

Assessment report  
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

**Master Verandermanagement**

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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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 Master Verandermanagement programme of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, which has been 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 is well-organised and thoroughly embedded in the School of Business and Economics of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

The programme objectives are sound and relevant. These objectives specify students being educated to address complex and multi-disciplinary organisational change management problems, using academic research methods and techniques and drawing on both scientific and practical evidence. The panel regards the programme objectives to meet the standards of academic master programmes. The panel considers the postgraduate nature of the programme to be adequately reflected in the objective to educate students to address complex and multi-disciplinary problems in the change management field. The panel agrees to the programme objectives to train students for positions as all-round change managers or as advisors on change management within organisations. The programme is adequately aligned with the professional field through the Board of Trustees. The intended learning outcomes of the programme meet the programme objectives and are well-articulated and conform to the master level.

The student influx numbers of the programme are limited. The panel supports the programme's intentions to raise the student numbers and advises to monitor the risks in terms of these numbers. The admission requirements and admission procedures are up to standard.

The panel is positive about the curriculum. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The courses are up to standard and address relevant subjects with adequate depth. The panel is equally positive about the coherence. In the curriculum, theory and practice are adequately integrated.

The panel considers the lecturers in the programme to be motivated. The lecturers are active researchers in their fields and their educational capabilities are up to standard. The panel, however, advises to stimulate them to participate in BKO-trajectories. The lecturers are competent to bridge theory and practice, this being very important for the programme.

The educational concept and the study methods are in line with the programme characteristics. The study methods promote student-activating teaching. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. The panel encourages the programme to limit study delay.

The programme examinations and assessment rules and regulations are appropriate. The panel considers the position of the Examination Board and the activities of the Board to monitor the examinations and assessments of the programme to be up to standard.

The examination methods in the programme are consistent with the goals and contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes have been well-organised. Students are offered appropriate supervision. The assessment procedures are up to standard, involving two examiners assessing the work separately and on the basis of elaborate rubrics scoring forms with relevant assessment criteria.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be appropriate. The panel is especially positive about the programme assessment plan.

The final projects of the programme consist of Practicum assignments, Rapid Evidence Assessment assignments and Master thesis projects. The panel regards the Practicum assignments to be valuable, but does not consider these assignments as complete academic final Master products, acknowledging this to be not the primary objective of the assignments. The panel sees Rapid Evidence Assessment assignments as valuable as well, but does not see these assignments as complete final academic master projects either. Two of the Master theses the panel reviewed, are limited to the gathering, reviewing and analysing of academic literature on the organisational change problems addressed in the theses. Students responsible for these two theses do not proceed to do empirical research nor do they test the problem statements on the basis of empirical research. Therefore, the academic empirical cycle is not completed. The programme did not require these students to draft their theses in line with the objectives to have knowledge and skills to do independent scientific research and to address complex, multi-disciplinary change management problems by making use of academic methods and techniques in the different phases of the academic cycle. The panel is of the opinion that these students have therefore not shown being able to meet the programme intended learning outcomes. In the third Master thesis, the student failed to use the appropriate statistical method to analyse the problem stated, resulting in invalid underpinned conclusions and recommendations for change management. The fourth Master thesis is regarded by the panel to be up to standard. On the basis of the final projects reviewed, the panel considers three of the four programme graduates not to have reached the intended learning outcomes. To remedy the shortcomings stated, the panel specifies to require students to complete the whole academic empirical cycle in the Master thesis projects and to require students to meet the full set of academic criteria related to the intended learning outcomes.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the Master Verandermanagement programme of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam assesses this programme to be satisfactory in the terms of the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands. Standard 4 is assessed by the panel to be unsatisfactory. The panel considers the improvement of the shortcomings identified under this standard to be realistic and feasible within two years. Therefore, the panel recommends NVAO to impose on the programme an improvement period of two years and to extend the current accreditation term of the programme for that period.

Rotterdam, 25 March 2019

Dr. C. Terlouw  
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercouteren  
(panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam to conduct the limited framework programme assessment process for the Master Verandermanagement programme 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 Master Verandermanagement is a MSc-accredited degree programme since April 2015.

Having conferred with management of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam 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:

- Dr C. Terlouw, educational researcher in Higher Education, former lector Intake and Transition Management Higher Education (Saxion), and former director Teaching Training Institute, University of Twente (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. M. De Ceuster, professor of Finance, University of Antwerp, academic director Master programmes of Finance, Real Estate and Personal Financial Planning, Antwerp Management School (panel member);
- Prof. dr. ir. R.E.C.M. van der Heijden, professor Innovative Planning Methods, Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University Nijmegen (panel member);
- D. Lutikhuis BSc, student Master Business Administration, specialisation Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Strategy, University of Twente (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercouteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

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 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 most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected the final projects of four graduates, who graduated since the previous accreditation of the programme in 2015, which was the initial accreditation. The four graduates were the only students having graduated from the programme in that period.

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.

The assessment panel chair and the process coordinator discussed the assessment process procedures and the site visit schedule. The panel chair was informed about the profile of panel chairs of NVAO, serving as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

A few days prior to the site visit, the designated panel chair decided not to take up that position. Having conferred with programme management, the new chair was proposed to NVAO to replace the designated chair. NVAO agreed to the new panel chair taking up this position. The newly appointed panel chair was informed by the process coordinator about the assessment process procedures and about the profile of panel chairs of NVAO.

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 newly appointed panel chair studied all programme documentation and participated fully in the preparations 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 meeting, the 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 28 November 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, panel members were given the opportunity to meet with School Board representatives, programme management, Examination Board representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni. On the day of the site visit, three out of four final projects had been studied by the panel, one final project being considered satisfactory by the panel and two final projects being considered unsatisfactory by the panel. After the site visit, the fourth final project was studied by the panel.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered each 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 programme assessment process, assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the goal to discuss future developments of the relevant scientific fields and the consequences for the programme. In particular, the content, scope, and methodology of a final master thesis project were discussed.

The draft assessment 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: M Verandermanagement  
Orientation, level programme: Academic Master (postgraduate)  
Grade: MSc  
Number of credits: 60 EC (study duration 2.5 years)  
Specialisations: None  
Location: Amsterdam  
Mode of study: Part-time (language of instruction Dutch)  
Registration in CROHO: 75123

Name of institution: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam  
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 Master Verandermanagement programme is one of the seventeen postgraduate master programmes of the School of Business and Economics of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The School also offers bachelor programmes, master programmes, and research master programmes. The School Board, chaired by the dean, has the authority to deliver the programmes and ensure the quality of the programmes. This programme is part of the Center for Executive Education. The Center is part of the School of Business and Economics, but at the same time is a separate organisation with its own executive board. The programme director of this programme is responsible for the contents, organisation and quality assurance of the programme. The Programme Committee, being composed of equal numbers of lectures and students, advises programme management on the programme quality. The Examination Board of the Center for Executive Education has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of the postgraduate programmes, including this programme. The Board of Trustees of the programme, being composed of professional field representatives, monitors the programme quality from the professional field perspective and also monitors the programme finances.

The Master Verandermanagement programme is a postgraduate academic master programme, taking two-and-a-half years to complete and carrying 60 EC of study load. The programme is situated in the field of organisational change management. The objectives of the programme are to prepare students, who are already working in organisations, for positions as all-round change managers or as advisors on change management within organisations. The programme aims to prepare students to address at academic level and in professional and practical ways change management problems, taking into account evidence from scientific research and practical evidence from organisations. Students are educated in theories and models in this domain and are trained to address problems systematically and methodically. The field of organisational change management is multi-disciplinary, drawing on concepts and theories of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, organisational science, communication science and economics. For the programme, the domain-specific framework of reference has been drafted, delineating the organisational change management domain. The programme is linked to the international Center for Evidence-Based Management.

Programme management conducted a survey, benchmarking the programme against similar programmes in the Netherlands. Apart from similarities to the other programmes, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam programme distinguishes itself by the multi- or interdisciplinary approach, the interface of science and practice, the focus on evidence-based management and the inclusion of professional development.

The programme objectives have been translated into the programme intended learning outcomes. These have been formulated in line with the School of Business and Economics general objectives, comprising academic skills, bridging theory and practice, professional/social skills, broadening students' horizons, and self-awareness. The programme intended learning outcomes specify, as the main points, students to be able to contribute to the profession of organisational change management, using academic research skills, to know the theory in this domain and to know how to apply this theory, to be able to develop, apply and reflect upon solutions from different theoretical and multi-disciplinary perspectives, using appropriate methods and techniques, to diagnose, intervene and reflect upon complex multi-disciplinary change management challenges, to give professional opinions and take positions, taking ethical, social and societal perspectives into account, and to have self-directed learning skills, drawing on professional reflection.

Programme management drafted a table from which the matching of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for master programmes may be inferred.

#### *Considerations*

The panel regards the programme to be well-organised and to be thoroughly embedded in the School of Business and Economics of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

The programme objectives are sound and relevant. These objectives specify students being educated to address complex and multi-disciplinary organisational change management problems, using academic research methods and techniques and drawing on both scientific and practical evidence. The panel regards the programme objectives to meet the standards of the academic master programmes, as academic research methods and techniques as the basis for students' education are key parts of the objectives. The panel considers the postgraduate nature of the programme to be adequately reflected in the objective to educate students to address complex and multi-disciplinary problems in the change management field.

The panel agrees to the programme objectives to train students for positions as all-round change managers or as advisors on change management within organisations. The programme is adequately aligned with the professional field through the Board of Trustees.

The panel welcomes the programme having been benchmarked against programmes in this field in the Netherlands. The benchmark adds to the clarification of the programme profile and of the programme distinctive features.

The panel regards the intended learning outcomes of the programme to meet the programme objectives and to be well-articulated. The panel has established the intended learning outcomes to conform to the master level.

#### *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 number of incoming students in the recent few years was 6 students in 2015, 6 students in 2016 and 11 students in 2017. The programme has set the target figure for the yearly influx at about 15 students. As has been said above, students enrolling in the programme already have jobs. They work, among others, as managers, consultants or project managers. The entry requirements for the programme are having at least three years of working experience in for this programme relevant positions, and having completed master degree programmes in economics, business administration or social sciences or comparable disciplines. Applicants with these qualifications are unconditionally admitted to the programme. Candidates having completed bachelor degree programmes of higher vocational institutes (hbo) must take the pre-master programme before being admitted. Other applications are screened by the Examination Board. Having to take part of or the entire pre-master programme may be required. In recent years, about 50 % of the incoming students had completed master programmes, while another 50 % took the pre-master programme. Part of the intake procedure is a face-to-face interview, to discuss, among others, the requirements and the study load of the programme. The pre-master programme carries 23 EC of study load and includes theoretical courses, courses on research methods and techniques and the drafting of an academic paper.

The curriculum of the programme takes 2.5 years to complete, the total study load being 60 EC. For the programme a table was presented, showing the mapping of the courses to the intended learning outcomes. The first part of the curriculum is composed of four modules (30 EC in total) and is primarily meant to introduce students to organisational change management theory. The modules in this part address the concepts and theories of strategy, organisation and behaviour, leadership and learning. These concepts and theories are taught in relation to organisational change. Students are acquainted with the Critically Appraised Topic method, which allows them to concisely assess relevant academic literature on specific change management problems. Students are trained in advisory, intervention and coaching skills to be effective as change managers or advisor in change management. The second part of the curriculum consists of the Practicum (13.5 EC) and the REA (Rapid Evidence Assessment) assignment and Master thesis module (16.5 EC). The Practicum requires students to do a change management assignment in practice, usually their own practice. The last module is the Master thesis project, including the REA assignment. The REA is a systematic method to gather, study and critically assess academic literature on specific organisational change management problems or interventions. The REA method allows to do this in a relatively short time span. The Master thesis project includes workshops on academic writing.

Three full professors, one lecturer and one PhD student lecture in the programme as permanent staff members, having part-time appointments. Permanent staff members are researchers in their fields, publishing scientific articles and books in these fields. In addition, guest lecturers lecture in the programme, to address specific subjects. The guest lecturers are academic researchers, but also know how

to relate to the practice of change management. The total number of them is 21 lecturers. About 67 % of them have PhD degrees and about 50 % of them are full professors. Some of them are BKO-certified.

The educational concept of the programme is strongly directed towards the integration of theory and practice. Students are educated to learn how to relate theory to practical problems and how to use academic knowledge in organisations. The number of hours of face-to-face education in the programme is about 400 hours. In addition, students are guided individually in the programme for about 40 hours. This amounts to about 1.2 hours of face-to-face education per EC of credits. The teaching methods adopted in the programme are, among others, interactive lectures, games, dialogue, exercises and assignments in small groups, and theoretical and professional reflection. Study methods are interactive and student-activating. The programme is demanding, partly on account of students' study and work balance. The programme accommodates this by being accessible to students in case of questions or problems and by being flexible in case of study delay by external causes. The students-to-staff ratio is on average 17/1. Few students drop out, leading to estimated proportions of students completing the programme of about 50 % to 80 % per cohort. A substantial proportion of students take longer to complete the programme, mostly because of study delay during the Master thesis project. The programme intends to improve the organisation and supervision to limit study delay.

#### *Considerations*

As the student inflow numbers of the programme are limited, the panel supports the programme's intentions to raise the student numbers. The panel detected some risks for the programme in terms of the number of students. The panel recommends to monitor these risks. The panel considers the admission requirements to be up to standard, students having completed master programmes being admitted and other students being required to take the pre-master programme. The admission procedures are adequate.

The panel is positive about the contents of the curriculum, especially also the attention for the evidence-based perspective. The curriculum meets the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The courses are up to standard and address relevant subjects with adequate depth. The panel is also positive about the curriculum coherence in terms of learning lines. In the curriculum, theory and practice are appropriately integrated.

The panel considers the lecturers in the programme to be motivated. The lecturers are active researchers in their fields. The educational capabilities of the lecturers are regarded by the panel to be up to standard. The panel, however, advises to stimulate lecturers to participate in BKO-trajectories. The lecturers are competent to bridge theory and practice, this being very important for the programme.

The panel considers the educational concept and the study methods to be in line with the programme characteristics. The study methods promote student-activating teaching, by using the own practical experiences of the students. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. The panel encourages the programme to limit study delay.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

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

### 4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

#### *Findings*

The programme examination and assessment procedures are aligned with the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam policies on examination and assessment quality and the School of Business and Economics assessment policies in this respect. Principles and procedures for the programme examinations and assessments have been laid down in the programme assessment plan. The Examination Board of the Center for Executive Education has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

In all of the modules, multiple examinations are scheduled. Examination methods adopted are, among others, written examinations, individual assignments, group assignments, papers, essays, presentations and reflection reports. One of the examination methods is the manifest, taking the form of an article and requiring students to voice their substantiated opinion on one of the module topics.

The final project of the programme is a portfolio consisting of three components, being (i) the Practicum, (ii) the Rapid Evidence Assessment assignment and (iii) the Master thesis. As of 2018/2019, a fourth component, the Manifest, is added to the portfolio.

The Master thesis project procedures are listed in the manual. Students are invited to select their topics. They may also discuss this with their supervisor. Students are offered lectures on work-based research and evidence-based management research to select the research method for the thesis. Prior to starting the Master thesis project, students are required to submit and to have approved their Master thesis research plan. Students are entitled to 30 hours of supervision. In the course of the Master thesis project, students and supervisors meet three times to discuss the progress in these projects. Students present their findings to fellow students and supervisors. Students are given feedback on draft versions of their theses by their supervisors. Two examiners independently assess the Master thesis and meet to discuss the assessment and the grade. They use the rubrics assessment form. This form includes a range of assessment criteria, such as problem statement, literature review, design and method, analysis and interpretation, oral presentations and discussion, and work attitude. All criteria have to be graded at least satisfactory. All Master theses are checked for plagiarism. If examiners' assessments differ more than 2.0 points, the programme manager will act as the third examiner. The final grade is the average of the individual grades.

Programme management and the Examination Board have taken measures to promote the quality of examinations and assessments. In the assessment plan of the programme, the contents as well as the methods of the course examinations have been aligned to the course goals and the programme intended learning outcomes. The Examination Board appoints the examiners. The draft examinations of courses are peer-reviewed by one or more fellow examiners. For courses, test blueprints, showing the relations between course goals and contents and examination items, are drafted. For written assignments, including the Practicum module and the Master thesis, rubrics assessment forms have been adopted. On behalf of

the Examination Board, the Assessment Committee inspects samples of course examinations as well as samples of Master theses.

#### *Considerations*

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and School of Business and Economics guidelines and policies. The panel considers the position of the Examination Board and the activities of the Board to monitor the examinations and assessments of the programme to be up to standard.

The panel approves of the examination methods adopted by the programme. The methods are consistent with the goals and the contents of the courses.

The supervision and assessment processes for the Master thesis projects have been well-organised. Students are offered appropriate supervision. The assessment procedures are up to standard, involving two examiners assessing the work separately and on the basis of elaborate rubrics scoring forms with relevant assessment criteria.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be appropriate. The panel is especially positive about the programme assessment plan.

#### *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.
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##### *Findings*

The final project of the programme is a portfolio composed of three components, being the Practicum, the Rapid Evidence Assessment assignment, and the Master thesis project. The Practicum allows students to do change management assignments in real-life organisations and to put theory into practice. The Rapid Evidence Assessment assignment requires students to search, review and analyse academic literature and may serve as the starting point for the Master thesis project. In the Master thesis project finally, students do self-directed research to address complex, multi-disciplinary change management problems, proceeding systematically and methodically and making use of academic approaches. Students may use either work-based research methods (qualitative) or evidence-based management research methods (quantitative). In these three components, all of the intended learning outcomes of the programme are being assessed, with the exception of the intended learning outcome on professional and social skills. As of 2018/2019, the Manifest is added to this portfolio.

The panel studied the final projects of four graduates of the programme, these being all of the students having graduated since the most recent accreditation in 2015, which was the initial accreditation.

Programme graduates indicate having the capabilities to succeed in completing larger and more complex organisational change projects. Several of the graduates have the chance to be promoted to positions with more responsibilities.

The programme Board of Trustees of the programme monitors programme graduates having reached the intended learning outcomes.

##### *Considerations*

Of the four final projects the panel studied, three are assessed by the panel as not satisfactory in terms of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The Practicum assignments the panel studied, are worth-while accounts of the practical implications of organisational change projects in organisations. The assignments include the professional and personal reflection of students on organisational change projects. The panel regards these to be valuable, but does not consider these assignments as complete academic final Master products, acknowledging this to be not the primary objective of the Practicum assignments. In the Rapid Evidence Assessment assignments the panel reviewed, academic literature is appropriately gathered, arranged and analysed to formulate or to sharpen the formulation of the problem statements of the Master thesis projects. The panel regards these assignments to be valuable, but does not see these assignments as complete final academic master projects either. Two of the Master theses the panel reviewed, are limited to the gathering, reviewing and analysing of academic literature on the organisational change problems to be addressed in the theses. Students do not proceed to do empirical research nor do they test the problem statements on the basis of empirical research, using data which have been collected systematically, which have been validated and which have been collected in controlled situations. Therefore, the academic empirical cycle is not completed. The programme did not require

these students to draft their theses in line with the objectives to have knowledge and skills to do independent scientific research and to address complex, multi-disciplinary change management problems by making use of academic methods and techniques in the different phases of the academic cycle. Designs are tested in practice and are researched empirically-scientifically, starting from research goals and research problem statements. Both designs and empirical-scientific research are theory-based. Interventionist research (design, implementation and evaluation of interventions in systems or organisations) are equally empirically-scientifically based. The other parts of the portfolio, the Practicum and the Rapid Evidence Assessment assignment, may include other elements. The Master thesis should, however, include the empirical-scientific research cycle.

The panel is of the opinion that these students have therefore not shown being able to meet the programme intended learning outcomes. In the third Master thesis, the student failed to use the appropriate statistical method to analyse the problem stated, resulting in invalid underpinned conclusions and recommendations for change management. The fourth Master thesis is regarded by the panel to be up to standard. On the basis of the final projects reviewed, the panel considers three of the four programme graduates not to have reached the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

To remedy the shortcomings stated, the panel specifies to require students to complete the whole academic empirical cycle in the Master thesis projects and to require students to meet the full set of academic criteria related to the intended learning outcomes.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

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

## 5. Overview of assessments

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

## **6. Recommendations and shortcomings**

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

- To limit study delay.
- To monitor the risks for the programme in terms of the number of students.
- To stimulate lecturers to participate in BKO-trajectories.

As standard 4, Assessment Learning Outcomes, is assessed to be unsatisfactory, the panel summarises the shortcomings to be remedied. These are the following.

- To require students to complete the whole academic empirical cycle in the Master thesis projects and to require students to meet the full set of academic criteria related to the intended learning outcomes.