



NVAO • NETHERLANDS

WO-MASTER MASTER OF ARTS IN
MANAGEMENT

MSM Maastricht School of Management

PANEL REPORT

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EXTENSIVE INITIAL ACCREDITATION PANEL REPORT

10 JULI 2019



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1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for an initial accreditation procedure regarding a proposed wo-pi-master Master of Arts in Management at MSM Maastricht School of Management. NVAO convened an expert panel, which studied the information available and discussed the proposed programme with representatives of the institution and the programme during a site visit.

The following considerations have played an important role in the panel's assessment.

The programme is a one-year, 60 EC, broad, academic programme in management, at master's level. Whereas most master programmes tend to have a more specialised character, the extent of specialisation in this programme is limited. In combination with the unique, international student population of the programme and the explicit international outlook of the School of Management, the panel has taken the choice for broad, one-year master programme, as a valid starting point for assessing the programme.

The programme aims to make students aware of the most important relevant theoretical approaches within the various sub-disciplines of Management and be able to provide concrete realistic solutions to problems and dilemma's encountered by organizations. To this end, the programme not only fosters student's knowledge, ability to apply this knowledge and ability to judge, but also enhances student's skills such as (intercultural) communication skills and self-development. The programme has a stronger orientation on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME's) than on large corporate firms, although the aforementioned are not excluded in the orientation of the programme. The programme provides a benchmark with other programmes in the Netherlands and Flanders. From this benchmark it becomes clear that the programme's broad character is unique, as is its international character. The programme's broadness is comparable to that of MBA-programmes, but the programme enrolls a different type of student. The aims and ambitions of the programme are translated into learning outcomes which are related to the Dublin Descriptors. The learning outcomes reflect a master's level, the focus of the programme is on the development of an academic mindset, which includes the application of knowledge, development of research capacities and sound judgement. The programme has a unique character and allows students with a variety of backgrounds to become competent managers who have developed specifically strong intercultural competences.

Students obtain knowledge in a selection of subfields of the Management discipline (economics, accounting, finance, organizational behaviour, human resource management and marketing). Furthermore state of the art developments (among them data analytics, digital transformation of business,) are touched upon. As a result, students are made aware of all relevant theoretical approaches and key debates in these subfields. In addition, students are made familiar with research methodology. They are introduced to both quantitative and qualitative methods, in an early stage of the programme. Students select a methodology for their thesis and by tutoring at the final stage of the programme are taught more in-depth about specific knowledge on the use of the selected methodology. The panel has concerns about this approach and finds that it should be strengthened in order for students to be well prepared to develop a thesis proposal that sufficiently takes into account methodological issues. The panel therefore assesses the programme to partially meet standard two. In order to fully meet this standard, the programme should meet the following condition: 'The programme should strengthen the research component to provide students with the tools and methods to collect data and analyse data in an early stage of the programme'

The curriculum consists of 13 courses, 2 group company projects, a supply chain management project, a personal development portfolio of workshops and a final project (thesis). The content of the curriculum on the whole allows students to obtain the programme's learning outcomes, however, with regard to some courses, the panel is concerned that the course content does not provide students with the content that reflects a master's level. The panel discussed its concerns

(based on the course material, the interviews with the academic teachers and the interviews with the students) during the site visit. The lecturers took some of the concerns of the panel partially away by giving examples of class discussions and the provision of additional reading material. Nevertheless, the panel is of the opinion that the depth with which some subjects are dealt with should be improved and assesses the programme to partially meet standard 3. In order to fully meet this standard, the programme should meet the following condition: the programme should harmonize the level of difficulty of the courses, especially of the courses in Marketing Management and Strategy and Planning.

The programme enrolls students from a wide variety of national and disciplinary backgrounds. Through the admission procedure, the levelling courses, the introduction day, the order in which courses are scheduled and the qualities of staff members, the programme realizes a coherent teaching and learning environment that allows students to obtain the learning outcomes. The programme has solid systems of assessment and quality assurance in place which has strengthened the panel in its conviction that the programme ensures a learning experience which enhances student's capacities and job opportunities. The panel is convinced that the programme will be able to repair the observed deficiencies and consequently meet the conditions issued above, within 1,5 year.

The panel comes to the conclusion that the programme meets standards 1, and 4 until 10, and that the programme partially meets standard 2 and 3. Given these considerations, the panel advises NVAO to take a conditionally positive decision regarding the quality of the proposed programme wo-pi-master Master of Arts in Management at the Maastricht School of Management.

The Hague, 10 July 2019

On behalf of the assessment panel convened for the initial extensive accreditation assessment of the wo-pi-master Master of Arts in Management at MSM Maastricht School of Management,

Prof. dr. Ed Peelen
(Chair)

Jetse Siebenga MSc.
(Secretary)

2 Introduction

2.1 The procedure

NVAO received a request for an initial accreditation procedure including programme documents regarding a proposed wo-pi-master Master of Arts in Management. The request was received on 31st of January 2019 from MSM Maastricht School of Management.

An initial accreditation procedure is required when a recognised institution wants to award a recognised bachelor's or master's degree after the successful completion of a study programme. The procedure for initial accreditation is slightly different as compared to the approach for programmes that have already been accredited. Initial accreditation is in fact an ex ante assessment of a programme. The programme becomes subject to the normal accreditation procedures once initial accreditation has been granted.

To assess the program, the NVAO convened an international panel of experts. The panel consisted of:

Chair

- Prof. dr. Ed Peelen, professor by special appointment of Content Marketing, University of Amsterdam, and Partner at ICSB;

Panel members

- Prof. dr. Dorota Dobija, full professor at the department of Accounting and Director of PhD programme, Kozminski University;

- Prof. dr. Aard Groen, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Valorization, and Dean of the Center of Entrepreneurship, University of Groningen;

Student member

- Duco Mülder, bachelor student in Econometrics and Operations Research & Economics and Business Economics, Erasmus University

On behalf of the NVAO, Gijs Kremers (policy advisor) was responsible for the process-coordination and Jetse Siebenga (owner at Siebenga Advies) for the drafting of the experts' report.

This composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. All the panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel has based its assessment on the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands (Stcrt. 2016, nr 69458).

The following procedure was undertaken. The panel members prepared the assessment by analysing the documents provided by the institution (Annex 3: Documents reviewed). The panel organised a preparatory meeting on the day before the site visit. During this meeting, the panel members shared their first impressions and formulated questions for the site visit.

The site visit took place on 22nd of May at MSM Maastricht School of Management. During this visit, the panel was able to discuss the formulated questions and to gather additional information during several sessions (Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit). Afterwards, the panel discussed the findings and considerations and pronounced its preliminary assessments per theme and standard. At the end of the site visit, the initial findings were presented to the institution.

Based on the findings, considerations and conclusions the secretary wrote a draft advisory report that was first presented to the panel members. After the panel members had commented on the draft report, the chair endorsed the report. On 16th of July the advisory report was sent to the institution, which was given the opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies in the

report. The institution replied on the 5th of August. Most suggested corrections were adopted. Subsequently the final report was endorsed by the panel chair. The panel composed its advice fully independently and offered it to NVAO on 9th of November.

2.2 Panel report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report, while the current chapter is the introduction.

The third chapter gives a description of the programme including its position within the institution, the MSM Maastricht School of Management and within the higher education system of the Netherlands.

The panel presents its assessments in the fourth chapter. The programme is assessed by assessing the themes and standards in the Initial Accreditation Framework. For each standard the panel presents an outline of its findings, considerations and a conclusion.

The outline of the findings are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the site visit. The panel's considerations consist of the panel's judgments and subjective evaluations regarding these findings and their relative importance. The considerations presented by the panel are at the basis of a concluding overall assessment.

The panel concludes the report with a table containing an overview of its assessments per standard.

3 Description of the programme

3.1 General

Country	Netherlands
Institution	MSM Maastricht School of Management
Programme	Master in Management
Level	Master
Orientation	Academic
Degree	Master of Arts
Location(s)	Maastricht
Study Load (EC)	60 EC
Field of Study	Economy

3.2 Profile of the institution

Maastricht School of Management (MSM) grew out of the Research Institute for Management Science (RVB) that was established in Delft in 1952. From the beginning MSM had the status of the International Education Institute. The name was changed after it moved to Maastricht. MSM has a distinguished status as one of the Dutch Higher education institutions with the explicit aim of leadership and management development in emerging and developing economies..., its current aims build forth on its history. The school aims to provide education and advocacy for ethical management, inspiring leadership, innovative entrepreneurship and effective public policy building to practitioners from all over the world. It does so by working together with institutions in emerging economies. It focuses on postgraduate management education and capacity development. MSM is incorporated as an independent non-profit foundation. In addition to its campus in Maastricht, MSM offers also, in collaboration with partner institutions, postgraduate education in countries all over the world. Among others, MSM collaborates with partner institutions in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Peru, Romania, Suriname, the UK, Vietnam, Ethiopia and the USA.

MSM has a portfolio of international capacity development projects. These are offered both for the public and private sector and cover a variety of fields such as higher education strengthening, public administration, entrepreneurship, innovation, private sector development, labor market development, international trade, environmental management, sustainable development and gender & SRHR. Capacity development and consulting activities are partially funded by the Dutch government, combined with funding from international donor organizations such as the World Bank and the European Union. The work from consultancy and projects allows the integration of the three core activities that are essential to MSM: research, capacity building and management education.

3.3 Profile of the programme

MSM started to design its first Master in Management programme in 2015, aiming at providing a generalist Management Master's degree that was unique from the others available in the Dutch market of higher education. The programme attracts bachelor graduates from all over the world, with various profiles, but of whom all have affinity with management, whether developed through their prior education, through being an entrepreneur or through relatedness to family business. The program was launched in 2016 and secured program accreditation of various international accreditation bodies (AMBA, ACBSP, IACBE) and MSM has institutional accreditation from ATHEA). After the academic cycles in 2017 and 2018, changes and improvements were introduced to the programme. The learning goals were re-defined and the final project became a final research thesis. Strong components of experiential learning were introduced with Group Company Projects. Personal development and 21st century competences became central.

Credits

The programme is made up of 60 EC

The need for an initial accreditation application

Since the programme is new and since the programme 's graduates would benefit from the accreditation of the Dutch and Flemish Accreditation Agency in their pursuit of a career, MSM has applied for NVAO accreditation for this programme.

4 Assessment per standard

This chapter presents the evaluation of the standards by the assessment panel. The panel has reproduced the criteria for each standard. For each standard the panel presents (1) a brief outline of its findings based on the programme documents and on documents provided by the institution and the site visit, (2) the considerations the panel has taken into account and (3) the panel's conclusion. The panel presents a conclusion for each of the standards, as well as a final conclusion.

The assessment is based on the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the (Stcrt. 2016, nr 69458). Fundamental to the assessment is a discussion with peers regarding the content and quality of the new programme.

Regarding each of the standards, the assessment panel gives a substantiated judgement on a three-point scale: meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard. The panel subsequently gives a substantiated final conclusion regarding the quality of the programme, also on a three-point scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative

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.

Outline of findings

The Master in Management (MM) is a generalist degree programme that aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills of modern management. Students gain knowledge in the functional management areas that make up the field of management, such as Operations Management, Marketing Management and Human Resource Management. In addition, the programme includes current issues such as data analytics, digital transformation of business, entrepreneurship, innovation and managing cultural diversity.

Regarding skills, the programme emphasizes personal development, development of 21st century skills and intercultural and international skills. As such, the programme prepares its students for a vast array of jobs within various fields. Although the job market of large corporates are not excluded by the programme, the orientation of the programme and its students focusses on small and medium enterprises. The discussions with representatives of the professional field and with the students during the site visit, confirmed the programme's focus on training students for job roles in Small and Medium Enterprises.

The appendix of the application file contains a benchmark of the programme with various other specialist and generalist programmes in the Netherlands and Flanders. The number of programmes that are comparative to this programme are limited because of the generalist focus of the programme, as opposed to a more specialist focus of programmes at other institutions for this type of students. The comparison shows that the uniqueness of the programme furthermore lies in the fact that the programme requires all students to obtain international and intercultural skills.

The Maastricht School of Management has formulated three Broad- Based Goals, which apply to all students and which express the ambitions of the Maastricht school of Management. These goals are related to the five programme learning outcomes in a table. The programme's focus on international and intercultural skills is expressed for example, by the first goal formulated for all students of Maastricht School of Management, which states that students recognize and evaluate the nature, impact and concepts of management in a globalizing multicultural context.

The programme-specific learning outcomes, which are five in total, address amongst others the capacity to demonstrate advanced knowledge, the ability to apply principles, theories and models in the context of 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets and the ability to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations. The programme has compared its learning outcomes to the level 7 description of the Dublin Descriptors. The panel found that the focus of the programme is mainly on Dublin descriptors two, three, four and five (application of knowledge judgement, communication and learning focus) and less on Dublin Descriptor one, demonstration of knowledge. Since the programme is rather broad, the depth of knowledge students will obtain in each subdiscipline, is rather limited.

The programme draws on the domain specific frame of reference, various other documents such as the competency framework of the OECD (2016) and Mckinsey's global institute workforce skills competency model. The programme is advised by a Business Advisory Board, of which the panel met some representatives during the site visit. In addition, the Faculty Advisory Board gives advice to the programme's management.

The programme is offered as a Master of Arts, whereas most management programmes in the Netherlands are offered as a Master of Science. The panel discussed this with the programme's management which stated that the broad character of the programme in combination with the international environment thereof (in which the practice of awarding titles is ambiguous) resulted in the choice for a Master of Arts.

Considerations

The panel reviewed the intended learning outcomes and the comparison of the intended learning outcomes with the Dublin Descriptors. The panel established that the learning outcomes represent a master's level and are in tune with international standards in the domain of management. The panel

is appreciative of the history and mission of the institute and understands the choice of the institute to develop a program with a broad character which represents the relevant sub-disciplines in the field of management. The panel observes that the focus of the programme is on the development of an academic mindset, which includes the application of knowledge, development of research capacities and sound judgement. In addition, the programme provides students with a skills set which allows students to be hands-on in the practice of a management job role. The panel concludes that the programme has an academic orientation and an additional focus on development of practical skills. The combination thereof results in a programme which aims to enhance students' competencies in the field of management.

The programme's broad focus is distinctive from other master programmes in management, as is the strong international orientation of the programme. The broad focus of the programme implies that the depth of knowledge obtained by students in a specific subdiscipline of management, is limited in comparison to most Master programmes in the Netherlands and Flanders. The panel finds the academic character of the programme sufficiently justified in its focus on Dublin descriptors 1, 2 3, 4 and 5, check the application of (academic) knowledge, judgement skills. The explicit and strong attention for the development of cultural competencies is a strong asset of the programme.

The Maastricht School of Management did extensive research to justify the necessity of the programme and has made sufficiently clear that the quality of the programme's graduates is suited for management roles in the large field of management, and more specifically, but not exclusively, for management roles in small and medium enterprises in which awareness of all relevant aspects of management is of importance.

The panel concludes in addition that the awareness of current issues is of relevance to the students of the programme. The way in which these current issues are mentioned in the learning

outcomes could be more eloquent. The panel recommends the programme to consider to formulate the learning outcomes in a more precise way and for example include a further definition of what are '21st century organizations' and 'sustainable organizations' in the light of the defined 'current challenges'.

The panel finds a Master of Science title to be more in line with the local context of the programme but understands that the programme has opted for a Master of Arts and approves this choice in light of the international ambiguous practice, in which both titles are eligible for programmes in management.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 1.

4.2 Standard 2: Curriculum; orientation

The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.

Outline of findings

The curriculum of the programme is structured in three domains. The Management Essentials domain covers knowledge in domains such as economics, accounting, finance, organizational behavior, human resource management and marketing. The transversal management skills domain covers organizational skills, learning skills and responsible management, including the management of cultural diversity. It also addresses research skills and conflict resolution. The 21st century business skills domain covers management science, data analytics, entrepreneurship and innovation and digital transformation. In all domains, students develop communication and consulting skills.

Students develop the capacity to do research, amongst others by a 3 EC course in research methods. In contrast to the other courses of the programme, the course is scheduled throughout the study programme (10 months) with four one-day sessions in November and one early December. Students have to develop a 10-page research proposal in preparation of the writing of their thesis.

In April, students follow two 2-hour workshops in quantitative and qualitative data analysis tools. This was additional to the Research Methods course in November, at the beginning of the second month of the program. In the final stage of the programme, students work on their thesis. In order to further develop their research skills, they receive additional tutoring by their thesis supervisor, occasionally with students that use a similar research method to research their research question. In all courses, students have to work on literature reviews and practice data analysis.

Considerations

The panel reviewed the extent to which the programme facilitates the achievement of research skills on a master's level. On the basis of course material and the 10-page research proposals, as well as the conversations during the site visit, it observes that the programme manages to convey to students the essence of academic standards in terms of plagiarism, academic standards for the quality of literature and the research cycle. In addition, students learn to define a research question and develop dependent and independent variables and offer hypotheses. The panel finds a relative lack of depth in the research programme elements that are offered before students write their research proposals. This is also revealed by the 4 research proposals the panel studied (as a 10 page proposal in the Course Research Methods). The panel has observed that the extent to which students are able to operationalize and design their research requires improvement that sufficiently allows students to work on their research at a master's level. The panel is positive about the availability of tutoring in the later stage of the programme, which might remedy some of the of the panels concerns, but finds that students need to be

offered a stronger and deeper training in order to develop a research plan that is viable, in an earlier stage of the programme. Students need to be provided with the tools and methods to conduct literature research, collect and data and analyse data in the earlier stage, which will allow them to develop a thorough and sound academic approach. The panel therefore formulated the following condition for the programme in order to meet the standard:

The programme should strengthen the research component to provide students with the tools and methods to collect data and analyse data in an early stage of the programme.

Conclusion

The programme partially meets standard 2.

4.3 Standard 3: Curriculum; content

The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Outline of findings

The programme offers 13 courses each worth 3 EC. Each course is scheduled in a two-weeks period during which students can fully focus on the scheduled course. The lectures are scheduled (four days) in the first week. During the second week, students work on their group assignments and individual assignments. In addition to the courses, students work on two 3 EC projects for which MSM cooperates with partners from the industry. In addition, throughout the year, the programme schedules workshops regarding negotiating skills, data analysis skills, job market preparation and personal development. Students receive 3 EC for the personal development trajectory which is related to these workshops. The course on research methodology, which is scheduled at the beginning of the second month of the programme equals 3 EC and students write a 12 EC thesis.

The programme ensures that all the intended learning outcomes are covered by the programme. The programme provided an overview of knowledge and skills assessed in each course. In addition, the course manuals explicitly refer to the learning outcomes of the programme and the Dublin Descriptors.

The study load equals 1800 hours of learning effort, the amount of lecture hours equals almost 500. The panel studied course material, assessments and discussed the courses with representatives of the programme. Students who are enrolled in the current programme indicated that the study load is heavy but doable. There are no specific stumbling blocks in the programme, however, the background of students is often indicative for the subjects they find either difficult or relatively easy.

The programme starts with an introduction week after which the course on managing cultural diversity is scheduled. Since students are from various national and disciplinary backgrounds, the course is not only important in order for students to obtain the learning outcomes, it additionally functions as a vehicle through which community building takes place and through which students become aware of cultural differences. The programme continues with courses in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Research Methods, Strategy and Planning, Accounting for Managers, Economics for Managers, Data Analytics, Management Science, Supply Chain Management, Finance, Human Resource Management, Digital Transformation of Business, Organizational behaviour and Marketing Management. The panel observes that elements that integrate the specific subfields are the business projects of which the first is scheduled in January and the second is scheduled in May and June. The course in Supply Chain Management combines insights from various disciplines in its approach towards supply chain challenges. In addition, the course on Entrepreneurship and Innovation integrates many elements which relate to other disciplines.

Considerations

The panel observes that the curriculum is comprehensive in terms of covering the broad field of

management. The subjects on offer and the learning goals of the courses match with the profile and intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel finds it positive that the programme touches upon the 21st developments in management, it is doubtful about the depth with which this can take place. For example, the programme aims to address data analytics and artificial intelligence in one course. According to the panel this is too ambitious and allows the programme to only create awareness. The panel finds that more is needed to adequately prepare students for their master's thesis.

The panel studied course descriptions and course materials and had interactions with students and lecturers about the courses and course materials. Most courses reflect a master's level, but particularly the course material of the courses in Marketing Management and Strategy and Planning, do not offer student's sufficient complexity and depth to match a master's level. The readings of these courses (1 out of 13) are introductory and the level on which theoretical approaches are offered, lack the complexity one would expect in a course at master's level. During the discussions with the programme board and the lecturers the panel raised its concerns. From the answers given, the panel got the impression that the course syllabi of some courses might not fully reflect the actual depth of the course. Lecturers offer students additional reading material and raise relevant discussion topics during the classes, that allow students to go deeper than the course syllabus implies. However, the panel could not sufficiently verify whether the approach stated by the lecturers is fully materialized in the delivery of the courses and the complexity of the assignments and exam questions also did not provide full evidence that indeed a master's level is achieved by students who succeed in the course. Since the panel has established that most courses do reflect a master's level, but given the fact that some courses reflect a level that is below a master's level, the panel assesses that the programme partially meets the standard. In order to repair this, the programme should meet the following condition:

The programme should harmonize the level of difficulty of all courses, especially of the courses in Marketing Management and Strategy and Planning.

In addition, the panel suggests the programme to ensure that all other courses reflect the level that is demonstrated in for example the course Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Economics for Managers.

Conclusion

The programme partially meets standard 3.

4.4 Standard 4: Curriculum; learning environment

The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Outline of findings

The programme starts in the first week of October, during which students have two introductory weeks allowing them to get to know each other, the staff members and the programme. It also allows students to level their knowledge with other students. Students are required to take levelling courses and make an inbound test as to ensure that their level of prior knowledge is sufficient to start the course work.

In general, courses are scheduled for a period of two weeks. For most courses, the first week consists of lectures and in the second week students work on group assignments and individual assignments in order to process what they have learned. The courses are described in a course outline provided to the panel. The outlines contain brief summaries of what themes and literature will be discussed in class during each day of the lecture week. It contains an overview of the learning goals of each course, related to the Dublin descriptors. The course outline further provides information on assessment and the weighing of each assessment criterion. The courses use different teaching methods such as:

- literature search and critical reading;
- listening to a traditional lecture;
- solving textbook case-studies;
- listening to guest speakers from managerial practice and solving practical cases put forward by these speakers;
- doing small group research/consultancy projects in business organizations;
- writing papers (individually and in groups);
- role-plays, simulations and behavioural exercises.

The programme pays explicit attention to the development of soft skills in response to employer demands. Amongst other, student practice teamwork, communication and are stimulated to develop their emotional intelligence. The programme plans to start a three EC Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) course which will allow the programme and students to better monitor the progress students make in development of soft skills. In the current programme, students work on their soft skills during various workshops which are spread out over the year.

Students are trained in intercultural communication in the course Managing Cultural Diversity, and practice these in the other various courses that follow. The panel received examples of this during the site visit. Group work comes back in nearly every course so that students are provided with many opportunities to learn how to communicate and work with a variety of different cultures.

Students are confronted with the real-life cases during various guest lectures, for several courses and in addition in the two group company projects for which students work out an assignment that will be used by the company. The programme cooperates with two companies in order to facilitate the students learning process.

Students develop their thesis proposal which they hand in and defend in February. In March students have another workshop on literature search and from then they receive additional tutoring during which they are taught methodological skills (interviewing, coding, surveys and how to use statistical programmes) in a more detailed and profound manner. The courses and group company projects last until June. Students have to hand in their thesis in the second week of August and defend their thesis in the fourth week of August. The period during which they will have no courses, allows students to fully concentrate on the writing of their thesis and deepen their knowledge of specific issues, theories and methodological approaches.

Considerations

The panel studied the structure of the curriculum. It is positive about the programme's choice for a structure in which students focus on one subdiscipline through intense teaching on one subject for a relatively short period of time. The curriculum facilitates students to develop an academic mindset and apply insights and theories in individual and group assignments. Although there is room for improvement (the research skills, the level of some courses). The programme consciously scheduled courses in which the various subdisciplines are integrated throughout the programme. Students study live cases, meet representatives from the professional field and work on real-life cases of which the results are used in a company. These elements strengthen the extent to which students develop competencies in the application of academic knowledge and the ability to use their knowledge to analyze and judge stated problems and offered solutions. In addition, the panel establishes that the curriculum provides students with sufficient opportunities to develop their soft skills. The panel applauds the intention of the programme to develop the soft skills activities and introduce a personal development portfolio to monitor students' progress. Also, the panel is positive about the fact that the background (bachelor education) of students is incorporated in the topic selection of the thesis.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 4.

4.5 Standard 5: Intake

The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.

Outline of findings

The programme admits students from different backgrounds. Applicants are not required to have previous business, economic or related undergraduate degrees. The main prerequisite for admission to the programme is having a sound academic background, proven by a completed bachelor's degree. In order to be eligible for admission, applicants need to hand in their diploma or expected date of graduation, an official transcript of copy of grades, a letter of recommendation, proof of English proficiency (TOEFL scores: – 88 for the internet-based test, – 230 computer based test– 570 paper based test. IELTS score :- 6.5 minimum, with no section below 5.5 on the Academic test.

The value of the diploma is checked according to the standards used by UK's NARIC (UK national recognition Information Centre). If the value of the diploma cannot be identified based on the information provided by NARIC, the programme uses the Dutch (NUFFIC) or German agencies to check whether a degree corresponds to the bachelor's level and will be accepted by the programme.

In order to ensure that students have sufficient prior knowledge and in order to ensure their knowledge is levelled, students have to give proof of satisfactory results of four online levelling courses (Accounting, Finance, Statistics and Economics), facilitated by Peregrine Academic Services. These can be completed after admission, but have to be completed prior to the start of the programme. Using these, the programme intends to give students tools to prepare for the programme, especially when their bachelor is out of the field. If the candidate has completed the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) with a score of 600 or higher (or a GRE with an equivalent score), the Leveling Courses can be waived. The panel has verified to what extent this waiver has been given, and learned that all students enrolled in the programme during the site visit, took the levelling courses.

If an applicant fulfills all conditions, the programme conducts a Skype interview to discuss the student's application. The panel studied the cv's of students currently enrolled in the programme and has observed that the vast majority has affinity with business management, through participation in small and medium enterprises, being an entrepreneur or through their prior studies. From the discussion with students, the panel learned that often, students are interested in entrepreneurial roles and in future work experience that relates to the global character of the programme.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the admission criteria and the admission process of the programme. The panel observes that the programme rigorously ensures that students have a degree of which the level is in accordance with European standards. In addition, it is positive about the setup of the levelling courses. Since students have various backgrounds and because of the broad character of the programme, these are of high importance to the programme and allow students and staff members to start the programme on a level that entails all students to participate.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 5.

4.6 Standard 6: Staff

The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.

Outline of findings

MSM has a combined staff and faculty of 65 FTE. This includes management, faculty, academic support staff, students' support services and facilities staff. An essential requirement in the vacancies for faculty at MSM is to have well developed intercultural communication skills. Staff (faculty teaching in the MM programme) members represent 8 different nationalities. A few staff members work and live abroad and visit the institute during the time their course is scheduled. The panel was able to discuss the programme with staff members and could study the resume of the staff involved in the programme.

The qualifications for a faculty position include amongst others is a Doctoral degree from an accredited institution. In case one has a master's degree, a relevant professional career additional to teaching and research experience will be required. The percentage of PhD qualified staff members teaching in the MM programme is 69%, 31 % of the other staff members have a master's degree. Of the staff members, 40% is affiliated with business.

The faculty is organized in academic disciplines according to their subject/specialization areas. The following academic disciplines have been established: Research Methodology & Skills, Economics and International Business, Leadership, HRM and Ethics, Marketing and Supply Chain Management, Technology ICT and E-Business, Accounting and Finance, Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The collaborative work of the staff members and their discussions play an essential role in curriculum revision, assessment of exams and grading procedures as well as in peer feedback. The programme in addition works with guest speakers from the industry. Staff members didactical experiences vary, most staff members have ample experience with teaching in an international classroom. During the site visit, staff members provided the panel with examples and insights on how to deal with cultural particularities as well as with group dynamics that often can be found in international classrooms. MSM organizes a number of trainings and workshops on didactical aspects, the application file contains an overview of these trainings. During staff meetings, best practices are shared and the Examination Board exchanged information on assessment practices. MSM in addition attended the workshop "Successful Case Teaching" at the IMD Case Center. 20% of the staff members have a BKO-certificate and some have a foreign equivalent.

Considerations

The panel has met an enthusiastic team of staff members and is positive about the quality of staff members. The staff operates as a team, signalled by the open-door policy through which staff members easily connect. Students experience low thresholds in approaching staff members for additional support, in particular during the thesis research. Most staff members have a PhD and a sufficiently strong background in research. The track record in research of most staff members is not very impressive but a good share of the staff members are active researchers. The panel recommends the programme to provide room to staff members to maintain and nurture their academic orientation. The team of staff members reflect the cultural diversity which is found among the students. Most staff members have ample experience with teaching in an international classroom and with teaching a group of students with a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.

Although the panel applauds the initiatives of MSM to provide staff members with additional didactical training, and the panel has no concerns regarding the quality of the teachers, the panel strongly recommends the programme to organize and develop the initiatives and the didactical quality of current staff members in such a way that more staff members will become BKO-certified.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 6.

4.7 Standard 7: Facilities

The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.

Outline of findings

The institute is located in an office park close to the city centre of Maastricht and close to the University of Maastricht. The building offers a variety of facilities. It provides one conference room with a capacity of 260 persons and two lecture halls, one with a capacity of 60 persons and one with a capacity of 100 persons. In addition, the building offers four colloquium rooms with a capacity range from 30 to 70 persons and three tutorial rooms for 8 persons. The business lounge has a capacity of 120 persons. The building includes a restaurant and is located next to a hotel, which is run by a separate foundation and offers rooms to students and staff members.

The programme uses Moodle as an online learning environment, which is used for all courses. In addition, the information centre provides study places and offers study material to students. Students and staff members can request new materials. Students have access to online libraries such as Business Source Ultimate, provided by EBSCO, the Regional Business News, Science Direct, Business, Management and Accounting provided by Elsevier and the Emerald Management Extra.

Considerations

During the site visit, the panel had a guided tour. The facilities such as the classrooms and lecture halls are up to standard and provide a learning environment in which student-staff interaction can take place. The information centre provides students with sufficient opportunity to seek and use state-of-the art literature. Students can use a database of the Chamber of Commerce to do research with. The panel recommends the programme to enlarge the amount of databases students can use for their research and to practice the research skills with. The location of the hotel, next to the building of the school is very convenient for both (visiting) lecturers and students.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 7.

4.8 Standard 8: Tutoring

The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.

Outline of findings

The programme provides (prospective) students with information on the website of the programme. In addition, the programme provides students with a student guide, a student CV book, information about housing, the information centre, the complaints and service point and the Education and Examination Rules (EER). The students have a student representative to represent students to the education officer and the Academic Coordinator, who is part of the Education Board. The introduction week serves to make students familiar with the style of teaching and the facilities provided as well as the rules applied by the institute. The programme offers students a Career and Personal Development Track (PDT) which contains several components such as business challenges, company visits and guest speakers, workshops on CV and motivational letter writing, presentation skills, LinkedIn and video resume, elevator pitching, individual self-awareness and self-development coaching and participation in the Entrepreneurship Week in Maastricht. Students are very positive about the system of tutoring and the information provided by MSM.

Students whose grades rise concerns, are invited for a meeting with the Academic Coordinator and the

Education Officer to identify special circumstances, if any exist, that may explain the poor performance.

The EER contains an article which gives students with personal circumstances (such as illness, physical and functional disorders and disability) more time to pass the missing or failed exams.

For the final project, arrangements are in place to provide a smooth and timely feedback. Each student is assigned a supervisor who gives feedback and advice and who guides the student during the whole thesis process. During this process, students and supervisors are requested to fill in project progress forms to report on supervision, challenges and problems encountered.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the tutoring in place. The programme provides clear information to new students. The information is complete and well-structured. It has clear definitions and rules which guide student's behaviour and allow for exemptions of the rules, within reason. The programme provides students ample moments during which students receive guidance and coaching, both individually and in groups. The panel has one small remark regarding the student curriculum vitae book year 2019, which includes photos, names and profiles of the student. The panel recommends the programme to check if this current practice is in line with the current laws on privacy.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 8.

4.9 Standard 9: Quality Assurance

The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.

Outline of findings

The programme's system of quality assurance is administered by the Education Board, which is chaired by the Director of Education and Executive Development in coordination with the Quality Enhancement and Accreditation Office, of which the Senior Secretary MSM Examination Board is part as well. As such, the quality assurance process connects the important bodies in the Maastricht School of Management and outcomes of the quality assurance process are known by all stakeholders. The programme has the following instruments in place to gather information on the quality of the programme.

- Course evaluations are held after each course
- Students and student representatives can talk to the Academic Coordinator of the programme
- Students fill in a programme satisfaction survey before they hand in their thesis
- An alumni survey is held every two years

During the site visit, the panel learned that because of the small-scale of the programme, staff members encourage students to give direct feedback, so that adjustments that can easily be made, are immediately implemented, even when a course has already started. In addition, each class selects a class representative, who is responsible for gathering student's opinion and see to it that all students are heard. Additionally, a student is elected as Educational Board representative, who can join the monthly meetings of the Education Board.

Another element which is part of the quality assurance process is the peer review of courses. This system ensures that the course material and exams and assignments of each course are reviewed by a colleague before the start of the course. The responsibility for this process lies with the Examination Board. Besides the formal processes regarding quality assurance, the panel

has observed that there is an 'informal' quality culture as well. During the site visit, lecturers and staff members, but also students, were able to give examples of how the awareness of quality is present throughout the programme and its stakeholders.

Maastricht School of Management has a Faculty Advisory Board and a Business Advisory Board. The Faculty Advisory Board consists of representatives from educational institutes in several places of the world. The Business Advisory Board consists of representatives of Small and Medium Enterprises and local public bodies, such as the local society for entrepreneurs 'Ondernemend Limburg'. The programme is discussed with both boards on a regular basis. Last but not least, the programme receives feedback from internship coordinators and companies involved in its business projects.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the quality assurance processes in place. Not only does the programme entail a systematic approach towards quality of the courses, it also enhances a quality culture. The programme provides students with ample opportunity to discuss their experience, both in informal ways and in formal ways. The programme includes all relevant stakeholders. The panel recommends the programme to include external academics in the peer review of courses, in order to safeguard and benchmark the level of courses.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 9.

4.10 Standard 10: Student assessment

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

Outline of findings

The programme uses a variety of assessment methods. Students have to discuss cases, make analysis, make exams, give presentations and work on group and individual assignments. The EER (OER in Dutch) states that at least 70% of the achievement of a student on course level should exist of individual work and a maximum of 30% can be on group work, take home assignments, case study, class participation or presentations. Students thus work in groups as well as individual.

The programme assesses both Skills and Knowledge. The appendices to the application file contain a table which lists the skills obtained by students and in which courses these are assessed. The table shows that critical thinking and team collaboration are assessed in each course whereas other skills, such as intercultural awareness and negotiation skills are assessed in some courses.

The programme ensures that students know what they will be assessed on. Each course outline provide students with assignments and the assessment criteria. In the application file, the programme consistently related the courses' learning goals to the intended learning outcomes of the programme and to the Dublin Descriptors. With regard to transparency as well as reliability, all Faculty staff is required to work with model answers and provide written feedback on students work. The panel was able to review assignments of several courses and could review some of the model answers used.

The programme uses a rubric to assess the student's thesis. The thesis is assessed by the student's supervisor and a two other evaluators. The aims and objectives of the thesis are stated in the thesis manual. The thesis should deal with practical problems or opportunities organizations are confronted with, this is called the research dilemma. This dilemma has to be examined from a theoretical perspective and in a rigorous manner. Students are expected to develop a theoretical framework that guides their empirical study on the research dilemma, using qualitative or quantitative research methods. Students have to defend their thesis in front of evaluators. The assessment of the thesis is performed by two other staff members than the

student's supervisor. After their defence, students get a pass or fail notice. After the defence, staff members fill out the grading form. The grading form contains a detailed description of the criteria and in which chapter of the thesis the element is assessed. The assessment criteria and weight of each criteria are related to the Dublin Descriptors.

The student's supervisor grades the process, which includes the independency with which a student has worked on his or her thesis. This grade is taken into account in the final grade and counts for 10%. The knowledge displayed by a student weighs 20%, the application of the knowledge 30%, judgement weighs 30% and communication weighs another 10%.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the systematic approach towards assessment. In the first place, all learning goals of each course are assessed and the relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme is clear. Secondly, the systematic peer review of courses enhances the quality of the assessment. The panel observes that staff members are committed to the peer review system. In addition, they also take seriously the use of rubrics and model answers. The panel reviewed some of the assignments and concludes that these in general reflect a master's level. With regard to some courses (see also standard 3), the assignments and exam questions could have been more challenging. The rubric which is used for the thesis provides students with a clear insight in the assessment criteria and in which elements of the thesis these criteria can be met.

Conclusion

The programme meets standard 10.

4.11 Qualification and field of study (CROHO)

The panel advises to award the degree Master of Arts in Management to the Academic Master Management. The panel supports the program's preference for the CROHO field of study 'Economics'

4.12 Conclusion

The programme has a broad profile which limits the extent to which students can develop specialized knowledge. Nevertheless, the programme provides students with a complete overview of relevant theories and insights in the various subfields of Management. The extent to which students are sufficiently equipped to write a master's thesis should be strengthened by improving the extent to which students master skills in data collection and data analyses in an early stage of the programme. In addition, some courses need to challenge students on a higher level of difficulty. On the whole, the panel is convinced that the programme and the Faculty involved, trains students to become critical thinkers who are intercultural competent and who have developed the skills and knowledge to become effective managers.

All in all, the panel assesses the quality of the programme conditionally positive.

5 Overview of the assessments

Standard	Assessment
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>Standard 1: 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</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Curriculum; orientation <i>Standard 2: The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.</i>	Partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Curriculum; content <i>Standard 3: The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Partially meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Curriculum; learning environment <i>Standard 4: The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Intake <i>Standard 5: The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Staff <i>Standard 6: The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Facilities <i>Standard 7: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated). Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Tutoring <i>Standard 8: The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Quality Assurance <i>Standard 9: The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).
Student assessment <i>Standard 10: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.</i>	Meets the standard (weighted and substantiated).

Conclusion	Conditionally positive (weighted and substantiated)
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Appendix 1: Composition of the panel

Chair

Prof. dr. Ed Peelen

Member

Prof. dr. Dorota Dobija

Member

Prof. dr. Aard Groen

Member

Duco Mülder

Coordinator

Gijs Kremers MSc. (policy advisor, NVAO)

Secretary

Jetse Siebenga MSc. (owner Siebenga Advies)

Appendix 2: Schedule of the site visit

The panel visited MSM Maastricht School of Management on 24th of May as part of the external assessment procedure regarding the wo-pi-master Master of Arts in Management.

09:00 – 09:30	Reception and preparatory panel meeting (confidential)
09:30 – 10:30	Representatives of the Executive Board, Institute and program management
10:00 – 11:30	Teaching staff
11:00 – 12:30	Representatives of the Examination Board and Program Evaluation Committee
12:30 – 13:15	Panel meeting (confidential)
13:15 – 13:45	Tour of the facilities
13:45 – 14:45	Students and alumni
14:45 – 15:15	Representatives from the professional field
15:30 – 16:45	Panel meeting (confidential)
16:45	Presentation of initial findings

Appendix 3: Documents reviewed

Programme documents presented by the institution

- Information dossier
- Appendices to the information dossier:
 - o MM program summary changes
 - o MSM History
 - o Subject-specific reference framework for business and economics disciplines
 - o MM programs benchmark Netherlands-Belgium
 - o MM program Outcomes Assessment Plan 2018-2019
 - o MM content mapping against AMBA requirements for MBM
 - o Final Thesis Manual (MM program)
 - o Skills from the international competence frameworks covered in the MM program
 - o MM Course Manuals 2018-2019
 - o Course learning outcomes mapped with the program learning goals
 - o Quality Checks Master Programs
 - o Education and Examinations Regulations – MM program 2018-2019
 - o MM student demographics 2018-2019
 - o Faculty trainings overview 2017-2018
 - o Faculty Handbook 2018
 - o Faculty teaching in the MM program (2018-2019)
 - o Faculty CVs (teaching in the MM academic year 2018-2019)
 - o MSM Faculty publications (2015-2019)
 - o MSM Information Center resources
 - o MSM Quality Assurance Policy
 - o Final Thesis Evaluation Rubric

Documents presented before the site-visit (request from the Panel)

- Faculty evaluation from the students, for the following courses: Accounting for Managers, Data analytics, Economic for Managers, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Finance, Human Resources Management, Managing Cultural Diversity, Strategy and Planning.
- Assessment description and sample of graded work from students for the courses: Economic for Managers, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Human Resources Management, Managing Cultural Diversity, Strategy and Planning and Research Methods.
- Minutes of the relevant general stakeholders' meetings
- Documents made available during the site visit
 - o Course Manuals
 - o Minutes, supporting documentation and decisions of the Education Board 2018 and 2019
 - o Curriculum vitae book of 2019 students
 - o Student Guide
 - o Course materials from the following courses:
 - Economics for Managers
 - Entrepreneurship & Innovation
 - Human Resources Management
 - Managing Cultural Diversity
 - Research Methods
 - Strategy and Planning
 - o Individual and Group Assignments and questions 2018-2019
 - o Education and Examination Regulations 2018-2019
 - o Marketing Material MSM and MM Programme
 - o Quality Check Folder including improvement plans
 - o MM 2018-2019 Schedule October 2018-Sept 2019

Appendix 4: List of abbreviations

Ad	Associate degree
ACBSP	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
AMBA	Association of MBAs
ATHEA	Association for Transnational Higher Education
Ba	bachelor's degree
EC	European credit point
hbo	professional higher education
IACBE	International Accreditation Council for Business Education
Ma	master's degree
MSM	Maastricht School of Management
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
wo	Academic orientation

