

Table of Contents

Application for the NVAO Amalgamation and name change procedure	2
Background and aims	2
Introduction	3
NVAO Standard 1: Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).....	3
NVAO Standard 2: Learning Environment	5
Orientation	5
Cohesion.....	5
Cohesion.....	8
NVAO Standard 3: Assessment of end-terms.....	8
NVAO Standard 4: Demonstration	9
Closing	9

Application for the NVAO Amalgamation and name change procedure

Background and aims

This report is prepared by Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) for the expert panel for the NVAO procedure on our request to:

1. Review the amalgamation of the M Organisational Change & consulting (OCC, 60457) and the M Human Resource Management (HRM, 60645), into a single new programme, by comparing the curriculum of the new programme in relation to the content of the existing programmes involved.
2. Change the programme name of M Human Resource Management (HRM, 60645 to M People, Organisations & Change (POC)

The primary goal of this Amalgamation is to better recognize the combined value of these two areas of research and practice (they are both fundamentally about the management of people in organisations) as mirrored in the substantial overlap in both programmes – and hence, ultimately, to provide students with greater breadth and choice in their education while ensuring efficiency in our delivery.

The goal of the name change is to more adequately reflect the full focus of the programme, per conclusion and advice from a thorough process of stakeholder participation. As already mentioned in the 2018 NVAO panel report, our HRM programme, compared to similar programmes, typically involves a broad focus beyond only classical HRM¹. This scope becomes even more explicit with the above merger.

¹ **2018 Panel report**, “The HRM programme teaches students how to manage, develop and structure HR within an organisational context. The orientation of the programme is academic and although courses contain practical relevance they all have a strong scientific background. The HRM programme at RSM stands apart from other similar programmes through its combination of theoretical views of organisational behaviour (OB) with the main insights from classical HRM” (p. 89)

Introduction

Following the logic of the four NVAO standards, this report compares the 2018 OCC, 2018 HRM, and 2021 broadened programmes. It aims to demonstrate that:

1. the amalgamation of the M Organisational Change & Consulting (OCC, 60457) into the M Human Resource Management (HRM, 60645), and
2. the ensuing name change to M People, Organisations & Change (POC)

do not substantially change the level and orientation of the intended learning outcomes and their assessments, nor the achieved end-level of the programme. At the same time, this report demonstrates that the ongoing continuous improvement measures since 2018 have raised the quality of the programme on all four standards.

NVAO Standard 1: Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

NVAO question: Have the overall goals, orientation of the programme changed?

Table 1 shows that the comparison of 2018 OCC and HRM ILOs as outlined in the 2018 NVAO Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and the 2021 broadened ILOs. The 2018 panel pointed out that the quality of the ILOs was quite low as they mostly referred to the lower level of the Bloom's Taxonomy, e.g. being acquainted with certain theories, and the list of ILOs was long as many course-level outcomes were included. Therefore, the ILOs underwent a re-design process where teachers, alumni, current students, and potential students (current students from our bachelor programmes) – of both the HRM and OCC programmes – were engaged in the design process. The re-design process also took into account the results of a competitor analysis of other MSc programmes focusing on people, leadership, organisation behaviour or theory, change management, and consultancy. The new set of ILOs was formulated on a higher level, following recommendations of the 2018 panel, and more explicitly recognised the multi-theoretical perspective which underpins the MSc (see Appendix 01). The revised ILOs were launched in the HRM programme since 2020-2021, and elements relating to organisational changes were added to the ILOs of the broadened programme from 2021-2022. The below comparison table demonstrated that the 2018 OCC and HRM ILOs have been revised, condensed, and/or subsumed into the ILOs of the 2021 broadened programme, hence there were no substantial changes intended in the ILOs of the broadened programme.

	2018 OCC NVAO/AACSB SAR (O)	2018 HRM NVAO/AACSB SAR (H)	2021 broadened programme *	Relation to 2018 ILO's
Knowledge	1. Be familiar with the content, process and context dimensions of change and with the various Organization and Change schools of thought.	1. Have knowledge of and theoretical and practical insights in main topics of organisational behaviour (OB); including job satisfaction, intelligence and selection, motivation, teams, leadership, organisational change	1. Critically evaluate the role and impact of individuals, leaders, and structures on organisational effectiveness	H4, H6, H7
	2. Be able to view and analyse change situations from these corresponding (e.g., behavioural, cognitive, political and cultural) perspectives.	2. Have knowledge of and theoretical and practical insights of how strategic and international HR knowledge adds value to the firm – students should be able to discover which (international) HR techniques are appropriate in which situations	2. Develop context- and people-sensitive solutions to organisational challenges	O1, O5, H1, H2, H5, H6
	3. Have theoretical and practical insights in the role and impact of consulting (e.g., knowledge of professional service organizations, and the professional aspects of consultants)	3. Have knowledge of and theoretical and practical insights in issues that are currently considered to be at the cutting-edge of Human Resource Management (HRM) and OB research	3. Initiate and manage people dynamics for sustainable personal and/or organisational development	O1, H2, H6, H7
	4. Have practical insights in the role and impact of change and change management (e.g., diagnosis, intervention, and conflict handling)	4. Acquire a meta-view on HR practices and leadership tools as well as developing insights in interfaces, and synergies between them	4. Analyse people and change management from behavioural, cognitive, political, social and organisational perspectives	O2, O4, O5, H5, H6
	5. Understand the main philosophy and methods of scientific research (e.g., regarding the nature, problems, possibilities and limitations of research in a change context)	5. Develop an understanding of day-to-day challenges and dynamics of the HR function inside firms		
		6. Have knowledge of methods of scientific research in the area of HRM and OB		
		7. Acquire deeper knowledge in one specific area of OB (i.e. leadership, decision making, organisational change and/or diversity in teams).		
Skills	6. Analytical: In analysing a change agent problem, be able to use and connect knowledge and theories (academic skilling, e.g., comparison organisation, change and consulting literature, assess the quality of publications, and apply qualitative techniques) and on that basis be able to develop solutions (practical skilling, e.g., be able to make sensible choices about research design and development process in relation to a concrete change problem or wicked problem). Being able as a change agent to assess whether an organization is ready for change or not, and to design and develop a plan of actions to be conducted on a consulting of change theme.	8. Analytical skills: a. Ability to apply key insights from the field of OB to practical issues on HRM b. Be able to (critically) read and discuss state-of-the-art scientific knowledge in the area of HRM c. Be able to conduct high quality research (including theory development, process models, hypotheses, adequate design and research paradigm, statistical analyses) of theoretical and practical relevance d. In analysing HRM problems, be able to apply quantitative and qualitative techniques e. Have experienced some basic consulting skills (critical diagnosis and analysis, organising and facilitating of a session, presentation skills)	5. Reflect on one's own leadership capacity, strengths and areas for personal growth and development	H10
	7. Social communicative: Be able to communicate to others about your change topic (e.g., in written or oral report, in critical discussions defend your findings with sound arguments, give a professional presentation about your findings)	9. Social communicative skills: a. In a group, be able to prepare and execute a written and/or oral report about a HRM topic at a scientific level b. Develop strong persuasive speaking skills and discussion skills to be able to defend one's own position c. Be able to give a high quality presentation d. Be able to work in a team	6. Demonstrate managerial and leadership skills (including decision-making, organisational design , teamwork, effective communication, managing diversity, and influencing and developing others)	O7, H8, H9, H10
		10. Leadership skills: a. Be able to make a plan of actions to be conducted on a HRM theme b. Be able to make a reasoned decision and managerial judgements about HRM problems	7. Analyse information using critical thinking to drive people-related (organisational) decision-making	O6, H8
Attitude	8. Be able to recognize ethically sensitive issues of professional consulting and change management and use these in a practical situation in their consequences.	11. Students should feel comfortable with making strategic decisions in complex and uncertain situations	8. Appreciate the importance of being a people-oriented responsible and ethical leader, manager, or consultant	O8, H12
	9. Be able to recognize ethically sensitive issues in research and handle complex dilemmas in a change situation in an ethical way	12. Regarding HRM decisions, students should be able to apply ethical considerations, be able to consider organisational as well as team and individual level perspectives within an organisational context	9. Demonstrate an open and inquisitive attitude alongside a critical evidence-based mind-set	O9, O10, H11, H13, H14
	10. Regarding change and its change context, consciously deal with and organize variety and pluralism, view one's own as well as others' work openly, critically and constructively, and be able to balance the various stakeholders and force fields in a change casus.	13. Develop a critical academic attitude, the ability to reflect and have independent thinking on HRM themes	10. Evaluate the importance of balancing the needs of various stakeholders in processes of people management, and/or change (organisational) development	O10, H11, H14
		14. Develop a professional attitude towards HR decisions and actions		

* The 2021 broadened programme shares the same ILO's as the 2020 HRM, except for the highlighted red components that were only added from 2021.

Table 1. A comparison of the ILOs of OCC (2018), HRM (2018), and broadened programme (2021).

NVAO Standard 2: Learning Environment

NVAO question: Has the orientation and cohesion of the programme changed?

Orientation

The orientation of all our MSc programmes, including OCC and HRM, is academic. All MSc courses have a strong scientific background and contain practical relevance, in order to prepare students for their future jobs with hands-on practical knowledge based on a background of sound methods and research.

Cohesion

The OCC and HRM programmes share the same programme design (see image 1 below): students follow a series of compulsory core courses (22 EC), then select and complete three elective courses (18 EC) while completing their thesis trajectory (20 EC; including a Research Methodology course and an individual thesis).

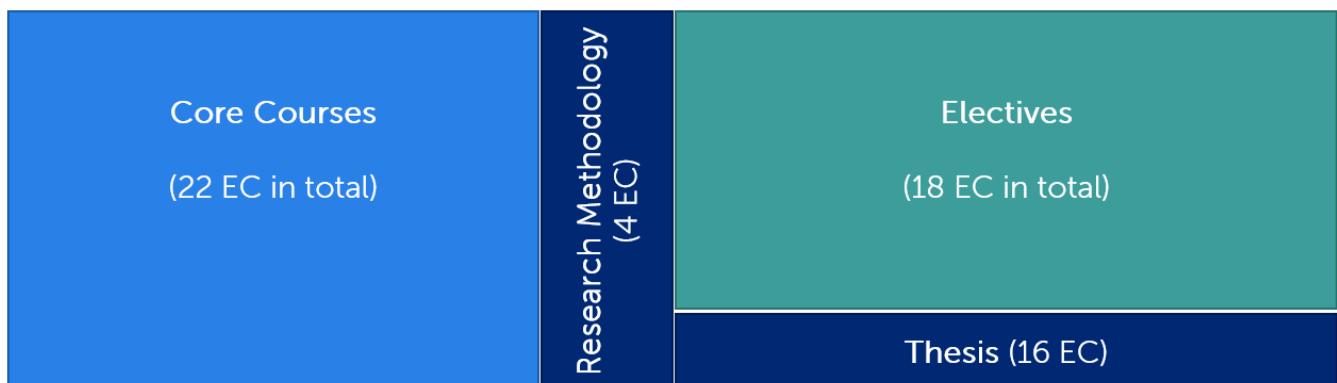


Image 1: The design of MSc programmes.

Since the previous self-assessment in 2018, the HRM programme has been undergoing continuous improvement to recognise the changing nature of work and to preserve the viability of the programme. Students of both HRM and OCC were extensively involved in designing the revised programme. For example, it included the introduction of the People Analytics course to recognise the impact and use of big data and data analytics.

Table 2 below compares the courses offered in the 2018 OCC & HRM and 2021 broadened programmes. Highlighted red are courses that have been retired and/or condensed into other courses. It shows that, in the broadened programme in 2021-2022,

- Three different elective tracks have been developed and the two specialist tracks reflect the programme combination as one is relating to HRM and the other to OCC:
 - o **Human Resource Leadership** track: develops knowledge of people management in the context of new organisation forms, digitisation of working life, and with external trends such as an aging workforce, and the ability to apply critical thinking to solving real-life management problems.
 - o **Organisational Development and Change** track: develops the ability to critically evaluate change situations, engages with change constructively, and work with all actors in change processes appreciatively and effectively, delivering inspiring, responsible and sustainable results.
 - o **Generalist** track: includes courses from both specialisms and allows a fully customised path through the electives.
- one of the OCC core courses has replaced the HRM core course that relates to organisational behaviour to give students a grounding in change management, and
- a bulk of OCC core and elective courses have been integrated into the “Organisational Development & Change” specialist elective track.

In the period between 2018 and 2021, there have been some changes in the core courses of the HRM curriculum, but in each variation over time the learning objectives of the core courses combined connect to the full range of ILOs. In addition, the Your Future Career has been developed and implemented across all RSM master programmes, including HRM and OCC, since 2019-2020. In conclusion, the core components constituting the broadened programme share substantial common ground with the core content of both OCC and HRM programmes.

The intended new programme name M People, Organisations & Change (POC) explicitly refers to the tripartite focus that characterises the broadened programme and thus better describes its scope. More specifically, “Change” denotes the programme’s distinctive perspective on dynamic aspects of people and organisational management, “Organisations” is critical to recognise the macro aspects, and “People” the micro. This therefore better highlights the high levels of choice students are offered in their electives, as demonstrated above, whilst emphasising the coherent focus of the programme. Furthermore, it fits the content of the programme and is aligned with current developments in research and practice.

Cohesion

We have strengthened the cohesion and pedagogical flow of the programme by introducing the Professional Development (PD) Trajectory in the HRM programme since 2020-2021. The PD Trajectory runs throughout the programme to facilitate students' personal development as a professional in their chosen field, and to equip students with methods to help others grow. This is aligned with the new RSM Educational Strategy to embrace life-long journey of learning and a stepping stone to our move towards competency-based learning.

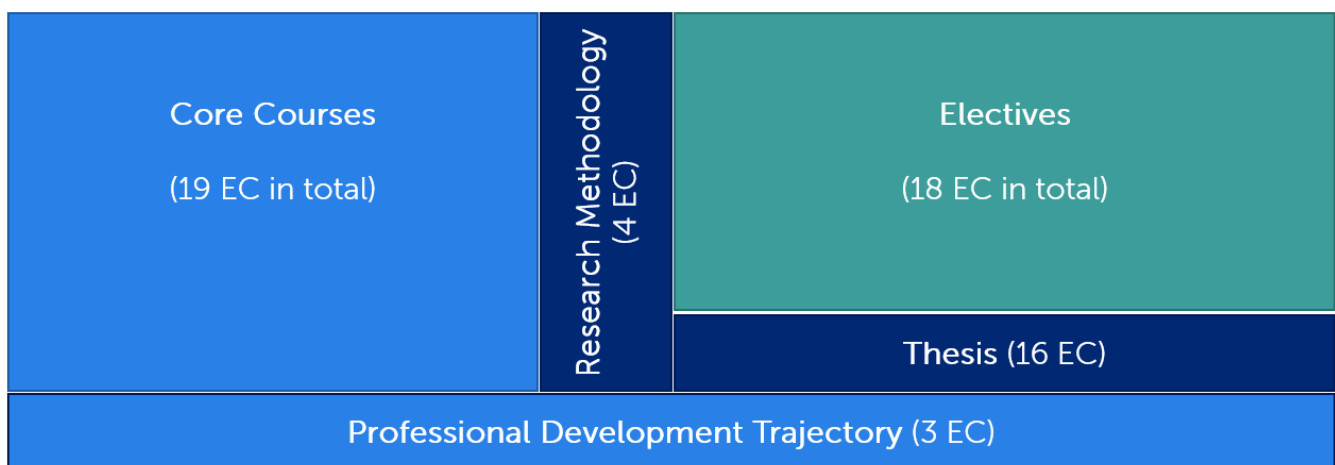


Image 2: The design of HRM programme in 2021-2022.

To further support that the overall goals, level, and orientation of coursework did not substantially change and the cohesion of curriculum has stayed intact, the course manuals of the courses of the 2018 OCC, 2018 HRM, and 2021 broadened programmes are added to this report as Appendix 02.

NVAO Standard 3: Assessment of end-terms

NVAO question: Has the assessment strategy and approach of the programme changed?

Overall, the assessment strategy remains the same. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes objectives articulated in the course ILOs are assessed within each course by means of a course-specific mix of exams, and team and individual assignments. The programme ILOs are further assessed in a master thesis where an independent, individual research in the academic field of the programme is conducted.

NVAO Standard 4: Demonstration

NVAO question: Has the demonstration of the programme changed?

The “endwork” of the programmes continue to comprise a portfolio of core courses (26EC in total), electives (18 EC in total), and a thesis (16 EC) that jointly represent the programme ILOs. All MSc programmes, including the broadened programme, share the same quality assurance and assurance of learning policies.

Closing

We hope to have demonstrated that the broadened programme shares substantial common ground with the learning objectives and core content of the old OCC and HRM programmes, and that the changes we have made between 2018 and 2021 strengthened the quality and cohesion of the programme as a whole. We also hope to have concluded that the new programme name supports a transparent profiling and positioning of the broadened programme. The three focus points together carve a clearly defined and distinctive position for the programme within RSM and within the university landscape, where most universities largely offer people and change as separate programmes.

We request the expert panel to advise NVAO positively on our programme amalgamation and name change requests, so that we can provide our students with greater breadth and choice in their education so they can pursue a career in HR, consultancy, or people management.