



Assessment report

Limited programme assessment

**HBO Bachelor programme
International Business and Languages
(IBL)**

Full time

**Amsterdam University of Applied
Sciences**

**De kracht van
kennis.**

ASSESSMENT REPORT

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**HBO Bachelor programme
International Business and Languages
(IBL)
Full time**

**Amsterdam University of Applied
Sciences**

CROHO nr. 34407

Hobéon Certificering BV

Dated

7 April 2016

Audit panel

Dr. J.W. Wierda

Prof. Dr. G.J. Westhoff

Drs. M. le Roux

K. van Zwet

Secretary/co-ordinator

I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc

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1. GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

Institution

Name	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Status	Government funded
Result of Institutional Quality Assessment	Positive

Course

Name of the course in Central Register of Higher Professional Education (CROHO)	International Business and Languages
ISAT-code CROHO	34407
Domain / Sector CROHO	Commerce
Orientation and level	HBO Bachelor
Relevant grade and title	Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) - this will be changed into Bachelor of Arts (BA), after 70% of all IBL programmes have been accredited.
Number of credits	240 EC
Specialisations	N.A.
Location(s)	Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Variant	Full time
Joint programme	N.A.
Language of education	English
Distinctive Quality Feature	N.A.

Date of site-visit	8 October 2015
Contact person (name and e-mail address)	<p>Mrs. C.W. Teuwsen Senior Quality Assurance Officer c.w.teuwsen@hva.nl</p> <p>Mrs. W. de Vries-Kempes Head of Quality & Accreditation w.e.de.vries-kempes@hva.nl</p>

Quantitative data of the programme **HBO bachelor programme International Business and Languages (IBL) full time**¹

Source: 1CHO

Date: 31 August 2014

<i>Cohort</i>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of incoming students					
▪ Fulltime	138	132	132	176	236
Percentage of drop-outs in first year					
▪ Fulltime	51,4%	55,3%	51,5%	51,1%	48,3%
Percentage of drop-outs bachelor					
▪ Fulltime	28,4%	16,9%	17,2%	14,0%	
Output ²					
▪ Fulltime	44,8%	42,0%			
Teaching staff		Number		Fte	
▪ Fulltime		53		31	
Teaching staff qualifications ³		Master	PhD.	Other	
▪ Fulltime		91%	3%	6%	
Teacher – student ratio ⁴					
▪ Fulltime		1:29			
Contact hours (average a week)		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
▪ Fulltime		12,3	10,9	9,2	1,5

¹ Source: *Basisgegevens opleidingsbeoordeling 'Indicatoren en definities', Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie, 11 september 2012.*

² Study success after 5 years

³ Numbers of teaching staff with Bachelors, Masters and PhD qualifications as a share of the total faculty.

⁴ The ratio between the number of registered students and the number of FTE in faculty during the most recent year of study.

2. SUMMARY

The International Business and Languages programme of Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) educates students to become professionals who are able to help organisations to be successful in an arena that is becoming more and more international, by using their broad business abilities and their intercultural communicative skills.

IBL graduates work for a broad collection of commercial organisations, ranging from SMEs that (want to) operate globally to big multinational companies. They also work for smaller and larger multinational organisations from the non-profit sector that have a need for international business trained staff. An IBL graduate can be employed in almost all sectors, on a permanent basis or as an independent contractor.

Standard 1, Intended learning outcomes

The programme has based its competencies on IBL's National Professional and Competency Profile named, 'IBL shows its colours'⁵. The programme has regular contact about its profile with (international) colleagues and professionals from the sphere of action. The aims of the programme tie in with the professional bachelor level (HBO). The development of the three core competencies of 'IBL shows its colours' play a pivotal role in the programme.

Like any other IBL programme the acquisition of international knowledge and skills is a key element of the course. In addition, the audit panel considers the specific attention for intercultural awareness a valuable complement. As nationally agreed upon the programme attaches sufficient importance to developing students' research skills.

Furthermore, the intended learning outcomes meet the (inter)national quality requirements set for an IBL programme. Therefore, the panel judges standard 1 as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 2, Teaching-learning environment

The IBL programme has a solid base. The elements of theory, practice and research are adequately incorporated into four learning lines and students have to apply their knowledge and skills during projects, by doing their internships and writing their theses. The programme deals significantly with the development of students' research skills and, as a result of the Curriculum Redesign (CuRe) project, the attention for research will even be expanded. Foreign languages are key to the programme. This is clearly reflected in students' oral language skills as perceived by the panel during the audit. Also, the panel ascertained that the learning objectives of the combined courses cover all of the intended learning outcomes. Furthermore, the panel is favourable to the excellence and honours programme offered to the students.

The curriculum is based upon four learning lines: international business, language, research and personal development, and shows horizontal and vertical coherence. This will even be strengthened further by the CuRe project. Together with the numerus fixus and the decentralized selection, the CuRe project is also supposed to reduce the number of dropouts by spreading the study load equally over the modules. The panel established that the staff is making considerable efforts to bring down the dropout rates.

The programme is up-to-date and maintained well by adjusting the curriculum regularly on the basis of feedback from its own International Business Advisory Board, by inviting guest speakers from the professional field and lecturers from other universities, by discussing topical subjects in the classroom and by following the (inter)national developments through the National Platform of IBL programmes.

⁵ Dutch title of this document: *IBL bekennt kleur*.

The IBL programme of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences is conducted in a truly international setting. The presence of foreign students, the various nationalities among the faculty, the connections with vast number of foreign universities, the choice of literature, the cases and assignments, the mandatory 'going abroad' experience and – last but not least – the study itself which is taught entirely in English. This all demonstrates the international characteristics of the programme.

The lecturers are well-qualified, enthusiastic and eager to continually professionalize themselves. The facilities are adequate and, among other things, comprise two well-equipped language labs that have special software for language teaching.

Weighing up the above features of the learning-teaching environment of the course the panel rates this standard as 'good'.

Standard 3, Assessment

The programme applies a suitable mix of testing instruments to evaluate students' knowledge and skills. The tests are linked to the learning objectives and, hence, the intended learning outcomes and show an increasing complexity in level. By using various appropriate mechanisms the programme ensures that the exams are valid, reliable and transparent. All tests are checked according to the four-eyes principle and assessments take place on the basis of clear criteria. The panel would recommend clarifying the relationship between the grammar tests and the CEFR language levels.

The Examination Board and the Test Assessment Committee take on a proactive attitude. They check tests, were involved in improving the graduation assessment form and are aware of the aspects that need their attention.

All in all the panel rates standard 3 'satisfactory'.

Standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes

Out of the initial stratified selection of fifteen theses the panel graded two of these insufficient. Both theses showed inadequate key-questions and/or sub questions. Also, one of them had linguistic inaccuracies. Recent improvements implemented by the programme enabled the panel to conduct an upscale from a new batch of theses.

From this additional selection of six theses the panel concluded that the improvements had clearly rendered fruitful results, in particular with regard to the phrasing of the research questions. Although one of the six theses was still showing some linguistic errors, the panel thought the most recent ones clearly reflected the professional Bachelors level. The alumni and field representatives also expressed their satisfaction with the level of the graduates of AUAS' IBL programme.

Therefore, the panel's balanced judgement about the attained level of the programme reads 'satisfactory'.

Overall conclusion

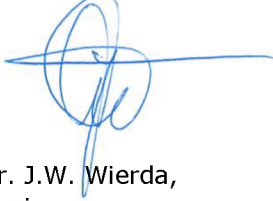
The audit panel concludes that the AUAS offers an educational programme at Bachelors level. It prepares students adequately to execute relevant positions in the broad field of international business, as was confirmed by the alumni and by the field representatives.

The programme is offered in a distinct international ambience, it is up-to-date and provides students with ample opportunities to challenge themselves. The faculty members are well-qualified, committed to the programme and contribute to its international learning environment. The building and facilities are of a fine quality and significant attention is being paid to improving student performance.

Recently implemented improvements regarding the graduation phase have already rendered positive results.

The panel rates standard 2 as good, whereas standards 1, 3 and 4 are considered 'satisfactory'. According to NVAO's assessment rules the panel's overall judgement for the programme reads 'satisfactory'. The panel therefore recommends the NVAO to re-accredit the HBO Bachelor programme International Business and Languages of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences for another six years.

The Hague, 7 April 2016



Dr. J.W. Wierda,
Chair



I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc
Co-ordinator

3. INTRODUCTION

The International Business and Languages (IBL) programme of Amsterdam University of Applied Science (AUAS) is located in the Fraijlemaborg building in Amsterdam. The programme is offered in a fulltime variant only and focuses on business as well as languages. IBL is part of the Faculty of Economics and Management (FEM). FEM runs ten Bachelor Degree courses, including Human Resource Management, Sport marketing and International Business and Management Studies (IBMS). The IBL and IBMS programme together make the International Business School (IBS). IBS is characterized by its international environment with English as the official language. Both IBL and IBMS intend to go for EPAS accreditation in 2017.

AUAS' IBL programme is part of the visitation group that also holds Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim, Stenden Hogeschool, Saxion Hogeschool, Hogeschool Utrecht and Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen. Currently IBL graduates obtain a Bachelor degree in Business Administration (BBA). In 2018, when all IBL programmes in the Netherlands have been re-accredited by the NVAO, the official degree will change into a Bachelor of Arts (BA). This enables the IBL programmes to focus more on marketing, sales and languages, and less on finance and economics.

Over the past years the IBL programme has had a firmly increased inflow of 132 students in 2010 to 236 in 2013. At present the programme has a numerus fixus of 240 students. Currently, 12% of the total number of IBL students have a foreign nationality (without a Dutch passport or Dutch origin). IBL wants this percentage to increase to 40% in 2020.

IBL is in the middle of the Curriculum Redesign (CuRe) project. The CuRe project aims to increase the studiability of the programme and to reduce the number of dropouts, particularly in the first year (for more information on the CuRe project see Standard 2).

Developments arising from the previous audit in 2008

The previous accreditation audit took place in June 2008. The panel evaluated the IBL programme as satisfactory in all aspects. Eight topics were evaluated as good. In 2013 the AUAS conducted an internal audit. Both audits led to several recommendations as set out in the table below. In its Critical Reflection the programme management indicated the actual status of these recommendations.

Recommendation	Improvements
Communicate IBL's specific profile and visibility for the work field	The focus on international communication, two foreign languages apart from English and intercultural awareness has been explicitly formulated in brochures, during open days and on the internet. The switch from BBA to BA in 2018 will accentuate the difference between IBL and IBMS even more.
Monitor the study load of separate modules	The management gains insight into the study load of a module by using module evaluation questionnaires at the end of each semester/block. One of the aims of the CuRe project is also to divide the study load evenly over the year.
Increase the study success rate	To increase the study success rate, the IBL programme redesigned the curriculum. Also the numerus fixus and decentral selection are introduced to increase the study success rate.

The documents of the programme as well as the audit discussions were delivered entirely in English.

4. JUDGEMENT ON EACH STANDARD

4.1. Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

NVAO's clarification: As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Findings

The audit team established that the International Business and Languages programme is clearly based on the Dutch National Professional- and Competence Profile 'IBL shows its colours' (2010). The profile has been developed in consultation with representative members of the field, VNO-NCW, MKB Nederland and relevant branch association like Fenedex, NIMA and DDMA.

In 'IBL shows its colours' the aims and competencies (established in 2005 by the 'Domein Commerce' and validated by the field) and the Body of Knowledge and Skills for Commerce (developed in 2008) are formulated at IBL level.

The IBL programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes/objectives tie in with bachelor level by making a parallel with the Dublin Descriptors, the generic hbo competences, and four hbo standards (a sound theoretical basis, research skills, professional expertise and professional ethics & social orientation).

AUAS designed its programme on the basis of the three core competencies as described in 'IBL shows its colours':

- *international business* – IBL graduates are able to professionally develop, carry out and manage in particular the commercial processes involved in international business;
- *international communication* – IBL graduates are capable of professionally handling international business communication in three modern foreign languages;
- *intercultural awareness* – IBL graduates have knowledge of and insight into the importance of intercultural differences for the various phases of international business and can identify with various cultures in order to support international business processes.

The programme has integrated these three core competencies into the curriculum by means of content related learning lines. The core competencies have been detailed into 11 programme competences and together form the set of 11 competences of 'IBL shows its colours'. Examples of these are:

- Initiate and create (contemporary) products and services for large or small international markets;
- Develop a marketing policy for a company operating nationally or internationally and be able to support the choices made;
- Manage and regulate own development with respect to learning, working in a result-oriented way, taking initiatives and operating independently, flexibility.

- Communicate in three modern foreign languages with awareness of cultural differences, internal and external, national and international.

With regard to the languages, agreements are made on a national level, regarding the required level for the reading, listening, writing and speaking skills of students. For the determination of the levels the IBL programmes use the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a standard.

For example, students' command of English must be at C1 level for all language skills. Command of the second and third modern language must be at B2 level for reading and listening skills. For spoken interaction, speaking and writing, B1 is the minimum level required.

Profile and own colouring

The IBL programme of AUAS focusses on intercultural communication and cross cultural awareness. Amsterdam is a grand metropolitan area with a multicultural and international melting pot of people and companies. The programme aims to create this international atmosphere also inside the school. Among others, this is reflected in the international classroom that the Amsterdam IBL programme aims for. Currently 12% of the IBL students have a foreign nationality and 35% of the lecturers have a foreign background. IBL is striving for 40% international students. The international classroom requires the study programme to be taught completely in English. The management and lecturers are very clear and persuasive in their vision on intercultural communication and therefore the lingua franca within IBL is in English, even outside classes. The profile of the course is also emphasized by the fact that the programme offers language courses up to year 4.

Furthermore, one of the goals of the Curriculum Redesign project (see standard 2) is to add more cross cultural components to the curriculum.

The audit team acknowledges the importance of intercultural communication in the Amsterdam area. The auditors definitely identified and experienced the international atmosphere during the site visit. However, the panel would also like to see these focus areas be stronger reflected in the intended learning outcomes. This is not yet the case, as the intended learning outcomes of AUAS IBL were copied one-on-one from the national profile.

Research

In the National Platform meetings it was agreed that the IBL programmes explicitly pay attention to research skills. The intended learning outcomes include different aspects of research. For example:

Competence I - International Business

2. Implement, interpret, assess and evaluate (international) market research
 - Formulate a hypothesis and research question(s) from a given context
 - Write a research plan containing justifications for your choice of qualitative or quantitative research
 - Carry out the research, using appropriate methods for the specific type of research
 - Process the data, applying simple statistics using a statistical package and drawing conclusions

The programme has developed a research learning line that is being revised within the process of the Curriculum Redesign (CuRe).

International orientation

Naturally, the mastering of internationally related knowledge and skills is at the forefront of the IBL programme. The documentation shows that, with the introduction of 'IBL shows its colours' in 2010, the importance of international business orientation in the IBL competences has increased (core competence 'international business').

Likewise, more explicit attention is paid to the evolvment of international communication skills. As stated before, the IBL programmes require command of at least three modern foreign languages, of which English is compulsory. Students must also master intercultural competences and demonstrate insight into cultural foundations, as they are supposed to operate in different countries and cultures (core competence 'intercultural awareness').

Consultation of colleagues and the professional field

The audit panel established that the programme maintains regular contacts about the structure and content of the programme with colleagues and professionals from the (inter)national (work) field. The AUAS shares information with the other Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences in the National Platform IBL. Furthermore the programme connects to other institutions through the participation of lecturers in international weeks organised by partner schools. In the audit it appeared that lecturers maintain connections with other institutions by taking part in networks such as the Network of International Business Schools.

At the same time the programme is in touch with the (international) professional field through its own International Business Advisory Board (IBAB), which among others consists of representatives of KLM, Philips, Business Trends Asia, Idexx Laboratories, ABN AMRO and TATA Consultancy Services. During the latest IBAB meeting the Curriculum Redesign was discussed.

The lecturers also stay in touch with the professional domain through the internship and graduation supervision of students, through research activities for the Centre of Applied Research on Economics and Management (CAREM) and through their own activities in IBL business area.

Considerations and Judgement

The programme based its competencies on 'IBL shows its colours', IBL's National Professional and Competency Profile. It deliberates regularly on the IBL profile with (international) colleagues and professionals from IBL's sphere of action. The development of international knowledge and skills is unequivocally one of the main topics of the IBL programme. As nationally agreed, the programme pays substantial attention to developing students' research skills. The audit panel considers the specific attention for intercultural awareness a valuable addition to the programme which could still be made more explicit in its set of qualifying statements. Overall, the programme demonstrates that its intended learning outcomes meet the (inter)national quality requirements for IBL programmes. Therefore, the judgement 'satisfactory' is appropriate.

4.2. Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

Standard 2: The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

NVAO's clarification: The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

Findings

From intended learning outcomes to learning outcomes per course

As mentioned in the previous paragraph (standard 1), the IBL programme has adopted a set of 11 intended learning outcomes. To show that the programme offers full coverage of these intended learning outcomes, the course provided a competence matrix that indicates the gradual mastery of levels (1, 2 or 3) of the intended learning outcomes as attained by the various courses offered.

On the basis of this matrix and a review of course materials the panel concludes that all courses combined contribute to the achievement of all of the intended learning outcomes. The study guides per course contain an overview of the specific competencies/learning objectives that relate to each course. For example:

International Marketing – year 2

After this module you will be able to:

1. Explain how to decide which international market to enter based on market segmentation criteria and competitive analysis.
2. Gain knowledge of internationalisation strategies.
3. Choose appropriate market entry strategies for companies to use.
4. Explain different international marketing tools that are available to companies.
5. Decide and implement the international marketing tools.
6. Write a SWOT analysis.

Structure and coherence of the programme

The curriculum is based upon four learning lines: the international business learning line, the language learning line, the research learning line and the personal development learning line. Each IBL course fits into one of these learning lines. The panel is pleased with the way these four learning lines cover all the aspects and competences of IBL.

The vertical coherence of the curriculum can be found in the deepening of courses and complexity of tasks students will conduct and perform during their study. The panel established that the eleven intended learning outcomes have all been translated into successive levels of execution, until students achieve the intended learning outcomes. The vertical coherence is also illustrated by a sequential arrangement of courses, e.g. Financial Management 1 and 2, Business Research 1-3, Business English 1-5 and the 2nd and 3rd language 1-5.

Horizontal coherence is created by the fact that the curriculum features real-world oriented themes for each year during the first two years. The first year is about entrepreneurship, with among others the Principles of Economics and Co-creative Entrepreneurship. The second year deals with export management, marketing and sales through courses such as Global Sales & Account Management, International Marketing and Strategic Export Management.

In the third year students follow an exchange programme and do their internships. The first half of the fourth year is dedicated to marketing communication and strategic marketing. The last half-year of the IBL programme is reserved for writing the thesis.

During the programme there is a shift from knowledge and understanding to applying this knowledge and understanding and demonstrating judgement. To effectuate this development, there is a clear increase in the extent and complexity of the context and the professional products students have to produce.

The panel is positive about the prominent place of ethics in the programme compared to other IBL programmes.

CuRe project

To decrease the dropout rates and to increase the study success, the IBL programme has made a redesign of the curriculum. The semester structured curriculum is being replaced by a block structured curriculum, starting with the first year of the new set of courses in 2014-2015..

Previously, during a semester of 20 weeks students had to follow 11 or 12 different courses simultaneously. In the redesigned curriculum, with 4 blocks of 10 weeks per year, each block contains only 4 or 5 courses. The advantage of this new structure is that students can concentrate on a limited number of subjects per period.

The first results of the CuRe project show a positive tendency as the drop-out rate has now decreased by 5%; also more students obtain their propaedeutic diploma within the first year.

Furthermore, the research learning line is being adapted. In the first year students follow two Business Research courses. In the second and third year they have to apply the knowledge and skills learned during these courses. In the first two blocks of the fourth year there is another Business Research course that prepares students for their graduation project. As part of this course students practice the art of thesis writing in groups.

Professional practice

The panel observed that the programme is strongly based on professional practice. Starting from year 1 students are confronted with professional practice when completing assignments. Both lecturers and students told the panel that topical questions are being discussed in class, such as the tampering with software at Volkswagen. By working on real life cases, students are challenged to improve their competencies. Examples of professional products that students develop are:

- a business model and business plan for their own company. Students can ask questions to real business men to improve their plans (year 1, block 3 and 4, co-creative entrepreneurship)
- a sales plan for a fictional company, based on realistic international business problems and opportunities (year 2, block 1, Global sales and account management)

In year 3 students do their internship. They work at an international company in the Netherlands or abroad and learn how to operate in the professional field. The programme also invites guest lecturers, e.g. someone from Universal Media (Marketing), the EMEA Sales Director from CXO Cockpit (Sales) and the Sales Manager from InterContinental Hotel Group (Sales) and two alumni for Spanish.

Furthermore, the Centre of Applied Research on Economics and Management (CAREM) provides the programme with new and more extensive contacts from the IBL domain.

Students who are truly motivated can apply for the honours programme 'International business case competition'. This programme aims at teaching students how to become an international business professional. In groups students have to set up a business and pitch their company to a professional jury.

Research

As nationally agreed and as already mentioned in Standard 1, the programme pays significant attention to developing students' research skills. One of the four learning lines within the curriculum is the research learning line.

As a result of the CuRe project research has an even more important position in the IBL curriculum. In year 1 students attend the Business Research 1 and Business Research 2 course, where they are taught to conduct research. The panel observed that research is also interwoven in the assignments of other first and second year courses such as International Marketing and Co-Creative Entrepreneurship. During these courses students have to produce professional products such as a target group analysis, a sales plan or a SWOT analysis.

During the four years of study, the complexity of the research assignments increases. Students are very positive about the mini-thesis they have to write as a group in year 3 (new curriculum year 4). This project seems to be a good preparation course for the final graduation project they have to write individually at the end of their study.

The International Business School (IBS), of which IBL is part, is connected to the Centre for Applied Research on Economics and Management (CAREM). Within IBS, it is planned that IBL will have its own research lab headed by an associate professor.

Internationalisation

By its very nature, every International Business and Languages course should have the obvious international focus as derived from the intended learning outcomes. Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences offers its IBL students various ways of learning to work in an international environment.

The panel members are very pleased with the decision of AUAS to offer its complete IBL course in English. The panel definitely experienced an international atmosphere during its site visit. The IBL programme hopes that this international character and the English language will attract more foreign students in the upcoming years as IBL strives for a population of 40% international students (now 12%). To achieve this goal AUAS intends to put more effort into the recruitment of international students. It is also expected that the EPAS accreditation, taking place in 2017, will open doors for international students.

The multicultural composition of the student population is very incorporated in the courses. When working in groups students have to take into account the cultural differences within their group. The panel saw group assignments that were conducted by groups composed by students of Dutch, Portuguese, French and Russian origin. The panel agrees strongly with the faculty that this helps students to develop intercultural awareness and intercultural communication. The lecturers also make sure that the cases they use in the classroom emanate from companies that operate in a multicultural or multinational setting, thus simulating an international business environment.

Not only the student population is multicultural, also the faculty is composed of different nationalities, including lecturers from Spain, India, Portugal and Poland. Furthermore lecturers from partner universities come to AUAS to deliver guest lectures.

The National Platform IBL states that students can achieve part of the international learning objectives through the IBL regular programme at a Dutch university of applied sciences. The development of some competencies however requires experience of study abroad. Therefore, all IBL students have to complete 30 EC of their study in a foreign country. They can go abroad to follow a minor at a foreign business school or to do their internship at an (international) organisation abroad. The graduation project can also be done abroad. The audit panel deems this to be appropriate for an IBL programme.

In the Fraijlemaborg building there is the international office. Students can ask for help when looking for a suitable partner institution abroad to do their exchange semester. The IBL programme has over one hundred locations to study abroad. Students who want to extend their international experiences, can ask their teachers to help them find a summer school or summer internship. One of the students told the panel she had done a summer internship in France to improve her French proficiency. The audit panel considered this a very nice and useful addition to the regular programme.

Admission to the course

During the audit the panel elaborated on the high dropout rates, especially in the first year (\pm 50% in 2012 and 2013). According to the lecturers the high percentage of dropouts is particularly caused by the business related part of IBL. Many students, who enrol in the first year have the expectation that IBL is mainly about learning different languages. During the first year they start to realize that the business aspect is also an important part of the programme, but often finance and mathematics are not their strongest points. Also the required English proficiency appears to be a problem for some of the students.

Due to the high number of dropouts in the first year the IBL programme started with a numerus fixus and decentral selection in the spring of 2015. Students interested in the IBL programme now have to do an entrance test, consisting of a test on motivation and personal circumstances, a test on arithmetical skills, English skills and they have to work on a marketing case. Based on the results of these tests students are selected to enrol in the IBL programme. The numerus fixus and decentral selection – in combination with the curriculum redesign - are expected to lead to higher study success rates, as the admitted students have proven to be motivated and have the desired starting level.

Study guidance

In the first year a mentor will be assigned to every student. The mentor is available to turn to for study-related issues. Also, in the first weeks of the foundation year the Personal Development learning line is focussed on study participation and success.

The International Centre at the Fraijlemaborg building supports incoming international students and students and lecturers who (want to) go abroad. The Central Student Affairs Office assists international students with the visa application process. Students who have decided to go abroad are being supported by one of the International Relations Coordinators (IRCs). They are in contact with (partner) institutions abroad. Students with personal problems can consult the IBS Student Counsellor.

For students with a study delay there is the Long-Stay-Students Committee (LSSC). This committee monitors all students with a study delay, speaks with them about the cause(s) of their delay and supports them to make a plan of action to successfully complete the programme.

Last year the LSSC interviewed some of the students with a study delay to hear about the reasons of their backlog. One of the causes is found in the positioning of the internship in the third year. After their internship some students find it difficult to 'go to school' again for their last year. Besides, some of them have got accustomed to earning money. Students, together with the study advisor, the main phase coordinator and LSSC are now looking into actions to reduce the delaying factors. The panel established that management and lecturers sincerely listen to the suggestions made by students. This observation was confirmed during the audit by student members of the Study Council.

Faculty

The permanent staff is composed of 53 lecturers, who altogether represent 31 Fte. Some of these lecturers are allocated both at IBMS and IBL. More than one third of all faculty members hold a foreign nationality. Together the lecturers cover all fields of IBL. The panel established that faculty is well qualified. All teachers have at least a Master's degree, except for one who holds a Bachelor's degree. Two lecturers hold a PhD and at the time of the audit one lecturer is in the process of obtaining his PhD.

All IBL lecturers hold a didactics certificate for higher education or are in the process of obtaining one. New lecturers also have to qualify for such a certificate. Training courses for lecturers are organised by the AUAS Academy.

To gain some insight into the didactic qualities of the lecturers the panel members attended some classes. The panel learned that the classes are taught in an interactive way. The lecturers concerned showed enthusiasm and appeared to inspire the students. The panel witnessed lecturers who delivered solid and convincing performances with a topical tone of voice.

Staff development

Lecturers seem to continually develop their professional and educational skills. The management team supports them to update and elaborate their knowledge and skills. The management hold performance and development interviews twice a year in which the personal development of lecturers is discussed. Intervention meetings with all thesis supervisors are organized on a regular basis.

The management is very supportive when it comes to attending training sessions or going to conferences and seminars, both financially as well as in terms of time. Lecturers have recently travelled to Poland, Spain and Sweden to attend conferences, meetings and training activities. In addition, teachers are encouraged to visit foreign partner universities as guest speaker. Lecturers can invest 10% of their time into personal development, although some say they are too pressed for time to attend seminars and professional meetings because of education/student-related obligations.

One of the faculty members is a PhD candidate. He was invited by the management to write a proposal stating how colleagues and students could benefit from his research. The panel thinks this is a useful precondition for conducting a PhD within the AUAS context. The faculty member has been allocated two days a week to conduct his research on co-working spaces.

Students are positive about the didactical and professional knowledge and skills of their lecturers, according to student evaluations and the discussion with the audit panel. In areas where improvement is needed, for instance when it comes to the English proficiency of lecturers, the management seriously listens to the students and takes action.

Building and facilities

As part of the audit the panel members conducted a guided tour around the school. The audit panel established that the material facilities and the housing of the programme are in good shape. There are enough computers available, as well as electricity outlets and WiFi connection. The library has sufficient books, journals and digital databases to provide students with IBL related sources. The programme has access to two sophisticated 'language labs'. These laboratories are equipped with digital language programmes and individual booths. With the system the lecturer can play a text simultaneously to all students, or 'connect' groups of students to have group conversations. The lecturer can listen into the various conversations and he or she can interfere to correct students or give advice. It is also possible to record and play back conversations.

From this tour on the premises, it became clear to the panel that the school buildings meet the standards for classrooms and facilities required for professional education. The panel believes that the physical environment sufficiently contributes to students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes, also when it comes to languages.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel is of the opinion that the IBL programme has a solid base. The elements of theory, practice and research are adequately incorporated into the four learning lines and students have to apply their knowledge and skills during projects and by doing their internship and thesis. The programme pays significant attention to developing students' research skills and, as a result of the CuRe project, the attention for research will even be expanded. The foreign languages are a focal point of the programme, which is clearly reflected in the oral language skills of students. The courses provide students ample opportunity to acquire all of the final qualifications. Furthermore, the panel is favourable about the excellence and honours programme the IBL course offers its students.

The curriculum shows a horizontal and vertical coherence, which is strengthened even further by the Curriculum Redesign. Together with the numerus fixus and the decentral selection, the CuRe is also initiated to reduce the dropout rates. Attention is being paid to the study load of each module. The panel established that the programme makes a profound effort to reduce the dropout rates.

The curriculum is kept up-to-date by incorporating regular feedback from the IBAB, by inviting guest speakers from the professional field and lecturers from other universities, by discussing topical subjects in the classroom and by following the (inter)national developments in the National Platform IBL.

The panel noticed that the programme is a truly international programme. The presence of foreign students, a wide range of nationalities among the faculty members, the connections with a substantial number of foreign universities, the literature, the cases and assignments, the mandatory 'going abroad' experience and – last but not least – the study programme being taught entirely in English explicitly demonstrate the international features of this IBL programme.

Furthermore, the lecturers are well-qualified, enthusiastic and show eagerness to continue developing themselves. The facilities are of a fine quality; the two well-equipped language labs deserve a special mention.

Weighing all of the above, the panel rates Standard 2 as 'good'.

4.3. Assessment

Standard 3: The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

NVAO's clarification: The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The programme's examination board safeguards the quality of the interim and final tests administered.

Findings

Examination and assessment system

In line with the AUAS policy for examinations and assessments, IBL has developed a test programme, that clearly indicates where in the curriculum the competencies are assessed and at which level. The tests are based on the learning goals of the modules, stated in the course manuals.

On the basis of a selection of tests, assignments and reports that were on display in the audit, the panel members concluded that the programme uses a functional and adequate mix of test formats, including written exams, multiple choice questions, project assessments, oral exams, self-assessment and peer assessment. Besides summative tests, IBL also uses formative tests during the modules to effectuate continuous assessment.

Validity, reliability and transparency

The panel established that the programme deploys tests which are valid, reliable and transparent in various ways:

- All tests developed by the lecturers of IBL are being checked according to the four-eyes principle, meaning that all tests are peer-reviewed before deployment. Each test is provided with an answer key for assessment. This is a written guideline for grading the test. Prior to a written exam, all lectures involved in the assessment of the exam take part in a calibration session;
- Each test is described according to a fixed format in the study manual, explaining what will be tested, the number of ECS for the course and the type of test;
- The programme has appointed International Relations Coordinators, who are mandated to evaluate the courses taken by each student for the third-year exchange programme;
- The assessment of the graduation level is done by two or more assessors. The second assessor is not involved in the supervision of a student;
- To guarantee transparency in the grading of exams and projects the examination result is accompanied by feedback and review days are scheduled so students can review their tests and receive oral feedback;
- Each block the IBL Test Assessment Committee (TAC) randomly selects tests to check their quality and monitor the extent to which the test format and content are consistent with the teaching format and content.

The 'business related tests' the panel reviewed (among others co-creation entrepreneurship year 1 and project export management year 2) showed a progressive level of assessment. The panel also noticed an impressive progression in students' performance between year 1 and year 2.

All Dutch IBL programmes express the required level of proficiency using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Through this framework an assessor can indicate what a student can do with a language and at what level.

This framework does not monitor a student's knowledge of a language in terms of grammar, but it indicates a student's ability to express himself in various situations without making too many mistakes. The levels are operationalized in so-called 'can do-statements'.

The panel noticed that most of the language tests available during the site visit focus on the command of grammar. It was, however, not mentioned how the scores for these grammar tests are related to the achieved CEFR level. This is indeed difficult, because there is no one-to-one correspondence between the extent of grammatical knowledge and CEFR-levels. Therefore, when a lecturer wants to know students' CEFR level it is more useful to give them functional assignments and to score them on the CEFR rubrics. The panel did not see any of these assignments.

To evaluate the students' level of proficiency the panel had to look for circumstantial evidence. For the proficiency of English this was not a problem. Except for one, all of the theses demonstrated that the students amply possess their English writing skills at the required level. Also during the site visit the students demonstrated convincingly that their listening and conversation skills were up to the mark (C1/C2 level).

As for the other languages (Spanish, French, Portuguese, German and Dutch) the panel reviewed several language tests. The panel endorsed the quality of these tests. Furthermore, the lecturers told the panel that they use standards from recognized institutes such as Cervantes (Spanish), Delf (French) and Cambridge (English). However, the panel believes this does not fully guarantee proper testing and a valid determination of the CEFR levels.

Therefore, the panel would recommend the programme to consider external safeguarding of the required CEFR-level by implementing, for example, Dialang, Versant, CITO, SLO tests and provide training to staff in the design of CEFR-related tests.

Examination Board (EB) and Test Assessment Committee (TAC)

The AUAS International Business School has one collective Examination Board for its two programmes (International Business & Languages and International Business & Management Studies). Both programmes have their own Test Assessment Committee. A member of the Examination Board acts as the chairman of the IBL TAC.

The Examination Board has delegated part of its responsibility to ensure the quality of tests and examinations to the Test Assessment Committee. However, the Examination Board retains final responsibility. The TAC annually checks a sample of exams and assessments to verify that all requirements are met and the difficulty and complexity of the questions fit the stage of study. The selection of these tests is made by the Examination Board because of the overlap in modules between IBL and IBMS. The TAC reports to the Examination Board on the quality of the tests.

Last year 30 tests were reviewed and most tests were fine according to the TAC. Within two weeks the TAC gives feedback upon the tests with inadequacies. If there is a severe issue a meeting is arranged with the assessor and the TAC.

The panel is of the opinion that the IBL programme has an adequate Examination Board and Test Assessment Committee. In other words: the Examination Board shows it is 'in control'. It has its own quality assurance agenda, has effectuated that the internship is being assessed by two assessors, pays attention to the assessment of internships abroad and has appointed certified assessors.

The examination board monitors the patterns in grades. Moreover, complaints are being monitored to see if there is a reason to verify a certain test and at the end of every block, students are asked to fill out an evaluation form about the lecturer, the literature, the exam, etc. The results of these evaluations are also taken into account.

As a result of the CuRe project the members of the EB and the TAC indicate the 'clean sweep' as an important issue, meaning that the old programme, and with that the old tests, are being phased out. It is the last chance for (long-term) students to pass those particular tests. Therefore the TAC keeps an extra eye on the results of these tests.

The panel spoke with some members of the Examination Board and the Test Assessment Committee and established that members of both committees are well facilitated by the management in order to execute their work for the EB and/or TAC. They attend training sessions of the AUAS Academy for EB and TAC members and this year they will all sign up for the BKE/SKE training.

The panel is convinced that both the Examination Board and the Test Assessment Committee are 'in control'. They are aware of the aspects that need improvement and they deal with these aspects expeditiously. The adjustment of the assessment form for the theses is a good example, as well as the monitoring of the clean sweep.

Graduation

The graduation process of the IBL programme consists of four 'products': the internship, two language modules and the thesis.

The 2nd and 3rd foreign language are tested on all four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Students have to demonstrate that they have achieved CEFR level B1/B2. The internship consists of a combination of a participatory- and an assignment internship. In the participatory part students learn about the everyday activities within an international organisation. For the internship assignment students have to carry out a small research project within the company: formulating a research question, collecting information, interpreting data, drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations. Through this internship assignment students can prepare themselves for doing their final project and writing their thesis.

For the thesis students have to analyse a manifest problem the company is facing. The problem needs to be related to international business. The students have to find strategic solutions to solve the problem, including the drawing up of an implementation plan. As part of the thesis – irrespective of the research question – they have to conduct a deep analysis of both the external and international environment of the company and include these findings in the strategic options to solve the main problem(s). The assessment of the theses is done by two assessors and divided in four aspects: thesis (60%), presentation (20%), process (10%) and critical reflection (10%).

Considerations and Judgement: satisfactory

Based on the test programme and a selection of reviewed tests, assignments and reports, the panel concludes that the IBL programme applies a suitable mix of testing instruments to evaluate students' knowledge and skills. The tests are linked to the intended learning outcomes. By using various appropriate mechanisms the programme ensures that the exams are valid, reliable and transparent. New tests are being checked according to the four-eyes principle and assessments take place on the basis of clear criteria. However, the panel recommends the programme to clarify the relationship between the grammar tests and the CEFR levels.

With regard to the Examination Board and the Test Assessment Committee the panel observed a proactive attitude. They check tests, were involved in improving the assessment form for graduation and are aware of the aspects that need their attention.

Altogether the panel judges Standard 3 as 'satisfactory'.

4.4. Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

NVAO's clarification: The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

Findings

The achieved learning outcomes of the IBL programme are measured on the basis of four elements: the internship, two language modules and the thesis.

A stratified selection of fifteen theses, with a spreading in the grades given by the supervisors, was evaluated by the panel members before the audit took place. During the site visit the panel looked at the internship reports and the assessments of the language modules. Although there was a wide variety in the extensiveness of the internship reports, the panel established they were all at least satisfactory. The same goes for the assessment of the language modules.

An overview of the inspected theses (internship reports and language modules) is provided in the Appendix V. The choice for these theses was made by the panel from a list provided by the programme that included the final papers of all graduates of the past two years.

Panel judgement on the theses

In most cases the panel agreed on the grades given by the assessors. However, out of fifteen the panel graded two theses as insufficient. One of them was considered both linguistically inadequate, as well as content wise. As graduates are supposed to master English at C1 level, this thesis did not represent the required graduation level of English.

The auditees told the panel that one could get a 5.5 or less for English and compensate that with a higher grade for other elements on the assessment form. As the supervisors and the examination board had already declared this to be undesirable, the assessment form was changed accordingly. Starting from the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2014/2015 students have to score at least a 5.5 for every single aspect on the assessment form. The panel underlines the importance of this measure and is confident that this will lead to better results.

With regard to the two theses that were graded unsatisfactory by the panel, the phrasing of the central question and/or the secondary questions caused them to slide off the rails.

It appeared that the two fails were written by students graduated in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. At that time the new assessment form had already been designed, but could not yet be implemented while students were already writing their thesis. Therefore the new assessment form was used for the first time for those students who started their thesis in the second semester of the 2014/2015 academic year.

In tune with NVAO requirements the panel executed an upscale by another 6 theses to ascertain that the fails were coincidental and are now prevented by the newly adjusted assessment form or, reversely, to confirm that a structural problem arises with the achieved level of the graduates.

On the basis of the additional sample taken from the most recent batch of graduates, the panel concluded that the improvements had clearly rendered fruitful results, in particular regarding the phrasing of the research questions.

The panel agreed upon the marks given by the supervisor. Although one of the six theses showed some linguistic errors, the most recent theses clearly reflect HBO bachelor's level and were accordingly rated sufficient by the panel.

Furthermore, the panel members established that some theses lacked the aspect of intercultural awareness. As this is an important part of the IBL programme' profiling the panel would recommend more guidance of students on incorporating aspects of intercultural awareness into their theses.

Overall, the panel holds a positive judgement on the attained level of the IBL programme. This is supported by the professional representatives and alumni in the audit who confirmed to the panel that the programme delivers students that fit the requirements of the professional field.

Considerations and Judgement: satisfactory

On the basis of an additional sample of theses taken from the most recent batch of graduates, the panel concluded that students consistently meet the required level. Although some of the theses bear witness of some linguistic carelessness, the business related content of the theses was considered sufficient. The professional representatives and alumni in the audit affirm the quality of the graduates by testifying that 'the students' profile fits the jobs in the working field'.

Therefore, the panel's overall judgement on the attained level of the programme reads 'satisfactory'.

5. OVERALL JUDGEMENT

With the Dutch National Professional and Competence Profile as a base, the IBL programme implemented an adequate set of intended learning outcomes.

The IBL curriculum is up-to-date, practically oriented and has an international focus, with English as the language of instruction. Students already learn to conduct research in a way that fits the professional field. It is expected that the Curriculum Redesign project will enlarge the attention for business research methods even further, consolidating the coherence of the curriculum and the spreading of the study load equally over the various study blocks.

The lecturers are well qualified, enthusiastic and show eagerness to continue developing themselves. The facilities are in good shape. The two well-equipped language labs deserve a special mention.

The various assessment instruments are effective. All competencies are represented in the various exams, assignments and projects. The tests the panel checked, all demonstrate the appropriate level. The Examination Board and the Test Assessment Committee are in control. They check and monitor the quality of the assessment system. By reviewing theses and portfolios the panel established that the level of the achieved learning outcomes of students is sufficient.

The panel judgement on Standard 2 reads good, while Standards 1, 3 and 4 are considered 'satisfactory'. According to the NVAO regulations the overall judgement on the IBL programme of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences reads 'satisfactory'.

Hence, the panel recommends the NVAO to award re-accreditation for another six years to the hbo-bachelor programme International Business and Languages of Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations emanate from the body of this report.

- The panel recommends the programme to consider some degree of external safeguarding of the required CEFR-level, e.g. by making use of Dialang, Versant, CITO, SLO and by training staff in designing CEFR-related tests.
- As this is an important part of the IBL programme' profiling the panel would recommend more guidance of students on incorporating aspects of intercultural awareness into their theses.

APPENDIX I Overview of judgements

Judgements of the panel Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences HBO-Bachelor International Business and Languages (IBL) fulltime	
Standard	Judgement
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standaard 2. Teaching and learning environment	Good
Standaard 3. Assessment	Satisfactory
Standaard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Overall judgement	Satisfactory

APPENDIX II The course's learning objectives

2.2 IBL Competencies, Dublin descriptors and the level.

Below, a description is given of the competencies that are to be acquired and the three levels at which they are achieved. The levels are:

1. Basic level (usually reached after the first year)
2. Level after the second year (advanced level = professional in training)
3. Bachelor level (= newly qualified).⁶

The three competency levels correspond with the various phases of the IBL programme and the learning goals in the Course Descriptions.

Competence I International Business

IBL graduates are able to professionally develop, carry out and manage in particular the commercial processes involved in international business.

1. Initiate and create (contemporary) products and services for large or small international markets.	
Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Know the theory on signaling and identifying new developments, taking customers and competitors into account.
Level 2	1. Signal and identify new developments, taking customers and competitors into account. 2. Translate these developments (or have these developments translated) into products or service.
Level 3	1. Develop creative ideas and concepts. 2. Translate these concepts into products or services in a team, and organise the production of these goods and services.
2. Implement, interpret, assess and evaluate (international) market research.	
Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Know how to determine the need for research. 2. Know the characteristics of various research types. 3. Know how to interpret research outcomes and how to determine the impacts of those outcomes. 4. Create a questionnaire under supervision of the student company coach.
Level 2	1. Determine the need of doing research. 2. Interpret existing research outcomes and determine the impact of the outcomes on the organisation's strategies. 3. Carry out the research, using standard methods for that specific type of research.
Level 3	1. Formulate a hypothesis and research question(s) from a given context. 2. Write a research plan containing justifications for your choice of qualitative or quantitative research. 3. Carry out the research, using appropriate methods for that specific type of research. 4. Process the data, applying simple statistics using a statistical package and drawing conclusions.

⁶ See appendix 3 in Critical Reflection for Coverage of levels in the IBL competence matrix.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Write a report containing graphic representations and justifying research results to client. 6. Evaluate the research.
<p>3 International market analysis and competition analysis. Determine, on the one hand, what the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation are based on analysis of internal processes and culture, as part of the value chain, and on the other hand, determine what the chances and threats are on the international market based on relevant national and international trends.</p>	
<p>Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communication</p>	
<p>Differentiation</p>	
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Desk research: Interpret research outcomes from already executed research. 2. Advise companies how to take advantage of interpreted research outcomes for their future strategy implementation.
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse: Create and execute, in a team, a SWOT analysis from a given context, an international market analysis plan from one or multiple contexts and an analysis of the organisation's ability to compete on a feasible international scale.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess: Draw conclusions and assess strategic options for the national and/or international market based on the analysis of available and possibly incomplete information, and indicate contradictions of interest. 2. Determine investment risks/market chances and advise on investment of money, time, energy in international situations that are very unpredictable or uncontrollable. 3. Report and with conviction present the results and justify the analysis, including justification for the approach and giving advice on what to do subsequently.
<p>4 Develop a marketing policy for a company operating nationally or internationally and be able to support the choices made.</p>	
<p>Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments</p>	
<p>Differentiation</p>	
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpret existing marketing policies and understanding its impact for the business as a whole. 2. List several options based on a SWOT analysis that has been executed for a client.
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structure the options based on a SWOT analysis and reduce to a realistic set of priorities. 2. Formulate several marketing targets for short and long term, using SMART.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design a marketing plan for realising these targets, including the organisational and financial consequences, giving explicit account of the use and meaning of contemporary media tools for the company's international marketing activities.

5 Set up, execute and adjust various plans on internationalisation from a marketing policy point of view.	
Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Determine and analyse, independently, the changes for all functional areas of the organisation working from a simple marketing problem.
Level 2	1. Develop, set up and support a plan independently (for communications, international purchasing and/or sales, import and export, distribution, organisation) based on a marketing problem. 2. Write a fully international business plan, in a team, giving account of issues concerning sustainability, quality assurance, and corporate social responsibility and international regulations for import and export; 3. Present the analysis and conclusions, in a team, with conviction to management and other target groups in order to receive permission and support for execution.
Level 3	1. Determine and analyse, independently, the changes for all functional areas of the organisation working from a complex marketing problem. 2. Develop, set up and support a plan independently (for communications, international purchasing and/or sales, import and export, distribution, organisation) based on a complex marketing problem. 3. Write a fully international business plan, giving account of issues concerning sustainability, quality assurance, and corporate social responsibility and international regulations for import and export. 4. Present the analysis and conclusions with conviction to management and other target groups in order to receive permission and support for execution.
6 International Sales and International Account Management. Develop, maintain and improve business relationships for purchasing, sales and service, and selling products and/or services with the help of modern media (such as customer relationship management, CRM).	
Dublin descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Put together a sales file for the target country with all relevant information 2. Use appropriate business communication for purchasing and sales.
Level 2	1. Differentiate between consumer groups in terms of prospects and suspects. 2. Distinguish and describe the groups of buyers and attune the (marketing) communication to these groups of buyers. 3. Negotiate in three modern foreign languages. 4. Design an effective purchasing and sales organisation.
Level 3	1. Set up an international account profile and effective purchasing and sales strategy 2. Sell and negotiate in three modern foreign languages. 3. Design an effective purchasing and sales organisation and maintain your own relations network. 4. Take advantage of opportunities to extend limits and build new relationships that may lead to a transaction, contract or business agreement.

Competence II International Communication

IBL graduates are capable of professionally handling international business communication in three modern foreign languages.

7 Communicate in three modern foreign languages with awareness of cultural differences, internal and external, national and international.	
Dublin descriptor: Communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Command of English at B1 level for reading and listening skills. For spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is A2. Command of the second and third modern language at A2 level for reading and listening skills, for spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is A1; 2. Knowledge of aspects of the culture, society and behavioural patterns in countries and regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used; 3. Knowledge of differences in corporate cultures in countries or regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used. 4.
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Command of English at B2 level for reading and listening skills. For spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is B1. Command of the second and third modern language at A2 level for reading and listening skills, for spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is A2; 2. Know and evaluate the importance of aspects of the culture, society and behavioural patterns in countries and regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used; 3. Know and evaluate the importance of differences in corporate cultures in countries or regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Command of English at C1 level for reading and listening skills. For spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is B2. Command of the second and third modern language at B2 level for reading and listening skills, for spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the minimum level to be obtained is B1; 2. Advise on aspects of the culture, society and behavioural patterns in countries and regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used; 3. Advise on adequately approaching differences in corporate cultures in countries or regions where these foreign languages are official and/or used.
8 Lead an international company, an international business unit, business processes or an international project in the field of international purchasing and sales, and international communication.	
Dublin descriptor: Communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate a simple conflict situation in an (international) team and/or project group. 2. Acknowledge the impact of unexpected events that hinder the project group/team/department and know when to consult experts/supervisors; 3. Know the various styles of leadership. 4. Formulate and set goals for a student company in consultations with the project group/team and run interim feasibility checks.

	5. Estimate the value of the contribution of an employee or project group member in the student company and provide the project group with feedback.
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handle unexpected events that hinder the project group/team/department and respond adequately with the help of experts/supervisors and team members. 2. Deal with unexpected events that hinder the project group/team/department and respond adequately after having consulted experts/supervisors. 3. Lead a simple business unit or project in a result-oriented manner, assisted by a supervisor. 4. Formulate and set long term goals in consultations with the project group/team and run interim feasibility checks. 5. Estimate the value of the contribution of an employee or project group member, provide the project group with feedback and accept and process feedback from group members.
Level 3	Not applicable
9 Interpersonal, social and communication skills.	
Dublin descriptor: Communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in a team in a student company and contributing ideas towards goals and organisational structure calls for: multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills, customer focus, collegiality, management skills (the social part of the competency). 2. Communicate internally at all levels, and communicate effectively in English in terms of professional tasks in a student company. This includes drawing up and writing plans and memorandums, providing information, consulting with other parties, generating support, encouraging, motivating, convincing and communicating decisions.
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in a team in a professional environment and contributing ideas towards goals and organisational structure calls for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills, customer focus, collegiality, management skills (the social part of the competency) in the placement company. 2. Communicate internally, and communicate effectively in the customary language used in terms of professional tasks in the placement company; writing a proper placement report, including a report on the placement individually managed assignment.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working in a team in a professional environment and contributing ideas towards goals and organisational structure calls for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills, customer focus, collegiality, management skills (the social part of the competency). 2. Communicate internally at all levels, and communicate effectively in the customary language used in terms of professional tasks. This includes drawing up and writing plans and memoranda, providing information, consulting with other parties, generating support, encouraging, motivating, convincing and communicating decisions.

Competence III Intercultural Awareness

IBL graduates have knowledge of and insight into the importance of intercultural differences for the various phases of international business and can identify with various cultures in order to support international business processes.

10 Personal professional international skills. The profession of an IBL graduate is in part characterised by frequent visits abroad for shorter or longer periods, and by representing the interests of the company on site indirectly (promotion, research) or by working in direct contact with the client. Graduates must be able to operate in all international regions where the company is represented. This demands various more specific, personal, professional skills from the IBL graduate.	
Dublin descriptor: Knowledge and understanding, Communication	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Interest in other cultures and ability to empathise with other cultures (cultural intelligence).
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Entrepreneurial initiative and wish to travel in order to solve important problems and issues abroad. 3. Ability to deal with insecurity, be socially resilient and have the courage to be in an environment/situation that is new to him/her. By this we mean that IBL professionals will often find themselves in an unfamiliar foreign context and therefore must be able to deal with the insecurities and questions that come with this context. 4. Adapt to the international environment in which they are to operate. Respect foreign norms and values, and act in accordance with a code of conduct. 5. Ample knowledge of the company's products and services in order to communicate with foreign buyers and suppliers.
Level 3	1. Bridge differences that arise from cultural background in each phase of business relations and show sufficient backbone, both professionally and morally.
11 Self-managing competency (intrapersonal or professional).	
Dublin descriptor: Learning Skills	
Differentiation	
Level 1	1. Think about, reflect on and take responsibility for own actions (indicates commitment and critical self-evaluation).
Level 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage and regulate own development with respect to learning, working in a result-oriented way, taking initiatives and operating independently, flexibility. 2. Develop a professional attitude with room for normative-cultural aspects, respect for others, a professional code and ethical principles in order to act professionally.
Level 3	1. Contribute to the further professionalisation of the sector, and contribute to publications, congresses, etc.

2.3 Required level of modern foreign languages

As far as proficiency in modern foreign languages is concerned, the IBL programmes apply the European level standard of competency as described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)⁷. This framework is clear and applicable in terms of foreign language proficiency. The framework is also accepted and internationally applied, which makes international comparison possible. It consists of six levels of language proficiency, ranging from A1 and A2 (basic knowledge) to C2 (high level of language proficiency only to be obtained by a highly qualified native speaker). These six levels are described in the table below.

The following levels of proficiency are applicable, taking into account that IBL is a four-year programme of higher education for students of economics, in which business knowledge plays a key role.

- The student has acquired a command of English at C1 level for all language skills.
- The student has acquired a command of the second and third modern language at B2 level for reading and listening skills; for spoken interaction, speaking and writing, the student has acquired at least level B1.

The table below describes in general terms the level of proficiency. In the Common European Framework (CEFR) the language levels are expressed into specific language skills, the so-called Can Do statements⁸. IBL uses these Can Do statements as a starting point and applies them to a business environment.

The AUAS IBL programme is fully taught in English, and students follow English classes as well. In year 1, students choose a second foreign language from Spanish, French, German and Dutch. In year 2, they continue with this second language and they choose a third foreign language from Spanish, French, German, Dutch and Portuguese.

At the end of year 2 the language programme is set up in such a way that the levels of both second and third language are the same. In year 4 students do the final language modules that take them to level B1/B2.

⁷ See: www.coe.int. Council of Europe, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

⁸ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), chapter 4.

APPENDIX III

Overview of the programme

IBL curriculum for enrollments from September 2014				
	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
4	2nd Language 5 4 EC	3rd Language 5 4 EC	Online and live: Cross Cultural Management 4 EC	Online and live: Social Responsibility in Business 4 EC
	International Financial Markets 4 EC	Business English 5 4 EC	Personal & Professional Development 1EC	Personal & Professional Development 1EC
	Strategic Marketing 4 EC	Marketing Communication Skills 4 EC	Thesis 20 EC	
	Business Research 3 4 EC			
	Personal & Professional Development 2 EC			
	Community Building / Contact with coach / Study Guidance / Guest Lectures / Extra curriculair Workshops: Job Application Skills, Negotiation Skills			
3	Minor Exchange is compulsory for students who did their previous education in the Netherlands. Students that are exempted from going on exchange can choose a minor at the AUAS or another Dutch Higher Education Institute. 30 EC		International Field-Based Learning Abroad or in the Netherlands 30 EC	
	Community Building / Contact with coach / Study Guidance			
2	Business English BEC Higher 4 EC	2nd Language 3 4 EC	Negotiating in English 4 EC	2nd Language 4 4 EC
	3rd Language 1 4 EC	3rd Language 2 4 EC	3rd Language 3 4 EC	3rd Language 4 4 EC
	Global Sales and Account Management 5 EC	Economics and Management for Business 4 EC	Strategic Export Management 5 EC	Financial Management 2 4 EC
		Law for Business 3 EC		International Marketing 3 EC
	Professional Branding 1 2 EC		Professional Branding 2 2 EC	
	Community Building / Contact with coach / Study Guidance / Guest Lectures / Career Day			
1	Business English 1 4 EC		Business English 2 4 EC	
	2nd Business Language 1 4 EC		2nd Business Language 2 4 EC	
	Introduction to Management 4 EC	Marketing Management Fundamentals 4 EC	Co-Creative Entrepreneurship 8 EC	
	Financial Management 1 4 EC	Cross-Cultural Awareness 3 EC	Principles of Economics 4 EC	Information Technology * 4 EC
		Business Research 1 4 EC		Business Research 2 3 EC
	Personal Performance and Development 3 EC		Team Development 3 EC	
	Community Building / Contact with coach / Study Guidance / Guest Lectures / Language Teasers			

Note: the possible languages to be chosen are: Business Dutch; Business French; Business German; Business Portuguese; and/or, Business Spanish.

APPENDIX IV**Programme of the site-visit**

Location: Fraijlemaborg 133, Amsterdam
 Conversation room: 3.064

Date: 8 October 2015

Time	Room	Conversation partners
08.15 – 08.30	3.064	Receipt of the panel
08.30 – 09.30	3.064	Internal consultation panel
09.30 – 10.30	3.064	<p>Management</p> <p>Wil Hazelhoff Director IBL</p> <p>Pieter Vermeulen Main Phase coordinator IBL</p> <p>John Sterk Director IBS/IBMS</p>
10.30 – 10.45	3.064	Pause and Internal consultation
10.45 – 11.45	3.064	<p>Lecturers IBL</p> <p>Stefan Molenaars Lecturer marketing subjects, thesis supervision and assessment, member thesis committee, member Curriculum Advisory Board.</p> <p>Miriam Olid Goni Lecturer Spanish, alumni coordinator, internship supervision and assessment, third year mentor, coordinator guest speakers.</p> <p>Rashied Alibux Lecturer research subjects, thesis assessment and supervision, long stay students committee, member thesis committee.</p> <p>Victor Cabral Lecturer marketing subjects, thesis supervision and assessment, PHD candidate</p> <p>Marjolein Hennekes Study Advisor, Member IBS Cure⁶ team, lecturer Spanish, member Curriculum Advisory Board.</p> <p>Floortje Dopmeijer Lecturer French, Coordinator Honours programme, Coordinator Professional Branding & Personal Development, Mentor second year students, internship supervision, member internship committee</p> <p>Ynske Gunning</p>

⁶ The IBS Cure team consists of lecturers of all programmes within IBS and is responsible for the proces of redesigning all IBS programmes.

Time	Room	Conversation partners
		Lecturer Ethics, thesis supervision and assessment, member thesis committee, member Curriculum Advisory Board. Radek Swiecinski Lecturer English, thesis supervision and assessment, Associate Professor
11.45 – 12.45	3.064	Students and student members of the study council Year 1: Annika Oudejans Pamela Siodmok Renee van Bokkem Year 2: Yannick Weinberger Sanne Draaisma Year 3 Lisa Ubachs (member of the Study Council) Antonio Comparetto Year 4 Nathalie Abdalla (doing internship) Ayoub Nassiri (writing thesis, member of the Study Council)
12.45 – 13.30	3.064	Lunch and internal consultation panel
13.30 – 14.15	3.063	Walk-in hour for students and lecturers
<i>Parallel sessions</i>		Specific training facilities tour And reviewing documentation
		At random visiting lessons
14.15 – 14.45	3.064	Presentation of Excellence programme Eye on Africa Presentation of Honours programme International Business Case competition
14.45 – 15.30	3.064	Examination board and Test & Assessment Committee IBL Reynt-Jan Sloet Van Oldruitenborgh Chair Examination board IBS. Thea Korfage-Spelman Chair Examination chamber IBL Chair Test and Assessment Committee. Juun van Burk Member of the Test and Assessment Committee Lecturer marketing subjects.

Time	Room	Conversation partners
		<p>Florence Herberichs Member of the Test and Assessment Committee Lecturer French.</p>
15.30 – 15.45	3.064	Pause and Internal consultation
15.45 – 16.30	3.064	<p>Field representatives and Alumni</p> <p>Erwin van Drongelen Human Resources Business Partner <i>IDEXX Europe</i></p> <p>Rosalie Greven Function <i>International Toptalent</i></p> <p>Freyja Heeschen Alumni IBL Trainee Communication&Project management <i>Philips</i></p> <p>Caroline Zwarthoed-Kunzmann Alumni IBL Coordinator Operational Planning <i>Adidas Group</i></p> <p>Nadja Wever Alumni IBL Project coordinator Event and Exhibition Logistics <i>CEVA Showfreight</i></p> <p>Kees Jan Markens Alumni IBL Director <i>Qareers.com & TrabajosEnPeru.com & TrabajoEnMX.com.MX</i></p>
16.30 – 16.45	3.064	Internal consultation and determine pending issues Reviewing documentation
16.45 – 17.00	3.064	<p>Pending issues</p> <p><i>(all conversation partners are available)</i></p>
	3.064	Reviewing documentation
17.00 – 17.45	3.064	Internal consultation: determine overall assessment
17.45	0.012	Feedback

Working methods

Selection of the delegations / the auditees

In compliance with the NVAO regulations the audit panel prior to the audit decided on the composition of the delegations (auditees) in consultation with the course management and on the basis of the points of focus that had arisen from the panel's analysis of the course documents.

An 'open consultation session' was scheduled as part of the site-visit programme. The panel verified that the scheduled times of the consultation session had been made public to all parties involved in the school community in a correct and timely manner. No students or staff members attended the open consultation session.

Auditing process

The following procedure was adopted. The panel studied the documents regarding the programme (Appendix V: Documents reviewed) and a number of theses. The panel secretary organised input from the auditors and distributed the preliminary findings among the panel members prior to the audit. A preparatory meeting of the panel was held on the morning of the site visit (Appendix IV: Programme of the site visit).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

A first version of the assessment report was drafted by the secretary and circulated among the members of the panel for review and comments. The final draft was subsequently forwarded to the institute to correct factual inaccuracies. The panel finalized the report on the 7th of April 2016.

Assessment rules

The assessment panel evaluates the programme against the standards of the assessment framework applying the following assessment scale: unsatisfactory - satisfactory - good - excellent.

For a positive final conclusion regarding the programme, each theme must at least be judged as satisfactory.

The final outcome of the programme assessment will always be "unsatisfactory" if standards 1, 3 or 4 are judged "unsatisfactory". In case of an unsatisfactory score on standard 1, no improvement period will be assigned and the programme will have to close down.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "good" if at least two standards are judged "good", one of which must be standard 4.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "excellent" if at least two standards are judged "excellent", one of which must be standard 4.

The final conclusion regarding a programme will always be "unsatisfactory" if standards 1 and/or 3 are judged "unsatisfactory". In case of an unsatisfactory score on standards 1 or 3, NVAO cannot grant a conditional initial accreditation.

APPENDIX V Documents examined

List of documents examined

- Critical Reflection IBL 2015
- IBL Programme Profile
- OER Bachelor IBL 2015-2016
- IBL Intended learning outcomes
- Coverage of levels in the IBL competence matrix
- AUAS IBL curriculum
- Overview faculty IBL
- Thesis Guidelines, including evaluation criteria
- Borgingsagenda 2015-2016
- Reference books and other learning materials
- Test questions with corresponding assessment criteria and requirements (answer models) and a representative selection of actual tests administered (such as presentations, work placements, portfolio assessments) and assessments;
 - Co-creative entrepreneurship (year 1)
 - Introduction to Management (year 1)
 - Project Sales & Account Management (Year 2)
 - Project Export Management (year 2)
 - Central exam Principles of Economics (block IV)
- Reports on consultations in relevant committees / bodies
- Annual report of the Examination Board
- Representative selection of final projects, selected by the panel, of the past two years with corresponding assessment criteria and requirements;
- List of 15 final projects/papers examined prior to the audit⁷:
 - 500505789
 - 500608356
 - 500608408
 - 500634906
 - 500538012
 - 500236331
 - 500611832
 - 500617579
 - 500623336
 - 500619806
 - 500655610
 - 500609373
 - 500640902
 - 500546154
 - 500645319
- List of six additional final projects examined after the audit (upscale):
 - 500646479
 - 500619313
 - 500641244
 - 500627155
 - 500615841
 - 500544229

⁷ Following NVAO regulations student enrolment numbers have been denoted here. For reasons of privacy names of students and projects are known to the panel members and panel secretary only.

APPENDIX VI Composition of the audit panel

Panel members	Expertise					
	auditing and quality assurance	education	professional field	discipline	International	student-related
Dr. J.W. Wierda	x	x	x	x	x	
Drs. M. Le Roux	x		x			
Prof. dr. G.J. Westhoff	x		x			
K. van Zwet						x

co-ordinator/certified secretary
I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc

On 7 September 2015 the NVAO approved the composition of the panel to assess the International Business and Language programme of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, registration 004234.

Succinct CVs of panel members and secretary/co-ordinator

1	Dr. J.W. (Wes) Wierda is former Professor Media Business at Inholland. He is currently working as a senior consultant at Hobéon.
2	Drs. M. (Michel) Le Roux is a consultant in the area of cross-cultural marketing communication
3	Prof. dr. G.J. (Gerard) Westhoff is professor emeritus in didactics of foreign languages
4	Mrs. K. (Kimberley) van Zwet is a third year IBL student at Windesheim University of Applied Sciences.

Prior to the audit all panel members undersigned declarations of independence and confidentiality which are in possession of the NVAO. This declaration certifies, among other things, that panel members do not currently maintain or have not maintained for the last five years any (family) connections or ties of a personal nature or as a researcher/teacher, professional or consultant with the institution in question, which could affect a fully independent judgement regarding the quality of the programme in either a positive or negative sense.



Strategische dienstverlener voor kennisintensieve organisaties



Lange Voorhout 14
2514 ED Den Haag

T (070) 30 66 800

F (070) 30 66 870

E info@hobeon.nl

I www.hobeon.nl