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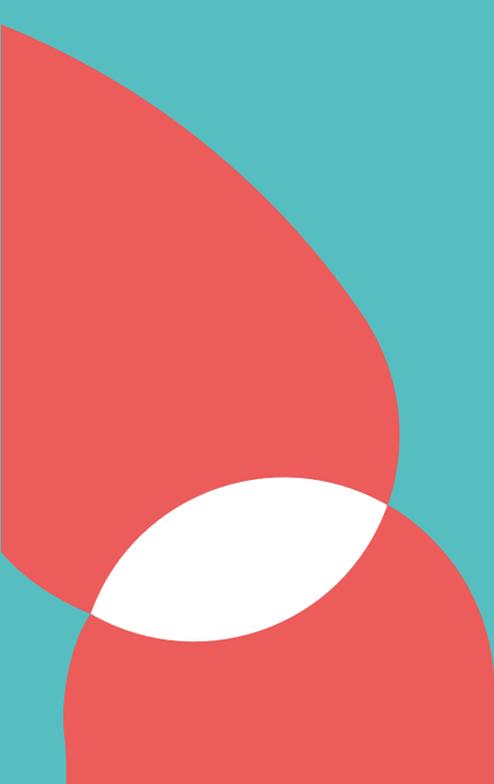
PEER REVIEW NEW PROGRAMME

M EXECUTIVE MBA : LEADING WITH
PURPOSE

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

SUMMARY REPORT

March 8, 2021



1 Procedure

The quality of a new programme is assessed by means of peer review. A panel of independent peers including a student reviews the plans during a site visit to the institution. A discussion amongst peer experts forms the basis for the panel's final judgement and the advisory report. The focus is on the curriculum, the teaching and learning environment, and student assessment.

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) takes a formal decision on the quality of the new programme based on the outcome of the peer review. This decision can be positive, conditionally positive or negative. Following a positive NVAO decision with or without conditions the institution can proceed to offer the new programme. Upon completion of the programme graduates are entitled to receive a legally accredited degree.

This summary report contains the main outcomes of the peer review. A full report with more details including the panel's findings and analysis is also available. NVAO bases an accreditation decision on the full report.

Both the full and summary reports of peer reviews are published on NVAO's website www.nvao.net. There you can also find more information on NVAO and peer reviews of new programmes.

Because of COVID-19 temporary measures apply for this peer review.

2 Panel

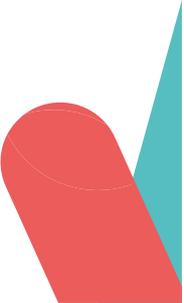
Peer experts

1. Prof. Dr. Ed Peelen (chair), Endowed Professor in Content Marketing, University of Amsterdam and partner at FutureofBusiness;
2. Prof. Dr. Ir. Marion Debruyne, Dean and Professor in Strategic Innovation and Marketing, Vlerick Business School, Brussels;
3. Prof. Dr. Woody van Olffen, Professor of Organizational Change and Development at TIAS School for Business and Society, Tilburg University;
4. Menno van Gameren MSc (student member), graduate Master in Business Administration, University of Amsterdam.

Assisting staff

- Dr. Marianne van der Weiden, secretary
- Ir. Lineke van Bruggen, NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator

Site visit (online): 18-19 January 2021



3 Outcome

The NVAO approved panel reaches a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the academic master Executive MBA offered by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The parttime programme is offered in Amsterdam and covers a period of 18 months.

The Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose is an English-taught programme for senior executives with at least five and ideally seven to ten years of professional experience. An advisory board with representatives from industry gave feedback to the programme designers and assisted in shaping it into a truly executive programme. The panel commends the programme for its unique profile. Participants learn to reflect on their leadership ambitions and how to be thought leaders: taking an evidence-based position on topical issues and communicate this convincingly to stakeholders. They follow courses on business foundations, strategic decision-making and organisational innovation, and leading a business through crises and uncertainty. The final element is a project in which they apply their knowledge and research skills to find an answer to a practical or academic problem of their choice.

Learning takes place in small groups. Participants with a diversity of backgrounds bring in their experiences and different perspectives, which creates a strong and interactive learning environment. They are introduced to state-of-the-art knowledge and apply this to various case studies. Individual and group assignments challenge them to come to evidence-based decisions. Reflection exercises stimulate personal growth, group work and practical exercises such as presentations contribute to the development of personal and professional skills. The panel advises to assess these skills explicitly at the end of the programme. The teaching staff is highly qualified and enthusiastic to work together in the programme. External partners are called in to bring in additional knowledge from practice.

The panel concludes that the programme meets the quality standards: it has a distinctive profile that meets the expectations of an executive MBA programme, the range and level of courses and the qualities of the teaching staff will help participants to achieve the learning goals. This is assessed in different, sometimes innovative tests and assignments.

4 Commendations

The programme is commended for the following features of good practice.

1. Involvement of professional field – Relevant companies are part of the advisory board. The programme management has used their feedback to create an attractive programme for senior executives in industry.
2. Profile – The focus on purpose-driven leadership is relevant and distinctive, and is clearly visible in the courses.
3. Capstone project – At the end of the programme, participants work on a practical or academic research question of their own, integrating and applying the knowledge and skills they learned in the programme.

4. Teaching staff – The teachers are experts in their fields and enthusiastic. They work as a team and make sure that their courses fit together well. They invite practitioners as guest lecturers to complement their own expertise.
5. Interactive learning environment – Participants with different backgrounds in leadership positions will share their experiences in the courses and contribute to peer learning. The programme uses a wide and innovative variety of teaching methods and assignments.

5 Recommendations

For further improvement to the programme, the panel recommends a number of follow-up actions.

1. Research skills – Organise a learning line of research skills before participants start work on their capstone project, so that they can build up maturity in these skills.
2. Personal and professional skills – Formulate explicitly that personal growth is one of the programme's learning goals. Do not organise them as extracurricular activities, but give them a clear position in the curriculum and assess them at the end of the programme.
3. Assignments and tests – Use the expertise of the examination board to ensure that innovative assessment methods measure what they should measure and in a reliable manner.
4. Extend the advisory board to differentiate it from the advisory board of the MBA in International Business, and include representatives from organisations that are ahead of the curve in purpose-driven leadership.

6 What comes next?

NVAO grants initial accreditation to a new programme on the basis of a panel's full report. The decision is valid for a maximum of six years. Upon accreditation the new programme will follow the NVAO review procedures for existing programmes. NVAO publishes the accreditation decision together with the full report.¹

Each institution has a system of quality assurance in place ensuring continuous follow-up actions and periodic peer-review activities. Peer reviews help the institution to improve the quality of its programmes. The progress made since the last review is therefore taken into consideration when preparing for the next review. The follow-up activities are also part of the following peer-review report. For more information, visit the institution's website.²

¹ <https://www.nvaio.net/nl/besluiten>

² <https://www.vu.nl/nl/index.aspx>

7 Summary in Dutch

Het panel oordeelt positief over de kwaliteit van de Executive MBA: Leading with Purpose van de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Dit is de uitkomst van de kwaliteitstoets uitgevoerd door een panel van *peers* op verzoek van de Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (NVAO). Voor deze beoordeling heeft het panel gesprekken gevoerd met de opleiding op 18 en 19 januari 2021.

De Executive MBA: Leading with Purpose is een Engelstalige deeltijdopleiding voor senior managers met minstens 5 jaar en idealiter 7-10 jaar professionele ervaring. De opleiding heeft de feedback van de adviesraad, met vertegenwoordigers uit het bedrijfsleven, benut om van het programma een echte MBA te maken. Het panel vindt het profiel van doelgericht leiderschap (Leading with Purpose) onderscheidend en gedurfd. Deelnemers leren te reflecteren op hun leiderschapsambities, een standpunt in te nemen over actuele ontwikkelingen en daarover overtuigend te communiceren. Ze krijgen cursussen over management en strategisch leiderschap en sluiten de opleiding af met een onderzoeksproject. Daarin passen ze hun kennis en vaardigheden toe om een antwoord te vinden op een probleem naar keuze, bijvoorbeeld in hun eigen organisatie. In dit project wordt het behaalde eindniveau getoetst.

Deelnemers hebben verschillende achtergronden. Ze leren in kleine groepen waarin ze elkaars ervaringen en perspectieven benutten bij het bespreken van theorie en het werken aan case studies. Aan de hand van individuele en groepsopdrachten leren ze theorie op waarde te schatten en te benutten bij het oplossen van problemen. De opleiding besteedt veel aandacht aan persoonlijke groei en de ontwikkeling van professionele vaardigheden. Dit zou volgens het panel meer expliciet getoetst kunnen worden aan het eind van de opleiding. De docenten zijn zeer gekwalificeerd en vormen een hecht team. Ze betrekken gastdocenten in hun cursussen om praktijkervaringen in te brengen.

Het panel concludeert dat de opleiding aan de eisen voldoet: een onderscheidend profiel van het juiste niveau, passende cursussen die door gekwalificeerde en enthousiaste docenten gegeven worden, en een passend toetssysteem.

Meer informatie over de NVAO-werkwijze en de toetsing van nieuwe opleidingen is te vinden op www.nvao.net. Voor informatie over de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam verwijzen we naar de website van de instelling.³

Als gevolg van de beperkende omstandigheden door COVID-19 geldt voor deze kwaliteitstoets een tijdelijke procedure.

³ <https://www.vu.nl/nl/index.aspx>

The summary report was written at the request of NVAO and is the outcome of the peer review of the new programme academic master Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Application no: 009876



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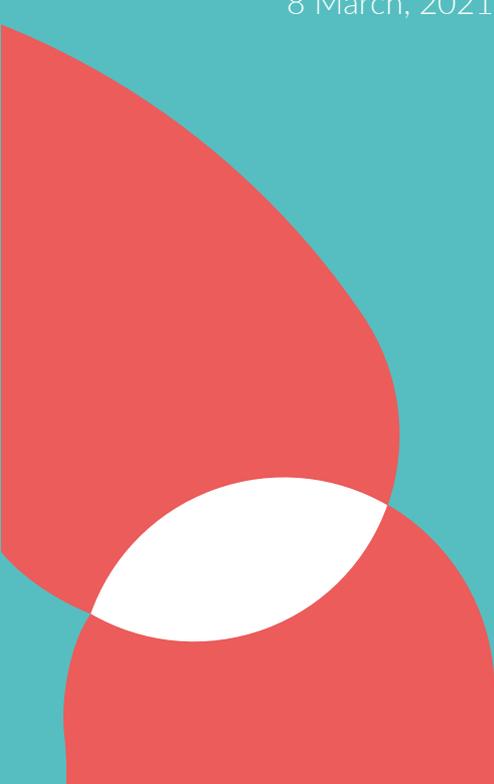
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INITIAL ACCREDITATION

M EXECUTIVE MBA : LEADING WITH
PURPOSE

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

FULL REPORT
8 March, 2021



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1 Procedure

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) determines the quality of a new programme on the basis of a peer review. This initial accreditation procedure is required when an institution wishes to award a recognised degree after the successful completion of a study programme.

The procedure for new programmes differs slightly from the approach to existing programmes that have already been accredited. Initial accreditation is in fact an ex ante assessment of a programme. Once accredited the new programme becomes subject to the regular review process.

The quality of a new programme is assessed by means of peer review. A panel of independent peers including a student reviews the self-evaluation report and documentation during a site visit to the institution. A discussion amongst peer experts forms the basis for the panel's final judgement and the advisory report. The agenda for the panel visit and the documents reviewed are available from the NVAO office upon request.

The outcome of this peer review is based on the standards described and published in the limited NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands (Stcrt. 2019, nr. 3198). Each standard is judged on a three-point scale: meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard. The panel will reach a conclusion about the quality of the programme, also on a three-point scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative.

This report contains the findings, analysis and judgements of the panel resulting from the peer review. It also details the commendations as well as recommendations for follow-up actions. A summary report with the main outcomes of the peer review is also available.

NVAO takes an accreditation decision on the basis of the full report. The NVAO decision can be positive, conditionally positive or negative. Following a positive NVAO decision with or without conditions the institution can proceed to offer the new programme.

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2 New programme

2.1 General data

Institution	: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Programme	: wo-master Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose
Mode of study	: Part-time
Degree	: Master of Business Administration
Tracks	: not applicable
Location	: Amsterdam
Study load	: 60 EC ¹
Field of study	: Economics (confirmed by the panel)

2.2 Profile

The Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose is aimed at senior professionals with at least five and ideally seven to ten years of professional experience and considerable experience in leadership positions. The programme helps them to uncover their leadership purpose, as this provides guidance to define and achieve their companies' and their own goals. The Executive MBA programme develops participants into societal thought leaders who are able to form an evidence-based opinion, to effectively communicate this opinion to different stakeholders and to lead organisations through times of crisis and uncertainty.

2.3 Panel

Peer experts

1. Prof. Dr. Ed Peelen (chair), Endowed Professor in Content Marketing, University of Amsterdam and partner at FutureofBusiness;
2. Prof. Dr. Ir. Marion Debruyne, Dean and Professor in Strategic Innovation and Marketing, Vlerick Business School, Brussels;
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Assisting staff

- Dr. Marianne van der Weiden, secretary
- Ir. Lineke van Bruggen, NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator

Site visit (online)

18-19 January 2021

¹ European Credits

3 Outcome

The NVAO approved panel reaches a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the academic master Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose offered by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The programme complies with all standards of the limited NVAO framework.

The Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose is a parttime English-taught programme for senior executives with at least five and ideally seven to ten years of professional experience. An advisory board with representatives from industry gave feedback to the programme designers and assisted in shaping it into a truly executive programme. The panel commends the programme for its unique profile. Participants learn to reflect on their leadership ambitions and how to be thought leaders: taking an evidence-based position on topical issues and communicate this convincingly to stakeholders. They follow courses on business foundations, strategic decision-making and organisational innovation, and leading a business through crises and uncertainty. The final element is a project in which they apply their knowledge and research skills to find an answer to a practical or academic problem of their choice.

Learning takes place in small groups. Participants with a diversity of backgrounds bring in their experiences and different perspectives, which creates a strong and interactive learning environment. They are introduced to state-of-the-art knowledge and apply this to various case studies. Individual and group assignments challenge them to come to evidence-based decisions. Reflection exercises stimulate personal growth, group work and practical exercises such as presentations contribute to the development of personal and professional skills. The panel advises to assess these skills explicitly at the end of the programme. The teaching staff is highly qualified and enthusiastic to work together in the programme. External partners are invited to bring in additional knowledge from practice.

The panel concludes that the programme meets the quality standards: it has a distinctive profile that meets the expectations of an executive MBA programme, the range and level of courses and the qualities of the teaching staff will help participants to achieve the learning goals. This is assessed in different, sometimes innovative tests and assignments.

Standard	Judgement
1 Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
2 Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
3 Student assessment	meets the standard
Conclusion	positive

4 Commendations

The programme is commended for the following features of good practice.

1. Involvement of professional field – Relevant companies are part of the advisory board. The programme management has used their feedback to create an attractive programme for senior executives in industry.
2. Profile – The focus on purpose-driven leadership is relevant and distinctive, and is clearly visible in the courses.
3. Capstone project – At the end of the programme, participants work on a practical or academic research question of their own, integrating and applying the knowledge and skills they learned in the programme.
4. Teaching staff – The teachers are experts in their fields and enthusiastic. They work as a team and make sure that their courses fit together well. They invite practitioners as guest lecturers to complement their own expertise. They are open for suggestions to further develop and improve the programme.
5. Interactive learning environment – Participants with different backgrounds in leadership positions will share their experiences in the courses and contribute to peer learning. The programme uses a wide and innovative variety of teaching methods and assignments.

5 Recommendations

For further improvement to the programme, the panel recommends a number of follow-up actions.

1. Research skills – Organise a learning line of research skills before participants start work on their capstone project, so that they can build up maturity in these skills.
2. Personal and professional skills – Formulate explicitly that personal growth is one of the programme's learning goals. Do not organise them as extracurricular activities, but give them a clear position in the curriculum and assess them at the end of the programme.
3. Assignments and tests – Use the expertise of the examination board to ensure that innovative assessment methods measure what they should measure and in a reliable manner.
4. Extend the advisory board to differentiate it from the advisory board of the MBA in International Business, and include representatives from organisations that are ahead of the curve in purpose-driven leadership.

6 Assessment

6.1 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.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Findings, analysis and considerations

The Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose (EMBA) aims to help senior executives to uncover their leadership purpose, such as why they have become a leader and what type of leader they aim to be. This will assist in creating a sense of purpose in employees' minds and thus be a crucial ingredient of successful organisations and leaders. EMBA also aims to develop the participants into societal thought leaders who take a stance on topical societal issues. It provides them with skills to form an evidence-based opinion and to effectively communicate about this with different stakeholders, preparing them to lead organisations through times of crisis and uncertainty. The panel appreciates the programme's profile: it distinguishes EMBA from other MBA programmes and aligns well with the university's priority areas (sustainable, enterprising and diverse) and two of its profile themes (Governance for Society, Science for Sustainability). The profile is state-of-the-art and matches the programme's target group: professionals who have at least five and ideally seven to ten years of professional experience and considerable experience in leadership positions.

The intended learning outcomes are presented in the information file. Five general learning goals for executive degrees (academic and research skills; bridging theory and practice; professional social skills; broadening your horizon; self-awareness) are made more specific in six learning outcomes, describing what a graduate can do or make. These intended learning outcomes are linked convincingly to the Dublin descriptors at master's level. The panel also recognises that the programme adopted the common MBA structure, ensuring a general management focus and offering different courses to prepare participants for challenges related to leading employees and organisations in turbulent environments. This ensures that the intended learning outcomes meet the standards for an MBA degree. The panel would have expected a stronger and more explicit expression of the programme's distinctive focus of 'leading with purpose'. The programme management explained during the site visit that accreditation is sought for a general MBA degree and that in a few years' time a different focus could be more appropriate. The panel appreciates that the programme is ready to adapt to such changes, but recommends giving 'purpose' or similar aspects of personal development and growth a more explicit position in the learning goals at programme level. This would stimulate its role as a guiding principle for the curriculum, ensure that it is assessed explicitly, and make it clearer for (prospective) students what they may expect.

EMBA was developed in close interaction with the programme's advisory board, which consists of senior leaders and highly-ranked Human Resources specialists from multinational companies as well as academic experts. During the site visit, the panel discussed the programme with a number of the advisory board's industry members. The advisory board was involved from the beginning, in the design stage, and played a prominent role in sharpening EMBA's profile from a fairly academic to a truly executive master's programme.

The panel concludes that EMBA's intended learning outcomes tie in with what is nationally and internationally expected from an executive master's programme. 'Leading with purpose' adds an interesting distinctive profile. This emphasis on personal growth could be made more explicit in the programme's intended learning outcomes. The input and feedback from the advisory board have been used well to finetune the programme to the needs of general managers and their companies. The panel suggests to invite some leaders, who are known for their purpose driven approach, to join the advisory board. The programme meets standard 1.

6.2 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.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Findings, analysis and considerations

The EMBA curriculum (60 EC) comprises a set of sixteen courses (3 EC each) and a final capstone project (12 EC). The courses are organised in five blocks that address the specific challenges of a senior executive. The information file provides a thorough rationale of how the courses relate to each other and to the intended learning outcomes. Meetings between course coordinators and with the programme director ensure alignment between the various courses. The programme's start with the participants' personal purpose is a good choice as it sets the agenda for the rest of the curriculum. The programme staff explained that, in order to develop personal and professional skills in leadership, all courses emphasise reflection and self-assessment. In addition, they offer executive coaching in an extracurricular setting. The panel is aware that programme time is limited, but feels that such an important aspect of the learning objectives should not be extracurricular, but be fully part of the curriculum.

In the sixth and final block, the capstone project, the participants will use the knowledge and skills acquired in the courses to investigate a relevant problem. This problem will probably in most cases be practice-based, related to an actual problem of their organisation, but could also be research-based, addressing a relevant knowledge gap. The programme has no specific course(s) on research methods to prepare students for the capstone project. Programme director and lecturers expect that the assignments in other courses will be sufficient preparation for the participants to work in an evidence-based way and to provide a scientifically based answer in their project. Support will be provided by a supervisor and a number of lectures, e.g. on data collection and academic writing. The panel advises to organise a more explicit learning line of (applied) research skills, so that participants can build up maturity in these skills. Overall, the panel judges that the curriculum is well-considered and that the blocks cover the intended learning outcomes. The capstone project is a nice way for participants to apply in practice what they have learned.

The parttime nature of EMBA allows participants to study alongside their career and to apply the new knowledge and skills in their daily work. The programme has a duration of 18 months and a feasible time schedule: once a month, participants will meet from Thursday to Saturday noon (2.5 days), while they will devote the rest of their study time to preparation and writing assignments.

The working language in EMBA is English, because this is the leading language in academia and in the business world. The panel agrees that senior leaders need to be able to communicate and express their thoughts in English, since large companies, even if they are based in the Netherlands, have an international workforce and operate outside the Netherlands.

The programme uses diversity, interactivity and evidence-based management as its didactic approach to develop holistic, innovative and socially responsible business leaders. A mixed classroom of participants with diverse backgrounds is expected to create learning opportunities, using the different experiences and perspectives in a safe environment. The interaction between participants will be stimulated by keeping classes relatively small (10-25 participants) and using interactive teaching methods such as problem-based learning and peer learning. Case-based teaching will be combined with scientific evidence to develop evidence-based management: participants learn to combine their intuition with scientific evidence to make superior decisions. The panel considers this a suitable approach for an executive programme of academic quality.

The programme has formulated appropriate admission criteria: a bachelor's degree, a GMAT score of at least 600 (waived for applicants with a master's degree or a PhD), a minimum of five years of postgraduate work experience (preferably between seven to ten years), leadership experience and senior leadership potential (testified by the candidate's CV, motivation essay and two recommendation letters), and adequate English language proficiency. These requirements are similar to those of other executive MBA programmes. The programme has set up a thorough admission process of three steps: (1) submission of the required documents, (2) an interview with the programme director to learn more about the candidate's motivation and commitment, and (3) decision-making by the admission committee which consists of the programme director and two members of the advisory board. The School of Business and Economics (SBE) has attracted a professional recruiter who knows the executive market to compensate its own lack of experience in the MBA market. The panel considers this a worthwhile step and thinks that, in combination with the advisory board and its network, this will help to recruit the right set of participants.

Based on the documentation and the interviews during the site visit, the panel is convinced that the teaching staff is both qualified and committed. Course coordinators and lecturers meet the requirements set by the school: a University Teaching Qualification and a high level of English proficiency, academic excellence proven by means of a PhD degree or high-ranked publications, and several years of teaching experience, ideally in executive education. Their commitment to the programme and their open attitude were clearly visible during the site visit. It is clear that course coordinators have been involved collaboratively in the design and further elaboration of EMBA. The majority of staff has a Dutch nationality, most of them combined with working experience abroad. The panel considers the diversity of staff a relevant item. The contribution of external experts will, therefore, be a good way to complement the staff's background. External contributors will range from journalists of renowned business newspapers and providers of business simulation games to senior executives and representatives from stakeholder groups as guest speakers. It is helpful that EMBA can build on the experiences in other executive programmes offered by SBE. The course coordinators and the programme director will support practitioners and make sure that they meet the SBE requirements of didactic and English language quality. The programme director will be available for student support during the programme, such as

answering programme related questions and providing guidance. The panel agrees that the small class size will allow the programme director to fulfil this role adequately, but recommends day-to-day administrative and organisational support to be available for faculty and students. This will help support the programme director in the efforts to optimally support the participants in the programme.

Summing up, the panel concludes that the curriculum adequately covers the intended learning outcomes and fits the specific programme profile of Leadership with Purpose. More explicit attention in the curriculum to applied research skills and personal growth would be helpful, but this observation does not detract from the panel's overall positive assessment. The parttime nature, admission criteria and didactic approach are suitable for the target group of senior managers who combine EMBA with their professional work. The teaching staff is well-qualified and obviously works as a team. The programme meets standard 2.

6.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Findings, analysis and considerations

Assessment in EMBA complies with the assessment policies of SBE and VU Amsterdam. These are embedded in the more general quality assurance system which ensures a clear division of responsibilities and a systematic evaluation and monitoring process. At programme level, each course creates an assessment file with a test blueprint, the exam with model answers, and assessment criteria and forms. After the exam, the file is completed with the test results including an item analysis, the results of the course evaluation and a short reflection report by the course coordinator. The panel considers this a valuable instrument for the course coordinator and the examination board to monitor the assessment quality. Other methods to control the assessment quality are the formal appointment of examiners by the examination board and the involvement of a co-reader with content knowledge to check the contents of an examination before the participants take it. The use of this four-eyes-principle contributes to the assessment validity. The use of model answers and clear assessment criteria and forms will strengthen the reliability of assessment. Participants have the right to review their graded assignment and compare it to a model answer. Upon request, the examiners organise review sessions to answer any questions. This ensures sufficient transparency of assessment.

Course coordinators use a variety of assessment methods that reflect the range of learning objectives: essays, reports, case studies, individual and group assignments, presentations, reflection reports, a business model, an interview with a professional journalist and, finally, the capstone project. In a number of courses, participants are asked to submit a pre-course assignment, meant to trigger their background knowledge and sensitise them to the course content. The assessment methods and assignments are part of the course manuals, including the assessment criteria (in general terms) and their relative weight. The panel has not yet seen more detailed assessment criteria or rubrics, but based on the discussions with the teaching team and the examination board, the panel is assured that they will be of the right level. The panel appreciates the innovative character of some of the assessment methods and

advises the programme to use the expertise of the examination board to ensure their validity and reliability.

In the capstone project, participants will identify a practice-based or research-based problem, formulate a suitable research question, collect and analyse data and provide an evidence-based answer, including implications for research and managerial practice. They will work on their project for four months, guided by a supervisor who matches the participant's topic. During this period, the programme organises a number of lectures on specific research skills. The final report is checked for plagiarism and will then be assessed by the supervisor and an independent second reader. The assessment form is made available in the course manual, so participants know what to expect. In cases of disagreement between the two examiners, a third assessor is asked to grade the project. The assessment form with the final grade and the examiners' comments is given to the participant as feedback. The panel considers the capstone project a suitable way to assess most of the intended learning outcomes at the final level, but during the site visit it became clear that it does not address the participants' social and professional skills. The panel advises to add an assessment of these skills at the end of the programme, e.g. in the form of a portfolio, allowing both programme and participant to look back at the learning journey. Both programme director and course coordinators welcomed this suggestion.

The examination board that supervises EMBA is also responsible for safeguarding the assessment quality and the final degree level of the other accredited postgraduate programmes of SBE. The current board consists of eight members. Upon the start of EMBA and a second new MBA programme (MBA in International Business), additional members will join. The panel's discussion with the chair of the examination board showed how the board can draw on its experience with other programmes when it provides feedback to EMBA. For example, the board encouraged the programme staff to use the experience of SBE's executive coaching programmes to improve and finetune the assessment criteria of reflection exercises. The examination board systematically investigates the assessment procedures, plans and products of each programme, by taking a sample of assessment files and actual tests each year and checking if they meet the quality criteria. The chair regularly meets with programme directors and core staff to provide feedback, explain procedures and address issues at hand. The panel considers this an important way to help create an awareness of assessment quality and safeguard its assurance.

All in all, the panel concludes that EMBA uses an innovative and wide range of assessment methods to evaluate whether participants meet the learning objectives, both in the various courses and, at the final level, in the capstone project. The panel considers it worthwhile to add a portfolio assessment to measure the personal and professional skills at the end of the programme. The examination board organises a systematic process to check the quality of assessment and contributes to a strong quality culture. The programme meets standard 3.

6.4 Degree and field of study

The panel advises awarding the following degree to the new programme: MBA.
The panel supports the programme's preference for the following field of study: Economics.

Abbreviations

EC	European Credit
EMBA	Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose
MBA	Master of Business Administration
SBE	School of Business and Economics
VU Amsterdam	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The full report was written at the request of NVAO and is the outcome of the peer review of the new programme
wo-pi-master Executive MBA : Leading with Purpose of Vrije
Universiteit Amsterdam

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