

**TEAM VISIT REPORT –
INITIAL ACCREDITATION REVIEW**

**UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS**

28-30 March, 2011

I. Team Recommendation

The team recommendation reflects the opinion of the Peer Review Team only. It will be reviewed for concurrence or remanded to the Team by the appropriate accreditation committee. The role of the accreditation committee is to ensure consistent application of the AACSB International accreditation standards and processes across peer review teams.

Within ten days of receipt of this report, the applicant should send the Team any comments and corrections related to factual information noted in this report. A copy should also be sent to the appropriate committee chair in care of the AACSB International office.

A. Team Recommendation

Initial Accreditation: The recommendation of the Peer Review Team is that the undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs in business offered by the University of Groningen be granted initial accreditation with a Maintenance Review to occur in year five. Concurrence by the accreditation committee and ratification by the Board of Directors are required prior to the confirmation of the accreditation decision. Following ratification by the Board of Directors, the applicant will be notified. The applicant must wait for this official notification before making any public announcement. AACSB International provides a list of applicants achieving accreditation to its members and the public.

B. Subsequent Review of Team Recommendation

The Initial Accreditation Committee will review this report, and any response from the applicant, at its next scheduled meeting (normally, provided that the report is received at least three weeks in advance of the meeting). The Committee is expected to next meet on July 15, 2011.

II. Identification of Areas That Must Be Addressed Prior to First Maintenance Review

The first maintenance review will occur in year five. With this in mind, the University of Groningen should closely monitor the following items and incorporate them in the ongoing strategic planning initiatives:

1. Ensure that strategic planning is linked to the underlying business model of the School and understood by relevant stakeholders, and that financial projections accord with the planned growth strategies which are sufficiently well developed and detailed to identify specific targets aligned to specific revenue flows.

III. Relevant Facts and Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses on a Standard-by-Standard Basis in Support of the Team Accreditation Recommendation

The University of Groningen is one of the oldest universities in Europe, with a rich tradition dating back to 1614. The antecedents of the current Faculty of Economics and Business have their origins in the 1940s. The University comprises nine faculties of which all business-related programs fall under the responsibility of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB). The current Faculty structure is the result of a merger between the previously separate Faculties of Business and Economics completed in 2007.

The Faculty of Economics and Business offers degree programs at all levels:- bachelor, specialist master (MSc) and PhD. Of note, there is no MBA offered at Groningen. The FEB comprises around 6,600 students (or 24% of the University's student population) of which 5,000 are enrolled in bachelor programs, 1,600 are enrolled in master programs and around 140 doctoral students.

There are 271 faculty members in the School supported by 142 support staff. In addition, several services are delivered at the University level. Governance in the FEB is through a Faculty Board comprising the Dean, Vice Dean (Education) and the Managing Director (akin to Director of Operations). The Dean is appointed by the President after consultation within the FEB. The current Dean, Harry Garretsen was appointed in March 2011 and serves a five-year term.

The School has demonstrated both through the AACSB accreditation process and the visit itself a strong commitment to accreditation and continuous improvement.

A. Assessment of overall high quality, the continuous improvement environment, and ability to achieve desired outcomes

1. *Assessment of Overall High Quality:*

The School has a strong commitment to the conduct of research and integration of research in the teaching programs. This feature is present at both undergraduate and graduate levels and provides a strong foundation for the integration of personal learning. There is a culture of high levels of service provision within the School and a continual focus on quality and improvement. Strong governance over the educational programs ensure that the students are taught in a professional, challenging and rewarding environment. Good support mechanisms and high extra-curricula expectations enhance the student experience. Engagement with business and industry is growing, and manifest through a variety of activities that involve interaction between faculty, students and the business community (eg active internship programs). Faculty management systems are in place and highly effective. The financial base of the School is sound although challenges lie ahead in relation to public funding support as is the case with all universities in The Netherlands. The School has demonstrated its ability to manage succession and a smooth transition through leadership changes.

2. *Continuous Improvement Environment:*

The Self Evaluation Report and other documentation reviewed during the visit along with the interviews with stakeholders confirmed that continuous improvement processes and strategies are in place. The School's faculty and management are committed to progressing the School and advancing its interests. Systemic reviews of academic programs are a feature of the School's quality assurance. The commitment to the accreditation process cannot be doubted.

3. *Ability to Achieve Desired Outcomes:*

The School has demonstrated that it can achieve key objectives. As noted above, the formation of the current structure is the result of a merger of two separate academic units. Inevitably, cultural differences and legacy issues can inhibit the development of a merged entity. However, the School has demonstrated considerable progress and is maturing into a consolidated and unified organizational unit.

B. Standard-by-Standard Analysis

ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURES

There are no eligibility issues. The School offers bachelor, MSc masters and PhD programs.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Standard 1: Mission Statement

The School's mission statement was developed in 2007 consistent with the merger of the previously two separate Faculties to form the Faculty of Economics and Business. The evolution of the mission reflects the research emphasis of both academic units. The current mission is:

The mission of the Faculty of Economics and Business is to:

- *Prepare students for a career in research or a leading position in the corporate or public sector through high quality, research-based degree programs in the fields of economics and business;*
- *Contribute to the advancement of knowledge in these fields by conducting high quality research;*
- *Provide a stimulating and international environment for staff and students.*

There is a strong alignment between the research emphasis within the mission and the current set of activities within the School. The mission reflects the School's culture and purpose. The mission aligns the School with the University, and provides a platform for the integration of research and independent learning into the teaching programs. Moreover, the mission is well understood by faculty members, staff, students and external stakeholders; and is closely aligned to the University's mission. However, as noted below, the mission could be refined to reflect some specific attributes of the School and articulate a distinctive identity.

Standard 2: Intellectual Contributions

The aggregate output of intellectual contributions is consistent with the School's mission and focus on research. Discipline-based research output in peer-reviewed journals is the main concentration of intellectual contributions. Quality of research output is achieved by a set of incentive and performance evaluation systems that centre on a widely accepted list of internationally accepted peer-reviewed journals. The rate of output is impressive and spread across numerous faculty members. Hence, the School demonstrates both breadth and depth in its research publications. By international standards, the School is performing well.

Standard 3: Student Mission

The development of programs in the School has been directed at serving both a local Dutch market and a growing international market. At the undergraduate level, programs are offered in both Dutch and English languages, while at the graduate level, programs are largely taught in English. The student body comprises approximately 12% of international students with a growth target of 25%. The development of international programs is

consistent with this strategy, although further work is required on recruitment processes and specific targets to achieve this goal.

Standard 4: Continuous Improvement Objectives

The School has demonstrated both through the AACSB accreditation process and the visit itself a strong commitment to accreditation and continuous improvement. Indeed, the documentation, preparedness and responsiveness of the School during AACSB accreditation was excellent. More generally, the School is pushing itself hard to improve in key areas, notwithstanding that it is currently in a strong position in several of these areas. Ambitions remain high in research, especially surrounding the quality of output. The focus on quality assurance in teaching is strong and continual. Further, strategic planning and future direction are aligned with a focus on continual growth and improvement in standing.

Standard 5: Financial Strategies

The School's financial base is solid with approximately €6 million in available reserves and current operations are funded through the current budget allocation. However, the financial impact of growth strategies is not currently embedded within financial forecasts. Strategic plans need to be closely linked and integrated within the School's business model and financial planning. With the Dutch system facing a sector-wide cut in public funding, the School needs to diversify and grow its non-public revenue base. Current plans include an expansion of the tuition fee base (mainly through non-EU students) and an increase in external research grants.

PARTICIPANT STANDARDS

Standard 6: Student Admission

The School's admission policies and procedures for all programs are well documented and transparent and the School follows its admissions policies in making admissions decisions. The admission policies are heavily influenced by the requirements of the Dutch Government which prevents the School from being selective in the admission of its Dutch students who have the appropriate pre-qualification and leads to large numbers of enrollment in first year and a high drop-out rate into year two (also see standard 7). In addition to alignment with the Dutch regulations, the admission processes are also aligned with the EU code of conduct related to international students and the internationally recognized qualification evaluation policies and procedures. All holders of non-Dutch diplomas are required to submit an application to the Admissions Office. In meetings with faculty and students it was clear that the School is concerned about the high attrition rates and has put in place interventions to assist students at risk with early interventions concerning study choice and success. This is in alignment with the School's mission which states that it prepares its students for careers in research or leading positions in the corporate or public sector.

Standard 7: Student Retention

As mentioned under standard 6, the School is bounded by the Dutch legislation to admit all Dutch students who register for programs and have the appropriate pre-qualifications. This leads to the admission of a large number of students in the first year and a high drop-out rate in the second year. However, the retention rate increases substantially when students

successfully complete their first year. For example, of the student 2003-04 cohort 60% completed their first year. Of these students, an average of 84% finished their bachelor degree. The average retention rate of international students is higher than that of the Dutch students. Additionally, non-Dutch students complete their bachelor degree faster than Dutch students. In 2004-05 56% of the Dutch students completed the first year compared to 70% of the international students and in 2007-08 59% of the Dutch students completed the first year compared to 82% of the international students. The School has recently implemented the binding study advice as a tool to support the students in making appropriate decisions related to study success and opportunities in an earlier stage during the first year. The academic standards are high, which is consistent with the School's mission and the School sees this intervention tool as a mechanism for early identification of students with study problems.

Standard 8: Staff Sufficiency – Student Support

During meetings with staff and students, ample evidence was provided of staff sufficiency and well organized student support services and activities. Academic advice and support is provided through a system of mentors and tutors involving the whole business school community, including students. The career services and student advisors provide guidance concerning locating internship and study abroad opportunities (mandatory for the BSc in International Business & Management and for the profile International Economics & Business of the BSc Economics & Business Economics) and have interactive resources available for guidance in choosing and pursuing career paths. International student support is available through the education and communication services department and is an ongoing agenda item in the School's strategic plan. The number of international students enrolled in the programs continues to grow and the strategic ambition of the faculty is to increase the number of international students to 25% by 2014-15. As this strategy is further implemented the School will have to focus on additional support services that will need to be created to handle this increase in volume of international students. In meetings with students it was evident that although opportunities for exchange and study abroad are available, an increase in quality international partnerships is an area of improvement for the School.

Standard 9: Faculty Sufficiency

Faculty resources of the School are sufficient for delivering the programs of the School. The School's faculty is highly involved in all aspects of its programs. Participating faculty members deliver more than 95% of the Faculty's teaching in total and 80% of them deliver the teaching in each degree program and discipline. These ratios meet AACSB expectations.

Standard 10: Faculty Qualification

The School is clearly research oriented as it appears in its mission statement. The maintenance standards for AQ faculty are exacting. Evaluation and promotion policies are aligned with the research mission. The SOM Research Institute provides the School with a structure for organizing and monitoring the research activity. The AQ and PQ ratios are respectively: 74% of the faculty members are academically qualified, and 86% are either professionally or academically qualified. These ratios are conservative given the exacting requirements for AQ maintenance. That is, in many other schools, the AQ maintenance requirements are typically

set at a lower threshold and the application of such benchmarks to Groningen would result in higher AQ ratios. Further, the percentage of “other faculty” is expected to decrease in the forthcoming years due to the continued recruitment of research-active junior faculty. Policies are in place to develop high quality faculty and the new tenure-track system assures a continual focus on research productivity.

Standard 11: Faculty Management and Support

The School has appropriate policies and systems of assessment to recruit manage and promote career development of the Faculty members. The criteria for evaluation of performance are widely shared among the faculty and good support systems are in place to help those who meet difficulties. An ‘open door’ culture is in place and all teaching is evaluated by students. The teaching load is aligned with the research orientation of the School. Performance review processes are systematic and understood.

Standard 12: Aggregate Faculty and Staff Educational Responsibility

Students are given clear information about program and course requirements. The effectiveness of instruction is evaluated through the Faculty’s quality assurance system. Students feel well treated and believe that the School is committed to their success. The “open door” culture and co-location of students, faculty members and administrative staff fosters a supportive learning environment. Committee structures assist program review and improvement, including a focus on innovation.

Standard 13: Individual Faculty Educational Responsibility

Faculty members abide to clear rules (codes and regulation) which are well documented including a focus on ethics and diversity. Faculty members conduct themselves with integrity in their dealings with the students and their colleagues. The University has set up a “Center for learning and teaching” that offers a range of education programs for staff who wish to improve and develop specific skills. Student assessment is expected to be timely and informative.

Standard 14: Student Educational Responsibility

In their first year, students are assigned advisors from among faculty members and administrative staff. Further, the School has implemented a student mentor scheme wherein junior students are assigned a mentor who is a senior student within the School. This mentor scheme gives a clear sense of commitment of the School to the student educational responsibility. There is a high level of confidence in the School and that creates a virtuous system to ensure a safe environment for everyone. The student responsibility is clear and they have to act as individuals aware of their own obligations. Further, students are actively involved in collaborative learning.

ASSURANCE OF LEARNING STANDARDS

Standard 15 – Management of Curricula

The School has systematic processes to develop, monitor, evaluate, and revise the curricula of degree programs and has a system to assess the impact of the curricula on learning. All academic staff understand the principles and processes of AOL and the School is evidently committed to ensuring that the AOL process permeates undergraduate and masters level programs. The School engages with an appropriate range of stakeholders in the design and revision of program curricula, including faculty, students, alumni and the business community. Program level Advisory Boards are present and play a key role in obtaining market input. Curriculum design also includes international benchmarking against programs of comparator schools.

Standard 16 – Undergraduate Learning Goals

The School has developed clear learning goals and objectives across the range of undergraduate programs. The assessment plans in respect of each bachelor program links specific learning objectives to particular elements of the compulsory thesis based assessment approach adopted by the School. There is particularly strong focus on the assessment of knowledge oriented learning objectives within the formal assessment processes. The relevant program director and program committee provides oversight of the assessment process in respect of the learning objectives of the program, ensuring the integrity of the assessment process. The program committees actively monitor the attainment of the learning objectives and intervene to revise learning objectives and assessment as required. As such there is clear evidence that the School has ‘closed the loop’ on the AOL process.

Standard 17 – Undergraduate Educational Level

The School complies with the standard in that all the bachelor degree programs provides appropriate contact hours, student-faculty interaction, opportunity for independent student learning, and discipline coverage. The educational level of all the bachelor programs is consistent with both the research-led mission of the School and the requirements of the national accrediting body (NVAO). The School provides strong learning support to assist students in attaining the required level of performance, both through formal teaching and through informal support from the faculty. Students on all the bachelor programs are very positive about the educational experience within the School.

Standard 18: Master’s Level General Management Learning Goals

The School does not offer an MBA or general masters degree.

Standard 19 – Specialist Master’s Degree Learning Goals

Paralleling the management of undergraduate programs, the School has developed clear learning goals and objectives across the range of specialist Master’s programs delivered by the School. The assessment plans in respect of each Master’s program links specific learning objectives to particular elements of the thesis based assessment approach adopted by the School. As with the undergraduate programs there is particularly strong focus on the assessment of knowledge oriented learning objectives within the formal assessment

processes. The relevant Master's program director and committee provides oversight of the assessment process in respect of the learning objectives of the program, ensuring the integrity of the assessment process. The program committees actively monitor the attainment of the learning objectives and intervene to revise learning objectives and assessment as required. As such there is clear evidence that the school has closed the loop on the AOL process.

Standard 20 – Master Educational Level

The School complies with the standard in that all the Master's degree programs provides appropriate contact hours, student faculty interaction, opportunity for independent student learning, and discipline coverage. The educational level of all the Master's programs is consistent with the research led mission of the School. The programs provide students with a clear pathway into either a career in business or doctoral level study. Further, the School has created a healthy learning environment to assist students in attaining the required level of academic performance, both through formal courses and through informal support from the faculty. Students on all the Master's programs are very positive about the educational experience within the School, and particularly value the increasing research orientation of the School.

Standard 21 – Doctoral Learning Goals

In common with both undergraduate and specialist Master's programs, the School has developed clear learning goals and objectives in respect of the doctoral program. The doctoral program combines an appropriate mix of assessed research development components and an independent thesis component. The School has explicit guidelines in respect of the assessment of the research development component and guidelines regarding the supervision of the independent thesis component. Together with the formal components of the program, doctoral students value the open-door policy adopted by supervisors and the egalitarian nature of the student-supervisor relationship. There is clear evidence of the standard of learning within the program from the number of students publishing papers in high quality journals and securing faculty appointments in research-led universities.

IV. Commendations of Strengths, Innovations, and Unique Feature

1. Leadership and Governance

The School has a strong and shared sense of self-governance while respecting the authority and position of the Dean and his Faculty Board (comprising the Dean, Vice Dean and Managing Director). Research is managed through the SOM Research Institute and its Director, while the academic programs are controlled through a system of Program Directors and Program Committees reporting to the Vice Dean (Education). The committee structure in the School is effective, engaging and inclusive. While there may be some areas of committee overlap and over-commitment in meetings, the governance of the School is effective. Wide involvement of faculty members, support staff and students is a highlight of internal governance. For instance, the Faculty Council on which students have strong representation provides an effective forum for student input and feedback.

Moreover, the School has demonstrated through three changes in decanal leadership since the initiation of the AACSB accreditation process that it has effective systems in place for succession planning and a smooth transition in leadership. This culture and structure gives rise to a high degree of confidence in the School's ability to maintain momentum and implement plans irrespective of individual personalities.

2. Continuous Improvement

The School has demonstrated both throughout the AACSB accreditation process and the PRT visit itself a strong commitment to accreditation and continuous improvement. Indeed, the documentation, preparedness and responsiveness of the School during AACSB accreditation was excellent. More generally, the School is pushing itself hard to improve in key areas, notwithstanding that it is currently in a strong position in several of these areas. Ambitions remain high in research, especially surrounding the quality of output. The focus on quality assurance in teaching is strong and continual. Further, strategic planning and future direction are aligned with a focus on continual growth and improvement in standing.

3. Position within the University

The School enjoys a strong position within the wider University. Student enrolments in the School represent around 25% of the University's student population. The University has recently invested heavily in modernization of the School's physical facilities and the central budget allocation covers annual operational costs. The University perceives the School as a leader in the areas of internationalization and corporate engagement. Further, the merger of the two previous Faculties is regarded as a success by the University. It was clear to the PRT that the School's strategy and direction are consistent with the vision of the University President. Hence, the School enjoys a strong position from which to innovate and move forward without hindrance from central university control. As such, the School has substantial autonomy to implement its own plans and structures. In relation to public university benchmarks, the School is well positioned inside the University of Groningen and enjoys an excellent relationship with its governing body. Indeed, the PRT received advice that the School arguably has more room to maneuver than it fully appreciates.

4. Location and facilities

The University's location in the city of Groningen and its rich and long association with the city of over 400 years has created an ideal environment for a student-centered approach to living and studying. The building which houses most of the School's staff and faculty is co-located with student and teaching facilities and was recently renovated. This building has over 40 classrooms that are well furnished and equipped with contemporary technology, including centrally placed monitors throughout the building providing students with updated information on available study areas and computers within the precinct. With over 50,000 students across educational institutions, the city is well known as a "University town" which provides a stimulating environment for student engagement, learning and collaboration.

5. Learning environment

The physical layout of the School's main building is open and inviting. The space encourages student movement, interaction and dialogue. The single location of faculty offices and student facilities stimulates easy communication and interaction between students, as well as between students and faculty. The open door policy and ease of approaching faculty and staff was praised during student meetings. The attitude of the faculty is student focused, orientated toward continuous improvement, and supportive of the strategic initiatives of the School. The overall atmosphere is positive and focused on high quality of learning. The focus on student learning is also evidenced by the thesis system at both the bachelor and master levels, and in its own right, encourages strong interaction between faculty members and students. This atmosphere and focus on high quality is also apparent in the service delivery of the support staff and the numerous extracurricular activities, such as company internships, exchange opportunities and the activities of the active student association EBF (Economics and Business Student Faculty Association).

6. Research focus

The School is clearly strongly research-oriented. Research appears in the mission of the School from the first paragraph: "*Prepare students for a career in research...*" and research activities are embedded in each program. The mandatory thesis at both bachelor and master's levels is one of the main outputs expected from each student. Prior to the thesis component of their degree, students receive training in research culture, methods and techniques. Assessment of students' theses is an important part of the student's overall evaluation. Further, in each program, research is embedded in the learning goals.

Research capability and productivity are key criteria when hiring new faculty and the supportive environment is conducive to the conduct and production of high quality research outputs. Research is largely taken into account in the career development of faculty members and the new tenure track has been set up to attract, develop and retain high quality and internationally competitive faculty members. Performance expectations and evaluations are set with reference to an internal journal quality rating list. The list is consistent with international best practice standards.

The SOM Research Institute leads six research programs, with each program managed by a Research Director. The SOM provides an experimental laboratory and training environment for faculty. In addition the SOM provides an administrative vehicle to attract research funding, evaluate research activities and an opportunity for collaboration across programs. Further, the SOM Research Institute provides a governance framework for the research master's programs with five tracks and the PhD program.

7. Faculty Quality and Management

The faculty members in the School are actively engaged in all aspects of the School's life, which is evidenced by the active participation of the faculty in student support services, research activities and the governance of the School. Not all involvement is compensated but faculty members are committed to the School and regard it as their professional duty to participate. Recruitment practices entail a focus on internationalization, and high quality research has led to a young and enthusiastic faculty profile that is engaging, energetic and focused on continuous improvement. The performance expectations of the tenure-track faculty are explicit and clearly understood. However, there could be improved clarity in career progression and clearer systems for the recognition of high performing teaching-only staff. Performance evaluations of faculty are undertaken on an annual basis and provide an effective system for academic improvement. This system is complemented by the recent introduction of the tenure-track system that provides incentives and certainty around promotion outcomes. The implementation and continuous improvement focus of the SOM Research Institute assists with the development of faculty members.

V. Opportunities for Continuous Improvement Relevant to the Accreditation Standards

1. Mission Statement (standard 1)

The School's mission statement was developed in 2007 consistent with the merger of the previously two separate Faculties to form the Faculty of Economics and Business. The evolution of the mission reflects the research emphasis of both academic units. The current mission is:

The mission of the Faculty of Economics and Business is to:

- *Prepare students for a career in research or a leading position in the corporate or public sector through high quality, research-based degree programs in the fields of economics and business;*
- *Contribute to the advancement of knowledge in these fields by conducting high quality research;*
- *Provide a stimulating and international environment for staff and students.*

There is a strong alignment between the research emphasis within the mission and the current set of activities within the School. The mission reflects the School's culture and purpose. Moreover, the mission is well understood by faculty members, staff, students and external stakeholders; and is closely aligned to the University's mission. However, as noted below, the mission could be refined to reflect some specific attributes of the School.

The School is in the process of revising its mission statement through a strategic planning exercise to be conducted in the latter part of 2011. The current mission is rather verbose and general. The PRT notes that the School has several attractive attributes and some distinctive features which are not reflected in the mission. When considering revisions to the mission, the PRT suggests that the School look to embed some greater ambition and incorporate some distinctive Groningen features. Examples might include the School's desire for enhanced international recognition, its growing engagement with the corporate community and its plans to further internationalise. The School has some impressive features and perhaps suffers a little from a modest approach to its marketing and branding. Combined with the supportive culture and environment of the city of Groningen, the School should strive to position and market itself more effectively by emphasizing the 'Groningen experience.'

While the mission can better reflect the School's ambitions and attributes, the branding of the School is also related. As the School seeks to extend its international reach, broaden its corporate engagement and possibly move into the MBA and executive education market, the PRT notes that the current branding of the School should be reviewed. The use of internal brands such as the SOM Institute combined with the traditional Faculty name may be perceived as cumbersome. As such, the PRT suggests that consideration be given to a more modern name such as the "Groningen Business School" and notes that there is no University objection to such a re-branding exercise.

2. Financial Strategy (standard 5)

Put simply, the School's plans involve improvement and growth. While the strategic plans are admirable, such plans need to be closely linked and integrated within the School's business model and financial planning. With the Dutch system facing a sector-wide cut in public funding, the School needs to diversify and grow its non-public revenue base. Current plans include an expansion of the tuition fee base (mainly through non-EU students) and an increase in external research grants. The PRT notes that financial projections are not well aligned with specific targets. While the School's financial base is solid with approximately Euro 6 million in available reserves, the financial impact of growth strategies is not currently embedded within the financial forecasts. Further, expansion of executive education programs and possible fund-raising campaigns are additional sources of revenue that might be explored. Irrespective of the chosen strategy, financial plans are not widely understood across the School and the PRT encourages the School to integrate activity and finances in a transparent manner to ensure alignment of strategy and resources.

The School's infrastructure is in a healthy state with recent modernization of facilities providing a supportive and impressive physical learning environment. However, as growth plans are realized, at some stage the School will need to consider its requirement for capital funds. The PRT encourages the School to start planning now for a fund-raising campaign. Given that there is a limited culture of philanthropic giving within The Netherlands, the PRT advises that significant planning and work will be required to secure non-tied gifts.

3. Student Retention (standard 7)

With reference to international standards, the School has poor retention primarily concentrated in the Dutch bachelor programs where only 59% of the most recent cohort are retained through to second year. As noted above, the Dutch system of open access to higher education means that Dutch universities are placed at a disadvantage in relation to other international schools in relation to its inability to implement a selective admission process. The School has recently put in place interventions such as binding study advice, a mentor scheme at first-year and a tutor system. However, compared to peer-Dutch schools, Groningen has been slow to react to poor retention rates. The PRT encourages the School to monitor the effectiveness of the intervention schemes

On a possibly related issue, students spoke of the lack of access to School infrastructure (library and computers) on weekends when the buildings are closed. This restriction has possible linkages with timely progression of student work, especially in the thesis component of degree programs.

4. Assurance of Learning (standards 16 & 19)

The School has demonstrated appropriate learning objectives and robust assurance of learning practices across all programs. There are a number of areas, however, where the School can enhance the assurance of learning processes. The Peer Review Team encourages the School to address these over the course of the five-year accreditation period. Specifically the PRT suggests the following issues be addressed:

- A. Ensure the systematic and formal assessment of the full range of learning objectives of all programs with particular reference to skill related objectives.
- B. Broaden the range of assessment instruments utilised in both bachelors and master's programs to complement the current reliance on assessment through the thesis.
- C. Ensure the independence of the assessment process in respect of the bachelor thesis, specifically the utilisation of an independent marker.
- D. Improve the consistency of assessment practices including evaluation of student work and feedback across all faculty members to fully reflect the mission of the School.
- E. Benchmark the AOL process and program learning objectives against relevant international standards through the utilisation of the School's international networks.
- F. The hurdle for satisfactory performance for all learning goals has been set at 80%. The PRT encourages the School to consider a more evidence-based approach to the selection of this hurdle and utilize international benchmarks to assess whether it is set appropriately, and moreover whether a single hurdle is appropriate for all learning goals and all programs.
- G. Plan the roll-out of AOL process over an extended cycle (five years) so that goals and programs are spread, rather than the current system of addressing all goals in all programs at the same time.

5. Internationalization (standards 1, 8, 9, 15, 19)

The School's current internationalization plan largely involves the recruitment of additional international students. However, internationalization should involve a comprehensive agenda that includes the School's international positioning and credibility, international reach of research, recruitment of international faculty, role and integration of international curricula, international networks and connections, alumni, exchange and international programs in addition to the student composition.

Notwithstanding, the current base of international students of 12% of the student population is low by international standards and the stretch target of 25% is still at modest levels. To achieve this target, the School will need to invest in additional recruitment processes and support activities. Further, the composition of the international student population should be more clearly specified and relate to the School's objectives. For instance, the mix between exchange students, degree program students and partner degrees needs refinement. Moreover, an improved proactive selection of peer international partners is encouraged as opposed to what appears to a current approach that is a little opportunistic.

The current position of "champion" of the internationalization agenda is not well supported within the School in comparison to other international schools. It is not uncommon among international peers to find structures of an Associate Dean (International) sometimes in a full-time capacity supported by an International Office. The PRT encourages the School to consider how it might best create (or elevate) a position of influence and authority supported by an administrative structure that provides focus and leadership in the arena of internationalization.

6. Corporate Engagement (standards 1, 5, 18)

The School has a number of high quality corporate connections. However, it is only in recent times that these connections have become institutionalized, predominantly through a reformed Corporate Advisory Board. The School should examine how existing program and department level advisory boards are aligned and linked together. The input of these boards will be important to developing an over-arching corporate engagement strategy.

One area that the School needs to address is its ambitions in relation to an MBA program and Executive Education arm. At present, there is no MBA program and executive education is limited to two post-experience Dutch masters programs without any over-arching strategy. These programs can provide high margin revenue flows into a business school. However, expansion into these areas can also be costly and a distraction for a business school unless there is careful assessment of demand and design of relevant products. Given the large energy-related industry in the province, one possibility is to have a suite of courses and programs that offer a distinctive “energy flavour”. Rather than spending considerable resources on developing its own programs from a zero base, the School might consider some strategic alliances such as a joint venture with the existing Energy Delta Institute. The PRT received advice that such a joint venture would be positively received by this organization.

As an aside, the Corporate Advisory Board does not have a Chairperson. The PRT suggests that an appointment be made to this position so that there is a clear external identity and champion for the School. Such a person should be locally located and of sufficient standing and influence.

IV. Summary of Visit

- A. List of degree programs included in the review and the number of program graduates in the most recent year:

Undergraduate:

Bachelor of Science in:

- Accountancy and Controlling
- Business Administration, two profiles: Business Administration and International Business & Management
- Business Economics
- Econometrics and Operations Research
- Economics & Business Economics, two profiles: Economics and International Economics & Business
- Economics of Taxation
- Industrial Engineering & Management¹⁾
- Technology Management

Graduate Degree:

Master in:

- Accountancy & Controlling
- Business Administration
- Econometrics, Operations Research & Actuarial Studies
- Economics
- Economics of Taxation
- Executive Master of Accountancy
- Executive Master of Finance and Control
- Human Resource Management
- Industrial Engineering & Management (2 years) ¹⁾
- International Business & Management
- International Economics & Business
- Research Master Economics & business (2 years)
- Teacher Training Economics & Business (2 years)
- Technology Management

Doctoral degree:

- Economics and Business

¹⁾ The Bachelor's and Master's degree in Industrial Engineering & Management are offered by the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences in close collaboration with the Faculty of Economics and Business.

B. List of Comparison Groups:

Competitive Group

University of Antwerp (Belgium)
University of Maastricht (NL)
University of Tilburg (NL)
Rotterdam School of Management (NL)

Comparable Peer Group

University of Antwerp (Belgium)
University of Glasgow (UK)
University of Maastricht (NL)
University of Queensland (Australia)
University of Tilburg (NL)
Smeal College of Business, Pennsylvania State University (USA)

Aspirant Group

Mannheim Business School, Mannheim University (Germany)
Queens School of Business, Queens University (Canada)
Warwick Business School (UK)

C. Peer Review Team Members

Professor Tim Brailsford, University of Queensland, Team Chair
Professor Francois Bonvalet, Reims Business School, PRT member
Professor Angus Laing, Loughborough University, PRT member
Mr Gerben Hendriks, NVAO member

Observers:

Ms Lucienne Mochel, Vice President Accreditation, AACSB
Ms An van Neygen, Policy Advisor, NVAO

APPENDIX

NVAO PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	General conclusion
Wo-ba Bedrijfskunde	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wo-ba Technologie- Management	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wo-ma Technology Management	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wo-ma Business Administration	Good	Good	Good	Good
Wo-ma Human Resource Management	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Wo-ma International Business and Management	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Good

PRT visit schedule Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Groningen, March 27 - 30, 2011

Date	#	Min	Start time	End time	What	Location	Who	Names
Sun 27-3	60		17:00	18:00	Peer Review Team Meeting	Hotel de Ville	PRT team: meet at hotel lobby at 5 pm	
	120		18:30	20:30	Dinner with Dean + AACSB Team members	Meet at hotel lobby; dinner at Dinercafé Diep		Harry Garretsen, Albert Boonstra, Frans Rutten, Mieke Schuurman
Mon 28-3					Team breakfast	Hotel de Ville		
			8:15		Pick-up team from hotel lobby			
	90		8:45	10:15	Faculty Board	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017)	Dean, Associate Deans + student member	Harry Garretsen, Janka Stoker, Teun van Duinen, Frans Rutten, Kees Praagman, Roman Daukuls
	20		10:15	10:35	Break			
	45		10:35	11:20	Academic Research	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017)	SOM Scientific Director + SOM Director of Graduate Studies + 3 directors of research programs / centers	Tammo Bijmolt, Taco van der Vaart, Gerben van der Vegt, Peter Verhoef, Wilfred Dolfma, Rina Koning
	45		11:20	12:05	Faculty Management: Department heads	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017)	4 department heads	Ruud Koning, Eric Molleman, Maryse Brand, Ruud Teunter
	45		12:05	12:50	Working Lunch	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017)		
	30		12:50	13:20	Transportation to downtown			
	45		13:20	14:05	Faculty members group 1 + 2 (concurrent sessions)	"Curatoren kamer" / + Faculty Room #108, Faculty of Arts (Academy Building -- downtown)	2 x 6 faculty members	Group 1: Martijn van der Steen, Frank Walter, Iris Vis, Niels Hermes, Liane Voerman, Ad Visscher Group 2: Jaap Wieringa, Jennifer Jordan, Manda Broekhuis, Michiel Hillen, Richard Gigengack, Laura Spierdijk
	15		14:05	14:20	Break			
	45		14:20	15:05	Academic support staff group 1 + 2 (concurrent sessions)	"Curatoren kamer" / + Faculty Room #108, Faculty of Arts (Academy Building -- downtown)	Group 1: Management Team & Educational Quality Group 2: Admissions and Exchange	Group 1: Wijnand Aalderink, Nienke Bastiaans, Mieke Schuurman Group 2: Rieks Bos, Hester Huizinga, Janna van Dijken
	60		15:05	16:05	Meeting Board of the University	"Curatoren kamer" (Academy Building -- downtown)	President / Chairman; Rector Magnificus; Deputy Chairman	Poppema, Sterken, Duppen
	60		16:05	17:05	Tour UoG buildings downtown		Pick-up at meeting location Board of Univ	
	30		18:00	18:30	Meeting with FEB Dean	Hotel de Ville		
120		18:30	20:30	Dinner with Faculty Board + external	Meet at hotel lobby; dinner at De Pauw	Faculty Board; member of Advisory Board	Faculty Board: Harry Garretsen, Janka Stoker, Teun van Duinen; Board of University: Elmer Sterken (rector, former FEB dean) Advisory Board member: Eric Dam (member of the Executive Board and Director Construction & Maintenance of Gasunie, one of the largest European natural gas infrastructure companies)	

Date	#	Min	Start time	End time	What	Location	Who	Names
Tue 29-3			8:15		Team breakfast	Hotel de Ville		
					Pick-up team from hotel lobby			
	90		9:00	10:30	Program management	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017)	4 program directors (BSc; MSc; 2x BSc+MSc); Vice Dean of Education; educational specialist	Sjoerd Beugelsdijk, Albert Boonstra, Pieter Jansen, Jan Riezebos, Janka Stoker, Tanja Jaklofsky
	15		10:30	10:45	Break			
	45		10:45	11:30	Students, concurrent sessions: group 1=undergraduate (BSc), group 2=graduate (MSc, PhD)	"Skibril" Duisenberg Bldg (room 0017) / room 119 Pavilion		Group 1, undergraduate students: Rianne Riezebosch, Diederik Langenberg, Ankie Kamps, Savas Oroilidis, Stefan Riezebos, Nelli Wedel, Bart Kleinlangevelsoo Group 2, graduate students: MSc: Roman Daukuls, Laura Giurge, Monique Bakker, Austin de Zusa, Lisanne Wiggers, Anniek Quist; PhD: Boyana Petkova, Peter Dijkstra
	30		11:30	12:00	Tour Duisenberg Building / student offices	Duisenberg Building		
	10		12:00	12:30	Transportation to downtown			
	60		12:30	13:30	Lunch meeting with alumni + member of Advisory Board	Feithhuis (downtown Groningen)	Alumni, member of FEB Advisory Board	Adv Board: Pieter Bregman (General Director of Nijestee, a large housing corporation) Alumni: Arno Boer; Wouter van Walbeek; Paul Werker; Mieke Klooster; Iryna Maslennikova; Erik Lammers; Hendrik van der Meulen
			13:30		Team returns to hotel, including dinner in Library Room	Hotel de Ville, Library Room available from 13:00		
Wed 30-3					Team breakfast	Hotel de Ville		
			9:15		Pick-up team from hotel lobby			
	60		9:30	10:30	Debrief Dean, Associate Deans, AACSB team	"Curatoren kamer" (Academy Building -- downtown)		
			10:30		Team departs			