



NVAO • NETHERLANDS

HBO-MASTER MASTER OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences

PANEL REPORT

7 JULY 2020

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**INITIAL ACCREDITATION
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7 JULY 2020



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1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for the initial accreditation procedure regarding the hbo-master Master of Business Management programme of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences. 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. In this executive summary, the main considerations and conclusions of the panel regarding the programme quality have been brought together.

The panel notes the reasons for Wittenborg to want to offer this programme to be both internally and externally driven reasons. It regards the programme objectives and the final qualifications derived from these objectives to be clear and valid. The programme objectives have been drafted in consultation with the professional field. The final qualifications meet the Dublin Descriptors for the Master level.

Although the specialisations being offered to students are in itself positive, the panel finds the programme profile unclear in terms of the position of the core business and management areas and the position of the specialisations and the relation between these two. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should develop and elaborate the profile of the programme further, especially to clarify the relation between the core business and management areas and the specialisations in the programme.

The panel notes the consultations of professional field representatives by programme management in the process of setting-up and designing this programme to be largely informal and to be less well-structured. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should step up and organise in a more formal way the involvement of the professional field in the development of the curriculum. This condition is advised by the panel to align the programme with professional field needs. The professional field structured input dates back from the professional profile in 2006, which was not drafted specifically for this programme but for a closely related programme.

The panel acknowledges the research orientation of the programme, but regards this quite unclear in terms of the distinction between academic research and applied research. For this programme, practice-oriented, applied research is to be expected. Although the panel appreciates the ambitions of the programme, the research orientation should be in line with the overall goals of the programme. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should make clear and explicit to prospective students that the research methods and techniques offered in the programme refer to practice-oriented, applied research and do not refer to academic research.

The panel considers the curriculum to meet the programme final qualifications and programme outcomes. Yet, the panel sees room for improvement. The panel notes the finance and accounting area to be underrepresented in the curriculum. Knowledge of this area is important for students to acquire. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Students should be taught finance and accounting subjects to enable them to use financial information for strategic and tactical decision-making processes in organisations.

The panel appreciates the strong international and intercultural character of the programme. The institute has a long track record with a distinguished focus on international students.

The panel regards the entry requirements for applicants to be up to standard and considers the admission procedures to be solid and reliable.

The panel regards the curriculum coherence up to standard. The flexibility in the programme is appreciated by the panel. Students are allowed to start in the programme at different moments in time. They are also allowed to adjust their study pace to their possibilities and to extend the work placement period. The panel welcomes classes being scheduled only for students of this programme and not jointly with students of other programmes. In addition, the panel is positive about the coherence of the programme. The number of hours of face-to-face education is adequate. The panel recommends to formulate prerequisites for modules, making clear to students which modules have to be completed, when they want to take specific modules. The panel endorses the English title for the programme and English as the language of instruction.

Although research methods and techniques are adequately covered in the curriculum, the panel recommends to address these earlier in the curriculum, to relate the Research Methodology module more directly to the Final Project and to involve the academic advisor for the Final Project already in the topic selection phase.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are up to standard. The panel notes the staff being equipped to relate lectures to the professional practice. The panel welcomes the very high proportion of PhD-qualified staff, being involved as teachers in the programme. The panel also appreciates the involvement of the teaching staff in the programme and the modules being taught by two teachers. The number of staff involved in the programme is sufficient and the international composition of staff is in line with the diversity of the student body typically for Wittenborg programmes.

The panel regards the buildings in which the programme is housed and the material facilities for the programme to be adequate. In addition, the panel appreciates the system of tutoring offered in the programme. This system is up to standard and meets students' needs.

The assessment panel assesses the quality assurance system for the programme to be up to standard. This system allows programme management to monitor the programme quality and to take adequate measures for improvement if needed.

The panel is positive about the position, composition, responsibilities and activities of the Graduation & Examination Board. In the panel's view, the Board ensures the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

The panel regards the quality and level of the written examinations in the programme to be appropriate. The quality and the level of the assignments are, however, not up to standard. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should bring the assignments to be completed by students in the programme up to the required level.

In the panel's view, the Final Project supervision and assessment procedures are appropriate.

The panel concludes the hbo-master Master of Business Management programme meets standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and partially meets standards 2 and 10 of the NVAO extensive initial accreditation framework. The panel advises NVAO to impose conditions for the programme to be met, as the panel is convinced the improvements required to meet standards 2 and 10 may be achieved within the period of one year. In line with these

considerations and conclusions the panel advises NVAO to decide conditionally positive on the quality of the hbo-master Master of Business management programme of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences.

The Hague, 7 July 2020,

For the assessment panel convened for the extensive initial accreditation assessment of the hbo-master Master of Business management programme of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences,

Prof. dr. Ed Peelen
(Panel chair)

Drs. Wim Vercouteren
(Secretary)

2 Introduction

2.1 The procedure

On 22 January 2020, Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences submitted to NVAO the request to conduct the initial accreditation procedure for the hbo-master Master of Business Management programme. The documentation on the programme was appended to the request.

The initial accreditation procedure is required in case recognised institutions want to award recognised Bachelor or Master degrees upon successful completion of study programmes. The procedure for initial accreditation is slightly different from the procedure for programmes that have already been accredited. Initial accreditation is in fact an ex ante assessment of the 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:

- Prof. dr. Ed Peelen, Extraordinary Professor Content Marketing and Academic Director professional education, University of Amsterdam (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. Dorota Dobija, Professor in Accounting and Management, Kozminski University, Poland (panel member);
- Hans van der Zwan, Programme manager and lecturer for Master programmes in Finance, The Hague University of Applied Sciences (panel member);
- Duco Mülder, Master student Econometrics and Operations Research, and Economics and Business Economics, Erasmus University Rotterdam (student member).

On behalf of NVAO, Jetse Siebenga MSc acted as the process coordinator. Drs. Wim Vercooteren served as the panel secretary.

This composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. All 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. 2019, nr 3198).

The initial accreditation procedure was conducted as follows. The panel members prepared the assessment by analysing the documents submitted by Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (Annex 3: Documents reviewed). The preparatory meeting of the panel was scheduled on 8 June 2020. During this meeting, the panel members shared their first impressions and formulated questions for the site visit.

The site visit took place on 9 June 2020 at the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences campus. During this visit, the panel met with programme representatives and gathered additional information in a number of sessions (Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit). At the end of the site visit, the panel internally discussed the findings and considerations and arrived at preliminary assessments per theme and per standard. Thereupon, the panel chair presented the initial panel findings and considerations to programme management.

Based on the findings, considerations and conclusions the panel secretary wrote the draft advisory report that was first presented to the panel members. After the panel members had

commented on the draft report, the chair approved the report. On 30 June, 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 6 July. Some suggested corrections were adopted. Subsequently the final report was approved by the panel chair. The panel composed its advice fully independently and offered it to NVAO on 7 July.

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, Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, 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

Institution	: Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
Programme	: Master of Business Management
Level	: hbo-master
Orientation	: full-time, part-time
Degree	: Master of Science (MSc)
Specialisations	: Digital Marketing & Communication Logistics & Trade Human Resource Management Entrepreneurship & Innovation Hospitality Tourism & Travel Events Sports Business
Location	: Apeldoorn
Study Load	: 90 EC
Field of Study	: Economie

3.2 Profile of the institution

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences is a privately funded (not-for-profit) institution for higher education in the Netherlands, having their main seat in Apeldoorn. The institution was founded in 1987. The institution also offers programmes in Amsterdam, Vienna, Austria and Munich, Germany. In total, more than 1.000 students are enrolled in the degree programmes offered by the institution, about 950 of whom study in Apeldoorn.

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences offers a range of Bachelor and Master programmes in the field of business administration with various specialisations. These Bachelor and Master programmes have been accredited by NVAO and by FIBAA. In addition, the institution offers four programmes through University of Brighton validations. These programmes are offered in joint teaching with University of Brighton. The institution is in the process of preparing for the AACSB accreditation.

The Executive Board of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences is responsible for the institution's strategy. The Education Board is in charge of the development and renewal of programmes of the institution. The Graduation & Examination Board of the institution has the authority to allocate credits and award degrees for all programmes of the institution.

All programmes of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences are English-taught and attract Dutch and international students. Dutch students are now about 10 % of the total student population.

3.3 Profile of the programme

The Master of Business Management programme, as proposed by Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, is based upon the existing Master of Business Administration programme of the institution. The latter programme has been accredited by NVAO.

The Master of Business Administration started as the joint taught programme of University of Brighton and Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences. The programme is still jointly taught

by these institutions, be it that the participation of both institutions changed over the years from 70 % (University of Brighton) and 30 % (Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences) to the 50 % participation for each of them.

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 studied during 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 upon the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands (Stcrt. 2019, nr 3198). 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 of Business Management programme is based upon the accredited Master of Business Administration of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (Wittenborg). Only students with at least three years of working experience are admitted to the Master of Business Administration programme.

The reasons for Wittenborg to consider offering the Master of Business Management programme are twofold. Firstly, Wittenborg wants to give students who have completed their Bachelor programme in the field of business administration or business management the opportunity to proceed directly to the Master level programme in this field without being obliged to acquire working experience. Secondly, the Brexit decision in the United Kingdom and changing regulations for Chinese students by the China government make the cooperation with University of Brighton less straightforward. Therefore, the Master of Business Management programme is meant to allow students to enrol on the basis of their Bachelor degree without working experience and the entire programme will be offered by Wittenborg.

The objectives of the programme are to provide graduates with the skills and competencies to take up business and management positions in larger organisations or in small and medium-sized companies in both the private and the public sector. The programme graduates are trained to manage business operations both at the tactical and the strategic level.

The programme objectives have been derived from the professional profile description of the business administrator. This profile is based upon the analysis of existing programmes in this field and upon consultations with companies in Europe about graduates' required knowledge and competencies. The professional profile was drafted in 2006. It has been updated recently for this programme. Input from the professional field has been taken into account.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme are summarised in five final qualifications. These final qualifications comprise understanding the body of knowledge of the field, taking on management roles, communication skills, research-oriented conduct, and continuous personal skills' development. The final qualifications have been elaborated in 26 more specifically worded programme outcomes.

Programme management showed the final qualifications and the programme outcomes to correspond to the Dublin Descriptors and the Netherlands Higher Education Qualifications Framework for Master programmes. The final qualifications also meet the domain-specific competencies for the business administration field of the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences.

Considerations

The panel notes the reasons for Wittenborg to want to offer this programme to be both internally and externally driven reasons. The panel regards the programme objectives to be clear and valid. The final qualifications derived from these objectives are up to standard as well. The panel notes the objectives to have been drafted in consultation with the professional field. They meet the Dublin Descriptors for the Master level.

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 programme offers eight quite diverse specialisations, four of which are oriented towards generic areas within the business and management domain and the other four of which focus on areas within the hospitality and tourism field.

In preparation of setting-up and designing the programme, programme management met with companies in the region and discussed the programme with the Wittenborg Advisory Board, being composed of professional field representatives. The purpose of these meetings was to learn about the career prospects for graduates of this programme. Both the companies and the Advisory Board confirmed programme graduates being of interest for the professional field. Not only the students' knowledge and skills in business management or business administration was regarded valuable, but also their international orientation. The companies interviewed either are international or want to expand internationally. Wittenborg contributes to the regional labour market and to companies in the region.

The programme is meant to be strongly research-oriented. Programme management stated the programme to be more research-oriented than the Master of Business Administration programme.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the specialisations being offered to students. The panel, however, finds the programme profile unclear in terms of the position of the core business and management areas and the position of the specialisations and the relation between these two. On the one hand, the focus of the programme is to teach students core business

knowledge, skills and attitude. On the other hand, it aims to provide students with specific knowledge of specific economical sectors. The relation between the two and the intention of the programme with regard to the specialisations could be made more explicit. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should develop and elaborate the profile of the programme further, especially to clarify the relation between the core business and management areas and the specialisations in the programme.

The panel notes the finance and accounting area to be underrepresented in the curriculum. In the panel's opinion, knowledge of this area is important for students to acquire. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Students should be taught finance and accounting subjects to enable them to use financial information for strategic and tactical decision-making processes in organisations. The relevance of finance and accounting subjects should be acknowledged by programme management as part of the core business knowledge and skills components of the programme.

The panel notes the consultations of professional field representatives by programme management in the process of setting-up and designing this programme, but sees these consultations as largely informal and as less well-structured. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should step up and organise in a more formal way the involvement of the professional field in the development of the curriculum. This condition is advised by the panel to align the programme with professional field needs. The professional field structured input dates back from the professional profile, which was drafted in 2006 and not specifically for this programme.

The panel acknowledges the research orientation of the programme. The panel, however, finds the research orientation of the programme quite unclear in terms of the distinction between academic research and applied research. For this programme, practice-oriented, applied research is to be expected. Programme management is not explicit in this sense. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should make clear and explicit to prospective students that the research methods and techniques offered in the programme refer to practice-oriented, applied research and do not refer to academic research.

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 curriculum of the programme consists of three semesters with the study load of 30 EC each, leading to the study load of the curriculum of 90 EC in total. Students take modules, which have 5 EC of study load. Only the study load of the Final Project differs with 25 EC. The first semester consists of six modules. Four modules are core modules and introduce students to classic functional business and management areas. Two modules are modules geared towards the specialisation students have chosen at the start of the programme. These specialisation courses introduce students to the specific specialisation parts of the programme. The first semester includes the Professional Enquiry module meant for students to reflect on what they have learned and the brief Introduction to Research Methods course. The second semester is composed of four core modules and two specialisation modules as well. These modules build upon the modules in the first semester. Students also take the

Research Methodology module, being one of the core modules, in preparation of their Final Project. Students are introduced to a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques to allow them to address various subjects. This module is completed by the submission of the Final Project proposal. In addition, students complete three interdisciplinary projects, addressing business or management problems for organisations in the region. In the third semester, students spend six weeks minimum as work placements at companies in the Professional Based Learning module. Students may extend this work placement to six months maximum. They either engage in consultancy projects or prepare for the Final Project. The curriculum ends with the research-based Final Project (25 EC).

All modules have already been designed and the study material for all of the modules already has been finished. The first modules in the programme curriculum have been offered to a group of about 15 students, one third of them having completed their Bachelor at Wittenborg and two thirds of them having Bachelor degrees from other institutions.

All modules have defined aims and objectives, which are related to the final qualifications and programme outcomes. Programme management presented diagrams, demonstrating all the final qualifications and programme outcomes being covered in the curriculum.

The coherence of the curriculum is mainly secured by the vertical built-up of knowledge and competencies. In the first semester, students are introduced to business and management subjects in the modules and to their specialisation. In the second semester, these subjects are addressed at advanced levels. In the third semester, students finish the curriculum with their Final Project. In the Research Methodology module, they prepare for the Final Project.

Considerations

The panel regards the curriculum to meet the programme final qualifications and programme outcomes. The modules in the curriculum cover both knowledge and competencies of generic business administration or business management areas and of the specialisations.

The panel notes research methods and techniques being adequately covered in the curriculum. The panel, however, recommends to address research methods and techniques earlier in the curriculum, to relate the Research Methodology module more directly to the Final Project and to involve the academic advisor for the Final Project already in the topic selection phase. The panel regards the curriculum coherence up to standard. It endorses the English title for the programme and English as the language of instruction.

Conclusion

The programme 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

Incoming students are allowed to start at the beginning of each of the blocks in the first year, that is six times per year. By far the most students are expected to start at the beginning of the first or second half of the first year. For students starting at other moments tailor-made solutions will be sought. Modules are offered two times per year to enable students to start

with the first semester in the second half-year. Students have to complete the first semester before being allowed to take modules of the second semester.

Under normal circumstances, students take two modules (2 x 5 EC) per six-week block. Given this study pace, they may complete the programme in three semesters or 1.5 years. Part-time students may spread the study load and may take three years to complete the programme. Full-time students are also allowed to take more time by spreading the study load. Extending the Professional Based Learning module (refer to standard 3) may prolong the programme to about two years.

Classes will only be attended by Master of Business Management students and there will not be mixed classes with students from other programmes. The number of hours of face-to-face education is about 12 hours per week in the first two semesters. In the third semester, the number of these hours is much less, on account of the different type of learning activities.

The programme is strongly international and intercultural. The programme outcomes and the curriculum reflect the international and intercultural character of the programme. All teaching activities are in English. Both the student body and the staff are highly international, with over 40 nationalities being represented. Key subjects in the programme are also ethics and diversity.

Students of the student group who have already taken modules in the programme, described the programme as very demanding, requiring more than 40 hours of study per week. The programme is in their view, however, doable in terms of the level of complexity. Programme management will collect information on the actual study load of the programme.

The target for the drop-out rate of the programme is 15 % to 20 %, which is comparable to the drop-out rate of the Master of Business Administration programme.

Considerations

The panel appreciates the flexibility in the programme. Students are allowed to start in the programme at different moments in time. They are also allowed to adjust their study pace to their possibilities and to extend the work placement period. Students starting the programme at different moments will be enabled to become members of the student group.

The panel welcomes classes being scheduled only for students of this programme. The number of hours of face-to-face education is adequate.

The panel recommends to formulate prerequisites for modules, making clear to students which modules have to be completed, prior to the ones they wish to enrol in.

The panel appreciates the strong international and intercultural character of the programme. The international orientation of the programme in terms of content but also in terms of targeted student body and staff composition result in an environment that are a strong added value of the programme in terms of quality.

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

Programme management has set the target for the number of students in the programme at about 250 students to be reached within two years.

The student body of the programme is expected to be very international, with students coming from a wide range of countries. Current programmes of Wittenborg attract 10 % students from the Netherlands and 90 % international students from countries around the world.

Incoming students should have completed the Bachelor programme in the fields of business administration or management to be admitted to the programme. Students may have taken their Bachelor degree at Wittenborg or at another university. Applicants, who have taken Bachelor degrees in other disciplines need to complete pre-master courses offered by Wittenborg to bring them up to the required level before enrolling.

Applicants are to submit the academic documents testifying to their previous education, their motivation letter, recommendation letters and proof of their proficiency in English. Foreign diplomas are screened by the Admission Committee. Admission interviews are conducted with applicants, if they prove to be eligible to be admitted.

International students are offered courses to teach them the Dutch language to allow them to integrate in Dutch society.

Considerations

The panel regards the entry requirements for applicants to be up to standard. The panel also considers the admission procedures to be solid and reliable.

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

The staff lecturing in the programme is very international, lecturers coming from a range of countries. Some staff members have permanent appointments, but most are appointed on part-time basis. Most of the teachers have positions in the professional field next to their teaching position. In addition, professionals are invited to give guest lectures.

Teachers are qualified for the subjects they teach. About 40 % of Wittenborg teaching staff hold PhD qualifications. Wittenborg aims to raise this number to 60 % in 2021. In Wittenborg Master programmes, such as this programme, about 70 % of teaching staff are PhD-qualified.

The teaching staff is involved in the programme design and development. The modules are taught by two teachers, the module leader and the co-teacher. They discuss the module contents. The module leader is to be PhD-qualified.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the qualifications of the teaching staff. The panel notes the staff being equipped to relate lectures to the professional practice. The panel welcomes the high proportion PhD-qualified staff of 70 %, being involved as teachers in the programme.

The panel also appreciates the involvement of the teaching staff in the programme and the modules being taught by two teachers.

The panel notes the number of staff involved in the programme to be sufficient. University of Brighton teachers will be able to continue teaching, even if University of Brighton may not participate.

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

Wittenborg has two buildings in Apeldoorn for lectures and examinations. These buildings have adequate teaching rooms and are equipped with appropriate teaching facilities.

Library facilities are available for students. Students also have access to relevant databases, allowing them to search for information they need. These services will remain intact, if the University of Brighton relationship changes because of Brexit.

Considerations

The panel regards the buildings in which the programme is housed and the material facilities for the programme to be adequate.

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

International students are supported by programme management in practical matters, such as residence permits and housing. Programme management also schedules extra-curricular activities for these students.

Every one of the students in the programme is entitled to the support from their individual study advisor. Study advisors assist students in proceeding through the programme. Every half-year, students meet with their study advisor for an appraisal meeting. For the Final Project, students are guided by their individual academic supervisor.

Students with whom the panel met, indicated lecturers being very accessible, even if they are only present only part-time.

Considerations

The panel appreciates the system of tutoring offered in the programme. This system is up to standard and meets students' needs.

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

For this Master of Business Management programme, the quality assurance system of Wittenborg applies. This system is documented. In line with the Wittenborg quality assurance system, stakeholders, such as students, staff, alumni and the professional field are involved in the quality assurance of the programme. This quality assurance system is based upon the plan-do-check-act evaluation cycle.

Students and staff are asked to complete written questionnaires on a regular basis to present their views on the programme quality. For students, this will be at the end of every module. Student representatives, representing the Master of Business Management programme students, meet regularly with programme management to discuss the programme quality. Feedback is also collected at internal conference/workshop days which are meant for the whole institution. Programme management keeps in contact with alumni. Programme management meets with the Wittenborg Advisory Board, to be advised on trends in industry.

Improvement measures which may be the outcome of evaluations or consultations are documented and are acted upon. For this programme, the Programme Committee on which sit teachers and students, has been set up. The Programme Committee studies student and staff evaluations and advises programme management on quality improvement measures to be taken.

Considerations

The assessment panel assesses the quality assurance system for the programme to be up to standard. In the opinion of the panel, this system allows programme management to monitor the quality of the programme and to take adequate measures for improvement if needed.

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 Graduation & Examination Board of Wittenborg has the authority to allocate credits and to award degrees for all programmes of the institution, including this one. This Board is composed of Wittenborg staff members and has independent members as well and meets seven times per year. The Board appoints the examiners for the programme, checks randomly module examinations and approves of Final Projects.

For modules in the programme, two types of examination methods are used. These are written examinations and individual assignments. Group assignments may be scheduled as

well, but always in combination with individual assignments in order to avoid free-riding effects.

Module examinations are drafted by lecturers involved in these modules. Draft examinations are peer-reviewed by fellow lecturers. Answer keys are designed for the examinations, these answer keys being meant to ensure the programme outcomes to be covered in the modules. Written assignments by students are automatically checked for fraud or plagiarism.

The topic selected for the Final Project and the Final Project proposal are approved by the teachers of the Research Methodology module. For the Final Project itself, students are guided individually by the academic advisor. They meet three hours per week in the course of the Final Project design, drafting and completion. Students tend to submit separate chapters of the Project, to be commented on by the academic advisor. The Final Project is assessed by the academic advisor and the second, independent assessor. The Graduation & Examination Board approves the Final Project prior to the oral defence by the student.

Considerations

The panel is positive about the position, composition, responsibilities and activities of the Graduation & Examination Board. In the panel's view, the Board ensures the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

The quality assurance measures for module examinations are adequate. The panel regards the quality and the level of the written examinations in the programme to be appropriate. The quality and the level of the assignments are, however, not up to standard. The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met: Programme management should bring the assignments to be completed by students in the programme up to the required level. As the quality assurance system for examinations and assessments is appropriate, the panel did not consider the programme not meeting this standard.

In the panel's view, the Final Project supervision and assessment procedures are appropriate.

Conclusion

The programme partially meets Standard 10.

4.11 Qualification and field of study (CROHO)

The panel recommends to award the degree Master of Science (MSc) to the graduates of this hbo-master Master of Business Management programme, this being in line with programme management's request.

The panel advises to classify the hbo-master Master of Business Management in the CROHO *Economie* field of study category, this being in accordance with the MBA classification and being in line with programme management's request.

4.12 Conclusion

The panel concludes the programme meets standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the NVAO accreditation framework. The panel concludes standards 2 and 10 of this framework to be partially met by the programme. For these two standards, the panel advises to impose conditions. In the opinion of the panel, programme management may meet these conditions within the time period of one year. The conditions are listed below. In addition, the panel formulated recommendations. These have been mentioned under the standard they refer to.

The panel advises to impose the following conditions to be met by programme management for standard 2:

- To develop and elaborate the profile of the programme further, especially to clarify the relation between the core business and management areas and the specialisations in the programme.
- To teach students finance and accounting subjects to enable them to use financial information for strategic and tactical decision-making processes in organisations.
- To step up and organise in a more formal way the involvement of the professional field in the development of the curriculum.
- To make clear and explicit to prospective students that the research methods and techniques offered in the programme refer to practice-oriented, applied research and do not refer to academic research.

The panel advises to impose the following condition to be met by programme management for standard 10:

- To bring the assignments to be completed by students in the programme up to the required level.

Therefore, the panel assesses the quality of the programme as 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>	Programme meets standard 1
Curriculum; orientation <i>Standard 2: The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.</i>	Programme partially meets standard 2
Curriculum; content <i>Standard 3: The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Programme meets standard 3
Curriculum; learning environment <i>Standard 4: The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Programme meets standard 4
Intake <i>Standard 5: The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i>	Programme meets standard 5
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>	Programme meets standard 6
Facilities <i>Standard 7: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.</i>	Programme meets standard 7
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>	Programme meets standard 8
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>	Programme meets standard 9
Student assessment <i>Standard 10: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.</i>	Programme partially meets standard 10
Achieved learning outcomes <i>Standard 11: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.</i>	Standard 11 is not applicable
Conclusion	Conditionally positive

Appendix 1: Schedule of the site visit

The panel conducted the site visit at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences campus in Apeldoorn on 9 June 2020 as part of the external assessment procedure for the hbo-master Master of Business Management programme

09:15 – 09:45	Reception and introduction
09:45 – 10:30	Panel deliberations (closed session)
10:30 – 12:00	Panel meeting with programme management and development team
12:00 – 13:00	Panel meeting with lecturers
13:00 – 14:00	Panel lunch and deliberations (closed session)
14:00 – 14:30	Panel meeting with Advisory Board/professional field representatives
14:30 – 15:45	Panel meeting with students and alumni
15:45 – 16:45	Panel deliberations (closed session)
16:45 – 17:00	Main findings, considerations and conclusions, presented by panel chair to programme management

Appendix 2: Documents reviewed

Information dossier

- Assessment Guide Initial NVAO Accreditation Master of Business Management
- Organisation, Institution, Strategy, Governance of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Statistics of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Admission and Selection procedures of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Education Development of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Quality Assurance of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Staffing of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Internationalisation at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Resources, Research, Partnerships, Marketing and Promotion of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
- Accreditations of Master of Business Administration
- Qualifications of Master of Business Management
- Curriculum and Programme of Master of Business Management
- Graduate Professions of Master of Business Management
- Internationality of Students and Staff of Master of Business Management
- Final Projects and Assessments of Master of Business Management

Documents made available during site visit

- Contents of Finance and Accounting Module
- Proposed Title Master of Business Management Graduates
- Admission criteria print-out website

Appendix 3: List of abbreviations

Ad	Associate degree
Ba	Bachelor
EC	European credit point
hbo	professional higher education
Ma	Master
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
wo	Academic orientation

Colofon

The panel report was ordered by NVAO for the initial accreditation of the hbo–master Master of Business Management programme of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences.

Aanvraagnummer: 009266



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