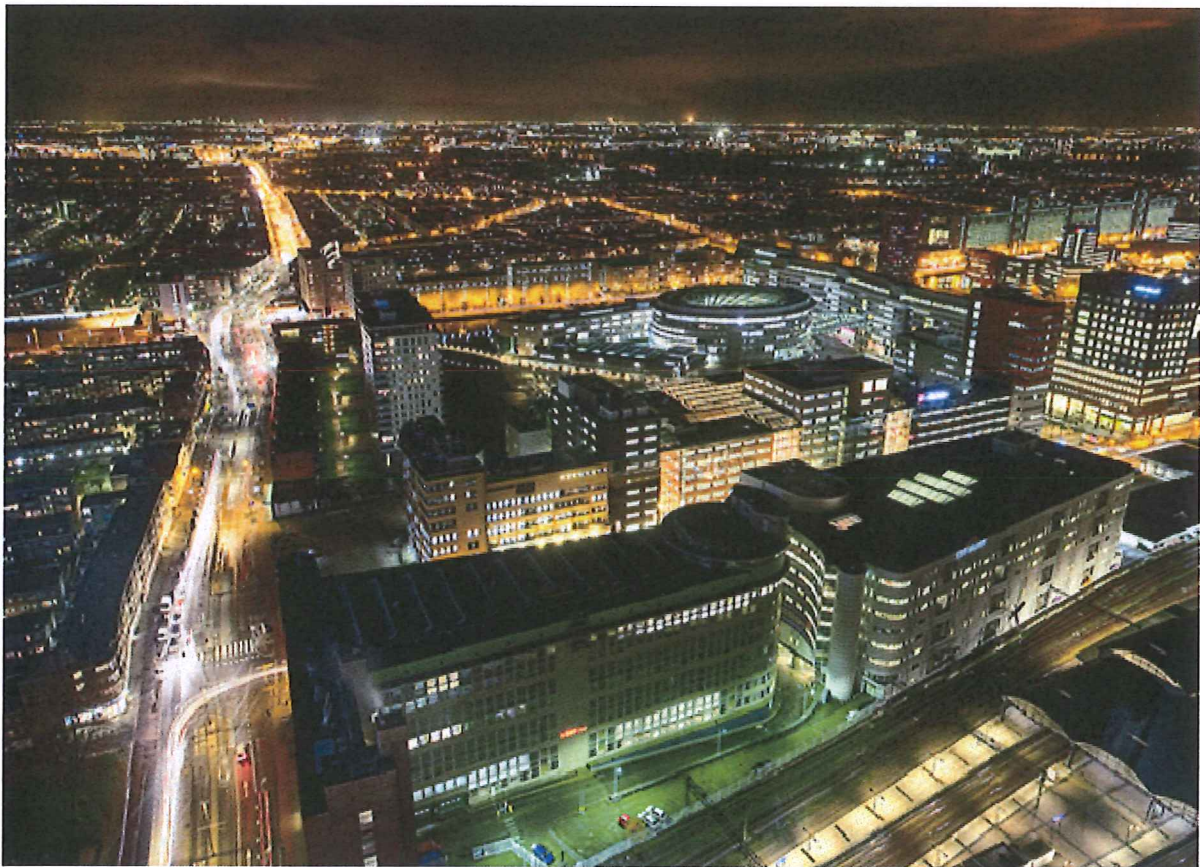


Improvement Plan Master of Business Administration



The Hague University of Applied Sciences

April 2015

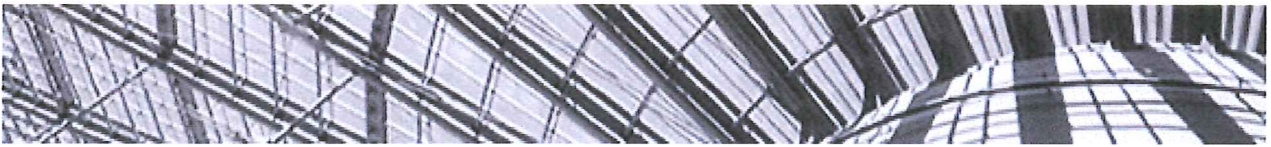


Table of Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Areas of Improvement	4
3 MBA Vision on improvement	6
3.1 Main features of improvement	6
Overview of the main improvement focus points	6
3.2 Phases and priorities.....	7
4 Overview of improvement measures	9
List 4.1: Assessment & thesis : safeguarding academic level.....	9
List 4.2: Research, analysis skills and Profile.....	13
List 4.3: Focus Point – Quality Assurance	17
5 Concluding Remarks.....	19
Appendix.....	20



1 Introduction

This is the Improvement plan of the master degree programme Master of Business Administration (MBA) offered by The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS). The MBA Improvement Plan is submitted as a response to the NVAO's request and accompanied by the view of the panel and the advice of the MBA Curriculum Committee.

In its letter¹, the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders) assessed three standards to be insufficient, and as such the quality of the MBA programme as insufficient. The NVAO bases its conclusion on the assessment report submitted by the NQA (Netherlands Quality Agency) panel in November 2014 following their site visit in June 2014.

During the site visit, as well as in their report, the NQA panel indicated elements that required improvement. At the same time, the panel recognized the work that has been done in the last year and expressed their trust in the MBA team and the development of the programme.

The site visit and the ensuing NQA report clarified the necessary improvement measures. The MBA team fully recognizes the outcomes and conclusions and embraces the recommendations made by the NQA panel.

The MBA team continuously and consistently works on improving the quality of the programme. The programme manager, together with the faculty, Curriculum Committee, Programme Council, and the Examination Board are highly committed to contribute to a successful implementation of the improvement strategy. As a result, actions have been taken, and will take place in a systematic manner.

This Improvement plan comprises five chapters of which three are central:

- Chapter 2 provides a summary of the NQA report and panel's recommendations;
- Chapter 3 describes the vision on improvement, phasing and prioritizing;
- Chapter 4 provides an overview of the improvement measures including the timeline and planning.

The MBA team is grateful to the NVAO and the NQA audit panel for the opportunity to share the improvement steps that will further enhance the MBA programme's quality. The MBA team and the academy are convinced that this improvement plan will clarify the strategy, actions and results achieved so far, as well as those planned for the near future. Together these not only justify an improvement period but, more importantly, ensure a solid and sustainable THUAS MBA programme.

¹ NVAO letter, dated 24th March 2015, kenmerk NVAO/20150935/AH



2 Areas of Improvement

Prior to the NQA site visit, the MBA team submitted the Critical Reflection (CR) and supporting documents, among which a selection of theses, in May 2014. The NQA audit panel reviewed the CR and conducted a site visit on the 26th and 27th of June 2014. The audit panel considered the plans the MBA team presented, and required more evidence for the implementation of these plans. In August 2014 the MBA programme provided an additional selection of Master's theses as supplement evidence to the assessment and learning outcomes implemented in the programme of the 13-14 Full-Time MBA programme.

In their November 2014 report, the NQA panel expresses its confidence in the MBA programme management to further improve the programme:

- The panel explicitly mentions an improvement in the use of research methods in the second batch of Master's theses that was sent in August 2014.
- The panel approved the content of the programme.
- The service level offered to the students is adequate: the staff is receptive to the students' needs and day-to-day issues are resolved quickly.
- The panel judges the learning outcomes to be relevant and in line with the required Master's level.
- The lecturers are found to be qualified and the literature adequate and up-to-date.
- The students, the alumni and the lecturers all actively contribute to the internal quality assurance.

Nevertheless, the NQA panel identifies important deficiencies in three standards and, therefore, assesses the overall level of the programme to be unsatisfactory. In its March 24th 2015 letter the NVAO corroborates the conclusion of the NQA panel.

The standards assessed as unsatisfactory are standards 2, 14 and 16. The panel's report clearly describes and explains the panel's observations and assessment.

The three standards shown in table 2.1 are those related to the skills offered to the students in the curriculum, the efficiency of the assessment system and the improvement measures installed for quality assurance.

Table 2.1 Overview standards assessed unsatisfactory, with the panel's main comments

<p><i>Standard 2 - Orientation of the curriculum: The orientation of the curriculum assures the development of skills in the field of scientific research and/or the professional practice.</i></p>
<p>The panel expressed concern regarding the research and analysis skills taught to students during the programme; the panel found that the orientation of the curriculum was not optimal in this respect; it was not sufficiently focused on developing research and analysis skills. The programme needs to enhance the critical thinking component in the curriculum and in the exams.</p>
<p><i>Standard 14 - Improvement measures: The outcomes of these evaluations constitute the basis for demonstrable measures for improvement that contribute to the realization of the targets.</i></p>
<p>The panel found that there is little clarity in the translation of the evaluation results to improvement measures. The improvement measures were not supported by sufficient formal documentation, as evidence to the systematic progress the programme was making. This is needed in order to make the improvement process transparent.</p>
<p><i>Standard 16 – Assessment and learning outcomes: The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved</i></p>
<p>As a result from the orientation of the curriculum, research and analysis skills were found to be insufficient in preparing the students for the thesis phase. In addition, the level of some of the exams and assignments was not challenging enough for a Master's level. Consequently, some of the Master's theses presented to the panel were found to be of insufficient quality. The panel found the thesis grading system to be unclear.</p>



The panel's assessment report concludes by way of summary with five concrete recommendations for improvement. These recommendations derive from the outcomes of the audit and are stipulated in the final assessment report of the Full Study Program Assessment compiled by NQA in November 2014²:

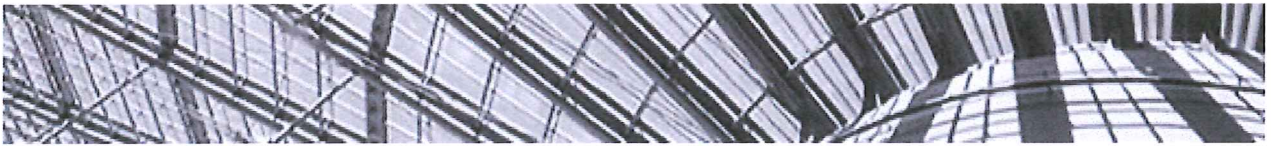
1. The **profile** of the MBA programmes could be more visible in the programme and more distinctive. The panel recommends further exploring the distinctive characteristics and incorporating them visibly in the programme.
2. The panel recommends that students are led to explore a range of **strategic models and enhance critical thinking** during the programme. The panel would recommend to offer a combination of models, use more articles/journals and teach students how to choose the best model given the situation.
3. The panel recommends the MBA to make **research** a red line through the programme.
4. The larger **measures for improvement** and the red line in evaluations should be guided and recorded better in order to finish the PDCA cycle.
5. The panel made remarks on the **exams and theses**. The Examination Board should show more initiative in safeguarding the final level. The panel recommends executing the test plan as it is already drawn up. And furthermore use the remarks the panel made in the report to develop the programme.

Throughout the report the panel defines the following additional points of improvement that are directly or indirectly linked to the recommendations:

1. Clarify the link between the different committees and councils to ensure the programme's quality.
2. Enhance the level and the depth of research skills in the exams.
3. The level of the theses and the process of grading should be further improved.

The MBA programme has carefully considered all these areas of improvement. Chapter 3 describes the ensuing vision and analysis.

² NQA. (2014). *THUAS Master of Business Administration. Full Study Programme Assessment*. p. 37.



3 MBA Vision on improvement

The MBA team is convinced that measures focused on quality improvement can only lead to sustainable results if all stakeholders understand, acknowledge and endorse the issues in question. We are pleased that all MBA stakeholders are committed to continuously improve our quality.

In the nine months preceding and following the NQA site visit the MBA team worked hard on improving the degree programme. Based on a thorough analysis of the causes and relations between the different areas of improvement, the MBA team developed a coherent set of improvement measures. These have been and will be implemented so as to both repair the deficiencies identified, and create a lasting and comprehensive improvement of the programme.

3.1 Main features of improvement

The assessment report clearly identified points of improvement and recommends possible steps to repair them. The MBA team searched for mutually reinforcing causes to the identified deficiencies.

A clear correlation between standards 2, 16 and 14 was established: a curriculum with a strong research and professional skills thread, leads to better-trained and more proficient students. That, in turn, enables the students to reach a Master's level - the proof to be the knowledge and skills acquired and expressed in their Master thesis. Improvement measures can be optimally implemented if the documentation and the communication thereof allow a full and well functioning PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle.

Overview of the main improvement focus points

Three focus points are defined by the MBA team, incorporating all the elements that require improvement. These are the focus points of the MBA programme development:

1.	Assessment & thesis : safeguarding academic level
2.	Research, analysis skills & profile: fine-tuning the orientation of the curriculum , the skills the students and their future working environment require, and highlighting the unique profile of this MBA programme.
3.	Improvement measures & quality assurance: facilitating clear and transparent communication with the MBA stakeholders (students, faculty, different committees) and the translation of their evaluation input into clear improvement measurements within a PDCA cycle

The three focus points defined by the MBA team are interconnected:

The assessment and thesis' academic level are safeguarded both by continuously applying improvement measures and by enhancing the students' research and analysis skills. This enables the students to develop the skills needed for their academic, professional and personal development.

In other words: A continuous and visible process of improvement that leads to better training, safeguards the academic level that is represented in adequate assessments and achieved learning outcomes.

This is depicted in figure 3.1 below:

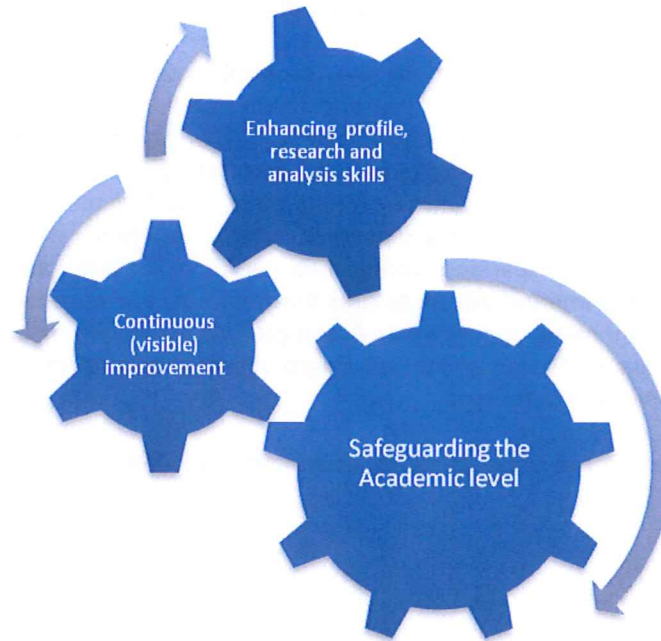
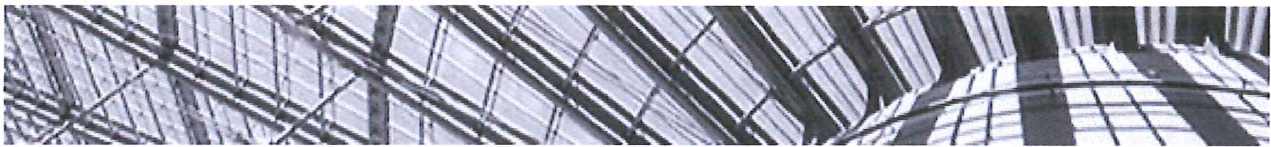


Figure 3.1- Defined and interconnected focus points

3.2 Phases and priorities

In planning and executing the different improvement measures and actions the MBA team consequently reflected upon the following questions:

1. What is a realistic timeframe for the measures to actually have the necessary impact?
2. Which measures should thus be prioritized?

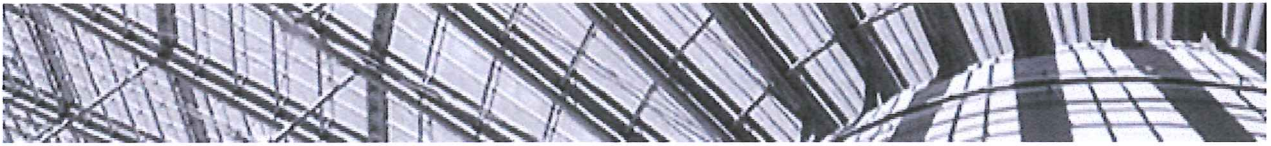
In order to achieve the right priorities, the MBA team focused in particular on the positive influence that the different measures would have on the different cohorts in the programme. An important goal was to introduce measures that would impact (but would not impede) current, as well as future students.

Safeguarding the academic level is considered priority number one, as it is the prerequisite of a Master's programme, and is also the element that must be consistently built into the curriculum and hence takes the longest to fully-implement. A fundamental part in assuring students are better prepared for master level and thesis writing is enhancing the orientation of the curriculum with regards to research and analysis skills. This can be done in steps and can be introduced also into a running programme, without impeding the planned structure of programme. Improving the level and validity of examinations and the tests is another crucial element in safeguarding the academic level. The team works in close collaboration with the Examination Board to achieve this.

Refining the improvement measures cycle happens in parallel to the other actions: the MBA stakeholders (students, faculty and different committees) are consulted and their input is considered and implemented.

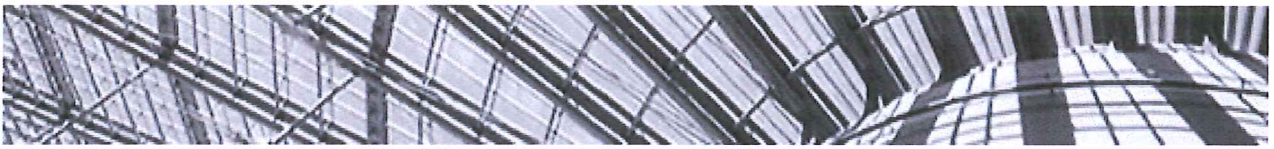
The ensuing steps:

- As of the summer of 2014 the improvement measures in the MBA programme were particularly focused on enhancing of the academic level, the research line and a more rigorous assessment of) the achieved learning outcomes of current and future students.
- The cohorts starting in September 2014 have an intensified element of the research orientation in each module.



- In the adjusted curriculum of the February 2015 cohort the focus is on research and analytical skills.
- The adjusted curriculum of the September 2015 cohorts also includes the clearer positioning of the programme and further embedded research line.
- The Examination Board continuously works on the improvement of the assessment procedures and the evaluation of tests/assignments and their results, all in a joint effort with the programme management and the test coordinator. The Examination Board uses the test/assignment plan, together with the program's stated competences, learning outcomes and indicators as a basis for evaluating tests/assignments. All tests and assignments are monitored in cooperation with the test/assignment coordinator. A sample will be drawn in order to monitor the theses. Members of the Examination Board monitor all oral defences and observe multiple examinations/defences.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of all improvement measures.



4 Overview of improvement measures

This chapter provides an overview of all measures and activities that have been implemented, are about to start or will be implemented in order to overcome the deficiencies in the MBA programme and improve its overall quality. The measures are presented in three lists, corresponding with the three focus points mentioned in Chapter 3.

The three lists have been drawn according to one format:

1. Description of the improvement measure
2. The intended effect of the measure
3. If applicable, the cohort on which the measure will have influence.
4. The table also states the status of the measures: achieved, ongoing or planned.

Table 4.1 depicts the different cohorts that are mentioned in the lists below:

Table 4.1. MBA cohorts

Name Cohort	Study period	Referred to as
MBA Full-Time 13	September 2013- August 2014	MBA FT 13
MBA Full-Time 14	September 2014- August 2015	MBA FT 14
MBA Full-Time 15	September 2015- August 2016	MBA FT 15
MBA Full-Time 16	September 2016 - August 2017	MBA FT 16
MBA Part-Time 14	October 2014 - August 2016	MBA PT 14
MBA Part-Time 15	October 2015 – August 2017	MBA PT 15
MBA Part-Time in Dutch 14	February 2014 – December 2015	MBA NL 14
MBA Part-Time in Dutch 15	February 2015 – December 2016	MBA NL 15
MBA Part-Time in Dutch 16	February 2016 – December 2017	MBA NL 16

List 4.1: Assessment & thesis: safeguarding academic level

The thesis is the assessment concluding and determining the Master's level in the MBA programme. However, the assessment preceding the thesis is paramount in its importance: it helps the students sharpen the skills and prove they have achieved the intended learning goals. Therefore, next to enhancing the thesis procedures even further, the exams' level has been systematically considered and improved. Improvements were introduced on different levels:

- The content and level of the exams
- Adequate implementation of the assessment policy

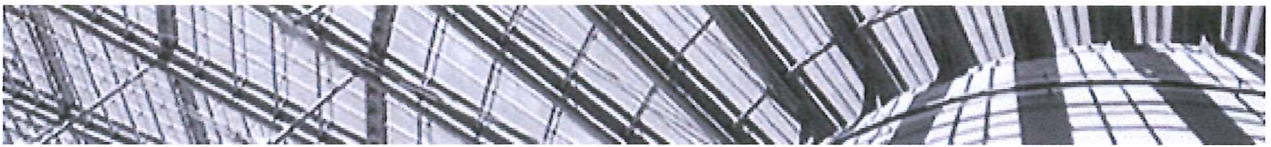
These two elements are combined in order to achieve the desired result: a well-regulated assessment system on a Master's level that is focused on honing the intended learning goals and helps students achieve the learning outcomes of the programme.

The above mentioned actions are implemented in close liaison with the Examination Board.

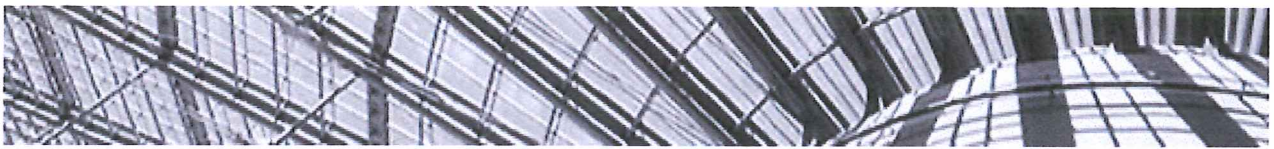
The list below indicates the actions that were and/or will be taken in order to achieve this goal.

List 4.1: Assessment & thesis: safeguarding academic level

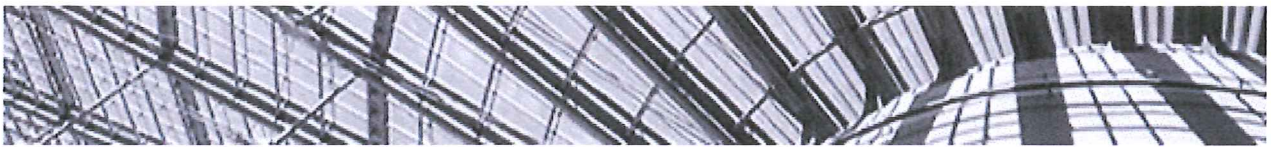
Number	Description	Effect	Cohort	Implemented by/ Status
Subtheme: level and quality of testing				
1.	Implementation of the 4-eye procedure: - Exam cover-sheets include the name of the	Transparency and accountability are enhanced. Improving and	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14 (second year, as of September, MBA PT 14)	- Program Manager - Achieved



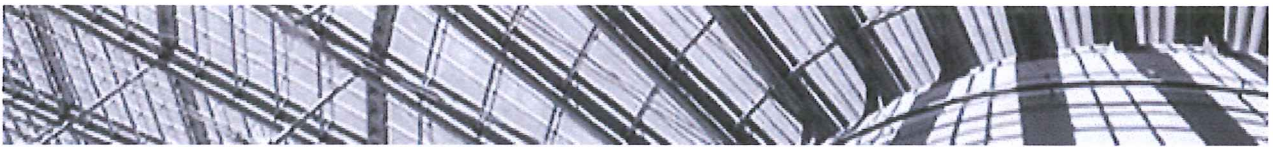
	<p>exam's author and second reader. Exams are only approved by the program manager after the 4-eye procedure has taken place. It is a prerequisite for using the exams. This is done two weeks before the exam takes place.</p>	ensuring quality of exams.		
2.	The 4-eye-check of all tests will be delivered in a standard format	Standardizing the quality assurance procedure.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Policy Adviser - Planned for June 2015
3.	All lecturers in the MBA are assigned to be Examiners by the Examination Board. All Examiners are periodically trained (a seminar) on assessment skills to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date.	Improving and ensuring quality of exams.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Exam Board - Planned for May 2015, October 2015 (and after that: once every Spring and Autumn)
4.	The MBA faculty will be invited by the Examination Board to have yearly 'moderation-sessions' to discuss test results and evaluations.	Improving and ensuring the quality of exams and their grading.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Exam Board - Planned for June 2015, November 2015 (and after that: every Spring and Autumn)
5.	Improved allocation of lecturers to courses (based on the evaluations of the students and lecturers performance)	The quality of the modules as well as the exams is improved.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14 MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15	Achieved (continuous)
6.	The current MBA Competencies and Learning Outcomes' phrasing is reviewed so as to sharpen the Test Plan. For example: explicitly rephrasing a learning outcome to include application of critical thinking in choosing an appropriate theoretical framework.	The learning outcomes can be better measured.	September 2015 onwards	- Curriculum Committee - Planned for May 2015
7.	The competencies matrix is readjusted.	The quality and balance of the testing is improved.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Curriculum Committee - Planned for May 2015
8.	The level and quality of tests is intensified by adjusting the required output; the students are required to deliver results that include analysis and	The students are challenged on a Master's level.	MBA FT 14 and onwards	- Program Manager Achieved



	synthesis.			
Subtheme: Examination Board				
9.	Introduction of an Examination Board annual calendar specifying tasks and responsibilities.	Assuring the transparency and independence of the Examination Board.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 and onwards	- Examination Board - Planned for September 2015
10.	The Examination Board will request the MBA programme Test Plan (prepared by the Program Manager and approved by the Curriculum Committee) by July 2015. Test matrices are stated for all modules in the Test Plan.	- Clear responsibilities and clear lines in execution. - The exams test the intended learning outcomes with greater precision. - All modules are set with clear outlines for their tests.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Examination Board, Program Manager & Curriculum Committee - Planned for July 2015
11.	The Examination Board will evaluate the correct and appropriate use of the Academy's Test Handbook (testing policy and procedures manual) by all stakeholders.	Improving and ensuring quality of exams.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Examination Board - Planned starting June 2015
12.	Standardizing the level of testing. Introduced by the Examination Board, this format must be used by lecturers and test coordinators to develop and evaluate tests and their quality. It is an extended checklist.	Improving quality of exams.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 and onwards	- Examination Board - Ongoing
13.	The Examination Board re-evaluates the role and responsibilities of the test-coordinator. The Examination Board introduces better guidelines and instructions for the test coordinator.	Improving quality assurance of tests.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 and onwards	- Examination Board - Planned for May 2015 and implemented by summer 2015
Subtheme: Thesis assessment				
14.	A new thesis manual has been written in 2014. The manual is reviewed and evaluated annually by the Examination Board. The thesis manual is approved by the Examination Board before implementation.	Assuring all stakeholders share the same standards and use a common language.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14 and onwards	- Examination Board - Ongoing and to be implemented in the summer (MBA FT 14) And winter (MBA NL14)
15.	The Examination Board introduces a supervising contract for supervisors and 2 nd readers with intensification of the instruction and guidance regarding their role. The supervisor and 2 nd reader will be instructed	Assuring all stakeholders share the same standards and use a common language.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14 and onwards	- Examination Board - Planned for May 2015 (MBA FT 14) And July 2015 (MBA NL14).



	regarding the new thesis manual in a mandatory meeting before the thesis supervision starts.			
16.	From 2015 onwards, the Examination Board will appoint supervisors and 2 nd readers and examiners.	Assure independency and consistency of supervision.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14	- Examination Board - Planned for June 2015
17.	The MBA will introduce internal thesis calibration sessions amongst the supervisors and examiners. Next to this will a sample of the theses be reviewed by external academic peers.	Achieving aligned grading standards. The grading process is fine-tuned and tested both internally and externally.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14	- Examination Board - Planned for July 2015 and November 2015



List 4.2: Research, analysis skills and profile

The MBA curriculum is constructed of modules that build upon each other. In order to ensure the required academic level and emphasize the unique character of this MBA, the second focus point was translated into changes in the curriculum.

A new curriculum structure was developed and contains three vertical learning lines³:

1. Business Research Methods line - will equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to develop a research oriented approach, academic research techniques, the ability to delineate methodological consequences and develop students' capacity to write assignments, papers and ultimately their master thesis.
2. Global Business Environment (GBE) line – designed to incorporate the International, Collaborative and Just characteristics of the THUAS MBA into each one of the phases. The GBE line represents the unique character of the THUAS MBA: an MBA programme that leans on the character of the city The Hague, and links to the World-Citizenship theme that is one of the main themes of The Hague University of Applied Science. Students are encouraged to use critical thinking in their evaluation of current affairs, and discuss business from multiple angles.
3. Personal and Professional Development vertical line - trains the students in professional skills and enhances their personal development through targeted workshops, lectures and exercises.

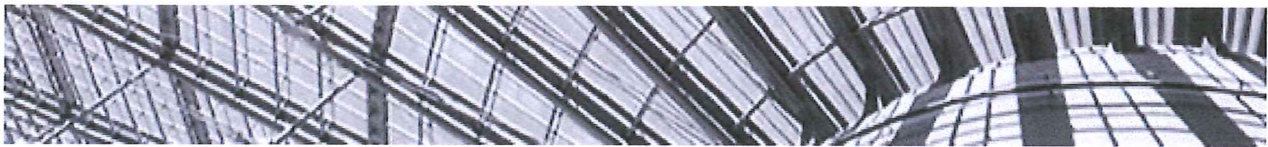
The new curriculum design demonstrates three important elements:

1. Research and analysis skills are clearly implemented throughout the curriculum; not only vertically but also horizontally, in each one of the modules.
2. The unique character of the THUAS MBA manifests itself clearly and consistently throughout the curriculum.
3. The horizontal and vertical embedded learning lines enhance the overall cohesion in the curriculum.

Table 4.2 below shows the new curriculum structure that will be applied in September 2015⁴:

³ The curriculum presented to the panel in the CR contained one vertical line, namely the Personal and Professional line. The new curriculum with the added two vertical learning lines is planned to be implemented in September 2015.

⁴ The curriculum structure and rationale will be explained in detail in the attached appendix

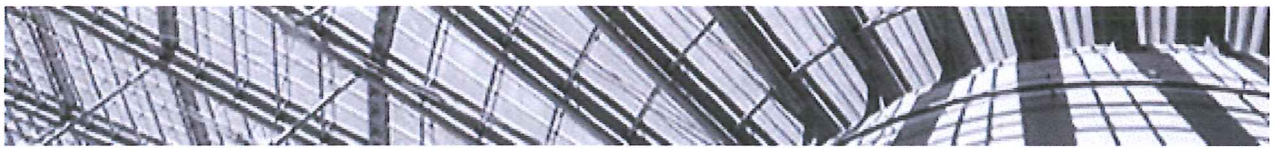


MBA 2015		ECTS
Phase one: Understanding		
BRM- academic paper writing , critical Thinking		3
GBE- mega trends and changing GBE		
PPD- high performance teams, negotiation & conflict resolution		
Marketing Management	Research question formulation	3
	Ethical marketing	
	Team work	
Organisational Behavior	Literature review	3
	Competition vs. collaboration	
	Communication skills	
Managerial & Financial Accounting	Data analysis	3
	Corruption and compliance	
	Excel	
Managerial Economics	Research question formulation	3
	New economic models, externalities	
	Presentation skills	
Phase two: Deepening knowledge		
BRM-understanding Data, from analysis to synthesis		3
GBE-new business models		
PPD- Project Management & stakeholder management		
Foundations of Business Analysis	GBE case studies with statistical information	3
	Data analysis and synthesis	
	Excel	
Operations Management	CSR in OM	3
	Literature review	
	Time management	
Corporate Finance	Sustainable finance practices	3
	Data synthesis	
	Decision making	
Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Social enterprise	3
	Critical evaluation	
	Creativity& problem solving	
Phase three: Implementing		
BRM - Research proposal		3
GBE- managing GBE changes		
PPD-authentic personal leadership, effective communication & peer coaching		
Risk and Change Management	Adaptive change and interconnectivity	3
	Data synthesis	
	Effective communication	
Human Resources and Talent Management	Global talent migration	3
	Critical evaluation	
	Peer- coaching	
Strategic Management	Collaboration	3
	Data synthesis	
	Leadership	
Integration Project	GBE holistic view	3
	Research paper	
	Effective team work	
Phase four: Integrating		
Thesis		15
ECTS Points in total		60

Business Research Methods (BRM)

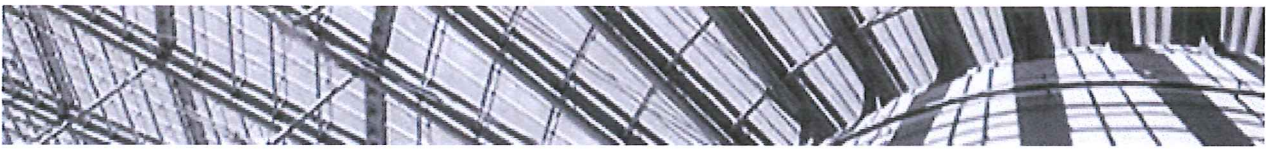
Global Business Environment (GBE)

Personal and Professional Development (PPD)

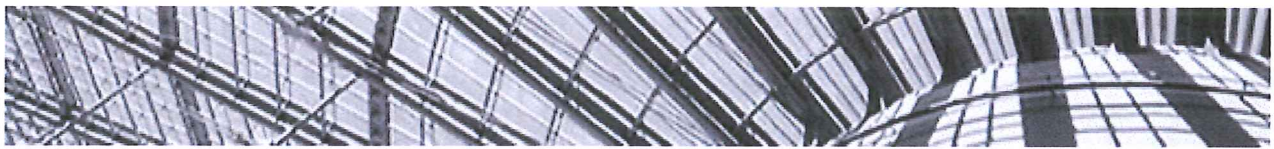


List 4.2: Research, analysis skills and profile

Number	Description	Effect	Cohort	Implemented by / Status
Subtheme: Research & analysis skills				
18.	The implementation of the research line is designed with the help of the research platform, lecturers, staff and the Curriculum Committee. The result: new curriculum design.	A better orientation of the curriculum on research and analysis skills. More focused and defined programme profile.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 from September 2015	- Curriculum Committee, Program Manager, research platform and other stakeholders - Achieved and executed by September 2015.
19.	Business Research Methods introduction sessions at the very beginning of the study.	Students gain a better understanding and mastery of research skills.	MBA FT 2014 MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15	- Program manager - Achieved.
20.	Critical Thinking component expanded in hours and is systematically incorporated into the Business Research Methods vertical line.	Students gain a better understanding of critical thinking and develop a research orientated approach to business problem solving.	MBA FT 14 MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15	- Program manager - Achieved
21.	Research and analytical skills components systematically embedded in all the modules, next to the vertical research red-thread.	The research red thread is systematically embedded in the testing. This allows the students to continuously improve the necessary skills.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year)	- Curriculum Committee, research platform and other stakeholders - Planned Full implementation planned on the September 2015.
22.	Following the program manager's discussions with lecturers, students are offered a broader range of strategic models and analysis tools throughout the programme. The students are encouraged to evaluate the different models based on diverse business situations.	This allows the students to sharpen their critical evaluation abilities and helps them choose the right models in their research.	MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15 and onwards	- Program Manager - Planned
23.	Students are required to carry out a consultancy project so as to train them to develop skills related to critical thinking, problem solving, formulate clear conclusions and offer solutions to real business cases.	Students practice a range of research and professional skills. They sharpen their critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.	MBA FT 14 MBA NL 14	- Program Manager - Ongoing
Learning Outcomes				
24.	The learning outcomes of the MBA are sharpened with the	Improved set of Learning	September 2015/ February	- Curriculum Committee and



	advice of the Curriculum Committee and Advisory Board.	Outcomes Enhance the profile of the programme as an MBA focused on world-Citizenship, international approach, collaboration and Justice in its different representations.	2015 second year	Program Manager - Ongoing
Subtheme: profile				
25.	Introduction of a course titled Global Business Environment (GBE).	Students gain a better understanding of the three key characteristics of the THUAS MBA: International Collaborative and Just.	MBA FT 13	- Program Manager (supported by advisory Board) Achieved
26.	Introducing a direct link between the GBE course and the Integration course in a consultancy project in collaboration with the University for Peace.	Students apply the acquired knowledge gained in GBE course and the Integration courses in their consultancy reports, and practice Master's level analysis and synthesis.	MBA FT 14	- Program Manager - ongoing
27.	Further developing the structure of the curriculum so as to incorporate the GBE as a vertical line (key characteristics of International Collaborative and Just to be embedded in each one of the modules).	Clear positioning translated to clear execution: the curriculum fully represents the unique character of the THUAS MBA	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15	- Curriculum Committee and Program Manager - Ongoing



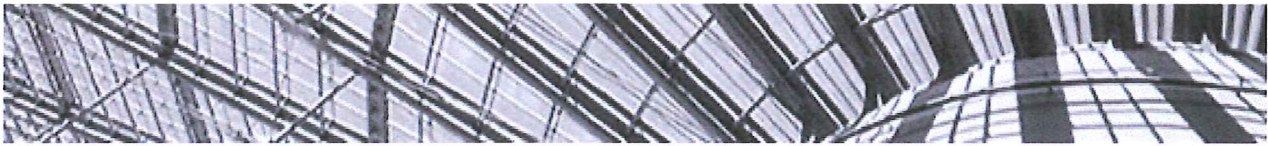
List 4.3: Improvement measures & quality assurance

The quality cycle of the masters' programmes is being directed by the Academy MPC. The quality system, the PDCA cycle, is described in the Academy's Quality Handbook. The implementation of all separate procedures, and thus completing the whole PDCA cycle, needs extra attention. The necessary actions are described in the improvement measures below.

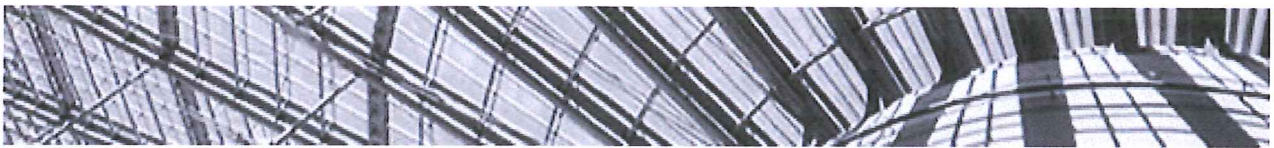
A programme-specific part of the quality system, the contribution to the quality of the programme by the main stakeholders in the programme (students, faculty and work field), is achieved by an improved combination of input from the Programme Council (new), the Curriculum Committee and the Advisory Board.

List 4.3: Improvement measures & quality assurance

Number	Description	Effect	Cohort	Implemented by / Status
Evaluation measurements / PDCA cycle				
28.	The quality cycle is being re-assessed Academy-wide. The Quality Handbook will be evaluated and redesigned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of the Examination Board in this process will also be re-assessed, when it comes to assessment and final level. 	The quality cycle will be approved, and will be properly (re-) implemented.	MBA FT 2015 MBA PT 15 MBA PT 14 (second year) MBA NL 15 (second year)	- Academy Director, Policy Adviser and other stakeholders. - Ongoing (new version of the main procedure for the Q-Handbook ready to be implemented Academy wide in September 2015).
29.	The link between the different bodies contributing to the quality of the programme is systematically strengthened. A new body is introduced that helps streamline the cycle: the Programme Council. This body will collaborate with the Curriculum Committee and the Advisory Board so as to streamline evaluations between all stakeholders: the Curriculum Committee suggests improvement measures with the program manager, based on the Examination Board and academy policy. These measures are assessed by the Programme Council and then by the Advisory Board.	Improvement measures will be suggested, assessed and decided upon in collaboration of these three bodies. Improvement measures will be endorsed by all stakeholders.	MBA FT 2015 MBA PT 15 MBA PT 14 (second year) MBA NL 15 (second year)	- Academy Director, Program Manager, Policy Adviser, Curriculum Committee, Examination Board, Programme Council and Advisory Board. - Ongoing
30.	The students' evaluations are discussed by the program manager with class representatives (this includes written and verbal evaluations).	Implementation of changes as necessary.	MBA FT 13 And on	- Program Manager - Ongoing
31.	Reassessing the internal execution of students' evaluations.	Introducing a clearer evaluation cycle with clear steps and timeframes for all stakeholders.	MBA FT 14 MBA PT 14 MBA NL 14 MBA NL15	- Academy Director, Program Manager, Policy Adviser, Curriculum Committee, Programme Council - Ongoing (to be



				implemented in September 2015).
32.	Explicitly mentioning how modules link with each other on the Course Outline forms.	Making the cohesion between the modules transparent.	MBA FT 14 MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15	- Program Manager and curriculum committee -Achieved.
33.	Better explaining the purpose of the evaluations cycle to students. Initiating a formal evaluation introduction to the students at the beginning of their studies. Linking this to the MBA collaboration and co-creation philosophy.	Students gain an understanding of the evaluation process and are able to better contribute to it.	MBA PT 14 MBA NL 15 MBA FT15 MBA PT 15	- Program Manager - Planned as a session for the ongoing cohorts and will be introduced at the beginning of the study for the new cohorts.
34.	Introducing a more frequent communication via Blackboard that will enhance the transparency in the evaluation process: the students, alumni, Programme Council, Curriculum Committee and Advisory Board input will be made transparent (if applicable to this process).	Students and overall stakeholders gain better understanding of the result of evaluations. The PDCA cycle is further clarified.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year)	- Program Manager - Planned.
35.	The Academy has adopted a policy on research involvement (and development) of staff, by means of a research platform. The teaching staff is strongly encouraged to conduct research and disseminate this into the MBA programme, next to internal and external publications. This is monitored in the 'Personal development plan' (R&O- result and development cycle).	The research platform improves the involvement and skills in research of lecturers, students and other stakeholders.	MBA FT 16 MBA PT 16 and future cohorts.	- Academy Director - planned. The research platform will be implemented as soon as the reorganization of the Academy is finalized. Expected timeframe: Autumn 2015, onwards.
36.	Enhance the research skills of the lecturers (staff development). These will be organized in compulsory training sessions.	Lecturers are better equipped to construct effective lectures with a well-defined applied research component in the module and in the tests.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Academy Director, research platform, policy adviser Ongoing.
37.	The role of the Advisory Board within the MBA is discussed by the MBA team. Additional members will be invited to join the board. The Advisory Board will be instructed as to the policy and expectations related to the role.	The focus on the MBA profiling and the intended learning outcomes is sharpened.	MBA FT 15 MBA PT 15 MBA NL 15 (second year), MBA PT 14 (second year) and future cohorts.	- Academy Director, Program Manager, Curriculum Committee - June 2015



5 Concluding Remarks

In the last few years the MBA programme has gone through rigorous changes. The panel recognized the steady steps the programme is making in enhancing its overall quality and recommended granting a period of two years for this improvement process. Internal assessments, combined with the panel's clear suggestions resulted in this improvement plan.

The analysis conducted by the MBA team has led to the identification of three focus points. The deficiencies and the recommendations that are mentioned in the NVAO letter from March 24th, 2015 and summarized in the three focus points have been addressed in this improvement plan.

1.	Assessment & thesis : safeguarding academic level
2.	Research, analysis skills & profile: fine-tuning the orientation of the curriculum , the skills the students and their future working environment require, and highlighting the unique profile of this MBA programme.
3.	Improvement measures & quality assurance: facilitating clear and transparent communication with the MBA stakeholders (students, faculty, different committees) and the translation of their evaluation input into clear improvement measurements within a PDCA cycle.

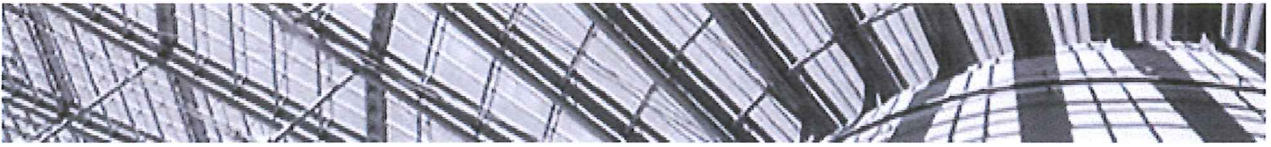
The following table shows which measures (represented by the list numbers in chapter 4) relate to which focus point.

Table 5.1 improvement measures relation to focus points

Focus point	Assessment & thesis : safeguarding academic level (standard 16).	Research, analysis skills & profile: fine-tuning the orientation of the curriculum , the skills the students and their future working environment require, and highlighting the unique profile of this MBA programme. (standard 2).	Improvement measures & quality assurance: facilitating clear and transparent communication with the MBA stakeholders and the translation of their evaluation input into clear improvement measurements (standard 14).	Clarify the link between the different bodies to ensure the programme's quality.	Enhance the level and the depth of research skills in the exams.	The level of the theses and the process of grading should be further improved.
Improvement measure number	1, 3, 7, 14	6, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27	2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13,16, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37	13, 29	8, 35, 36	4,12, 15, 17

The MBA programme prides itself in its devoted team, qualified faculty and enthusiastic students. These clear improvement steps as well as the dedicated contribution of the MBA stakeholders is the key to the THUAS MBA's success. The improvement measures described in this plan will ensure the THUAS MBA's quality.

We hope that the described measures, whether achieved, ongoing or planned, will imbue the NVAO and the NQA panel with the necessary trust to approve this improvement plan.



Appendix

The following document present detailed information on the improvement points mentioned in the plan. It is attached as an appendix.

- MBA Curriculum 2015 rationale