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### Frame of Reference - Bachelor's and Master's Programmes in Artificial Intelligence

*The Dutch Perspective*

van der Meulen, A.; Kwisthout, J.; ten Teije, A.; Schlobach, S.; van Splunter, S.; Winands, M.; van Netten, S.; Visser, A.; van Someren, M.; Dastani, M.; Dignum, F.

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# Frame of Reference

## Bachelor's and Master's Programmes in Artificial Intelligence

### *The Dutch Perspective*

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October 16th, 2018

This document is an update of the 2013 Frame of Reference as developed by the KION<sup>2</sup> task force on Curricula for Artificial Intelligence, which was based on:

- Artificial Intelligence Academic Programmes in the Netherlands - A State of the Art report, Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities, 2015<sup>3</sup>.
- Computer Science Curricula 2013: Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Degree Programs in Computer Science, The Joint Task Force on Computing Curricula, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), & IEEE Computer Society, December 20, 2013, p. 221-229<sup>4</sup>.
- The Onderwijs- en Examenregelingen (OER) of the bachelor's and master's programmes in Artificial Intelligence administered by the Dutch Universities.
- Tuning Educational Structures in Europe<sup>5</sup>, European project, 2000-2004.

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<sup>1</sup> The authors like to acknowledge the authors of the 2006 and 2013 Frame of Reference for their work; major parts of this document are still built on their original vision.

<sup>2</sup> Kunstmatige Intelligentie Opleidingen Nederland

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.qanu.nl/en/state-of-the-art-reports> (last visited in March 2018)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.acm.org/education/curricula-recommendations> (last visited in March, 2018)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unideusto.org/tuning/> (last visited in February 2018)

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## 1. Introduction

This document is an update of the 2013 frame of reference for the Dutch University programmes included in the category Artificial Intelligence of the Dutch register of higher education programmes (CROHO)<sup>6</sup>. This frame of reference defines the fields covered by the term Artificial Intelligence as well as the common goals and final qualifications of these programmes.

Artificial Intelligence is a relatively young field. The birth of Artificial Intelligence research is often dated in 1956, when the founding fathers of AI met at the Dartmouth Conference. The history of teaching Artificial Intelligence as a separate discipline is much shorter still, starting in the Netherlands in the early '90's. Consequently, a frame of reference for Artificial Intelligence is still actively developing both in the national and the international context. This document formulates the current Dutch consensus on a national frame of reference for Artificial Intelligence in the Netherlands.

Intelligence is often defined as the ability to reason with knowledge, to plan and to coordinate, to solve problems, to perceive, to learn and to understand language and ideas. Originally these are typical properties and phenomena associated with the human brain, but they can also be investigated without direct reference to the natural system. Both ways of studying intelligence either can or must use computational modelling. The term Artificial Intelligence as used in this document refers to the study of intelligence, whether artificial or natural, by computational means.

### 1.1. KION: Artificial Intelligence in the Netherlands

The current Dutch Artificial Intelligence programmes were mostly started in the nineties in an interdisciplinary context. Originally they were known under a variety of names such as Cognitive Science (Cognitiewetenschap), Applied Cognitive Science (Technische Cognitiewetenschap), Knowledge Engineering (Kennistechnologie), Cognitive Artificial Intelligence (Cognitieve Kunstmatige Intelligentie) as well as Artificial Intelligence (Kunstmatige Intelligentie).

In 1999, the number of recognised labels in the CROHO was reduced, and the aforementioned study programmes were united under the name *Artificial Intelligence*<sup>7</sup>. Initially, this was an administrative matter that did not influence the content of the curricula. It did mean, however, that from then on cognitive science (as the study of natural intelligence) and artificial intelligence (as a formal approach to intelligence) were shared under the heading of Artificial Intelligence. The above mentioned definition of Artificial Intelligence as the study of natural and/or artificial intelligence by computational means was then agreed upon. The KION (Kunstmatige Intelligentie Opleidingen in Nederland) was formed as a discussion and cooperation platform for the united programmes.

Starting in 2002, all university-level study programmes in the Netherlands were divided into a bachelor's and a master's phase. KION took this as an opportunity to agree upon a common kernel of subjects that would be constituent of every Dutch Artificial

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<sup>6</sup> Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs

<sup>7</sup> In Dutch: Kunstmatige Intelligentie

Intelligence bachelor's programme, with the aim of advancing an adequate fit of all Dutch bachelor's programmes to all Dutch master's requirements.

Since then, some degree programmes have changed their names for specification and/or marketing purposes. The Human-Machine Communication degree programme in Groningen joined the KION framework soon after the start, in 2004. In 2013, the VU changed the name of its bachelor's in Kunstmatige Intelligentie to Lifestyle Informatics, to better fit their human-oriented approach to AI, which helped to attract a new population of students (including a higher proportion of female students). However, from 2019 on, the bachelor's programme will be taught in English under the name Artificial Intelligence (with a track in Intelligent Systems and a track in Socially Aware Computing). Furthermore, in 2017, Maastricht renamed its bachelor's programme to Data Science & Knowledge Engineering, and changed its master's programme in Operations Research programme to Data Science for Decision Making, to enable more synergy with its master's AI programme. A full list of the degree programmes that are a member of the KION can be found in section 1.2.

During the last decade new developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) have become increasingly visible to society and the general public. Most appealing successes like IBM's Watson performance and Google's DeepMind victory in AlphaGo, have globally drawn attention. In business, AI's impact on massive data-mining applications in consumer markets may even more revolutionise the use of AI in everyday life.

The successes in the field of AI have not gone unnoticed in the Dutch educational AI programmes. There has been a substantial increase in the intake of virtually all Dutch AI programmes, reflecting the awareness of the growing potential of AI by talented students. In addition, several Dutch programmes are now taught in English, attracting students from all over the world. At some Universities, the substantial growth has led to measures to maintain quality, e.g. by introducing a Binding Study Advice or even by imposing a Numerus Fixus (Radboud University and University of Amsterdam in September 2018; other Universities are likely to follow in 2019).

The prospects of a career in AI, directly or via business-related spin-offs, are very promising; we therefore have to be prepared to face the challenge of keeping quality of our AI programmes during upcoming years, while offering enough capacity to train professionals to fulfil the future needs of society in implementing AI-based solutions.

## **1.2. Degree Programmes of the KION**

The following degree programmes are a member of the Kunstmatige Intelligentie Overleg Nederland:

### **1.2.1. Bachelor's Programmes of the KION**

The following bachelor's programmes are a part of the KION:

- B Artificial Intelligence, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (CROHO: 56945)
- B Data Science and Knowledge Engineering, Universiteit Maastricht (CROHO: 50300)
- B Kunstmatige Intelligentie, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (CROHO: 56981)
- B Kunstmatige Intelligentie, Universiteit van Amsterdam (CROHO: 56981)
- B Kunstmatige Intelligentie, Universiteit Utrecht (CROHO: 56981)

- B Artificial Intelligence, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (CROHO: 56983)

### **1.2.2. Master's Programmes of the KION**

The following master's degree programmes are a part of the KION:

- M Artificial Intelligence, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (CROHO: 66981)
- M Artificial Intelligence, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (CROHO: 66981)
- M Artificial Intelligence, transnationale Universiteit Limburg (CROHO: 66981)
- M Artificial Intelligence, Universiteit Utrecht (CROHO: 66981)
- M Artificial Intelligence, Universiteit van Amsterdam (CROHO: 66981)
- M Artificial Intelligence, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (CROHO: 66981)
- M Data Science for Decision Making, transnationale Universiteit Limburg (CROHO: 60125)
- M Human-machine Communication, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (CROHO: 60653)

### **1.3. Aim of this Document**

Now that the Dutch Artificial Intelligence programmes are coming up for accreditation in 2019, KION feels that the essence of the 2013 Frame of Reference is still valid, but in definite need of an update. However, this document is not intended purely as a description of the current status quo. Rather, it aims to provide an account of what an Artificial Intelligence programme should provide as a minimum (the communal requirements for every study programme called Artificial Intelligence), and how it can extend this basis to distinguish itself from other Artificial Intelligence programmes.

Agreement among the Dutch Artificial Intelligence programmes upon the contents of this document will advance both the equivalence of these programmes, and the understanding on existing and possible profiles within Artificial Intelligence programmes. Moreover, it is hoped that this document will also be a starting point for defining international standards for Artificial Intelligence programmes.

## **2. Programme Characteristics**

This section describes definitions regarding the build-up of bachelor's and master's programmes.

### **2.1. Areas, Courses, Modules, and Topics**

A bachelor's programme in Artificial intelligence is organised hierarchically into three levels. The highest level of the hierarchy is the area, which represents a particular disciplinary subfield. The areas are broken down into smaller divisions called modules, which represent individual thematic units within an area. A module may be implemented as a complete course, be covered in part of a course, or contain elements from several courses. Each module is further subdivided into a set of topics, which are the lowest level of the hierarchy. The modules that implement the particular programme (or curriculum) are together referred as the 'body of knowledge'.

## 2.2. Core and Elective Courses

By insisting on a broad consensus in the definition of the core, we hope to keep the core as *small* as possible, giving institutions the freedom to tailor the elective components of the curriculum in ways that meet their individual needs. The core is thus not a complete programme. Because the core is defined as minimal, it does not, by itself, constitute a complete undergraduate curriculum. Every undergraduate programme must include additional elective courses relating to the body of knowledge. This report does not define what those courses should be, but does enumerate options in terms of modules.

## 2.3. Assessing the Time Required to Cover a Course

To give readers a sense of the time required to cover a particular course, a metric must be defined that establishes a standard of measurement. No standard measure is recognised throughout the world, but within the European Community agreement has been reached upon a uniform European Credit Transfer System<sup>8</sup> (ECTS) in which study load is measured in European Credits (ECs). One EC stands for 28 hours of study time and a full year of study is standardised at 60 EC. In this document, we shall use the EC metric as the standard of measurement for study load.

## 2.4. Coping with Change

An essential requirement of any Artificial Intelligence degree is that it should enable graduates to cope with—and even benefit from—the rapid change that is a continuing feature of the field. But how does one achieve this goal in practice? At one level, the pace of change represents a challenge to academic staff who must continually update courses and equipment. At another level, however, it suggests a shift in pedagogy away from the transmission of specific material, which will quickly become dated, toward modes of instruction that encourage students to acquire knowledge and skills on their own.

Fundamentally, teaching students to cope with change requires instilling an attitude that promotes continued study throughout a career in those students. To this end, an Artificial Intelligence curriculum must strive to meet the following challenges:

- Adopt a teaching methodology that emphasises learning as opposed to teaching, with students continually being challenged to think independently.
- Assign challenging and imaginative exercises that encourage student initiative.
- Present a sound framework with appropriate theory that ensures that the education is sustainable.
- Ensure that equipment and teaching materials remain up to date.
- Make students aware of information resources and appropriate strategies for staying current in the field.
- Encourage cooperative learning and the use of communication technologies to promote group interaction.
- Convince students of the need for continuing professional development to promote lifelong learning.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/european-credit-transfer-accumulation-system\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/european-credit-transfer-accumulation-system_en)  
(last visited on May 4, 2018)

- Provide students with awareness of potential ethical and legal issues the field of Artificial Intelligence.

### 3. Shared Identity

#### 3.1. Common Role

Apart from the roles academics usually perform in society students of Artificial Intelligence are educated to enrich society with the benefits a formalization of intelligence and intelligent phenomena can provide. In particular this entails that an alumnus of Artificial Intelligence can contribute to the understanding and exploitation of natural and artificial intelligence. This may lead to new technologies but it may also enrich designs, products, and services with intelligence so that they are more effective, more reliable, more efficient, safer, and often require less natural resources. This role, in combination with the interdisciplinary nature of the field, requires the Artificial Intelligence alumnus to be able to contribute to interdisciplinary teams and, in many cases function as an intermediate who facilitates the interaction of (other) domain specialists.

#### 3.2. Common Requirements

Artificial Intelligence is a broad discipline and many approaches to the study of intelligent phenomena are justified and fruitful. Curricula are therefore often different from their siblings in emphasis, goals, and capabilities of their graduates. Yet they have much in common. Any reputable Artificial Intelligence programme should include each of the following aspects.

1. Essential and foundational underpinnings of the core aspects of intelligence. These must be founded on empirical efforts and based on a formal theory, and they may address professional values and principles. Regardless of their form or focus, the underpinnings must highlight those essential aspects of the discipline that remain unaltered in the face of technological change. The discipline's foundation provides a touchstone that transcends time and circumstances, giving a sense of permanence and stability to its educational mission. Students must have a thorough grounding in that foundation.
2. A foundation in the core concepts of modelling and algorithms for implementing intelligence. The construction and use of models (simplified, abstracted and dynamic representations of some phenomenon in reality) is common to many sciences. In Artificial Intelligence, however, model building is central: the field of Artificial Intelligence may actually be defined as trying to model aspects of (formal or natural) intelligence and knowledge. Moreover, models within Artificial Intelligence have specific characteristic: they are computational and therefore necessarily mathematical or formal. Artificial Intelligence-graduates must therefore be able to work with (computational) models at different levels of abstraction and understand the recursive nature of models in Artificial Intelligence. This foundation has a number of layers:

- a. An understanding of, and appreciation for, many of the diverse aspects of intelligence, models of intelligent phenomena, and of algorithms that describe intelligent processes.
  - b. Skills to model intelligent phenomena and appreciate the abilities and limitation of these models, if appropriate in comparison with a natural intelligence counterpart.
  - c. Skills to model and implement intelligent phenomena on a computer, in particular skills to work with algorithms and data-structures in software.
  - d. Skills to design and build systems that are robust, reliable, and appropriate for their intended audience.
3. An understanding of the possibilities and limitations of what intelligent systems can and cannot do. This foundation has a number of levels:
    - a. An understanding of what current state-of-the-art can and cannot accomplish, if appropriate in combination with the accomplishment of the natural system that inspired it;
    - b. An understanding of the limitations of intelligent systems, including the difference between what they are inherently incapable of doing versus what may be accomplished via future science and technology;
    - c. The impact of deploying technological solutions and interventions on individuals, organizations, and society.
  4. The identification and acquisition of non-technical skills, including interpersonal communication skills, team skills, and management skills as appropriate to the discipline. To have value, learning experiences must build such skills (not just convey that they are important) and teach skills that are transferable to new situations.
  5. Exposure to an appropriate range of applications and case studies that connect theory and skills learned in academia to real-world occurrences to explicate their relevance and utility.
  6. Attention to professional, legal and ethical issues such that students acquire, develop and demonstrate attitudes and priorities that honour, protect, and enhance the profession's ethical stature and standing.
  7. Demonstration that each student has integrated the various elements of the (under)graduate experience by undertaking, completing, and presenting a capstone project.

### **3.3. Shared Background for Bachelor's Programmes**

Similar to alumni of programmes such as Physics, Computer Science, and Psychology, all Artificial Intelligence bachelors are expected to share a certain amount of support knowledge, domain specific knowledge, specialised domain knowledge, and a set of skills. The content mentioned below ensures a firm common basis that enables AI bachelors of any Dutch university admission to any Dutch master's programme in AI. At the same time, it allows for a wide range of individual and/or institute specific specialisation. The list is an update (extension) of the shared programme agreed upon by the KION platform in 2013.

### 3.3.1. Core Modules (shared between AI Bachelor's Degree Programmes)

The following topics and skills are part of each of the bachelor's programmes, either as a dedicated course or as a substantial topic within one or more courses. The core modules define the 8 key areas of Artificial Intelligence.

#### 3.3.1.1. Artificial Intelligence (Core) Modules

- Algorithmic Problem Solving (Search, Decision Making, Optimisation)
- Cognitive Science
- Computational Linguistics
- Context of Artificial Intelligence (History, Philosophy, Ethics)
- Intelligent Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems
- Interaction (Perception, Human-Computer Interaction, Communication)
- Knowledge Representation and Reasoning
- Machine Learning

#### 3.3.1.2. Support Modules

- Computer Science
  - Algorithms and Data Structures
  - Programming
- Logic
  - Propositional Logic
  - Predicate Logic
- Mathematics
  - Calculus
  - Discrete Mathematics
  - Linear Algebra
  - Probability Theory
  - Statistics

#### 3.3.1.3. Academic Skills

Apart from curriculum specific skills, the bachelor's programmes support the development of a set of general academic skills. Even though they can be topics in specific modules, they are generally addressed by the appropriate choice of work and assessment methods throughout the curriculum.

- Analytic Skills
- Empirical Methods
- Modelling
- Teamwork
- Written and Oral Communication, Argumentation and Presentation

### 3.3.2. Elective Modules (within Artificial Intelligence)

The following list of modules is considered as representative of the AI field at this moment. Given that the different AI programs have different priorities in selecting topics, and assigning topics to either the bachelor's or master's, each bachelor's should offer a substantial subset of the following list as part of their bachelor's programme, either as specific course, or as a substantial part of a broader course (i.e. a module).

- Architectures of Cognition and Cognitive Modelling
- Computational and Cognitive Neuroscience
- Computational Intelligence
- Computer Vision

- Data Mining
- Deep Learning
- ELSA (Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects of AI)
- Evolutionary Algorithms (Genetic Algorithms, Evolutionary Computing)
- Language and Speech Technology
- Neural Networks
- Perception (Computational and Natural)
- Reasoning under Uncertainty
- Reinforcement Learning
- Robotics
- Text Mining and Information Retrieval
- Virtual Reality and Gaming
- Web and Artificial Intelligence

## **4. Bachelor's Programme Artificial Intelligence**

This section is divided into two parts. Section 4.1 describes the roles that a bachelor ought to be able to perform in society. Section 4.2 describes the final qualifications that bachelors in Artificial Intelligence possess in order to fulfil these roles.

### **4.1. Objectives**

The objective of the bachelor's programme is to provide students with a suitable basis for a further career, both in education as well as in employment. The bachelor must be prepared for a number of different roles and opportunities.

#### **4.1.1. Access to Master's Programmes**

The bachelor provides the student with the specific knowledge and abilities, exemplified in the form of a bachelor's diploma that allows the bachelor to apply for any master's programme in Artificial Intelligence or other national or international master's programmes, particularly in related disciplines.

#### **4.1.2. Professional Career**

The bachelor prepares for a position in which the student can earn his or her own subsistence. In particular it prepares for:

- Supervised work on a national and international academic level;
- Positions in the modern high-tech society, such as functions in knowledge-intensive companies and knowledge intensive parts of the non-profit sector.

#### **4.1.3. Academic Skills**

The bachelor provides sufficient training in (scientific) reasoning, conduct, and communication to reach internationally accepted standards of academic skills at that level.

#### **4.1.4. Place in Society**

The bachelor's programme provides the bachelor with the knowledge and tools needed to form an informed opinion of the meaning and impact of Artificial Intelligence, and an informed notion of the responsibilities of a specialist in this area.

## 4.2. Final Qualifications

The objectives of the bachelor can be specified into final qualifications. To comply with international standards these qualifications are presented below in terms of the Dublin descriptors for the bachelor's profile<sup>9</sup>. Together these final qualifications must lead to alumni that exemplify the shared identity defined in section 3.

### 4.2.1. Knowledge and Understanding

The bachelor demonstrates knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and supersedes their general secondary education. Knowledge and understanding is typically at a level at which the bachelor, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, is able to include some aspects at the forefront of their field of study.

We distinguish two levels of qualification: a basic understanding, corresponding to knowledge of the essentials and fundamentals of the field in question, such as knowing what the field is, knowing how to apply knowledge in said field, and knowing how to further develop oneself in the field in question, and an advanced understanding, corresponding to in-depth knowledge about a topic in question.

Qualifications:

1. Basic understanding of the (8) key areas in Artificial Intelligence in accordance with the shared identity.
2. Advanced knowledge of at least one of the key areas in Artificial Intelligence, up to a level that without further requirements grants access to a master programme in this area.

### 4.2.2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Bachelors can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems and/or designing systems within their field of study. They are able to analyse and model *prototypical* Artificial Intelligence problems by using *known* Artificial Intelligence methods and techniques.

Qualifications:

1. The ability to understand, apply, formulate, and validate models from the domains of Artificial Intelligence.
2. The ability to apply knowledge from the key areas of Artificial Intelligence. (as outlined in 3.3.1.1)

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<sup>9</sup> ["A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area", 2005.](#) (last visited on May 4, 2018)

3. The ability to apply knowledge from the support modules of Artificial Intelligence (as outlined in 3.3.1.2)
4. Analytical approach to problem solving and design:
  - Ability to comprehend (design) problems and abstract their essentials.
  - Ability to construct and develop logical arguments with clear identification of assumptions and conclusions.
5. The ability to submit an argument in the exact sciences (or humanities) to critical appraisal.
6. Analytical and critical way of thought and ability to apply logical reasoning.
7. Openness to interdisciplinary cooperation and ability to effectively participate therein as an academic professional.
8. The ability to create an effective project plan for solving a prototypical Artificial Intelligent problem in a supervised context.
9. Manage one's own learning and development, including time management and organizational skills.
10. The ability to transpose academic knowledge and expertise into (inter)national social, professional and economic contexts.
11. Readiness to address new problems in new areas, emerging from scientific and professional fields.

#### **4.2.3. Making Judgments**

The bachelor has the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (typically within the field of study) and to formulate judgments that include reflection on relevant social, academic or ethical issues.

Qualifications:

1. Ability to critically review results, arguments and problem statements from accepted perspectives in the field of Artificial Intelligence and neighbouring disciplines.
2. Initial competence in search and critical processing of professional literature in Artificial Intelligence.
3. Acquaintance with the standards of academic criticism.
4. Awareness of, and responsible concerning, the ethical, normative and social consequences of developments in science and technology, particularly resulting from Artificial Intelligence.

#### **4.2.4. Communication**

The bachelor can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to audiences of both domain-specialist and a general audience.

Qualifications:

1. Academically appropriate communicative skills; the bachelor can:
  - Communicate ideas effectively in written form and through the use of Information and Communication Technology,
  - Make effective oral presentations, both formally and informally,
  - Understand and offer constructive critiques of the presentations of others.

#### **4.2.5. Learning Skills**

The bachelor has developed those learning skills that are necessary for a successful further study characterised by a high degree of autonomy (typically in the context of a master or a specialist profession).

Qualifications:

1. Reflection on one's own style of thought and working methods and readiness to take the necessary corrective action.
2. Recognise the need for continued learning throughout a professional career.

### **5. Master's Programme Artificial Intelligence**

This section is divided into two parts. Section 5.1 describes the roles that a master ought to be able to perform in society. Section 5.2 describes the final qualifications that masters in Artificial Intelligence possess in order to fulfil these roles.

#### **5.1. Objectives**

The objective of the master programme is to provide students with a suitable basis for a further career, both in research as well as in the rest of society. The master must be prepared for a number of different roles and careers at key positions in society.

##### **5.1.1. Access to PhD Programmes**

The master programme provides the student with the specific knowledge and abilities, exemplified in the form of a master diploma that allows the master access to a PhD programme in a broad range of disciplines, especially in Artificial Intelligence related disciplines.

##### **5.1.2. Professional Career**

The master programme prepares for a position in which the student can earn his or her own subsistence. In particular, it prepares for:

- Independent work on an academic level, especially at positions where many of the problems have not been addressed before and where solutions require scientific training
- Key positions in the modern high-tech society, such as higher functions in knowledge-intensive companies and knowledge-intensive parts of the non-profit sector

### **5.1.3. Academic Skills**

The master programme provides sufficient training in independent scientific reasoning, conduct, and communication to reach internationally accepted standards of academic skills at that level. Masters can communicate original ideas in their own language and in English to a public of specialists and non-specialists.

### **5.1.4. Place in Society**

The programme provides the master with the knowledge and tools needed to formulate an informed opinion about the meaning and impact of Artificial Intelligence in society. Masters are able to enrich society with results from contemporary research and oversee the consequences of proposed measures to society and are aware of their responsibility towards society.

## **5.2. Final Qualifications**

The objectives of the master can be specified into final qualifications. To comply with international standards these qualifications are presented below in terms of the Dublin descriptors for the master's profile<sup>10</sup>. Together these final qualifications must lead to alumni that exemplify the shared identity defined in section 3.

### **5.2.1. Knowledge and Understanding**

The master demonstrates knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and supersedes their bachelor's degree. Knowledge, understanding, and abilities are typically at a level at which the master is able to formulate a feasible research plan in one's own specialisation.

We distinguish three levels of qualification: a basic understanding, corresponding to the minimal level of knowledge that is expected of a Bachelor student, an advanced understanding, meaning students must have in-depth knowledge about a topic that they could easily develop to become a specialist, and specialist knowledge, meaning students are highly skilled (and specialised) in the key area in question.

Qualifications:

1. Basic understanding of all (8) key areas of Artificial Intelligence.
2. An advanced understanding in some of the key areas of Artificial Intelligence.
3. Specialist knowledge of at least one of the key areas in Artificial Intelligence, up to a level that the master can appreciate the forefront of research in that field.

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<sup>10</sup> [Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area](#) (last visited on May 4, 2018)

### **5.2.2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding**

Masters can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a scientific approach to their work or vocation. They are able to handle complex and ill-defined problems for which it is not a priori known if there is an appropriate solution, how to acquire the necessary information to solve the sub-problems involved, and for which there is no standard or reliable route to the solution.

Qualifications:

1. The ability to formulate a project plan for an open problem in a field related to Artificial Intelligence in general and the own specialisation in particular.
2. The ability to determine the feasibility of a proposal to lead to a solution or design as specified.
3. The ability to contribute autonomously and with minimal supervision to an interdisciplinary project team and to profit from the abilities, the knowledge, and the contributions of other team members.
4. The ability to choose, apply, formulate, and validate models, theories, hypotheses, and ideas from the key areas of Artificial Intelligence.
5. The ability to submit an argument in the exact sciences (or humanities) to critical appraisal and to incorporate its essence in the solution of Artificial Intelligence problems.
6. The ability to translate academic knowledge and expertise into social, professional, economic, and ethical contexts.
7. Awareness of, and responsibility concerning, the ethical, normative and social consequences of developments in science and technology, particularly resulting from original contributions.

### **5.2.3. Making Judgments**

The master is able to formulate an opinion or course of action on the basis of incomplete, limited and in part unreliable information.

Qualifications:

1. Competence in the search and critical processing of all sources of information that help to solve an open and ill-defined problem.
2. The ability to demonstrate a professional attitude conform the (international) scientific conduct in Artificial Intelligence.
3. The ability to provide and receive academic criticism conform the standards in one specialism of Artificial Intelligence-research.

4. The ability to formulate an opinion and to make judgments that include social and ethical responsibilities related to the application of one's own contributions.
5. The master is able to judge the quality of his or her work or the work of others from scientific literature.

#### **5.2.4. Communication**

The master can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to audiences of specialist in (other) research areas and to a general audience.

Qualifications:

1. The master has academically appropriate communicative skills; s/he can:
  - Communicate original ideas effectively in written form,
  - Make effective oral presentations, both formally and informally, to a wide range of audiences
  - Understand and offer constructive critiques of the presentations of others.

#### **5.2.5. Learning Skills**

The master has developed those learning skills that are necessary for a successful further career at the highest professional level. The master is able to detect missing knowledge and abilities and to deal with them appropriately.

Qualifications:

1. Being able to reflect upon one's competences and knowledge and, if necessary, being able to take the appropriate corrective action.
2. The ability to follow current (scientific) developments related to the professional environment.
3. Showing an active attitude towards continued learning throughout a professional career.

## **6. International Perspective**

As stated in the introduction, this frame of reference is intended not only for the Dutch national context, but also to put the Dutch Artificial Intelligence programmes into an international perspective, and possibly to serve as a starting point for an internationally agreed frame of reference. The latter possibility is of course dependent upon international debate and agreement, and at this moment it is not clear how to bring this about, or whether it will in fact be possible. What we can and will do in this document is provide a comparison between the frame of reference as developed in the previous sections and a number of known related study programmes in other countries. In doing this, we hope to show that the developed frame of reference is up to par from an international perspective as well as the Dutch national one.

Having said this, we must immediately recognise that the Dutch national context appears to be rather special in that we only know of specialised bachelor-level Artificial Intelligence study programmes at one university outside the Netherlands, namely at Edinburgh (United Kingdom), which have a rather different programme structure than the Dutch (and general European) one. In our discussion of the Dutch frame of reference in international perspective, we will therefore add to our comparison with the Edinburgh study programme by a comparison with bachelor's programmes of study programmes in a related field, notably Cognitive Science. Furthermore, we will compare the Dutch bachelor's qualifications with the requirements for enrolment in Artificial Intelligence master programmes in other countries.

A comparison of master programmes is tricky as well. Although, contrary to bachelor's programmes, there are several well-known specialised Artificial Intelligence master programmes outside the Netherlands, study programmes at the master level are much more divergent than at the bachelor's level. A comparison can therefore only be provided in global, subject-independent, terms.

We have drawn up both the bachelor's and master's degree programme comparisons based on the programme descriptions and course lists received from the involved Universities. However, for the purpose of conciseness, we have left out particular details of the programmes that are largely time-dependent and often change from year to year.

## **6.1. Comparison of Bachelor's Programmes**

### **6.1.1. The Artificial Intelligence Bachelor's Programme in Edinburgh**

Edinburgh University (United Kingdom) offers a range of bachelor's degrees related to Artificial Intelligence, one of them in Artificial Intelligence as such, the others in combination with other disciplines (AI & Computer Science, Cognitive Science). An ordinary bachelor's degree consists of 4 years. In order to compare this system with the European standard of a 3-year bachelor's and a 2-year master's programme, we will take the fourth year of the Edinburgh bachelor's programme to be equivalent to the first year of a 2-year master's degree in other European countries, and base our comparison of bachelor's programmes on the first three years.

It should be pointed out that the (first three years of the) AI-related bachelors in Edinburgh show a large variation between them, and an extensive amount of (usually restricted) choices for particular courses within them. In fact, the commonality between the Edinburgh Artificial Intelligence bachelors is smaller than commonality within the Dutch framework. It seems that the wide variation in Edinburgh Artificial Intelligence related bachelor's degrees actually means that the degrees themselves are much more specialised than the Dutch framework proposes, some of them having little or no (cognitive) psychology, others having no mathematics, etcetera.

### **6.1.2. The Cognitive Science Bachelor's Programme in Osnabrück**

The University of Osnabrück (Germany) offers a three-year (180 EC) bachelor's programme in Cognitive Science. The discipline of Cognitive Science is related to Artificial Intelligence, and may in fact be seen as a flavour of Artificial Intelligence, focused somewhat more towards Cognitive Psychology, and somewhat less towards

Engineering. The same key knowledge and skills apply in Artificial Intelligence and in Cognitive Science.

Based on studying both programmes, we conclude that the Dutch frame of reference recognises the same AI-specific areas as both Cognitive Science programmes outside the Netherlands. The Dutch frame of reference devotes as much or more attention to any of these areas as any of those Cognitive Science programmes, with the exception of Cognitive Psychology in Linköping. Moreover, the recognition, in the Dutch frame of reference, that each individual study programme has a specific profile in addition to the communal areas appears to hold for both inspected study programmes outside the Netherlands as well.

### **6.1.3. The Symbolic Systems Bachelor's Programme in Stanford**

The University of Stanford offers a programme in Symbolic Systems that has a variant in Artificial Intelligence. The list of core requirements of this programme includes, but is not strictly limited to: single and multivariable calculus, probability theory and statistics, discrete fundamentals, programming, philosophy, cognition and neuroscience, natural language and computation and cognition. Students in Artificial Intelligence should also take courses from the topics of knowledge representation and reasoning, natural language processing, learning and robotics and vision. They offer several courses in these topics. They offer a more in-depth application of numerous of these topics as non-core cognate courses, such as machine learning, motion planning, modal logic, automated reasoning, and more advanced levels of philosophy/linguistics (in reality, they offer a wide variety of supplemental courses).

The course units that are denoted are the core of Symbolic Systems and are supplemented by their Artificial Intelligence variant are very similar to the Dutch framework of reference - all of the topics in the core list of Stanford's programme + variant are reflected in our common core to some degree. There seems to be a slightly bigger focus on Philosophy (3/12th of the Symbolic Systems bachelor's core consists of philosophical foundations). The nature of the setup of compulsory core courses in Stanford does allow students to 'somewhat' skip topics that are important in the eyes of the Dutch framework - for example, the framework in Stanford calls for knowledge on 'Computation and Cognition', which ask of the student to take one course from a list ranging from Theoretical Neuroscience to Neural Networks and Machine Learning. All in all, the frameworks are similar, but the core of Symbolic Systems appears to be a bit less technical than the Dutch framework.

### **6.1.4. The Bachelor's Programme Artificial Intelligence at Carnegie Mellon**

The Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh has introduced in Fall 2018 the first full Artificial Intelligence bachelor programme of the USA. Their [curriculum](#) consists of three cores: a mathematical, computer science and artificial intelligence core. The artificial intelligence core consists of Introductions in AI Representations, Problem Solving, Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing and/or Computer Vision. As electives, one course has to be selected from four clusters: Decision Making & Robotics, Machine Learning, Perception & Language and Human-AI Interaction.

The main difference with the Dutch Framework is the role of Logic; in this framework Propositional Logic and Predicate Logic are explicitly mentioned as support modules, in Pittsburgh logic is part of the Decision Making & Robotics cluster, with courses as Strategic Reasoning for AI and Planning Techniques for Robotics. This is a far more practical approach compared to the theoretical approach of the Dutch Framework.

## 6.2. Comparison of Master's Programmes

### 6.2.1. The Artificial Intelligence Master's Programme in Edinburgh

The Artificial Intelligence master programme in Edinburgh spans a full 12-month period and consists of two parts: taught and research. During the taught part (8 months), lectures, tutorials and group practicals are followed. The research part (4 months) consists of a major individual research project on which a dissertation is written. There is also the option of completing only the taught part, in which case, a Diploma will be awarded. MSc courses in Artificial Intelligence in Edinburgh are grouped in four major areas of specialisation:

- Intelligent robotics
- Agents, Knowledge and Data
- Machine Learning
- Natural language processing

Comparing the Edinburgh programmes to the Dutch frame of reference, we can draw the following conclusions:

- The main Artificial Intelligence topics that are in the Dutch framework are also represented in the Edinburgh programmes (as shown in the four different identified areas of specialisation).
- The Edinburgh programmes are 1-year, whereas most Dutch Artificial Intelligence master programmes are 2-year programmes. However, the Edinburgh master programme requires a 4-year honours bachelor's degree.
- The Edinburgh programme knows relatively little study load for practical work. Whereas the minimum length of a Dutch master-thesis ('afstudeerproject') is 30 ECs (half a year), the Edinburgh programme has 4 months for doing practical assignments.
- However, the practical work seems to be more research oriented, whereas in the Dutch programme there is also the option to do a final project in industry.
- The Edinburgh program has an entry requirement on mathematics (During the bachelor degree 60 credits have completed of mathematics.)

### 6.2.2. The Machine Learning and Machine Intelligence Master's Programme in Cambridge

At the University of Cambridge the master is called [Machine Learning and Machine Intelligence](#). It is a very selective (20 places) two year programme (120 ECTS credits). To apply, the applicants should have a UK First class Honours Degree (equivalent with overall grade of 8/10).

Their programme includes [courses](#) such as:

- Deep Learning and Structured Data
- Probabilistic Machine Learning
- Speech Recognition
- Weighted Automata

- Computer Vision

Comparing the Cambridge study programme to the Dutch frame of reference, we can draw the following conclusions:

- the programme has clear programme objectives (9 in total)
- the programme only covers 3 of the 8 core areas (Computational Linguistics, Perception, Machine Learning)
- There is not much choice: the programme consists of eleven core modules
- the programme has only two optional modules: Computer Vision or Natural Language Processing
- As elective the students can pick one elective module from 4th year undergraduate

### **6.2.3. The Symbolic Systems and Computing Science Master's Programmes in Stanford**

Stanford offers two variants that are similar to Artificial Intelligence in the Netherlands: the Symbolic Systems Master and an Artificial Intelligence variant in the Computer Science degree programme. Symbolic Systems is an interdisciplinary programme that combines Computer Science, Psychology, Philosophy, and Linguistics in order to better understand cognition in both humans and machines. Viewing people and computers as symbol processors, the Symbolic Systems programme explores the ways computers and people reason, perceive, and act. Within the Symbolic Systems major, there is a core set of required classes with respect to the aforementioned fields; beyond this core, students choose an area of concentration in order to gain depth.<sup>11</sup>

The variant that is actually named Artificial Intelligence offers a subset of the disciplines in the Dutch framework, mostly those related to Computer Science. This master's programme focuses on solving problems using computers, and as such mainly contains course units that address topics in Machine Learning, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing, Data Mining, Robotics and Bioinformatics. There is a framework of courses students can choose from, but this framework is fairly loosely defined (with only very few guidelines), making it hard to distinguish a core beyond the specific attention for the applied computational side of Artificial Intelligence.

Comparing the Stanford study programme to the Dutch frame of reference can only be done by evaluating both the Symbolic Systems Master and the Computer Variant at the same time:

1. The Dutch framework has more formal subjects (such as a stronger focus explicit focus on logic and computer science related topics) than the Symbolic Systems programme. The Dutch framework has more topics related to Cognitive Science and the context of Artificial Intelligence than the Computer Science AI variant.
2. It has already been mentioned that there is much variety between the master programmes – both in the Netherlands and abroad. This is also the case for the programmes at Stanford.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://symsys.stanford.edu/courses> (last visited on May 4, 2018)

- The Stanford programmes seem to have a lot of freedom in their choice for electives. In other words, the core of compulsory courses is limited and students have to select many elective courses - thus rejecting the idea behind a broad common core of the programme.

#### **6.2.4. The Cognitive Science Master's Programme in Osnabrück**

The university of Osnabrück offers a two-year (120 ec) master of science programme in Cognitive Science. Apart from a 30 ec individual thesis project and a 22 ec team project, students take predominantly elective courses in Cognitive Psychology, Artificial Intelligence, (Computational) Linguistics, Robotics, Neuroscience, Neuroinformatics and Philosophy of Mind and Cognition. The choice of courses largely follows the research group structure. The programme offers a double degree option together with the Cognitive Science programme in Trento.

The Osnabrück programme has a similar focus on cognitive (and neuroscience) aspects of AI as Nijmegen. Nijmegen has a tradition of attracting graduated bachelor students from Osnabrück who are typically directly admitted to the master programme in Nijmegen; in addition, several graduated master students from Osnabrück found a PhD position at the Radboud University. Student mobility thus suggests that the programmes are relatively comparable in content and quality to the Dutch Framework.

### **7. National Perspective**

At its core, the framework of reference serves as a foundation for every Artificial Intelligence degree programme in the Netherlands. This is also what differentiates the degree programmes that are a member of the KION from similar degree programmes: at its very heart, the KION programmes aim to provide a broad foundation that respects the roots of the field, rather than merely offer a specialistic application of Artificial Intelligence. With the growing popularity and diversity of Artificial Intelligence as a field, the need for programmes to adhere to a framework founded in both history and modern-day application is more important than ever.

We have drawn up an analysis that compares AI-related degree programmes in the Netherlands, to see whether they fit the frame of reference. In this way, we hope to highlight the unique position the KION degree programmes hold in the field of Artificial Intelligence: both with respect to delivering broadly educated Artificial Intelligence students, but also with respect to the consistency of the quality and background future employers can expect.

#### **7.1 Bachelor's Programmes**

Tilburg University and TU Eindhoven offer a joint BSc degree in Data Science. The focus of this bachelor's degree is on mathematical tools for dealing with big data; there is less emphasis on programming and no broad introduction in Artificial Intelligence. Tilburg University also offers a bachelor in Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence; this is part of the School for Humanities. Currently, the programme is under development; the relationship with the KION frame of reference is still open at the time of writing. Finally, TU Delft offers a bachelor Computer Science & Engineering (intelligent data analysis variant). This programme does not offer the broad introduction in Artificial Intelligence that the KION degree programmes do.

## 7.2 Master's Programmes

Several universities offer a specialisation in Data Science as part of the Computer Science or Information Studies MSc degree. Tilburg University and TU Eindhoven offer a joint MSc degree Data Science and Entrepreneurship. TU Delft offers a MSc degree in Data Science & Technology. These master programmes do not offer the broad overview on AI that the KION degree programmes do, but focus specifically on data science. Tilburg University also offers a one-year MSc degree (in contrast to the two-year KION programmes) in Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

Artificial Intelligence is a rapidly developing field. The term Artificial Intelligence does not have the stature of Physics, Psychology, or even Computer Science, due to its relatively recent start as a coherent field of research. Despite this, the recent attention for the successes of the field have ascertained that the field of Artificial Intelligence has made its mark. Internationally, the study of natural and artificial intelligence with computational means is firmly embedded in the fabric of modern Universities.

Modern topics such as gaming, ambient intelligence, ambient awareness, and believable-agent systems are fashionable manifestations of Artificial Intelligence and these and future fashionable spin-offs of Artificial Intelligence will increasingly affect humans. A particularly popular focus of Artificial Intelligence can currently be found in the field of Machine Learning, where possibilities for data analysis provide the world with useful patterns in all sorts of data. These possibilities have helped popularise Artificial Intelligence in the media, but have also raised ethical and legal questions about the field. Future challenges will force products, services, and societies to react faster but remain reliable, to be both flexible and effective, be both efficient and versatile, and to utilise natural resources with maximal benefit. The biggest challenge of all is making the most of this combination of conflicting demands, a challenge that lies very much at the core of in the concept of *intelligence*.

The Dutch situation is special because of the existence of Artificial Intelligence bachelor's and master's programmes on most of the general universities. This offers the Netherlands a competitive advantage, consistent with its main economic strategy to remain one of the leading "knowledge intensive" economies. This frame of reference explicates how the bachelor's and master's programmes in Artificial Intelligence of Dutch universities contribute to educate alumni that will take a leading role in meeting these future challenges.