Hotelschool The Hague

Master Leading Hotel Transformation

Assessment of NVAO conditions and mid-term assessment

20 November 2023

Contents

General data

Institution	Hotelschool The Hague
Programme	Leading Hotel Transformation
Mode of study	Full-time
Degree	Master of Arts (MA)
Tracks	--
Location	Amsterdam
Study load	60 EC
Language of instruction	English
Field of study	Economics

NVAO Conditional Accreditation Decision

Report	18 May 2020
Decision	26 June 2020
Term	26 December 2022 (extended to 1 December 2023)

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

In March 2020, an NVAO panel assessed the new professional master's programme Leading Hotel Transformation of Hotelschool The Hague. The report was published in May 2020. The advice on the programme was conditionally positive. The panel was positive about the programme's intended learning outcomes, orientation, learning environment, intake procedure, facilities, tutoring and system of quality assurance, but had some reservations about the content of the programme, its staff and the student assessment system. The panel concluded that they were convinced of the quality of the professional master Leading Hotel Transformation, provided three conditions would have been met within a period of two years:

1. The programme needs to formulate a shared rationale that underpins the curriculum design, paying attention to the order in which courses are structured, progression of course content, increasing complexity of assignments, and the transparent allocation of study credits.
2. The programme needs to have a solid recruitment plan in place to ensure the continuity of the master Leading Hotel Transformation. In addition, there needs to be a structure in place where teaching staff can systematically interact and therefore be collectively responsible for the content and quality of the full master programme.
3. The programme needs to have a policy in place to permanently safeguard the objectivity of all student assessments. In addition, the delegated responsibility between the Exam Committee and the Assessment Committee should be clearly formalized in the Assessment Policy of HTH and adequately internalized by the committee members.

NVAO followed the panel's advice and, in June 2020, granted Hotelschool The Hague (further: HTH) conditional accreditation of its new master Leading Hotel Transformation and expected HTH to meet the conditions by 26 December 2022.

For Institutions that do not have a positive decision for the institutional audit, a mid-term assessment of the new programme is necessary after three years, focusing on the student assessment system and the achieved learning outcomes (NVAO Assessment Framework 2018, page 16). HTH was offered the opportunity to combine the assessment of conditions with this mid-term assessment, with a deadline of 1 December 2023.

1.2. Panel composition

In the first half of 2023, HTH invited experts for the combined assessments. Two panel members of the 2020 panel were available and willing to participate in this procedure. NVAO approved the new panel composition.

The panel consisted of the following members:

− Eltjo Bazen (chair), Chief Product Owner Quality Assurance at HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht;

- Truls Engström (member, part of 2020 panel), Associate Professor in Service Management at Stavanger University, Norway and Florida International University;
- Quynh Nguyen (member, part of 2020 panel), Lecturer in Hospitality Management, Department of Marketing, Strategy and Innovation, Bournemouth University Business School;
- Pieter Schilder (member), Lecturer Business Management programme, member Research Group Practice Based Research at HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht;
- Jos van der Sterren (member), Programme Lead Research and Graduate School, Member Research Group Tourism Impacts on Society, Academy of Tourism, Breda University of Applied Sciences;
- Sara Miqdadi (student member), graduate Bachelor of Business Administration Amsterdam School of International Business, student MA Luxury Brand Management Northumbria University.

The panel was supported by Marianne van der Weiden, independent secretary.

1.3. Panel procedure

Early July 2023, the panel was provided with a report on the repair actions undertaken by HTH, including appendices to support the description of repair actions. Based on a preliminary assessment of the documentation, the panel requested additional information on a number of details. On 22 September 2023, the panel had an online meeting to assess whether the conditions were met.

On 25 September 2023, the panel received a document detailing the student assessment system, supported by a sample of student work. By this time, the programme had nineteen graduates. From this group, the panel selected fifteen theses, ensuring a proper range of higher, intermediate and lower grades. The panel also received the assessment forms and feedback provided per thesis. In addition, the school provided the assessments made by two students, including assessment forms and feedback, for five courses. The selected courses were Digital Developments for the Hotel Industry (6 ECTS credits, block A), Culture and Innovation in the Hotel Ecosystem (5 ECTS credits, block B), Circular Thinking in the Hotel Ecosystem (6 ECTS credits, block B), Guest Experience in the Hotel Industry (5 ECTS credits, block C) and Personal Leadership (3 ECTS credits, block A-C).

For the mid-term assessment, a site visit took place on 24 October 2023, preceded by an online preparatory meeting on 17 October 2023. Quynh Nguyen was not able to attend this meeting in person, and participated online. For the schedule of the site visit, see appendix 1.

2. Assessment of conditions

2.1. Curriculum content

> The programme needs to formulate a shared rationale that underpins the curriculum design, paying attention to the order in which courses are structured, progression of course content, increasing complexity of assignments, and the transparent allocation of study credits.

In 2020, the NVAO panel recognised that the curriculum design of the master programme was based on the design principles of constructive alignment and backwards design, but it felt unable to identify the underlying structure of the curriculum that resulted from these curriculum design principles and how this transposed into the courses. Whilst the panel considered the content of the individual curriculum components to be adequate, the intertwinement of components should be improved upon.

In response to this outcome, the school agreed that the structure of the curriculum as well as the use of the AuCom model had to be updated. The revised curriculum is as follows:

Block A (15 ECTS credits)	Block B (15 ECTS credits)	Block C (15 ECTS credits)	Block D (15 ECTS credits)
Developments	*Business Innovation*	*Transformation*	*Integration*
Strategic Foresight (5 ECTS credits)	Culture and Innovation in the Hotel Ecosystem (5 ECTS credits)	Transformation of the Hotel (6 ECTS credits)	
Digital Developments for the Hotel Industry (6 ECTS credits)	Circular Thinking in the Hotel Ecosystem (6 ECTS credits)	Guest Experience in the Hotel Industry (5 ECTS credits)	
Sustainable Leadership of the Hotel Ecosystem – external stakeholders (part 1 of 2)	Sustainable Leadership of the Hotel Ecosystem – internal stakeholders (part 2 of 2) (4 ECTS credits)	Writing your Thesis (2 ECTS credits)	Thesis (15 ECTS credits)
Design-oriented Research (part 1 of 3)	Design-oriented Research (part 2 of 3)	Design-oriented Research (part 3 of 3) (3 ECTS credits)	
Personal Leadership (part 1 of 3)	Personal Leadership (part 2 of 3)	Personal Leadership (part 3 of 3) (3 ECTS credits)	

Block A - Developments - aims at fundamental knowledge of new learning concepts, gaining broader insights into technological trends and a deeper understanding of the resilient leadership skillset in the context of the external environment. Block B - Business Innovation - provides in-depth knowledge about sustainability and circularity in the hotel sector from a stakeholder perspective with an increased focus on the hotel guests. Block C - Transformation - focuses on a deeper understanding of the need and requirement of transformation (Why) of a hotel organisation and developing the toolset for managing a successful transformation (How). Block D - Integration - culminates the

integration of the programme learnings and preparation for design-oriented research; students autonomously conduct research in one of the areas covered by the programme to be presented in the format of a final research paper (thesis).

To ensure the progression of course content and an increasing complexity of assignments, a revised matrix of Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) was drawn up and the revised AuCom-I (Saxion Niveaumodel 2.0, 2021) model was implemented. The AuCom-I model consists of three dimensions: complexity, autonomy and interdisciplinarity; each of them is worked out at three levels (low - average/medium - high). Competency levels are defined in terms of how independently somebody can carry out activities, the complexity of the issues they work on, and the degree in which they can work (together) both within their discipline and across disciplines (interdisciplinarily).

The current panel considers the addition of the AuCom-I model a good choice. In order to safeguard that the programme meets the required learning outcomes at master's level (NLQF/EQF-7), the knowledge and skills and the degree of responsibility and autonomy on master's level have been linked to the three pillars (autonomy, complexity and interdisciplinarity) throughout the curriculum. The exit level of the learning outcomes was set at level 'high' in all three dimensions, which means that the student is able to perform a complex task independently in a complex and unpredictable situation with complete control of the required skills and cross-domain actions required to solve the problem.

The school explained that the core teams, using the descriptors of complexity of task/context, autonomy and interdisciplinarity, translated the PLOs into the course learning goals, designed assignments, and formulated the criteria for assessing the performance of students. This rationale enabled the lecturers to account for the constructive alignment of the curriculum. The starting level of autonomy, complexity and interdisciplinarity for the master's programme was established at level 'medium' (as students have successfully completed a bachelor level studies (NLQF/EQF level 6)), thus allowing students enough room to achieve the level 'high' by the end of the programme.

The panel appreciates that, in order to clarify the use of the AuCom-I model, the school described different situations: activities of one course could be 'average level complex' and 'average level interdisciplinary', while students need to carry them out fully autonomously. The complexity of activities of another course can be 'high level complex', whereas the required autonomy is less high (medium). The matrix presented to the panel shows the overall progression of PLOs through the curriculum: level 'medium' in Au-Com-I is prevalent in block A (Developments) and B (Business Innovation), and level 'high' in these three dimensions is achieved by block C (Transformation) and block D (Integration).

From the documentation, the panel understood the build-up and cohesion between the various courses and how students in a later course integrate the learnings of previous courses. On request of the panel, the school explained in more detail the connection between the two parts of the Sustainable Leadership course and between the courses on Design-oriented Research and Writing your Thesis. The panel found this clarification convincing: Sustainable Leadership in the Hotel Ecosystem focuses on external and internal stakeholders and how to maintain and develop sustainable relationships with those stakeholders. In block A the focus is on external stakeholders and in block B on the internal stakeholders. In addition to HRM aspects (for example, how to use different tools within HRM, performance management, role of leadership, training & development, employee engagement and implementation and their impact on the relationship management strategy), change management and ethical dilemmas are the themes addressed in block B. The two course assessments are connected: in block A students write an individual essay on a topic that is

related to relationship management, while in block B the students work in teams on a Relationship Management Plan based on a case. All aspects of external and internal stakeholder management and relationship management must be addressed in this Plan. Students need to share their knowledge (also learnings gained from individual essay writing) to be used as input for the Relationship Management Plan.

The Design Oriented Research course focuses on support for research design/methodology, whereas the Writing Your Thesis course delivers academic writing support, such as structural synthesis (flow and connections) and critical depth in literature and academic writing/argumentation skills. The programme mentions in its explanation that in future both courses may be revisited for a possibility of integration and to increase study feasibility.

The panel notes that the number of ECTS credits in the table is not evenly distributed over the blocks, but this is explained by the fact that credits are awarded only after all parts of a course have been completed. The workload for students is consistent with 15 ECTS credits in each block and, therefore, well-balanced.

Summing up, the panel recognises a clear rationale under the curriculum and the curriculum build-up and is convinced that the programme and the reasoning behind it are clear and justified. The panel appreciates the links between units within a block as well as those across the four blocks: they provide a cohesive symbiosis between courses. The adjusted PLOs are reasonable and logical. The panel concludes that with the revised curriculum the school has addressed the issues raised from the 2020 assessment.

The panel concludes that the curriculum content **meets the condition** set by NVAO.

2.2. Staff

> The programme needs to have a solid (staff) recruitment plan in place to ensure the continuity of the master Leading Hotel Transformation. In addition, there needs to be a structure in place where teaching staff can systematically interact and therefore be collectively responsible for the content and quality of the full master programme.

In 2020, the NVAO panel applauded the enthusiasm and strong qualifications of staff members, including their strong relationship with the hospitality industry. That being said, the panel found insufficient evidence that the programme had a solid recruitment plan in place to ensure the continuity of the master Leading Hotel Transformation. The panel was unable to establish how the staff members intended to work together as a team to collectively deliver the programme and continuously work on its improvement.

In response to this judgement, the school has taken appropriate measures at programme and course level. A buddy system has been devised for all courses of more than 3 ECTS credits, working on the principle of co-ownership and shared responsibility for the delivery and maintenance of a course. In this co-owner system, two qualified lecturers pair up and take responsibility for the course together, from a quality assurance perspective as well as from the operational/ execution perspective. In practice, one of the two lecturers takes full ownership of the course, while timely and sustainable succession is ensured by the involvement of the second lecturer. In addition, there is also a buddy system on individual class level. Each course of the programme has a backup group of lecturers who are subject matter experts as well as experienced lecturers in the domain(s) connected to the specific

programme learning objectives of the course; they are able to temporarily take over one or more workshops or classes, if needed. Both at course and class level, succession and buddy pairing are PLO based.

The panel received a table, outlining the course lecturers and back-up lecturing team per course. The panel observed that for two 6 ECTS credits courses (Digital Developments and Transformation of the Hotel) only one lecturer was listed, which seemed inconsistent with the buddy system. When requested, the school explained that, for these courses, they had prioritised the student interaction with a specific expert, whom they described as one of the most knowledgeable professionals in the domain. The school added that, although one lecturer actually teaches the course, the course content and deliverables are designed and monitored by an expertise team. Also, this expert lecturer is paired up with a lecturer who leads the minor 'Future of Digitalization' in the bachelor programme and is familiar with the topics of the classes in the two master courses. On short notice, this lecturer is able to teach those classes and take over. The panel considers this a reasonable arrangement.

The school is able to ensure the content quality of lecturers by a strong link with the school's Research Centre: all subject matter experts of the Research Centre have active roles in the educational programmes of the institution, and 60% of the course leaders in the master's programme are connected to the Research Centre. In order to achieve the collective responsibility, a number of opportunities are created for lecturers to systematically interact and learn from each other. Lecturers visit classes of their peers. The fact that 80% of the master's course lecturers are also connected to the programme as Final Thesis supervisor results in a higher feeling of commitment to the cumulative success and attainment of learning objectives. All course evaluations are shared within the lecturing community.

The panel was informed that two bootcamp meetings, chaired by Programme Management and the Research Centre, are organised per academic year to make sure that on the overall programme level all lecturers involved are not only being made aware of current and running affairs, but are also actively encouraged to share their experiences, thoughts and concrete actions for improvement. Discussions are based on student evaluations, their own expert opinion and the input of the industry through the course commissioners. During these bootcamp meetings, lecturers and educational advisors are brought together to work 'alone together' on the development of materials. During the sessions all lecturers give course pitches, reflect on their work and ask critical questions. They actively look for potential overlap (redundant information) and for opportunities for cross-pollination. Lectures gain more insights into the positioning of their individual course in the programme as a whole and into how their course continues where others left off. In addition, a separate yearly session is dedicated to the calibration and benchmarking of thesis results. All assessors grade and discuss a randomly selected thesis report using the rubric in order to come to an overall alignment how to best apply the rubric and cater to suggested improvements.

The panel received a detailed plan for the recruitment of new staff for the master's programme, starting with a needs assessment and the formulation of recruitment criteria. The school uses a variety of recruitment channels, including its network in the hospitality industry and (inter)national higher education in hospitality. Succession planning is the instrument to identify potential internal candidates. The documentation describes a thorough selection process, followed by an onboarding programme and regular evaluation. The panel appreciates the explicit additional recruitment strategy for international candidates, based on the school's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Besides this recruitment plan and the buddy system, a contingency plan has been drawn up to deal with unexpected situations of staff shortage or absence, drawing on the available staff in the bachelor's programme and the Research Centre.

Considering the measures described above, the panel appreciates the multi-layered approach to quality control. The diverse set of connections between lecturers makes learning possible and leads to cross-pollination. The panel recognises a good alignment of staff in relation to courses. The buddy system and the calibration meetings per year are strong features. The panel is convinced that the continuity and quality of staff in the master's programme are thus well taken care of.

The panel concludes that the staff **meets the condition** set by NVAO.

2.3. Student assessment

The programme needs to have a policy in place to permanently safeguard the objectivity of all student assessments. In addition, the delegated responsibility between the Exam Committee and the Assessment Committee should be clearly formalized in the Assessment Policy of Hotelschool The Hague and adequately internalized by the committee members.

In 2020, the NVAO panel noted that regular assessments only involved one examiner. In a small community such as that of the master Leading Hotel Transformation this entails the risk of subjective colourings of judgement based on personal preferences. The panel, therefore, felt that the programme should have a policy in place to permanently safeguard the objectivity of assessments. In addition, the rules and regulations for exams and assessments of the master's programme were clearly described in the Education and Examination Regulations, but it appeared during the site visit that the relationship between the Exam Committee and the Assessment Committee was not clear to all committee members.

To remedy the possible subjectivity, the programme management ensures that courses larger than 3 ECTS credits are taught and assessed by two lecturers. This buddy system is described above in paragraph 2.2. The pairing up of the lecturers serves to ensure each student and each student's work is assessed from multiple perspectives following the official rubric. To avoid bias in grading within the courses that are taught by one lecturer, the 'stand-alone' lecturers of courses join the calibration events that are organised. As an example, the school mentioned in the documentation that the lecturer of the course 'Writing your Thesis' (Block C) in which the students deliver the research proposal for the thesis, involves the supervisors of the Final Thesis (Block D) in the assessment of the proposals. Also, the creation and implementation of well-defined grading rubrics for each course support the avoidance of bias. The rubrics are shared and discussed with the students at the start of the course to ensure mutual understanding of what is expected and what is necessary to pass the course. The panel agrees that these measures safeguard the objectivity of student assessments.

The division of tasks and responsibilities between the Assessment and the Exam Committee was addressed and clarified in the revised Assessment Policy (2021). The Assessment Committee at Hotelschool The Hague covers all programmes offered by the institute on both bachelor and master level. The tasks and responsibilities of the Assessment Committee are clearly described in section 5.3 of the Assessment Policy (2021), the duties and authorities of the Exam Committee are described in article 7.2 of the Education and Examination Regulations. Since the NVAO assessment, several new members have been appointed to both the Exam and the Assessment Committee and a structured

collaboration between both committees has been established. The Assessment Committee reports to the Exam Committee and is tasked with reviewing the quality of assessments within all programmes. For the MA Leading Hotel Transformation, the Assessment Committee regularly reviews assessments of the courses offered within the programme as part of their annual review cycle. Currently, reviews are mainly carried out as a post-screening action, plans are in place to do more prescreening reviews as well. Lecturers and course teams can proactively seek advice in the form of a prescreening of assessments, for instance in the case of course improvements. The panel received a sample of the reviews, which showed the detailed and thorough approach taken by the Assessment Committee.

Considering the information received, the panel judges that the assessment is under control in a satisfying way. The assessment policy and the rationale behind it are well-suited to the subject area and skills required for the students. Every course is now assessed by two lecturers, on the basis of grading rubrics. The division of responsibilities between the Assessment Committee and the Exam Committee has been made very clear in The Assessment Policy. There is no apparent overlap between the roles of both groups and it is clear that the Assessment Committee fulfills the role of the Exam Committee of monitoring and safeguarding the quality of assessments.

The panel concludes that the student assessment **meets the condition** set by NVAO.

2.4. Conclusion

The panel concludes that Hotelschool The Hague has taken suitable measures in response to the conditions set by NVAO in 2020 and that the Master Leading Hotel Transformation **meets the three conditions** set by NVAO on curriculum content, staff and student assessment.

3. Mid-term assessment

3.1. Student assessment system

> The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place. The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The examining board exerts its legal authority. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

The HTH assessment policy emphasises assessment as part of the learning process. Assignments reflect real-life cases, students are encouraged to identify their learning needs and development, and social learning is emphasised. Based on these principles, course leaders use a variety of assessment methods, to be made individually or in a group. During the site visit, the assessment committee explained that in their cycle of evaluations they not only check and advise on quality standards such as validity, reliability and transparency, but also on the way the assessment principles are upheld and embedded in a course, e.g. how specific assessment criteria are weighted and if formative and summative evaluation are in balance. The assessment committee provides their outcomes as feedback to the course leaders and follow them up in the next year. They do this for all programmes offered by HTH.

The assessment committee operates under the responsibility of the examination committee. The examination committee fulfils its legal responsibilities for both the bachelor and master programmes. It has clear procedures, e.g. to deal with appeals and fraud cases. Assessors are appointed by the examination committee once they have completed the relevant assessment training. The chair explained that the checks on plagiarism are quite effective. Since the student numbers in the master programme are small, not many cases of irregularities have occurred. The panel asked about the additional risk of fraud through artificial intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT and learned that the assessment committee acted proactively and did a risk assessment. Course teams were advised to not only check on their assessment methods and make full use of formative assessment and student agency, but also to use AI in their course as a learning tool.

The panel studied a sample of course assessments and confirms that, generally, the assignments properly reflect the learning goals and required level. The use of an overall assessment plan, based on constructive alignment, and test matrices for each course effectively contribute to the validity of assignments. In some courses, the relationship between PLOs and grading criteria is less obvious or not in balance. For instance, in the course Digital Developments (part of the sample studied by the panel), it is unclear how PLOs connect to the grading criteria in the rubric and what is pass or fail (% of points). In this course, PLO1 (Strategic advising) and PLO3 (Translating trends) are clearly visible in the rubric, but PLO4 (project management) and PLO7 (managing stakeholders) are not present in the rubric. In the course Culture and Innovation, the panel recognises a clear connection between PLOs and grading criteria, but it is unclear how to weigh the different criteria to come to the final grade. In the thesis rubric, more attention could be given to PLO6 (problem solving) and PLO8 (ethical reasoning). Reliability is strengthened by using a variety of assessment methods, such as practical assignments, written papers, exams, advisory reports, reflection reports and pitches/presentations. To ensure independence of assessment the four-eyes principle is upheld. In addition, rubrics have been designed for each assessment (see also paragraph 2.3). The panel wondered if the various rubrics provide sufficient guidance to assessors to decide on a grade and asked if calibration is

organised between assessors. The lecturers explained that they found the rubrics helpful and that, generally, course teams discuss the outcomes before grades are communicated to students. They agreed that it would be good to organise calibration more structurally.

Assessment outcomes show that assessors do not use the full grading scale: grades tend to cluster between 60-75. The panel advises the programme to investigate why this is the case and whether it is an effect of grading, of supervision/coaching, or of something else. Part of the explanation might be found in the mix of individual and group assessments. The panel considers this mix generally well-balanced, but heard from alumni that ambitious students sometimes feel held back. The panel advises a thorough and continuous discussion on this, clarifying the purpose of each group assignment, related to the learning objectives. Even if it is a learning objective for students to work in a project with less ambitious classmates and nevertheless achieve the project goals, it is important that it is clear at the end what each student's contribution was, and that excellence is rewarded.

Course syllabi give full information on the assessment, including the grading rubrics. At the start of a course this is further explained by the lecturers, as was confirmed by the students and alumni. Transparency of the assessment procedure per course is thus guaranteed. The panel noted that the level and depth of feedback differs between courses. Feedback on the assessment forms was sometimes limited, but the panel assumed that the written feedback would be complemented by oral feedback, e.g. during a presentation. The alumni and students confirmed that this is indeed the case. They also expressed their appreciation for the formative assessment during courses and the openness of lecturers.

The panel was informed in more detail about the thesis assessment procedure, since it was not entirely clear how the first and second assessor decide on the final grade. The lecturers explained that one assessor is the student's thesis supervisor and the other is an independent assessor who has not been involved with the student's thesis work. Both read the thesis separately, fill in the assessment form and suggest a grade. A pass is needed for a student to be allowed to defend the thesis. In case of disagreement, the assessors try to come to a consensus and regularly come to an average. If they cannot come to an agreement or if the difference in grades is more than 1.5, the examination committee appoints a third assessor. The panel considers this an appropriate procedure, but missed a paper trail of it. The panel advises adjusting the procedure by requesting both assessors to upload their independent assessment forms and archiving them. This will increase the transparency of the thesis assessment procedure.

Summing up, the panel concludes that a clear assessment policy is implemented, checked and upheld by the assessment committee and the examination committee. Lecturers and committee members demonstrate a strong ownership and commitment to quality and students appreciate the open atmosphere where feedback can be freely given and received. For continuous improvement, the panel advises further investments in calibration sessions and the paper trail of thesis assessments, and further discussions on group assignments and the use of the grading scale.

The panel concludes that the student assessment system **meets the standard.**

3.2. Achieved learning outcomes

> The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

In preparation of the site visit, the panel studied fifteen theses. Overall, these demonstrate that graduates have achieved the required master level. They are well-structured, make use of appropriate statistics, and indicate a good level of knowledge and learning. The topics are well-anchored in the industry needs, in line with the educational profile of the school and the programme. It struck the panel that, despite the practically relevant topics, the theses mainly had an academic approach, with a focus on data gathering and bridging the knowledge gap, and generally were not very practice based, e.g. by involving stakeholders. Since the programme teaches its students a design-oriented research approach, the panel would have expected more attention to solution design and implementation & evaluation. The lecturers explained that they prepare students to become change agents and want them to think towards practical solutions, but do not expect them to make and evaluate that change in the three months available.

The grades provided are a reasonable and transparent reflection of the student's theses with the attached weighting, although sometimes the panel found the grading rather generous. Overall, the written feedback on the assessment forms is not abundant, but clear and sufficient. There is a difference between examiners in how elaborate their substantiation is. Some examiners gave detailed feedback on each section of the dissertation both with positive and constructive feedback, clearly indicating an in-depth assessment of the theses in question.

The panel observes that, in the thesis requirements, the programme tries to strike a balance between academic rigour and practical relevance. Practical relevance is considered to be essential, in line with the intention to educate change agents for the hotel industry. The current grading form is, however, geared towards academic criteria and does not sufficiently reflect the design-oriented research approach. The panel advises adapting the grading rubrics to express both the required academic rigour and the professional orientation through design-oriented research.

A strict maximum of 10,000 words is enforced for each thesis, which is relatively low for a master's level thesis. The panel wondered if this would give the students sufficient space for discussion and reflection and enquired after the background of this requirement. The programme staff explained satisfactorily that the background is partially pragmatic, linked to the number of credits. More importantly, however, is that students learn to work within constraints and to formulate concisely, focusing on what they want to bring across. The lecturers are convinced that writing short texts is more difficult and, therefore, more appropriate to the master's level.

A second way to establish that the intended learning outcomes are effectively achieved is the performance of graduates on the labour market. Feedback from the industry, both in a survey and through the Industry Advisory Board, shows that the graduates are well-received. The programme prepares them for an active and leading role in the transformation process for hotels. The programme management explained that the first role for graduates, being young, is usually supervisor or (junior) manager, but that they have enough qualities to grow quickly towards more senior project management, raising their hand when an opportunity arises. During the site visit, the alumni confirmed that the programme gave them a strong basis, enabling them to apply their skills in change management and implementation in their current jobs. They mentioned that the course on

personal leadership had been especially valuable, focusing on personal resilience, team resilience and company resilience in blocks A, B and C respectively. The programme management told the panel that the programme does not focus on hospitality in general, but very specifically on transformation in the hotel sector. The current alumni are nevertheless very well able to apply their knowledge and skills in a broader range of employment. The panel considers this a strong point.

The panel concludes that both the theses and the graduates' performance on the labour market demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The panel advises the programme to discuss the balance between academic and professional requirements in the thesis grading criteria.

The panel concludes that the achieved learning outcomes **meet the standard.**

3.3. Conclusion

The panel concludes that the student assessment system and the achieved learning outcomes of the Master Leading Hotel Transformation of Hotelschool The Hague **meet the standards**.

For further improvement to the programme, the panel recommends a number of follow-up actions.

- Double-check the relationship between PLOs and grading criteria per course;
- Organise calibration sessions on a structural basis;
- Investigate why course grades tend to cluster within a fairly limited range;
- Clarify the purpose of each group assignment, related to the learning objectives, and give credit to each student's contribution;
- Collect and archive the assessment forms of both first and second thesis examiners to ensure a transparent paper trail of the thesis assessments;
- Adapt the thesis grading rubrics to reflect both the academic rigour and the professional orientation through design-oriented research.

4. Overall conclusion

The panel concludes that the three conditions formulated by NVAO in 2020 are met. The panel also concludes that the student assessment system and the achieved learning outcomes are up to standard.

Based on these conclusions, the panel advises NVAO to take a positive accreditation decision for the Master Leading Hotel Transformation of Hotelschool The Hague.

On behalf of the entire assessment panel,   Utrecht, 20 November 2023

Eltjo Bazen, chair   Marianne van der Weiden, secretary

Appendix 1 Programme of the site visit

Date   24 October 2023

Location   HTH Amsterdam Campus, Jan Evertsenstraat 171, 1056 AB Amsterdam

12.00-12.15 Welcome

12.15-13.15 Internal deliberations panel & lunch

13.15-13.45 Board and Programme Management

13.45-14.00 Break

14.00-15.00 Examination Board, Assessment Committee, lecturers and assessors graduation

15.00-15.15 Break

15.15-16.00 Recent alumni and students

16.00-17.00 Internal deliberations panel

17.00-17.30 Feedback

Appendix 2 Documentation provided

Assessment of conditions
- Report on repair actions
- Additional appendices:
    - 1   MLHT Programme Overview
    - 2   MLHT Programme Matrix for the PLOs
    - 3   Curriculum Matrix/ PLOs Levels
    - 4   AuCom-I level model (2021)
    - 5   MLHT Study Guide 2022/2023
    - 6   Buddy System Overview
    - 7   Sample of Course Reviews by Assessment Committee (course Sustainable Leadership)
    - 8   Assessment Committee Calendar of MLHT assessment reviews
    - 9   HTH Assessment Policy
    - 10   Education and Exam Regulations 2022-2023
    - 11   Course guide: Final Thesis
    - 12   Course guide: Sustainable Leadership in Hotel Ecosystem Part 1 and 2
    - 13   Course guide: Circular Thinking in the Hotel Ecosystem
    - 14   Course guide: Culture and Innovation in the Hotel Ecosystem
- Additional information requested by panel:
    - Answers to question on the relationship between courses
    - Internal recruitment plan
    - Contingency plan
    - Annual report of exam committee and assessment committee

Mid-term assessment
- Self-evaluation
- Course materials (course guide, grading rubric, student work including assessment forms) of five courses:
    - Culture and Innovation in the Hotel Ecosystem
    - Circular Thinking in the Hotel Ecosystem
    - Digital Developments for the Hotel Industry
    - Guest Experience in the Hotel Industry
    - Personal Leadership
- Selection of fifteen theses (including course guide, grading rubric and assessment forms)