

Last February the Memorandum of Understanding between UNESCO and Maastricht University was signed by Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Director of the World Heritage Centre, and Dr. Jo Ritzen, President of Maastricht University. The memorandum pertains to the MA in Arts and Heritage: Policy, Management and Education, which is now part of the UNESCO Forum – University and Heritage Network.

It is my pleasure to write a few introductory lines on Maastricht, Maastricht University, the MA in Arts and Heritage and on the workplan for the next four years. Maastricht is the second oldest town in the Netherlands, known in Roman times as Mosa Trajectum, because of its bridge over the River Maas (Meuse). The city is particularly rich in monuments (second only to Amsterdam) and boasts more than 1650 listed monuments. The university is, however, relatively young, officially opening its doors in 1976. Maastricht University has approximately 13,000 students, 3,500 staff, and is the most international university of the Netherlands. More than 70 percent of the 1800 students (1500 undergraduates and 300 post-graduates) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) – where the MA in Arts and Heritage: Policy, Management and Education is offered – are non-Dutch, comprising some 50 different nationalities.

This MA program, which has taught tracks in Dutch and English, attracts students from all over the World. On average one in three students comes from the Netherlands, and one in five from non-EU countries, with the rest citizens of other EU countries. There are always around 15 - 20 nationalities among the 45 - 50 students who are selected.

Other characteristics of Maastricht University and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) are interdisciplinarity and problem-based learning (PBL). The MA in Arts and Heritage is one of eight graduate programs at the Faculty. Like most other MA programs in the Netherlands, it officially began in 2005 when the BA-MA structure was introduced into Dutch higher education. However, many elements of the present MA have a history that goes back to the early 90's when the Faculty was set up (1994). The one-year, highly selective program has mandatory classes during the first semester. The second semester offers great scope and freedom for specialisation and personal development. Students can choose from electives (tutorials, internship) and conclude their study by researching and writing a thesis.

For more information on the program please see:

[www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Faculties/FASoS/TargetGroups/ProspectiveStudents/MastersProgrammes/Programmes/ArtsAndHeritagePolicyManagementAndEducationMA.htm](http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Faculties/FASoS/TargetGroups/ProspectiveStudents/MastersProgrammes/Programmes/ArtsAndHeritagePolicyManagementAndEducationMA.htm)

In short, the three most important elements of the workplan are: providing the World Heritage Centre with 2 - 4 interns per year; supporting the Centre and its partners in priority activities, specifically in heritage policies, the impacts of World Heritage listing, heritage site visitor research, heritage values or significance and cultural/national identity; and, in partnership with the World Heritage Centre, identifying internship opportunities for MA students to contribute to World Heritage site management, especially in developing countries.

My colleagues and I are very much looking forward to cooperating within the Forum network.

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