

The logo for AeQui, featuring the letters 'AeQui' in a purple, sans-serif font. A light blue, hand-drawn style line loops around the letters, starting from the 'A', passing under the 'e', looping around the 'Q', and ending under the 'i'.

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MSc Customs and Supply Chain Compliance

Rotterdam School of Management
Erasmus University Rotterdam

*Report of the limited programme assessment
9 February 2024*

Utrecht, The Netherlands

March 2024

www.AeQui.nl

Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

Programme

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Rotterdam School of Management
Master Customs and Supply Chain Compliance
Location: Rotterdam
Mode of study: parttime
Croho: 75133
Result of institutional assessment: positive

Committee

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prof.dr. Frank Nellen, domain expert
prof.dr. Moritz Fleischmann, domain expert
mr. Katja Idsinga-Schellaars, domain expert
Maarten Peels BA, student
drs. Linda van der Grijspaarde, secretary

The panel was presented to the NVAO for approval.
The panel assessed on the basis of NVAO Framework 2018

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Summary

On 9 February 2024 an assessment committee of AeQui visited the master programme Customs and Supply Chain Compliance at Rotterdam School of Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The committee concludes that the programme meets each standard; the overall quality of the programme **meets the standard**.

Intended learning outcomes

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The multidisciplinary programme aims to prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The programme has translated this profile into seven intended learning outcomes that are categorised into knowledge, analytical skills, socials and managerial skills, and attitude. These intended learning outcomes are properly described in terms of level and orientation.

Teaching-learning environment

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The parttime master programme is organised around three knowledge pillars. By combining perspectives from customs law and procedures, supply chain management, and information management, the programme provides the students with knowledge, insights, and methodologies from these academic disciplines. The programme has a strong international focus, visible through the teaching, the staff, and the internationally oriented student community. The programme uses appropriate study materials, in the form of books, articles and self-written materials. The educational formats are adequate, with a positive impact of the group meetings and working on projects in small groups. The students learn a lot from their peers and are inspired by each other. The staff is qualified for the execution of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme is reflected in the broad range of expertise among the staff. The programme has begun to further develop the programme for the next cohort.

Student assessment

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. Multiple assessment types are applied throughout the programme, and

these are aligned with the learning outcomes. The quality and level of assessments and assessment questions is high. The questions are challenging, often multidisciplinary and zoom in on relevant real-world cases. The requirements are transparent to the students although more attention could be paid to the required commitment of the students in terms of hours for the take-home exams. The assessment procedures are sufficiently implemented in the programme. The Board of Examiners performs thoroughly and pro-actively its tasks to control the quality of the exams, the assessment procedures, and graduation research projects. The Board shows good knowledge of the programme and its assessment.

Achieved learning outcomes

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The programme aims to prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The programme succeeds in achieving this aim. The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is among others demonstrated by the results of the theses. Also, alumni of the 2017 cohort who graduated some time ago indicated that the program helped them follow the career path they envisioned.

Recommendations

To bring the programme to an even higher level of quality in the future, the committee issues the following recommendations:

- Because the domain for this programme changes rapidly, the panel recommends that the intended learning outcomes be updated regularly, in consultation with the field.
- For the new cohort, attention is needed to update offerings, add current topics such as ESG, and look for opportunities to further integrate a focus on research skills.

- In the further development of the system of assessment, the panel deems it important to consider reducing the number of tests and thereby the assessment pressure.

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework (2018) are assessed positively; the assessment committee therefore awards a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the programme.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,
Utrecht, March 2024

Raoul van Aalst
Chair

Linda van der Grijspaarde
Secretary

Introduction

This report describes the programme assessment of the Executive Master programme Customs and Supply Chain Compliance (CSCC). The programme is offered by the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), the business school of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

The institute

Erasmus University Rotterdam has seven schools, two institutes and a university college in which education and research is being conducted. Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) is one of the schools. The primary focus of this business school is on developing business leaders with international careers who can become a force for positive change by carrying their innovative mindset into a sustainable future. The school has a portfolio of bachelor, master, MBA, PhD and executive programmes.

The programme

The CSCC programme is a two-year part-time master programme of scientific orientation. According to the CROHO, the programme comprises 64 EC. The programme intends to adjust the amount of EC in the CROHO to the usual 60 EC for a master programme.

The programme is offered roughly every three years. The size of the group per cohort averages twenty-five students. The last cohort started in 2020. Most students have graduated by 2023. Some are still working on completion. The programme plans to start a new group in 2024, if there are enough applications.

The programme was initially offered by TU Delft and has been transferred to Erasmus University Rotterdam. The governance of the programme has gradually become more aligned with the governance of the other degree programmes in RSM.

The programme is focused on customs and trade compliance professionals from both government

and commercial sectors. It is structured with the aim to optimally prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The combination of students from government and business in the classroom, as well as individual learning and group work, fosters this development.

The programme consists of seven modules, workshops, an integration project, and a thesis. The format requires students to travel to Rotterdam for the intensive weeks of the seven modules. Learning and collaboration among students are stimulated and facilitated through the online learning platform.

The programme is taught in English because it has a clear international profile, that also aims to take in international students. The field is by its very nature international. The committee agrees with the considerations for choosing an English-language programme.

The previous accreditation of the programme is based on a conditional decision from March 2017 and a follow-up assessment in February 2018. The main concerns in 2017 had to do with 1) admission procedures, 2) supervision of faculty without UTQ certificate and 3) the clear relation of examinations to the intended learning outcomes. The follow-up assessment in 2018 stated that sufficient improvements were made in the programme. As a result, the committee stated that all conditions were fulfilled. At the same time, the committee was still concerned that the scientific

and research-oriented character of the programme should be further safeguarded. It therefore formulated additional recommendations on the admission criteria, the education in methodology and the integration of the focus areas in the programme. The committee discusses the follow-up to these recommendations under Standard 2.

The assessment

The Erasmus University Rotterdam assigned AeQui to perform a quality assessment of its master programme CSCC. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee. A preparatory meeting with representatives of the programme was held to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit.

In the run-up to the site visit, the assessment committee studied the self-evaluation report on the programme and reviewed a sample of student work. The findings were input for discussions during the site visit.

The site visit was carried out on Friday, February 9 according to the programme presented in attachment 2. The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment committee

presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme and the institution.

As mentioned, at the time of visitation, the active group of students is from cohort 2020-2023. Most have finished, with a few in the final stages of the programme. The programme intends to start a new cohort in September 2024. The necessary student perspective information was obtained from interviews with alumni of the 2017-2020 and 2020-2023 cohorts. The committee obtained sufficient information from the documentation and interviews to make informed judgments on the four standards and on the programme.

In this document, the committee is reporting on its findings, considerations, and conclusions according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

Initiated by the programme, a development dialogue will be planned later in 2024. The results of this development dialogue have no influence on the assessment presented in this report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The multidisciplinary programme aims to prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The programme has translated this profile into seven intended learning outcomes that are categorised into knowledge, analytical skills, socials and managerial skills, and attitude. These intended learning outcomes are properly described in terms of level and orientation. Because the domain for this programme changes rapidly, the panel recommends that the intended learning outcomes be updated regularly, in consultation with the field.

Findings

The master programme is focused on customs and trade compliance professionals from both government and the commercial sector. Traditionally, the customs profession is a field in which learning on the job was the standard, and most education is done in-house or in industry courses. However, according to the programme, current challenges in the customs domain require more skilled personnel with a multidisciplinary academic background. This is what the programme aims to provide. The programme expects that, in the next few years, hiring customs staff at the academic level – with academic research and methodological expertise will increase in customs administrations as well as in trade.

The programme is structured to prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The combination of students from government and business in the classroom, as well as individual learning and group work, fosters this development.

The seven intended learning outcomes for the programme are ordered according to the structure of learning in knowledge, analytical skills, socials and managerial skills, and attitude. They demonstrate the multi-disciplinary focus on three integrated perspectives: customs law and proce-

dures, supply chain management, and information management. Students learn to generate a sustainable and coherent approach to solving complex customs compliance problems, using qualitative and quantitative methods, and understand the managerial implications. Also, they learn to design and execute a complete research project independently, which includes defining a relevant research question in the current business and/or administration context, formulating a research plan, reviewing relevant literature, collecting, processing, and interpreting data, evaluating the findings, and relating them to business.

The programme engages in the annual learning/evaluation cycle for all accredited programmes to further align and formulate the intended learning outcomes in line with the RSM School mission and quality assurance policy.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the master programme offers the students the possibility to obtain a sufficient multidisciplinary overview. According to the committee, the seven intended learning outcomes are well described in terms of level and orientation. They reflect the multidisciplinary profile of the programme. The programme aims to teach students academic skills, research skills and communication skills at an advanced level.

The committee noticed that over the years the programme has had to make more of an effort to communicate the relevance of the programme and recruit enough students. For the targeted new cohort, the committee notes, there is still insufficient interest. The committee advises the programme to review the programme's profile and sharpen it to match the current needs of prospective students, in close cooperation with the field. In doing so, the committee recommends that the programme consider, for example, consultants as a target group in addition to customs

and trade compliance professionals from government and commercial sectors. The committee suggests that the programme could use alumni stories to provide insight into what career paths become available through the completion of this master's degree.

Based on the interviews and examination of the documentation supplied by the programme, the assessment committee establishes that the intended learning outcomes **meet the standard**.

2. Teaching-learning environment

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The parttime master programme is organised around three knowledge pillars. By combining perspectives from customs law and procedures, supply chain management, and information management, the programme provides the students with knowledge, insights, and methodologies from these academic disciplines. The programme has a strong international focus, visible through the teaching, the staff, and the internationally oriented student community. The programme uses appropriate study materials, in the form of books, articles and self-written materials. The educational formats are adequate, with a positive impact of the group meetings and working on projects in small groups. The students learn a lot from their peers and are inspired by each other. The staff is qualified for the execution of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme is reflected in the broad range of expertise among the staff. The programme has begun to further develop the programme for the next cohort. Attention is needed to update offerings, add current topics such as ESG, and look for opportunities to further integrate a focus on research skills.

Findings

Contents

The programme of the 2020 cohort included 62 EC and lasted two and a half years. The programme of the cohorts before that included 64 EC, as is still described in the CROHO. The programme plans to have the number of EC in the CROHO adjusted to the usual 60 EC for a master programme. The programme of the cohort to be started will include 60 EC. Program management is currently shaping the new programme. The committee describes and assesses the programme of the 2020 cohort in this report.

The knowledge part of the educational concept is based on three knowledge pillars: customs law and procedures, supply chain management (including logistics), and information management (including auditing). The programme provides students with an understanding of basic concepts, access to academic sources and recent research results in the three pillars.

The three pillars comprise different academic disciplines, with different views on scientific research, different bodies of literature, and different expectations from an academically trained pro-

fessional. The programme addressed this by allocating time in the research methods courses to the specific research methodologies in the legal, business and engineering domain, by using learning methods that are appropriate in these disciplines. Examples are legal arguing, case-based learning, and IT systems design.

The programme comprises nine courses: Customs Fundamentals I (6 EC), Customs Fundamentals II (6 EC), International Trade and Transport Regulation (3 EC), Global Supply Chain Management & Logistics and Transport (5 EC), Design of Information Chains / Systems Based Auditing (5 EC), Trade Compliance Management (4 EC), Research Methods and Methodology (6 EC), Integration Project (7 EC), and Thesis Project (20 EC). The knowledge-oriented learning, research methods from various scientific disciplines and the associated skills and attitudes are taught in the first seven courses.

Students complete the programme with the Integration Project and the Thesis Project. The Integration Project is a course in which students work on a real-life challenge, in a group. The real-life challenge is proposed by one of the members of the group, who will also provide access to relevant information and contacts. The group will be

tasked to analyse the problem in a scientific way and propose and develop one or more solutions that result from an in-depth, academically sound, analysis of the problem and solution scenarios. Students integrate the three knowledge pillars in the project; the final deliverable is a co-written report. In the thesis project, students carry out an individual research project on a chosen topic of their own. Students are required to connect to all three pillars that underpin the programme but are allowed to specialize in one or two of the knowledge pillars in the thesis.

In the programme, all courses are described individually in a course outline, that includes the learning objectives at course level, the reading and theoretical framing of the course content, an overview of the lecturing schedule, required reading and preparation for each session, and a planning of the self-study period for the students. The alignment of the course learning goals to the programme intended learning outcomes, as well as the mapping of assessments against the learning goals is done on a course-by-course basis in the course outline. The course outline is made available to the students before the start of each course.

Recommendations previous accreditation committee

The previous accreditation committee advised that the scientific and research-oriented character of the programme should be further safeguarded. It therefore formulated the next additional recommendations.

First, the committee insisted that the majority of the students should have a scientific bachelor upon entry. The current committee notes that the programme mainly gets students with a college bachelor's degree. It is mandatory for these students to take the premaster, which brings students up to the appropriate level in terms of content and research methodology. The current committee argues that the targeted field does not hold that many professionals with a scientific degree to begin with. This was, the committee

learned, one of the reasons to start the programme at inception. Therefore, the current committee is of the opinion that offering the mandatory premaster is the more productive way to safeguard the scientific and research-oriented orientation of the programme.

Second, the previous committee recommended that no exemptions be given for the research methods and methodology module if the candidate's scientific training differs from the approach in this programme. The current committee notes that the programme does not give exemptions for taking the teaching of the various research methods.

Third, the previous committee advised the programme to make sure that the three focus areas of the programme are sufficiently integrated. To address that point, the programme has merged the courses Design of Information Chains and Systems Based Auditing. In addition, students integrate the various pillars in courses such as the Integration Project.

After evaluating the actions and progress on the previous recommendations, the current committee is of the opinion that the previous recommendations have been adequately followed-up by the programme.

Structure

The teaching format for all the courses, except the Integration Project and the thesis, is a combination of six weeks of self-study, and after that an intensive week in which classes/meetings take place face to face. The period of self-study is guided by a limited number of face-to-face online lectures. The intensive week is a blend of plenary lectures, interactive class discussions, group work, and student presentations, with occasional guest lecturers.

The skills and attitude learning takes place in two ways primarily. The programme management creates groups with students with a diversity of

background and working environment. The management strives to put business and customs professionals together as much as possible. The second approach is that teachers engage the students, during the digital lectures, but specifically during the intensive weeks, in class discussions, Socratic dialogues, and presentations of their work – both as a group, and individually. The programme also creates space for sharing (professional) experiences by the students, and, especially during the intensive weeks, allowing time for social interaction between the students during coffee breaks, joint lunches, company visits and occasional social events.

Incoming students

The programme's admission criteria require students to have at least a scientific bachelor's degree. For students with an applied bachelor the programme offers the pre-master (16 EC). The programme strongly recommends that all candidates follow the pre-master programme, given that it recruits candidates with working experience that typically have some distance from their previous education. The programme also requires students to have at least three years of customs-relevant experience, to offer their expertise to other students when working in teams on challenges relevant for their own organisation, and for society in general.

Prior to the 2020 cohort, all students took the pre-master, regardless of whether they met the formal entry requirements. Components include research methodology and basic knowledge of customs, information technology, logistics and auditing.

The 2020 cohort consisted of twenty-five students, including ten international students. The international students came from South Korea, Spain, Germany, India, France, Costa Rica, Belgium and China. One student had a PhD upon entry. Ten students had scientific master's degrees, two students had scientific bachelor's degrees, and twelve had applied bachelor's degrees. All

students worked in trade management or customs functions.

Staff

According to the list of teaching faculty, fourteen staff members are involved in the programme. The size is about 1.3 FTE. This comes to a staff-student ratio of 1:25. Twelve of the fourteen staff members have PhDs. The other two have an MSc. Ten of the fourteen staff members have a University Teaching Qualification.

The expertise of the core teachers is spread across the three pillars. In addition, the programme involves industry experts, as well as colleagues from other schools within Erasmus University to bring in their expertise in the various courses.

Language

The programme is taught in English because it has a clear international profile around international trade and compliance management. The programme targets international students to provide interaction in an international setting. Although Dutch Customs is one of the main sources of students for this programme, the actual pool of candidates is small and very international. Therefore, the programme needs to recruit students worldwide.

Considerations

The committee has established that the contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The committee studied the three disciplinary pillars of the programme and concludes that by combining legal customs, supply chain management/logistics and IT/auditing, the programme confronts the students with knowledge, understanding and methodologies from the relevant academic disciplines.

The committee appreciates the strong international focus, through the teaching, the staff, and the internationally oriented student community. The committee finds the choice of English language for the course appropriate given the in-

tended international audience of diverse backgrounds. All staff members have adequate English language skills for teaching.

The committee notes that the programme uses appropriate study materials, in the form of books, articles and self-written materials. The committee appreciates the self-written materials, which are of a high standard and integrate different perspectives whenever possible. The committee learned from students that some materials were outdated. The committee therefore recommends the programme ensures the materials are regularly updated, for example in terms of changing legislation.

The programme has begun to further develop the programme for the next cohort. In the past cohort, the programme advanced the focus on research methodology in the programme. The committee recommends that the programme explore whether it would be beneficial to further promote and/or integrate research methodology into courses. Some students indicated that in the Integration Project they felt they were not yet adequately equipped to conduct research. The committee also agreed with the programme that sustainability should receive more attention in the new programme. The committee recommends that in adjusting the number of credits to 60 EC, the programme takes another look at the workload. Alumni reported that it is a heavy programme, with a high assessment pressure and the need to spend a lot of study hours.

In the eyes of the committee the didactic concept of the programme structures the programme and supports the learning process of the students. The educational formats are adequate. The committee is very positive about the impact of the group meetings and working on projects in small groups. The students learn a lot from each other and are inspired by each other, the alumni indicated to the committee. The backgrounds of the students, who come from customs and business and from different countries, allow for a wide range of different experiences and approaches to

be exchanged. The self-study prior to the intensive week works well for students and they report that this allows them to discuss the materials in-depth with each other. The committee appreciates the quality of the online materials, such as short video clips. These nicely complement the written material.

The committee observes that the staff is qualified for the execution of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme is reflected in the broad range of expertise among the staff. Alumni indicate that they rate the staff as highly qualified and easily accessible to students. The committee notes that although two core members do not have a PhD and thus do not meet the guideline that lecturers are educated one level above the programme, they are very valuable to the programme and highly experienced and appreciated lecturers. The committee notes that some of the teachers still do not hold a UTQ. This was a focus of the previous visitation. The committee recommends that the programme bring the teaching team in the next cohort in line with RSM's guidelines regarding didactic training of teachers.

The committee notices that the faculty team is quite compact and made up of respected experts with longer track records. The committee recommends that the upcoming programme also invite experts from the younger guard, to expand the faculty pool, bring in experience from the current field, and have more opportunities as a backstop for different courses.

According to the committee's observations, the programme combined with the pre-master aligns well with the qualifications of entering students. The committee feels that the admission procedure functions well and is informative for students and the management. The committee noticed that the programme manages to attract a highly motivated, ambitious group of students.

The tutoring and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of the (international) students. The committee noted, based on the discussions with alumni, that the programme invests actively in offering students guidance throughout the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

3. Student assessment

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. Multiple assessment types are applied throughout the programme, and these are aligned with the learning outcomes. The quality and level of assessments and assessment questions is high. The questions are challenging, often multidisciplinary and zoom in on relevant real-world cases. The requirements are transparent to the students although more attention could be paid to the required commitment of the students in terms of hours for the take-home exams. The assessment procedures are sufficiently implemented in the programme. The Board of Examiners performs thoroughly and pro-actively its tasks to control the quality of the exams, the assessment procedures, and graduation research projects. The Board shows good knowledge of the programme and its assessment. In the further development of the system of assessment, the panel deemed it important to consider reducing the number of tests and thereby the assessment pressure.

Findings

There are twenty-six assessments in the programme, including the final thesis. Twenty-two assessments are summative, four assessments are formative. Each of the nine courses in the programme includes three to five assessments. Summative assessment forms are projects, exams with open questions, and written assessments. Formative assessments are quizzes. The programme has an assessment approach that is based on a combination of individual and group assessments. All courses have a threshold minimum of 50% individual assessment (over final course grade).

Given the large online part of the learning experience of the programme, a choice was made in the past to use individual exams that are take-home exams. After the self-study and intensive week periods, students have two weeks to complete the assignment of the take-home exam. This is an essay-based exam where students must answer multiple questions in their own words. The exam papers are checked with a plagiarism scanner to avoid issues of plagiarism and freeriding.

For the next cohort, the programme will evaluate this form of assessment with take-home exams. With the advent of ChatGPT, examiners have an even more limited view of whether students submit their own work. The programme will develop an assessment approach that is robust for the recognising the use of AI tools. Part of this process

will be the extension of the portfolio approach, which has already been introduced for the pre-master and the course Trade Compliance Management.

The programme so far has its own Examination Board. Before the start of the next cohort, this Board will be merged with the examination board of the MBA programmes at RSM.

Participation is not graded directly, but rather indirectly through some of the graded in-class assignments that students work on during the intensive week. A part of the assignments is group work, which forces the students to interact and gauge each other's opinions on certain topics.

The programme describes the assessment approach in the course outline of every course. The assessment matrix in the course outline matches learning objectives with assessment types and indicates the weight of individual and group components. In addition, the assessment matrix indicates partial grades, minimum requirements for passing and if grades are numerical or of a pass/fail nature. During the course delivery, the faculty discusses the expectations towards assignments and the final exam and provides examples of questions. For the assessment of the thesis, a grading rubric is provided to the students as part of the thesis manual.

Considerations

The committee concludes that the programme has an adequate assessment system and assessment procedures. Multiple adequate assessment types are implemented in the programme.

The programme opts for a very large number of summative assessments. The committee notes the advantages of this: it challenges students to actively engage with the material throughout the programme. In addition, students receive regular feedback this way, which is provided extensively by the examiners, the committee notes. The disadvantage is that it creates a high assessment pressure, which makes students experience the programme as very demanding. The committee recommends that the programme, when revising the assessment system, seeks a balance between keeping students actively engaged and an appropriate assessment pressure.

The committee is positive about the quality and level of assessments and assessment questions. The questions are challenging, often multidisciplinary and zoom in on relevant cases from the field.

The programme chooses a grading system with grades from 1.0 to 10.0. The committee noticed that there is little variation in the grades, generally students receive a 7 or an 8. In the case of the take-home exams, this may be because students work through until they are certain of an ample passing grade. The committee agrees with the programme that it would be good to consider a different grading system when revising the system of assessment. If the programme is going to work with a portfolio approach, for example, then the programme could choose a four-point scale or pass/fail, for example, when assessing.

The committee notes that the programme provides clear instructions to students on the nature of the assessments. However, there are no clear,

delineated agreements on the amount of time students should or may put into a take-home exam. The committee sees that a culture has developed where students generally put far more time into these assessments than is intended and desirable. The committee recommends that the revision of the take-home exam include a limitation on time. In addition, the committee agrees with the programme that the possibility of supervised assessment instead of the current take-home exams should be considered to ensure reliability, time spent and reduce the risk of exam fraud.

The Board of Examiners performs its tasks thoroughly and pro-actively to assure the quality of the assessments, the theses, and the assessment procedures. The Board, that focusses only on this programme, shows very good knowledge of the programme and its assessment. The Board is strictly doing more than it should, the committee notes. For example, the examination committee also actively contributes to the choice of assessment forms and the system of assessing. The committee observes that the Board is a good sparring partner of the programme, in addition to the safeguarding tasks it performs well. The committee thinks it is positive that the examination board will merge into the broad examination board for RSM's executive masters, so that the working method can be standardised. The committee recommends that the programme monitor whether sufficient knowledge about this programme is present in the merged examination board, so that the examination board can continue to operate close to the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

4. Achieved learning outcomes

The assessment committee concludes that the programme **meets this standard**. The programme aims to prepare future customs professionals to be leaders in their field by enabling them to build their knowledge base and analytical skills, as well as their key networks in government and the industry. The programme succeeds in achieving this aim. The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is among others demonstrated by the results of the theses. Also, alumni of the 2017 cohort who graduated some time ago indicated that the programme helped them follow the career path they envisioned.

Findings

With the thesis of 20 EC, students complete the programme. Completing the thesis with a defence before the supervisor and a second assessor is the final stage of the master programme. The programme allows the students to specialise in one of the pillars for their thesis project – with the explicit requirement that the other pillars are considered and connected to. Some students have a specific interest in one or two of the pillars and specialisation might also allow for more depth in the scientific work in the thesis. The programme does not see that this compromises the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. According to the programme, the curriculum devotes considerable time to the integration of the three pillars, and, due to the nature of this domain, even in a specialised thesis, the other pillars are in effect always considered. The committee concurs with this view: the theses are indeed multidisciplinary in orientation, while at the same time in-depth research will almost unavoidably entail a focus of some sort.

Thesis assessment will take place through supervision and review by two faculty members. The first member is the main supervisor, who will directly supervise the students, and the other member is a second reader, who will be involved primarily in reviewing the initial proposal, the midterm version of the thesis and the final version of the thesis. Both faculty members will engage with the student in the defence of the thesis. In practice, there can also be a third party, from the side of the employer, who can also be involved in the supervision, but not in the grading of the thesis.

For the assessment, the programme uses a rubric with several criteria and evaluation levels. The evaluation of the thesis as well as the justification of the grade will be recorded on this rubric and signed by both faculty members. In cases where both supervisors have doubts, either to award a high grade, or a minimal pass grade, the Academic Director can be consulted. The Academic Director will then also review the thesis.

The midterm committee (2021) had the following comment: 'The thesis rubric is difficult to read and understand. Descriptions of the grades given is limited. The committee suggests reviewing the form and develop a system to ensure students can learn from feedback on the proposal and thesis.' The programme addressed this by revising the thesis rubric to make the rubric more suitable for the multi-disciplinary approach in the programme. This means that the rubric now contains evaluation criteria for both business, design and legal-oriented research activities. The rubric also has an explanatory guideline for thesis supervisors on how to apply the criteria. In addition, the programme asks the reviewers to attach comments on the rubric after the thesis defence.

The programme management speaks positively about the career prospects of the alumni. Many of the alumni change jobs after graduating or move up the career path in their respective organisations. In addition, the management sees that a number of students are able to better manage challenges in their current positions. Given

that students all have a working environment already, the programme does not offer specific career services.

The alumni of the programme are part of the extensive alumni community of RSM. As such they have become part of a network of 50.000+ members worldwide. Given the relatively small scale of this programme, faculty as well as programme management are in close contact with alumni. Alumni are frequently asked to participate in promotional activities for the programme or appear in webinars. In addition, for a number of faculty, alumni are part of their professional circle. Several alumni also help RSM organise face-to-face events.

Considerations

The committee conducted a high-level assessment of fifteen theses of the programme and established that all met the requirements for graduation. The committee considers the grades a fair representation of the academic quality of the theses. These outcomes demonstrate that the students have achieved the intended learning outcomes as formulated by the programme. Most theses show that the students developed original problem-solving skills and are analytical thinkers and can deliver new solutions to existing or new problems. The successful completion of the Integration Project course also shows the alumni have sufficient understanding of the challenges and

opportunities with which potential employers must deal.

According to the committee, the programme has made good modifications to the assessment form, which better reflects the specifics of the research methodology of the three different pillars. The transparency of the judgments could be further strengthened, the committee notes. It is not always clear how the final grade is arrived at. The committee also recommends increasing the amount of textual substantiation of the judgment and feedback to the student. Although students indicated that they also receive sufficient verbal feedback, it is not fully clear from the written record how examiners substantiate their judgments on the theses.

Based on the interviews with stakeholders from the field and alumni, and on the information from the documentation, the committee concludes that the programme is highly relevant to the field. The alumni of the 2017 cohort, who graduated some time ago, told the committee that they were able to follow the career path they envisioned in part because of the programme.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee establishes that the programme **meets this standard**.

Attachments

Attachment 1 Assessment committee

drs. Raoul van Aalst, chair

Independent consultant organisatieadviseur and NVAO trained chair of assessment panels

prof.dr. Moritz Fleischmann

Professor Supply Chain Management – University of Mannheim

dr. Frank Nellen

Associate Professor VAT and Customs Law Maastricht University

mr. K. (Katja) Idsinga-Schellaars

Senior director Global Customs and Compliance – Teva Pharmaceuticals and Deputy Judge Customs Court Haarlem

Maarten Peels, BA

Student M Applied Ethics at Utrecht University

The panel was supported by drs. Linda van der Grijspaarde as a certified secretary.

All panel members have completed, signed, and submitted a statement of independence and impartiality to NVAO.

Attachment 2 Programme of the assessment

Date: 9 February 2024

Location: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Campus Woudestein, Burg. Oudlaan 50 Rotterdam

Time	Session	Attendents
08.30	Arrival	
09.00	Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of education RSM • Academic Director CSCC • Policy director RSM
10.15	Showcase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of education RSM • Academic Director CSCC • Policy director RSM • Alumnus cohort 2020 • Alumnus cohort 2020
11.30	Lunch, documents and opportunity for open consultation	
13.00	Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Director CSCC, teaching staff member • Teaching staff member • Teaching staff member
14.00	Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumnus cohort 2020 • Alumnus cohort 2020 • Alumnus cohort 2020
15.00	Examinaton board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member CSCC Examination Board • Member CSCC Examination Board • Chair RSM Examination Board
16.00	Alumni & employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evofenedex, employer • Douane Nederland, employer • Douane Nederland, alumnus • Stryker, alumnus
17.00	Committee (private consultation)	
17.45	Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim dean RSM • Dean of education RSM • Academic Director CSCC • Policy director RSM • Academische zaken EUR (zoom)
18.00	End of visit	

Attachment 3 Documents

- Interim review 2021
- Calculation of contact hours
- List of Teaching Faculty
- Curriculum mapping
- Sample course outline
- Brochure (cohort 2020-2023)
- Cohort 2017-2020 student list
- Cohort 2020-2023 student list
- List of theses (2017-2020 and 2020-2023)
- Thesis grading rubric (2020-2023)
- Samples of minutes of the various boards
- Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) and AI Policy
- Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) values
- Theses of fifteen students