

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

BSc Management and Consumer Studies

Wageningen University

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the Bachelor Programme *Management and Consumer Studies* of Wageningen University. The programme was assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

The programme teaches students to become knowledgeable in the domains of management and consumer studies, and application thereof in the fields of agri-food and life sciences. The learning outcomes include knowledge, research capabilities and professional skills such as written and oral presentation and collaborative skills. The panel is positive about the learning outcomes, these display a bachelor's level and an academic orientation, are well-formulated, measurable and up-to-date. The panel is also positive about the extent to which sustainability defines the character and profile of the programme. The same holds for the pro-social character of the programme, although this is not as much reflected in the learning outcomes. The panel recommends the programme to make this more explicit in the learning outcomes. The programme is unique, due to the domains and fields it brings together. However, in order to become more aware of related programmes in Europe and the world, the panel suggests the programme could make a more elaborate benchmark. The programme could also gain from more diversified composition of the Advisory Council, in terms of background in industry. The panel assesses standard 1, intended learning outcomes, as satisfactory.

The panel is positive about the renewal of the programme resulted in explicit learning lines that reflect the learning outcomes. The learning lines constitute programme elements that develop disciplinary knowledge in business studies and consumer studies, academic skills and professional skills. The panel established that the emphasis of the programme is on the field of agri-food and less on the broader field of life sciences, the panel suggests the programme to reconsider this balance.

The learning lines provide clear structure and coherence to the curriculum, and the panel concludes that the courses allow students to obtain all the learning outcomes at a bachelor's level. The programme makes use of various teaching and learning methods that support the development of professional skills and academic skills. The panel is very positive about the variety of teaching and learning methods and the adequate choice of these in terms of course objectives. Students write their thesis in the first half of the third year. In the second half of the third year, the free choice part is scheduled. Students have many options, amongst others to study abroad. The panel is impressed by the number of students who take this opportunity, and which is, amongst others, a result of the scheduling of the programme.

The panel observes that attention for quantitative analysis, which is of importance to the domain, is sufficiently present within the programme. It suggests the programme to reconsider the order of courses in statistics and mathematics. The panel observed that the level of the programme is adequate, the panel suggests the programme to raise the challenge for students and/or stimulate ambitious students to take part in honours education, in order to get the most out of the better students.

Study support to students is provided by study advisors who monitor student's progress in collaboration with members of the academic staff. The panel has established that this monitoring is adequate, but that it does not prevent students from delaying their studies. The panel recommends the programme therefore to take measures to improve the study success rate of the programme. The panel is very positive about the quality of the staff. Overall, the panel assesses standard 2, teaching and learning environment, as good.

The panel has established that the programme carefully reflects on the assessment methods used. The extent to which the student's appreciation of the assessment is used in reflection on assessment is a positive element, as is the variety in the programme's assessment methods. The panel is positive about the renewed rubric the programme uses for the assessment of the thesis. The panel has studied 15 theses and their assessment forms. The panel agrees with the grades given to the students, but recommends the programme to stimulate staff members to fill out (more detailed) comments on the assessment forms.

The Examination Board is pro-active and aims to strengthen a quality culture with regard to the practice of assessment among staff members. The board does so by holding discussions with the various Chair Groups. The panel regards this system as useful but recommends the programme to increase the frequency of these discussions, which are currently held only once every four years. One of the considered measures which the panel applauds is the peer review, organized by the Chair Groups, for which they sent their courses to be reviewed to academic peers at other universities. The panel assesses standard 3, assessment, as satisfactory.

The panel is positive about the quality of the theses reviewed. Students demonstrate that they have obtained knowledge in the domains of business and consumer studies as well as the agri-food field. Students apply a number of methodological approaches and display that they are able to reflect on the choice of the methodology. The programme prepares students well for continuing their studies at the master's level. The panel assesses standard 4, achieved learning outcomes, as good.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Bachelor Programme *Management and Consumer Studies* of Wageningen University assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be good. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to accredit this programme.

Rotterdam, 15 April 2019

Prof.dr. Sjoerd Romme
(panel chair)

Jetse Siebenga MSc.
(panel secretary)

2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Wageningen University to support the limited framework programme assessment process for the Bachelor *Management and Consumer Studies* of this University. The objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

The management of the programmes in the assessment cluster Business Management convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of candidates.

Having conferred with management of the programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof. dr. Sjoerd Romme, professor in Entrepreneurship & Innovation at the Eindhoven University of Technology;
- Prof. dr. ir. Ale Smidts, professor of Marketing Research at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University;
- Prof. dr. ir. Guido Van Huylbroeck, professor in Agricultural and Rural Environmental Economics, Academic Director for International Relations at Ghent University;
- Renée Stam MSc, recently graduated in Environmental and Sustainable Development at Utrecht University.

On behalf of Certiked, J.W. Siebenga MSc. served as the secretary in the assessment process. The overall coordination of the assessment cluster Business Management was executed by drs. W. Vercooterren.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit were discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the Certiked process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the last two complete years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected 15 final projects from this list. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates, these final projects being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

A number of weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this preliminary meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the final projects were discussed. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 23 November 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the Wageningen University Campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, the panel was given the opportunity to meet with Faculty Board representatives, programme management, Examination Board representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, study advisors and students and alumni.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, the assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management were given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for these factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the University Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: B Management and Consumer Studies
(Bedrijfs- en Consumentenwetenschappen)
Orientation, level programme: Academic Bachelor
Grade: BSc
Number of credits: 180 EC
Specialisations: Business Studies
Consumer Studies
Location: Wageningen
Mode of study: Full-time (language of instruction: Dutch/English)
Registration in CROHO: 56836

Name of institution: Wageningen University
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

The Bachelor in Management and Consumer studies is a three-year social science programme embedded in agricultural and life science contexts. The programme's objective is to provide students with a solid theoretical foundation in management and consumer studies, with methodological, academic, and professional skills, and with an academic and professional attitude. The agri-food and life science chains are defined as the production, processing, trading, distribution and consumption of food (from field to fork), including the linkages, actors and transactions involved. The panel discussed with the programme the extent to which the programme sufficiently draws on the life sciences in its profile. Along with the university as a whole, in recent years the programme has shifted from a strong emphasis on agri-food solely, to a combined emphasis in both life science and agri-food. The programme has a multidisciplinary character by combining various perspectives and disciplines in the programme. Elements that further sustain the character of the programme are the integration of social science with life science, the combination of management and consumer studies, and the application of management and consumer studies to food and the agri-food chain. In addition, the panel noted that in comparison to other programmes in business studies, the programme has a strong emphasis on sustainability as well as a pro-social approach. The pro-social approach of the programme consists of attention for aspects of consumer studies that involve a broader outlook than just a commercial-oriented outlook. It contains sociological aspects, governmental aspects and considers the well-being of consumer on a large scale.

The research environment offered by Wageningen University traditionally combines fundamental academic research and the application thereof in cooperation with the professional field. Therefore, the extent to which the programme can draw on relevant developments in both the academic and professional field are high. Research groups involved in the programme are amongst others business economics, food quality and design, management studies, economics of consumers and households and marketing and consumer behaviour. The programme is unique in the Netherlands for its focus on the agri-food domain and it is the only programme in the Netherlands which allows students to specialize in Consumer Studies.

The programme compares itself to other European universities of high stance within the domain of consumer and business studies such as Bonn, Helsinki and Ghent. With regard to the consumer perspective, the programme compares itself to a programme in consumer affairs of the University of Munster. Compared to this programme, Wageningen University offers a broader view on consumer studies, involving a sociologist and a communication perspective in consumer studies.

All students get a broad foundation and are offered the choice between either a major in Business Studies or a major in Consumer Studies. In the Business major, students focus on decision-making processes within businesses, managerial and financial issues, and relations between the different actors involved in a chain. Students with a major in Consumer Studies focus on decision-making processes within households, purchasing and consuming behaviour of individual consumers, consumer lifestyles, communication, and consumer centred technology development.

The overarching aim of the programme is to train students to be able to reflect on the complexities, challenges, subtleties and specific issues that set the multidisciplinary sustainable agri-food chain apart from other business and consumer chains. Students of the programme have developed sufficient competencies to start a professional career or commence a study on Master's level in a similar or related domain. Students of the programme obtain twelve learning outcomes, containing a description of theory, methods and skills. They become familiar with the theoretical lenses of consumer and business science and learn how to apply these to production and consumption of food and the agri-food chain. In addition, students develop academic skills such as formulating a research question, write a research design and how to collect and interpret data. Students further develop academic and professional skills such as collaborating, communicating, making sound judgement and skills that allow students to design and plan their own learning path. The programme has recently developed a learning line within the curriculum with specific attention for professional skills. In the current curriculum, this includes that students learn how to reflect on their learning path and personal development.

The programme receives advice about relevant developments in the professional field by an External Advisory Committee. The panel observes that most members of the committee are somehow related to Wageningen University and discussed this during the site visit. The committee advised the programme to strengthen the development of certain soft skills and elucidate the importance of big data in the professional field. Students need to develop the ability to work with big data in order to be competent for (future) challenges on the job market.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the learning outcomes. These are sufficiently specific and allow the programme to validate and test whether students have obtained them. The learning outcomes have an academic character and reflect a bachelor's level. They are up to date and address relevant knowledge and skills. The panel has observed that the programme includes not only a sustainable, but also a pro-social approach towards business and consumer studies. Since this is a relevant asset of the programme's profile, the panel recommends the programme to address this in the learning outcomes. The panel has further observed that the programme is embedded in a productive context with regard to the available knowledge within the institution, on both the field of agri-food and the broader field of life sciences, including health. The programme is quite unique and brings together a set of relevant disciplines in the field of agri-food and the agri-food chain. Although the programme is aware of what other programmes in Europe have to offer, a more elaborate benchmark could help the programme to strengthen its profile on the international market. In addition, the panel recommends the programme to ensure that the composition of the Advisory Council is sufficiently varied to be able to provide the programme with the perspectives in both agri-food and life sciences that strengthens and diversifies the programme's outlook.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, Intended learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

The programme is one of the BA Programmes of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Science. The programme board is responsible for the quality of the programme. The day-to-day management of the programme is the responsibility of a programme director who is also responsible for the Bachelor programme Economics and Governance. Staffing of the programme is the responsibility of the Chair Groups, which form research units that contract scientific staff. There is a common programme committee for the Bachelor programme Management and Consumer Studies, the Bachelor programme Economics and Governance and the master programme Management, Economics and Consumer studies. The committee is composed of six lecturers and six students. It advises the programme management on the quality of the programme. The Examining Board is responsible for the social sciences programmes within Wageningen University. It has the authority to ensure the quality of the examinations and assessments of this programme and the other social science programmes within the faculty.

The number of students entering the programme remained rather stable over the past three years, being on average 150 students per year and ranging from 142 to 168 students per year. Students with a VWO diploma from a secondary school, whose courses included either mathematics A or B, are admitted to the programme.

The programme consists of three study years, each with a course programme of 60 credits. In each year, the credits are divided over six periods. The common part of the programme is scheduled during the first (60 EC) and second year (36 EC). In the second year, students have to choose between the two majors: Business or Consumer Studies (24 EC in the second year and 30 EC (including thesis) in the third year). The Business Studies major consists of five compulsory business courses, two courses chosen from two blocks of two restricted optional courses, and a Business Studies thesis. The Consumer Studies major consists of six compulsory courses, one course chosen from two restricted optional courses, and a Consumer Studies thesis. The third year ends with 30 EC elective space: students follow either a minor at Wageningen University or another Dutch University or study abroad. The number of students who go abroad has increased in recent years: from 5% in 2010-2011 to 34% in 2016-2017.

The success rate of the programme after three years was 52%, 41% and 26% for respectively the 2012, 2013 and 2014 cohort. The study success rate after four years for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 cohort is respectively 78%, 75% and 78%.

The programme has restructured the curriculum and developed four learning lines which are business theory, consumer theory, methods and professional skills. In the first two years the curriculum contains courses that provide students with basic knowledge relevant to both consumer and business studies, and with courses that help students to develop academic skills. The self-evaluation report contains an overview of how in the curriculum students obtain the various learning outcomes.

The first period of the programme contains an introduction course (*Introduction to Management and Consumer Studies*), *Statistics* (the first methodological course), and a 1-credit skills-course in which students learn information literacy and develop collaborative skills which are applied in the parallel-taught course *Introduction to Management and Consumer Studies*. Other first-year common courses address research methods (quantitative and qualitative), decision science, micro-economics but also

applied information science. Students take theory courses (like *Introduction to Business Economics*) and methodological courses (like *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*). Topics like management and marketing, mathematics and legal regulations and management of production chains are addressed as well in the first-year common part. After the previous accreditation, the programme changed the schedule of the programme in such a way that students take courses in statistics at the start of the programme, to allow students with a Mathematics B background to get acquainted with statistics and allow students to be able to go deeper in other first-year courses in which statistics are integrated. At the end of the first year, students conduct a research project in which knowledge of methodology, theory, and skills are applied at an academic level.

The second-year courses build on the first-year courses and allow students to go deeper into the material. Not only with regard to research, for example in the course *Quantitative and Qualitative Research Techniques*, but also in courses that aim to develop knowledge and insights on important cornerstones of business and consumer studies, such as the course *Decision Science 1, Principles of Consumer Studies* and *Applied Information Technology*. During the second year students start their specialisation courses. For Business Studies these involve the course *Strategic Change Management and Innovation* and *Advanced Marketing and Management*. For consumer studies, these involve *Lifestyles and Consumption* as well as *Economics of Consumption, Welfare and Society*. The panel observes that integration of social sciences with life sciences takes place in the first-year course *Business and Consumer Perspectives on Food Quality* and in the second-year course *Research Topics on Food and Society, a Gamma-Beta Approach*. The panel observes that the programme does not provide courses which introduce the field of life sciences at large to students.

The 12 EC thesis makes up the final stage of the major. Students choose their topic after having received information on subjects within the various Chair Groups and can only start their thesis when they have passed all first-year courses and collected at least 42 credits of second- and third-year courses. Students write the thesis to show that they have the ability to develop and implement a research design, integrate knowledge from various sources and apply theoretical and methodological knowledge obtained in the study. Furthermore, they prove to be able to work independently, plan and carry out their work within the available time and report both in writing and orally in an understandable way. The methods applied in the thesis depend on the subject and, in addition to a literature review, often include empirical work or normative modelling work with a limited scope.

The programme aims to provide students with activating teaching methods. The average amount of contact hours is 17 hours in year one, 14 in year two and 12 in year three. The panel got clear insight to the division of study activities throughout the programme as a whole. These comprise 36% lectures, 17% tutorials and 18% independent study. Group work takes 13%. Since the implementation of the learning lines, the practising of collaboration skills, presentation and writing skills and the use of academic literature is practised in a more structural and visible way. Teaching methods include lecturers and sessions for smaller groups in addition to lectures for all students on a course. The panel discussed with the programme the preference of most staff members to be able to address students with small-scale educational methods, and the impossibility of doing so with increasing student numbers. One of the instruments which is increasingly used by the programme is group work. The more frequent use of group work was shortly after implementation not too much appreciated by students but outcomes of student evaluation now show that students appreciate group work and the way the programme organizes group work.

Student support is primarily provided by study advisors who track individual students throughout their enrolment. The study advisors help the student to make reasoned choices within the study and stimulate the student to make progress. An example of this is the organisation of job market orientation days in the second year of the programme. In addition, the programme organises group discussions during which students exchange with each other the choices they want to make with regard to their study-path. Study advisors provide students with feedback on these choices and the Examination Board has to approve non-standard choices. Students are positive about the support offered by study advisors. In addition, students are positive about the availability of staff members for students. Study advisors monitor student's progress, and advise students on studying abroad. Students who study abroad, often take more time to finish their studies. In addition, students who are very active members of their student society tend to delay their graduation. The study load is monitored by the programme committee for which it uses student evaluations. Students are generally satisfied with the study load which for most students is not too high. Some students the panel spoke with during the site visit indicate that they would welcome to have more challenge. The programme offers students the opportunity to take part in a University-wide Honours Programme.

About 50 staff members are involved in the programme. The application file contains an overview of the staff members of which all have a PhD. A university Teaching Qualification (UTQ) is obtained by 45%, 30% is working towards a UTQ, and 25% have extensive teaching experience starting from the time before teaching qualifications became mandatory. The programme brings lecturers together by organizing teachers lounges in which staff members exchange their experience. Students are generally positive about the qualities of staff members. The programme uses guest lecturers in order for students to be able to become aware of the professional field related to the programme. During the site visit, students expressed their appreciation for the use of guest lecturers. According to alumni of the programme, the programme could increase the extent to which students are in contact with the professional field.

Considerations

The panel has established that the courses on offer provide students with a coherent programme, offering basic elements to students who commence their programme and building towards more specialised knowledge in the third year. Students acquire sufficient knowledge of the quantitative aspects of business administration, which are of high importance in the field of business administration. The panel suggests that an advanced course in big data analysis might be useful to the programme. The panel additionally recommends the programme to consider whether the balance between agri-food and life sciences reflects current developments in the professional field. An introduction course to life sciences would strengthen the programme in this respect and might stimulate more students to further explore the field of life sciences. The panel believes that the program could take more advantage of the presence of the broad life science expertise at Wageningen University to strengthen its unique position of a social science driven management and consumer studies bachelor at a technical university.

The panel concludes that the programme allows students to obtain the learning outcomes. Throughout the programme, students develop disciplinary knowledge in business studies and consumer studies, academic skills and professional skills. The panel is positive about the recently established learning lines, which have led to a more coherent as well as more state-of-the-art curriculum. The panel applauds that students have to practice skills such as collaboration and presentations, and that these have a visible place in the programme. The panel is positive about the teaching and learning methods used by the programme which are effective in supporting knowledge development as well as skills training. The panel is also positive about the extent to which students get insight in what happens in the 'real world' by the courses taught in collaboration with representatives from the professional field. The panel recommends to consider whether

more exposure to the professional field would be useful in improving the extent to which students accomplish the learning outcomes. The study load of the programme is adequate, the panel recommends the programme to consider to raise the challenge for students or guide the more ambitious students towards the honours programme. The percentage of students who study abroad is impressive, the panel believes that the scheduling of the programme and specifically the offer of the free choice part of the programme is beneficial in this regard. The time used to obtain the learning outcomes varies, and the panel recommends the programme to improve the programme's success rates. The panel is positive about student's guidance and monitoring of the progress of students via the study advisors.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be good.

4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

The activities of the Examination Board are guided by the annually updated Education and Examination Regulations Wageningen University, and the WU Rules and Regulations of the Examining Boards. The university provides staff members with guidelines regarding assessment in the 'education assessment policy' document. Assessment methods used in the programme are written exams (open-end questions, multiple choice questions, or combinations), individual or group assignments, papers/essays, presentations, and participation in course work.

In order to provide transparency, the relative contribution and minimum grades for partial exams are explicitly specified. In case of written exams, all courses provide example exams to students. The panel has noted that the programme uses group work in various courses and discussed during the site visit how the programme prevents students from practicing free-rider behaviour. The programme trains students in giving feedback and evaluating each other's work and addition to the group's project. In the courses, students have to practice these skills.

The panel discussed a remark that students made in the student chapter about the need for improvement of testing cognitive skills. Students felt insufficiently challenged by some courses using multiple choice exams. The programme investigated the remark by reviewing the courses which used multiple choice testing. The remark is not supported by the outcomes of the course evaluations (which are more representative). Students appreciate the assessment for the courses with regard to level and content, which scored not less than 3.6 on a 5-pointsscale. In addition, the programme discussed the issue to a larger extent among staff members and students. From these discussions, the participants concluded that multiple-choice questions, testing cognitive skills, are not as such recognized by all students.

The programme renewed the rubric used for assessment of the bachelor thesis. This rubric contains several criteria and provides staff members with an indication of when to use which grading for the thesis. The thesis assessment form is divided in four weighted categories. These categories are: (i) the demonstration of research capacities, including amongst others handling feedback, reflective capacities and time-management, (ii) the quality of the thesis report including, amongst others, the clarity of the argumentation and conclusions, the theoretical underpinning and use of literature and the problem definition & research set-up, (iii) the oral presentation and (iv) the oral defence. Staff members fill in the partial grades for each criterion and can clarify their appreciation of the thesis in additional comments. The panel reviewed 15 theses and discussed with the Examination Board the extent to which staff members make use of the space to provide additional comments. The panel agrees with the Examination Board that staff members could make more use of the space for comments, to improve the written feedback to students. To the panel, it was not always sufficiently clear why a certain grade was given. The grade given was, however, in most cases equal to the appreciation of the panel for the theses and in cases in which the assessment by the panel differed, the differences were small.

The Examination Board reviews the quality of the thesis and the assessment of the thesis on a regular basis. The Board visits the various Chair Groups in which staff members reside to discuss the quality of the course materials provided to students and to discuss the practices of assessment in these Chair Groups. These visits take place once every four years, the Examination Board intends to raise the frequency in which these visits take place. Chair Groups are stimulated to organize peer reviews on their courses, in

which they ask academic staff from other universities to review their courses. If Chair Groups organize this, the Examination Board is informed on the outcomes of the peer review. Other topics which are discussed and checked by the Examination Board are amongst others whether answer keys are available, the assessment practices with regard to theses and internships and the outcomes of student evaluations with regard to assessment for courses which are offered by a Chair Group.

Considerations

The panel considers that the programme has a system of assessment in place which allows the programme to safeguard the quality of the assessment. The system draws on the assessment practices within various Chair Groups and is aimed at stimulating a quality culture within these chair groups. The panel supports the Examination Board in its intention to raise the frequency of visits to the Chair Groups and strongly recommends the programme management to provide the means to support this. The panel is positive about how the programme systematically uses the students' feedback on the assessment. In addition, it is positive about the renewed assessment form for the assessment of the thesis. It recommends the programme to improve the extent to which staff members provide comments and explain their appreciation of the student's work on the assessment form.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3, Student assessment, to be satisfactory.

4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

Students obtain the learning outcomes during the course of the programme. A demonstration of the achievement of the learning outcomes is provided by the thesis. The only learning outcome not demonstrated in the thesis is the ability of a student to collaborate and engage in group work. Students develop and demonstrate this capacity in various other courses, throughout the programme. The panel has reviewed 15 theses and is positive about the demonstration of the learning outcomes by the students. Theses cover a wide range of topics, demonstrating the breadth of the programme. In addition, students use a wide variety of research methodologies, such as secondary analysis of data, field interviews, experiments and literature reviews. The panel concludes that the theses connect well to the learning outcomes of the programme and that the level thereof reflects the academic character at a bachelor's level.

The majority of the students (68%) graduating between 2011 and 2016 continued their study with a master programme at Wageningen University. Most of these students start with the MSc. Programme in Management, Economics and Consumer studies. Most other graduates of the programme continue their studies at master's level on other universities, specific information about this is not available. The students and alumni the panel spoke with during the site visit, are positive about the extent to which the programme prepares students for a study on a master's level.

Considerations

The theses studied by the panel reflect the achievement of all the learning outcomes except for collaboration skills of students, which is sufficiently tested and trained in other elements of the programme. The panel is positive about the extent to which students reflect on the chosen methodology. Most theses discuss relevant developments with regard to the professional field. The focus on sustainable and pro-social business is also demonstrated in the topics chosen by the students. The focus on agri-food is reflected in the topics discussed by the students. Students demonstrate sufficient background in the disciplines of consumer and business studies to be able to write a good thesis.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be good.

5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Good
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Good
Programme	Good

6. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below:

- to make the pro-social orientation of the programme more explicit in the learning outcomes;
- to ensure that the composition of the Advisory Council is sufficiently varied and as such able to provide the programme with the perspectives in both agri-food and life sciences that strengthens and diversifies the programme's outlook;
- to develop a more elaborated benchmark;
- to consider whether the balance between agri-food and life sciences reflects current developments in the professional field;
- An introduction course to life sciences would strengthen the programme in this respect and might stimulate more students to further explore the field of life sciences;
- to consider the sequence, content and structure of the data science courses;
- to consider if more exposure to the professional field is useful in improving the extent to which students obtain the learning outcomes;
- to consider to raise the challenge for students and/or stimulate ambitious students to take part in honours education;
- to improve the programme's success rates;
- to raise the frequency of visits from the examination board to the Chair Groups;
- to improve the extent to which staff members provide comments and their appreciation of the student's work on the thesis assessment form.