-language Master in de westerse literatuur.

— Students acquire a broad **critical literacy** and related skills that can be put to direct use: the ability to exercise well-founded criticism, the ability to carry out autonomous problem-solving research, but also a pronounced problem-sensitivity are typical of the masters in Western literature.

Planned actions

The coordination and cooperation between the different members of a didactic team are usually smooth and enriching, when, for instance, teachers attend each other's lectures. In the larger didactic teams, the coordination is less obvious and can be improved. To this end, the relevant curriculum committee has reformed a number of the core course units with effect from 2019-2020.

The programme works to improve the **relevance and labour-market orientation** of the programme. This concern has to do with the tension between "**problem-solving**" research skills and the "**problem-sensitivity**" needed to appreciate the complexity of literary and other cultural phenomena. For challenging jobs in the knowledge economy, the ability to deal with that tension is at least as important as the ability to solve well-defined issues. It seems better not to give up on this tension, but to underline much more that the labour market-oriented competencies taught by this programme are situated precisely in this area of tension.

Internationalisation within a one-year master's programme is a challenge. The programme ensures that a one-term Erasmus exchange is possible in practice and is pedagogically productive.

This COBRA report is a result of the past four-year COBRA cycle (2015-2019). Each study programme that participated in the COBRA cycle has drawn up this document, which specifies the strengths and planned actions of the study programme. These strengths and actions result from the dialogue between the programme and its stakeholders (primary actors, alumni, professional field and international experts from the discipline). This report aims to give a comprehensive indication of the study programme's realised quality. The COBRA report will be made available in the programme guide, so it will be accessible to the public.



More information on COBRA: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/quality/cobra-english/quality-assurance-method>
 More information on the quality of education: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/quality>
 KU Leuven educational terminology: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/education/educational-glossary/educational-glossary>