

Master Strategic Events Management Breda University of Applied Sciences

*Report of the assessment after three years
8 December 2022*

Colophon

Breda University of Applied Sciences
Monseigneur Hopmansstraat 2
4817 JT Breda

Programme: Master Strategic Events Management

Location: Breda

Mode of study: Fulltime

Croho-registration: 45287

Assessment committee

E. Waarts, chair

M. Farmer, expert

C. Jansen, expert

P. van Loon, student-member

L. Kozłowska, secretary

The committee was presented to the NVAO for approval.

The assessment was conducted under the responsibility of

AeQui VBI

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Content

Colophon.....	2
Content.....	3
Introduction.....	6
Assessment.....	7
Achieved learning outcomes.....	9
Appendices.....	11
Appendix 1 Assessment committee.....	12
Appendix 2 Programme site-visit.....	13
Appendix 3 Studied documents.....	14

Summary

On 8 December 2022 an AeQui committee performed an assessment of the master's programme in Strategic Management of Breda University of Applied Sciences. The overall judgement of the committee is that the quality of the programme is **positive**.

Assessment

The assessment committee concludes that the programme has an adequate system of assessment in place, and that the programme meets this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

The committee assesses that the programme meets this standard. The committee concludes that graduates of the programme achieve the required master's level and the intended learning outcomes.

According to the committee, the M SEM programme has gotten well off the ground, even during challenging Covid19-times. The programme management has rightly intervened in the heavy workload for students by extending the duration

of the programme from 1,5 to 2 years. The assessment is creative and comprehensive and there are checks and balances in place. The students confirmed that the assignments in the programme are related to their work and that the programme brought what they hoped for.

Suggestions

For further improvement of the programme, the committee suggests the following:

- Considering the nature of the events' sector, the panel wishes to encourage the management, lecturers and student to further 'think outside the box' in choosing a graduation topic.

Both standards of the NVAO assessment framework are assessed positively, hence the committee awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the master's programme Strategic Events Management. The committee concludes that the overall assessment of the programme is **positive**.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,
Utrecht, January 2023,

Eric Waarts
Chair

Liza Kozłowska
Secretary

Introduction

In February 2020 the master's programme in Strategic Events Management was awarded accreditation by NVAO.

The institute

Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) is a medium-sized higher education institute with about 7,000 Dutch and international students from approximately 80 countries.

BUAS offers bachelor's and master's programmes within five academies:

- Academy of Digital Entertainment;
- Academy of Hotel & Facility;
- Academy for Leisure & Events;
- Academy for Tourism, and;
- Academy of Urban Development, Logistics & Mobility.

The programme

The master's programme in Strategic Events Management is part of the Academy for Leisure & Events (ALE). The programme ties in with the mission of BUAs 'to deliver graduates who are trained to develop and use their talents as well as their personal innovative capacity to the fullest potential in order to provide innovative solutions to the (international) professional field and be meaningful to our globalising society'.

The programme started at September 2020, simultaneously with the moment that the Covid-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill. The events industry suffered severely from the lockdown measures and alongside with it, this also applied to the programme. At the time of the site

visit, the event sector is slowly recovering. This presents a completely different starting point for the third group of students who started the master's programme last September.

The current batch of master's students consists of 16 people. However, the programme aims to train up to 25 students annually in their development to become a strategic events manager.

The assessment

Breda University assigned AeQui VBI to perform a quality assessment, three years after the initial accreditation. In close co-operation with AeQui, an independent and competent assessment committee was convened, mainly consisting of committee members that were involved in the initial assessment. A preparatory meeting with representatives from the programme has taken place on 5 December 2022.

The site-visit took place on 8 December 2022 in accordance with the programme in Appendix 2.

The committee assessed in an independent manner. At the conclusion of the assessment, the results were presented to representatives of the programme. The draft version of this report was sent to the programme representatives; their reactions have led to this final version of the report.

Assessment

The committee concludes that an adequate system of assessment is in place.

Standard 10: The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.

Findings

Assessment policy

The master SEM has its own assessment policy which sets the framework within which lecturers need to operate regarding their assessment practices. The assessment is aligned with the learning outcomes and the teaching methods (constructive alignment).

The assessment system of the M SEM programme complies with the assessment policy of BUAs. These include an assessment plan to ensure that all learning objectives are assessed, and quality criteria to ensure validity and reliability of tests and assessments such as the 'four eyes principle' in drafting tests, course assessment matrices, the use of model answers and model grading sheets with assessment criteria, and thesis evaluations by two independent examiners. Students receive feedback after each test or assignment. Measures are taken to prevent and detect fraud and plagiarism.

Assessment methods

The assessment policy describes the desire for a varied mix of assessment methods. Depending on the learning outcomes and group size, different types of assessment are applied in the programme, for example: group or individual presentations, individual papers, active engagement, individual oral assessment, and papers in duos. Most courses have more than one assessment method. The committee read in the Self Evaluation Report that the students are satisfied with how the examination and assessment match the content of the programme and are positive about the usefulness of the feedback on assignments,

examinations and reports. This was confirmed by the students during the interviews. The panel understands that there is no group assessments for group work and advises the programme management to consider how group assessments may enrich the assessment portfolio.

Graduation

The graduation phase of the programme consists of several assignments with a shared study load of 18 ECTS. From the start of the programme onwards, the student will deliver a self-assessment report regarding the mastery level of programme's learning goals. In year 2 students will deliver a Graduation Plan. A positive assessment of this Plan is conditional for starting the graduation phase. In semester 4, students will deliver a Graduation Portfolio; a 'go' from the assessment committee (supervisor and second assessor) plus an external events representative, is a must to be able to take the Oral Graduation Exam.

The committee is pleased to hear that the students must **prove** that they gave and received feedback before starting the graduation procedure and that they must show what they did with the feedback. The committee learned that the supervisor and the 2nd assessor will be responsible for the grading. The external company representative will function as a consultant in the assessment process and safeguards the connection to the industry.

Board of examiners

The Board of Examiners (BoE), consisting of 4 members, is responsible for all four programmes of the academy. The BoE deals with individual objections and appeals, appoints examiners and screens a sample of the assessments of the SEM

programme. All members of the Board are appointed by the Executive Board, two members are appointed on behalf of the M SEM. The vacancy for an external member of the BoE has been open for some time. According to the *Annual Report 2021-2022*, the BoE is currently exploring the possibility of appointing an external member of the University of Wageningen (WUR). Furthermore, the committee learned that members of the BoE obtained an BKE and are now in the process of obtaining an SKE.

A recommendation of the NVAO panel in 2020 was "to review the 'Regels en Richtlijnen van de Examencommissie' from the perspective of the formal/legal roles of an exam committee, i.e. to ascertain that the intended learning outcomes are met by each and every graduate." During the site visit the committee learned that the Board has taken several actions to ascertain that the intended learning outcomes are met. For example: all assessment matrixes have been checked and discussed to ensure alignment between lecturers. The board also organized two sessions to evaluate and discuss the quality of testing and with graduates from the programme. This resulted in improvement points that are monitored in the current year.

The committee also understood that the diplomas of the current cohort will be undersigned by the chair of the Examination Board, herewith ensuring the validation of the degree.

The role of the BoE considering resits was discussed during the interviews. The Teaching and Examination Regulations are quite clear in this regard: the programme established clear deadlines for the moments of the resits and it is mandatory that the resit exam must have the same format and criteria as the original exam. In case of personal circumstances, a student may apply to the examination board with a request for an extra examination opportunity.

Considerations

The committee concludes that an effective system of assessment is in place. The quality assurance of the assessment system is solid and effective measures are taken to guarantee the validity, reliability and transparency of the assessments. The BoE is competent and carries out its statutory duties properly.

Based on the above, the committee concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

Based on the documents studied and the interviews, the committee concludes that graduates of programme achieve the required master's level and the intended learning outcomes.

Standard 11: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Achieving of ILO's in two years

M SEM initially started as a part-time master's programme of 60 ECTS with a duration of 1,5 years (40 ECTS in year 1 and 20 ECTS in year 2), representing a study load of 28 hours per week. Students are required to have a job alongside their studies, preferably for 2 or 3 days per week. A workweek of 2 or 3 days seemed, however, difficult to achieve in the events sector, often resulting in an often (too) high workload for students. The committee read in the SER that of the class that started in the academic year 2020-2021, 12 of the 24 students have graduated. Of these 12 students, nine were capable of doing so within 1,5 years.

In order to give students a better possibility to complete the programme, and therefore achieving the ILO's, after consultation with students, lecturers, the Board of Examiners and the programme committee, the programme management decided to extend the duration of the programme with half a year. This means 30 ECTS per year, representing a study load of 20 hours per week for 2 years. During the interviews, students confirmed that the result is a more practicable and feasible programme and that the extra time gives more peace of mind to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

The panel investigated whether the programme management foresees any (other) major changes in the ILO's or the curriculum. The management states that this is not the case. On the other hand, as the management pointed out, the programme

wants to stay open for change. The panel underlines the view of the programme that the Covid-19 pandemic showed the importance of being flexible at all times.

Graduation Portfolio

The Master SEM is a part-time professional master's programme in which students combine their job in the events sector with their studies. The programme aims to optimize the synergy between the professional field and education. This was the reason for the choice to let students compile a professional Graduation Portfolio. In preparation for the visitation, the committee reviewed the final works of all graduates, 12 in total. According to the committee, graduating through a portfolio offers a high degree of freedom of choice to the student to shape their own learning journey. In all cases, the panel members' assessment matched BUAs' previous assessment. Although the committee (understandably) did not have access to the presentations, the committee is positive about the choice of topics and the quality of the work delivered. As encouragement, the committee would like to add that the topics, although appropriate to strategic events management, could be a bit more 'outside the box'. In this way, the graduation works will be able to do even more justice to the flexible and challenging nature of the events industry.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the learning outcomes are achieved.

Furthermore, the committee concludes that, despite the challenges that Covid-19 brought upon the programme, the programme successfully trained the first batches of event professionals for the sector at a strategic level. The panel considers

it a great asset of the programme that students are taking SEM courses and develop their competencies while already working in the event field at the same time. The panel is confident that the students will be of great value to the field after completing their studies.

Based on the above, the committee concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Assessment committee

Chair:

- Prof. dr. Eric Waarts, full professor at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM)

Panel members:

- Prof. Mary K. Farmer MBA, adjunct professor, University of British Columbia; Nipissing University
- Drs. Cor Jansen, CEO at Utrecht Marketing

Student member:

- Perry van Loon BSc, Master Student Urban Governance, Erasmus University Rotterdam

The panel was supported by Liza Kozłowska MA, secretary. All members and secretary have signed a declaration of independence.

Appendix 2 Programme site-visit

8 December 2022, Breda

12.00-12.15	Welcome (5 min movie)
12.15-13.15	Internal deliberations panel & Lunch
13.15-14.00	Course Management
14.00-14.15	Break
14.15-15.00	Board of Examiners and assessors graduation
15.00-15.15	Break
15.15-16.00	Recent alumni and students in final phase
16.00-17.00	Internal deliberations panel
17.00-17.30	Feedback
17.30	Drinks

Appendix 3 Studied documents

In addition to the Self-evaluation Report (October 2022) the committee studied the following documents:

- Outcomes NSE for M SEM
- M SEM Assessment Programme
- M SEM External Commissioners 2022-2023
- Jaarverslag Examencommissie 2021-2022 [Annual Report Board of Examiners 2021-2022]
- Graduation Portfolio of 12 graduates
- Graduation manual
- Course material:
 - o Event Marketing
 - o Business Strategy
 - o Strategic Value Creation
 - o Sustainability Improvement