



Stenden Hogeschool

International Business and Languages

Limited Study Programme Assessment

Summary

In October 2015 the hbo bachelor programme International Business and Languages of Stenden University of Applied Sciences was visited by an audit panel from NQA. The programme is offered in English. The audit panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **satisfactory**.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The programme receives the assessment **good** on standard 1.

IBL graduates are specialists in international marketing and export (international trade). They are proficient in three foreign languages and they are interculturally competent. Graduates find work in commercial businesses with an international focus. Jobs that are commonly held by IBL graduates are: international purchasing, sales and account management, international communication management and export management. Stenden IBL complies with the national professional and competency profile (2011), but it has added its own professional image of an IBL graduate. A Stenden IBL graduate is inquisitive, is flexible, is an excellent communicator, and capable of embracing the world.

IBL focuses on the region around Emmen, including Germany, with an explicit international perspective. Asia is also included because of Stenden's International Campus Sites in Bangkok and on Bali where IBL students can do part of their study. Internationalisation and intercultural competencies are an integral part of the intended learning outcomes. The panel was impressed by how IBL Stenden approaches internationalisation in a structured and integrated way.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The programme receives the assessment **good** on standard 2.

The programme consists of building blocks. In the integrative building block students work on solving a genuine problem from professional practice, resulting in a professional product. The necessary knowledge and skills that are required to deliver this professional product are offered in the supporting building blocks. For instance, students learn the principles of marketing, marketing policy plan and business economics in order to be able to work on the project 'Innovate don't imitate' where they have to innovate an existing product. Students learn how to work on projects according to the principles of Problem Based Learning. During a project they have to apply research skills they have acquired so far.

English is compulsory and students choose two other foreign languages (German, French, Spanish and/or Dutch). These last two languages start at zero level. The panel was impressed by the level of English of the students. The level of the other foreign languages is sufficient.

The international and intercultural aspects are real assets of the programme in Emmen. The programme is offered in English. There is a mix of foreign and Dutch students. Students get ample opportunities to go abroad, e.g. study, either at another university or at a Stenden International Campus Site abroad, fulfil their work placement and/or graduation assignment. Students are very pleased with these opportunities and this is one of the reasons for choosing IBL Emmen.

The lecturers are all qualified to teach in their field of expertise. In recent years lecturers were trained in English. The audit panel recommends the management to keep the proficiency in English high on the agenda as students think there is room for improvement here.

Standard 3: Assessment

The programme receives the assessment **satisfactory** on standard 3.

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place. Students are assessed in several ways depending on the subject. Assessment of the integrative project is based on the professional products and on active participation of the student in the problem based learning group. The criteria for assessment are included in the building block books. The foreign languages are rounded off by both a written and a verbal examination. The assessment of intercultural awareness consists of a mix of assessment forms (written tests, papers, portfolios). Students compile a Portfolio of Intercultural Awareness in which they explicate the aspects of intercultural awareness as well as their progress.

The programme has several means to ensure the quality of the programme and the bachelor level. The examination committee monitors the final attainment level and the correct way of testing. This committee is in control as the panel has seen. The management consults the programme committee (consisting of students and lecturers) on all matters concerning the content and assessment of the programme. Students say the management is open for feedback and advice.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme receives the assessment **satisfactory** on standard 4.

The panel has screened fifteen graduation theses as well as assessments from the first half of the fourth year. It is convinced that graduates reach the bachelor level. In recent years the pdca cycle has improved. The panel thinks the assessment of the thesis can be further improved by a more rigorous procedure for filling in of assessment forms and by a more thorough awareness of 'research hygiene'.

Introduction

This is the assessment report of the bachelor International Business and Languages degree programme offered by Stenden Hogeschool. The assessment was conducted by an audit panel compiled by NQA commissioned by Stenden Hogeschool. Prior to the assessment process the audit panel has been approved by NVAO.

In this report Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA) gives account of its findings, considerations and conclusions. The assessment was undertaken according to the *Assessment frameworks for the higher education system* of NVAO (19 December 2014) and the *NQA Protocol 2015 for limited programme assessment*.

The site visit took place on October 29, 2015.

The audit panel consisted of:

Drs. D.W. Righters MBA (chairperson, representative profession/discipline)

Prof. dr. G.J. Westhoff (representative profession/discipline)

Ing. V.J.M. Guyt (representative profession/discipline)

G.M. Baake (student member)

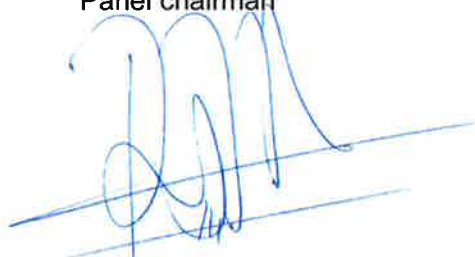
Drs. P. Göbel, NQA-auditor, acted as secretary of the panel.

The study programme offered a critical reflection; form and content according to the requirements of the appropriate NVAO assessment framework and according to the requirements of the *NQA Protocol 2015*. The audit panel studied the critical reflection and visited the study programme. Critical reflection and all other (oral and written) information have enabled the panel to reach a deliberate judgement.

The panel declares the assessment of the study programme was carried out independently.

Utrecht, January 2016

Panel chairman



D.W. Righters

Panel secretary



P. Göbel

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1 Basic data of the study programme

Administrative data

<i>Administrative data of the study programme</i>	
Name study programme as in CROHO	B International Business and Languages
Orientation and level study programme	Hbo bachelor
Grade	Bachelor of Commerce (cohorts until 2013) Bachelor of Business Administrations (cohorts 2013 and further)
Number of study credits	240
Graduation courses / 'tracks'	n.a.
Location(s)	Emmen
Variant(s)	Fulltime
Joint programme	n.a.
Language used	English
Registration number in CROHO	34407

<i>Administrative institutional data</i>	
Name institute	Stenden Hogeschool
Name institutional contactpersoon	W. Koehoorn
E-mail address for copy of application	wiep.koehoorn@stenden.com
Status institute	Publicly Funded
Result institute audit	Positive

Short outline of the study programme

Stenden University of Applied Sciences¹ offers twenty-one study programmes. These programmes are grouped in seven Schools, led by a Head of School. An eighth Head of School is responsible for the international campus sites.

Stenden aims at educating students to become complete professionals. Therefore education has a strong focus on competency orientation, realistic task environments, learning as constructing, problem-based learning and self-management of learning processes. A characteristic of the programmes at Stenden is the focus on professional practice and the value that is attached to the best possible realistic approach to the profession.

International Business and Languages (IBL) is part of the School of Commerce, together with Marketing and Small Business and Retail Management.

The programme is offered in Emmen and the official language is English. The programme consists of four years fulltime study. The first two years are divided into four periods, year 3 and 4 consist of two periods (ref. Appendix 2).

¹ *Critical Reflection International Business and Languages, diversity matters embrace the world*, Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Standard 1

Intended learning outcomes

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

In this chapter the audit panel describes the findings, considerations and conclusions on the intended learning outcomes. The study programme receives the assessment **good** for this standard.

Professional orientation

IBL graduates are specialists in international marketing and export (international trade) and need to be interculturally competent. Graduates find work in a broad spectrum of commercial businesses with an international focus. Jobs that are commonly held by IBL graduates are: international purchasing, sales and account management, international communication management and export management.

Domain competencies

The curriculum up to 2011 was based on the domain competencies Bachelor of Commerce, the Body of Knowledge applicable for this programme, the national descriptions of the competency levels and the national professional and competency profile.

In 2011 the national professional and competency profile of the IBL programme was accepted by the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen). This professional and competency profile meets the requirements of the Bachelor of Business Administration standard, renamed HEO standard in 2014. Since 2013 the final qualifications were rendered into learning outcomes (ref. Appendix 1). Stenden IBL complies with this professional and competency profile.

Specific profile

IBL Stenden has formulated its own specific professional image of an IBL graduate, which the panel appreciates:

“An IBL graduate works in an international business environment. This international business environment is continuously changing due to social, political, technological and economic developments. Within this dynamic environment, IBL graduates are able to add value to international trade through the application of their professional expertise, an excellent command of several modern languages and a highly developed intercultural competence. IBL graduates are essential links in international business in the broadest sense of the word sales, export, import, communication and international customer relationship management are the areas in which IBL graduates are active. The development, implementation and management of international business processes cover the complete spectrum in which IBL graduates can operate with ease. A Stenden IBL graduate is inquisitive, has nerve, is flexible, has an inquiring attitude and is an excellent communicator, capable of embracing the world.”²

² *Critical Reflection International Business and Languages, diversity matters embrace the world*, Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Benchmark

In 2013 an international benchmark was set up. The benchmark focused on learning outcomes, didactics and the relationship with industry. The outcome of the benchmark analysis is that learning outcomes are recognised by most international partners. They aim for similar international business learning outcomes.

International trade

The School of Commerce wants to stimulate local economies by researching international opportunities. The School of Commerce and thus also IBL focuses on the region around Emmen, including Germany, with an explicit international perspective. Asia is also included because of Stenden International Campus Sites in Bangkok and on Bali where IBL students can do part of their study, and increasing collaboration with Vietnamese universities, companies and municipalities.

Internationalisation and intercultural competence are an integral part of the intended learning outcomes. The panel was impressed by how IBL Stenden approaches internationalisation in a structured and integrated way. The programme is offered in English which accounts for a high level of English. Internationalisation can be found in every building block of the programme (ref. Standard 2). IBL used the MINT instrument to shape internationalisation. In 2015 EP-Nuffic has granted IBL Stenden a final place in the Orange Carpet Award for its efforts to increase the international character of the programme.

Students appreciate the attention that is given to internationalisation and intercultural awareness (NSS: 83.3% agreed strongly with the statement 'The international character of Stenden appeals to me').

Conclusion

IBL Stenden complies with the national professional and competency profile. Like other IBL-programmes it focuses on international trade, especially in the region, but also in Germany and Asia. The panel has seen that internationalisation, as well as intercultural awareness, is an integral part of the IBL programme in Emmen. The whole programme is offered in English.

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses standard 1 as **good**.

Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment

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

In this chapter the audit panel describes the findings, considerations and conclusions on the learning environment. The study programme receives the assessment **good** for this standard.

Content

The IBL programme is based on three pillars: International Business, International Communication and Intercultural Awareness.

International Business

Each period focuses on a specific theme for the integrative building block. In the integrative building block students work on solving a genuine problem from professional practice, resulting in a professional product. The case is often presented by a guest lecturer from the industry. The necessary knowledge and skills that are required to deliver this professional product are offered in the supporting building blocks. For instance in Period 2 of year 1 the theme of the integrative building block is 'Innovate don't imitate' (ref. Appendix 2). Students have innovated an existing product and apply the basic marketing principles to launch this innovated product on the Dutch market. As supporting building blocks the following subjects are offered: Marketing 2 and Business Economics.

Another example: 'Made (up) for each other'. At the end of year 2 a group of students will have to select a company which it considers a suitable partner for Weleda. The students have to explain why they have chosen a certain partner and what their plans with this partner are. They have to argue what the advantages and disadvantages of this venture are. The supporting building block is Purchasing 1, and all they have learned in previous periods.

Knowledge and skills are derived from the Body of Knowledge and Skills that is included in the national professional and competency profile (2011). Students are offered knowledge and skills in the supportive building blocks. They apply their knowledge and skills in the integrative building blocks. In addition, knowledge and skills are applied by carrying out research in the integrative building blocks, during work placements, in IMCCM (International Marketing and Cross-Cultural Management) and in the final project. In the first two years the foundation is laid for research skills (writing a proposal, different methods to use, and types of evaluation). During their placement in year 3 students conduct a research assignment. In year 4 students conduct a research assignment for an international client and a graduation assignment. Ethical issues are not separately presented in a building block but are discussed with suitable subjects, e.g. trade barriers, building block 'The Lion's Den'.

The panel is pleased with the content of the programme that is in line with the intended competencies and the Body of Knowledge and Skills.

International Communication

Next to these business building blocks students are offered English for Business Communication and two out of four other foreign languages (Dutch, German, French and Spanish). Prior to their work placement and study abroad students show that they have a B1/B2 level for the language they have studied as part of their curriculum.

Students spend at least one semester in the linguistic area of the second or third modern foreign language in year 3. In the fourth year students are tested again at level B1/B2 (cohort 2012 and 2013). From cohort 2014 students' writing skills are tested at B1/B2 level in year 3 and their speaking skills are tested in year 4.

Up till September 2014 the entry level for the second and third foreign language was A1/A2. Due to the growing diversity of the student population this entry level formed a barrier, especially for students from Russia and the Baltic States. As from September 2014 students can enter at zero level for the second and third foreign language. Extra building blocks have been introduced in order to reach the end level B1/B2. Also additional distance learning is offered in the third year when students are spending a semester abroad. The panel agrees with this solution.

To maintain the level of the foreign languages students take maintenance courses, e.g. in year 4 in preparation for the final test. There are also online courses available (Blackboard) so students can continue to practice.

The panel was impressed by the level of English of the students. The level of the other foreign languages is sufficient. The panel commends to extend the external validation of the CERF (Common European Framework of Reference) level by using tests and insights of other institutes (e.g. Cito, Dialang, Goethe, Cambridge, Delf and Cervantes). All foreign language lecturers take part in some form of intervision or training in the CEFR framework in order to discuss how to assess the different levels. They also benchmark the level of the foreign languages with partners in e.g. Finland.

Intercultural Awareness

During the first two years attention is paid to study career counselling. A recent addition to the curriculum is the INCA portfolio of Intercultural Competence. Students collect relevant evidence that shows their development in intercultural awareness. At the end of the first year this portfolio is one of the subjects of the students' final interview with the study coach. In the second year groups of students with different backgrounds visit companies and execute authentic assignments for a company. In semester 7 (building block IMCCM) students work for an internationally oriented client and have to demonstrate their intercultural knowledge and skills.

A semester of study abroad is a compulsory component of the programme. Most IBL students also carry out a work placement and/or graduation project abroad. For the study abroad students can choose to go to another university, e.g. the preferred Finnish partner Haaga Helia, but they can also go to one of the Stenden campuses abroad (Grand Tour). IMCCM is offered in Emmen and in adapted form at the Bali and Bangkok campus sites. Students are enthusiastic about the study abroad. According to the students the possibilities of internationalisation are one of the strengths of the programme.

Knowledge of and experience with other cultures is also achieved by bringing in international students, lecturers from abroad, international study materials and using native speakers for language education. The programme organises a buddy system: every international student is assigned a buddy (a senior student) for support during the first year of study.

As of September 2014 the IBL programme participates in the Export Carousel, cooperation between the Chamber of Commerce, Stenden University of Applied Sciences and entrepreneurs. The purpose is to offer support in the form of knowledge from experienced entrepreneurs, the Chamber of Commerce and lecturers and to offer practical support by students to companies that plan to export products. A group of IBL students supported entrepreneurs from the region in entering the Mexican market by means of an International Trade Mission project.

Some students are involved in a research project for the regional and the Vietnamese business community. The panel appreciates these initiatives and has seen that the accommodation at Stenden location Emmen fits this purpose well.

Design of the programme

The curriculum committee is responsible for the form and content of the programme.

Problem based learning

The didactic concept is based on social constructivism and the concept of competencies. The programme uses Problem Based Learning (PBL) in each period, next to other methods of working. PBL is used in the integrative building blocks, the other methods are used in the supportive building blocks.

An overview³ of the methods of working:

Learning track	Content	Test forms
Integral learning track	Operationalised competencies: authentic, complex professional situations	PBL, project assignments
Conceptual learning track	Supporting knowledge	Lectures, tutorials, assignments
Skill Learning track	Supporting skills	Workshops, training sessions
Reflective learning track	Support in self-direction: learning styles, attitude, skills and studying problems	Study career counselling, portfolio discussions

PBL allows students to actively participate in the learning process. To a certain extent students can determine for themselves which emphasis they want to place on a certain aspect of the material, depending on their prior knowledge or special interests. By working in an educational group students also practice their social skills (discussing, cooperating, presenting) and procedural skills (chairing meeting, compiling minutes). During the visit the panel has seen an example of this when it asked students to make a swot-analysis of the programme in five minutes. The panel was impressed how the students dealt with the assignment and the outcome of their analysis. When the panel inquired about PBL, the students were enthusiastic about the PBL programme.

Coaching

Study coaching is an essential part of the curriculum. The study coach coaches and advises on the formulation of learning questions and in making choices. International students are supervised more intensively by special lecturers. During the first year the tutor coaches students during PBL meetings and stimulates their active participation in the PBL group. During work placements and the graduation period lecturers supervise the students. The supervising lecturers for the graduation period are appointed as examiner by the examination committee and are professionally qualified in the field of the student's graduation assignment.

³ *Critical Reflection International Business and Languages, diversity matters embrace the world*, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, p. 20.

The students appreciate the small scale of the programme in Emmen and the persona approach. Lecturers are easy accessible.

Intake

The School of Commerce invests in contact with the supplier schools in the area. The programme has a long-term cooperation with the Drenthe College to improve the transition from mbo to hbo. Together with the Alfa College, the IBL programme is developing a continuous learning track on export. The foreign intake demands a different approach and the agents in the field are well informed about the contents of the programme. The School of Commerce is now investigating possibilities for international study tracks in Vietnam. In spring 2016 lecturers and students from Vietnam will visit the IBL programme in Emmen.

Staff

Lecturers almost always work for both the IBL programme and the Marketing programme. More than seventy percent of staff hold a Master or a PhD degree. Some lecturers hold branch-oriented certificates. One lecturer is certified by NIMA as a Senior Marketing Professional. Some of the language lecturers are certified examiners for the corresponding language certificates (e.g. Cambridge, Delft). During the academic year 2014-2015 staff members were outplaced on teacher exchange, international weeks, conferences, excursions and projects with students, and setting up partnerships.

According to the Critical Reflection one of the components of the Internationalisation at Home policy plan is to strengthen the focus on training lecturers to teach the international classroom, on increasing their knowledge of how to develop intercultural competencies and on the lecturers' mastery of the English language. According to some students the proficiency of English is an issue for some of the lecturers, due to a specific accent. Especially the strong Dutch accent was mentioned. On the positive side is the fact that students get used to different accents in English which helps them in intercultural communication. The panel was pleased to learn that IBL offers English courses to the lecturers. As the whole programme is taught in English, the panel recommends IBL to invest even more in the proficiency of English of the lecturers. One of the English lecturers now sometimes gives support to colleagues. This could be enhanced by having English lecturers sit in on lessons by colleagues on a more structural basis.

Facilities

The programme is offered in Emmen. The layout of the building makes social interaction easy. The IBL section can be recognised by its own colour. There are project rooms for PBL sessions. The well-provided library is located at the central part of the building with the study landscape next to it. Lecturers are within easy reach and are accessible for students.

According to the students the only draw back is the location of Emmen. IBL wants to improve this situation by building a campus where students can live, study and meet.

Conclusion

The programme has organised the content in building blocks. Students work on integrative, realistic assignments for which knowledge and skills are offered in supportive building blocks. The panel is convinced that students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The PBL approach works well. The programme offers a good balance between the business component and the foreign languages.

The panel was impressed by the level of English of the students, probably due to the fact that the programme is taught in English. The other languages are sufficient.

The panel appreciates the extra hours that are invested to be able to start at a zero level for the second and third languages as well as the maintenance hours for the languages in the fourth year.

The panel is very positive about international and intercultural opportunities for students. They all have a mandatory study period abroad, which they can extend by doing their work placement and/or their graduation project abroad. The student population has an international background although the majority of the international students come from Germany (30 percent).

With regard to staff the panel concludes that they are well educated in their own field. Most lecturers are well equipped to offer their subject in English. On the other hand, some lecturers are not. The panel advises IBL to constantly pay attention to the proficiency in English.

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses standard 2 as **good**.

Standard 3 Assessment

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

In this chapter the audit panel describes the findings, considerations and conclusions on the assessment system. The study programme receives the assessment **satisfactory** for this standard.

Assessment

The system of testing and assessment and the forms of assessment are described in the education and testing policy of the programme⁴ and are made specific in a handbook of testing. The programme assesses students on the mastery of competencies in the integral learning track, on their knowledge in the conceptual learning track and on their skills in the skills learning track. The attitude is dealt with in the reflective learning track.

In the Critical Reflection the programme describes that the competencies are made operative in the integrative building blocks on the basis of typical professional situations, resulting in one or more professional products to be delivered by the students. Assessment of the competencies is based on these professional products and on active participation of the student in the PBL group. The criteria for assessment are included in the building block books, as the panel has seen.

The foreign languages are tested in several ways. Every building block in the first or second year is rounded off individually by both a written and a verbal examination. The reading and writing skills are tested in written examinations. The assessment is communicative in nature, knowledge components therefore must be applied.

⁴ *Onderwijsbeleid Toetsbeleid International Business and Languages, versie 2, augustus 2014*

The verbal component can be an oral examination, in which verbal production and interaction, and implicitly also listening skills are tested, or a presentation.

The assessment of intercultural awareness consists of a mix of assessment forms (written tests, papers, portfolios). Students compile a Portfolio of Intercultural Awareness in which they make the aspects of intercultural awareness explicit as well as their progress.

An overview⁵ of the test forms is presented in the table below:

Learning track	Content	Test forms
Integral learning track	Operationalised competencies: authentic, complex professional situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portfolio interview - Authentic project - Professionally-oriented work placement - Company project - Final project
Conceptual learning track	Supporting knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home project - Pen and paper test - Oral test
Skill Learning track	Supporting skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home project - Oral test
Reflective learning track	Support in self-direction: learning styles, attitude, skills and studying problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Portfolio interview - Intercultural portfolio

The panel has seen several examples of assessment forms and tests students have taken. It concludes that the tests are adequate, regarding content and level. The panel concludes that in some cases corrections by the lecturers could be done with more accuracy. According to student evaluations the relation between tests and content of the programme could be more transparent, as well as the criteria on which they are assessed.

Quality insurance

In the Critical Reflection the programme describes how it guarantees its objectives with regard to testing and assessment:

- The testing and assessments satisfy formulated standards for valid, reliable and transparent testing and assessment.
- The programme applies the 'four eyes' principle.
- The learning outcomes of the supporting building blocks are derived from the programme competencies and are specifically formulated in verifiable learning outcomes.
- The professional products that are delivered by the students in the integrative building blocks are based on the programme competencies and typical situations from professional practice.
- The pass mark and the assessment criteria are communicated to students beforehand.
- The quality of written tests is monitored by the test committee.

⁵ *Critical Reflection International Business and Languages, diversity matters embrace the world*, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, p.26.

The test committee has investigated the quality of written tests in recent years. Last year it started with an in depth screening of a selection of tests. The test committee will now focus on the total process of testing from design to results. The test committee works under responsibility of the examination committee.

The examination committee is responsible for monitoring the final attainment level of the programme and for correct substantive and organisational taking of the tests. The examination committee feels it is in control as the panel learned during the site visit. It agrees with the panel that the way comments are formulated on the assessment form by the examiners could be made more uniform in order to increase the transparency. For example, the panel sometimes found it difficult to align the comments on the assessment forms for the graduation project with the mark that is given (ref. standard 4). The examination committee communicates these findings with the management. A new assessment form has been developed by the thesis committee to combine the holistic approach and the analytical approach. The panel concludes that the examination committee lives well up to its task.

The programme committee consists of both students and lecturers and advises the programme about the curriculum, including assessment. The programme committee feels that it is taken seriously by the programme. Recently the committee had some comments about the order of supportive building blocks. The management is open for advice and feedback from students.

Conclusion

The panel is convinced that IBL has an adequate assessment system in place. The panel is impressed by the document that describes the education and testing policy of IBL, but it also concludes that the implementation needs attention, e.g. the accuracy of the feedback to students. The panel has seen several examples of assessment forms and tests student have taken. It concludes that the tests are adequate, regarding content and level, although students think the relation between content and test, as well as the use of criteria could be more transparent.

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses standard 3 as **satisfactory**.

Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

In this chapter the audit panel describes the findings, considerations and conclusions on the achieved learning outcomes. The study programme receives the assessment **satisfactory** for this standard.

Students complete their programme by demonstrating that they are capable to function effectively as professionals in the working field. The students must take several tests in their graduation programme (finals tests, papers and the graduation assignment) to prove they have mastered the various final qualifications. The IBL programme has opted to test all final qualifications at the highest level before the student starts with the graduation assignment.

In the first semester of year 4 (building block IMCCM) students compile an individual portfolio and are tested during an individual portfolio interview to assess whether they have achieved the final qualifications. The panel appreciates these portfolios and the way students document their findings and results very much.

Below an overview⁶ of the graduation programme and the moments the final qualifications are tested at the highest level:

Unit of study	Cohort	Year of study	Tested final qualification
IMCCM	From 2012	4	IBL final qualifications 1.1 to 1.6 and 2.2
Portfolio of Intercultural Competence	From 2012	4	IBL final qualification 3.1
Test level B1/B2 modern foreign language 2 and 3	2012 and 2013	1 or 2 and 4*	IBL final qualification 2.1
Test level B1/B2 modern foreign language 2 and 3	2014	1 or 2 and 3 (writing B1/B2) 4 (oral B1)*	IBL final qualification 2.1
English	From 2012	4	IBL final qualification 2.1
Graduation assignment	From 2102	4	Depending on the assignment, IBL final qualification 2.3 and 3.2

*Test level B1/B2 prior to work placement and study abroad, at least one semester in the linguistic area of the 2nd or 3rd modern foreign language, final test level B1/B2 in year 4 (cohort 2012 and 2013), final test writing level B1/B2 year 3 and final test oral B1 year 4 (cohort 2014).

The graduation assignment consists of carrying out a professional assignment in practice. When selecting a graduation assignment, students have maximum freedom of choice within the breadth of the professional field. Students confirmed this. The outcome is a professional product with a justification of the manner in which the professional product is produced.

The nature of the assignment is such that the student must carry out research to collect the required information. The level of the graduation assignment is checked beforehand by the thesis committee. Every student carries out the graduation assignment individually and writes a graduation thesis on the basis of this. Students mentioned to the panel that they feel adequately prepared for the graduation assignment. The basic knowledge on different methods is offered during the study. The criteria as well as the form of the assessment were clear to them.

In the national Commerce domain there is a shared vision on the bachelor level, the nature of the graduation assignment and the role of research in this process. A common assessment instrument is under development. IBL Emmen has adjusted the assessment form for the thesis on this vision. This renewed form is applied from February 2014.

⁶ *Critical Reflection International Business and Languages, diversity matters embrace the world*, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, p.31.

The assessment of the professional product, the thesis, is carried out by the first examiner (the supervising lecturer) and a second examiner. The assessment of the process is done by the first examiner (the supervising lecturer) with an advisory role for the company mentor based on an evaluation form. For the assessment of the process students compile a logbook. Finally the first and second examiners give a judgement of the presentation and the interview (defence).

To ensure that examiners apply similar interpretations of the assessment criteria, the programme organised several calibration sessions. Some of the theses are also discussed with colleagues from other IBL programmes. In recent year the examiners were trained in supervising research projects.

The panel has studied fifteen theses from students who graduated in the past two years. The panel has seen several good examples of the thesis, even some that might have been granted a higher mark. In general the conclusions and the reflection are good or even very good. The justification and argumentation are the weaker points in most theses. The panel is pleased with the extensive comments of the examiners on the assessment forms. The panel expects that when all students have been able to profit from the research skills offered in the whole programme and students have been able to practice these skills during PBL sessions, the quality and the justification of the methods applied in the theses will improve.

On the other hand the panel has come across three theses where it had doubts about the content, transparency of the feedback given on the assessment forms or the methods used. During the site visit the panel had an extra interview with the examiners concerned to discuss these issues. The panel also discussed these issues with the assurance panel. Based on these interviews, especially with the assurance panel, the panel is confident that the issues will be addressed properly. The panel is satisfied that all students graduated at bachelor level.

The panel advises the programme to further improve the quality of the theses by paying attention to the following issues.

- The check on the proposal in which the students offers their research plan, theoretical framework and the methodology they want to apply, could be more focussed on the scope of the research. A more narrowed research question increases feasibility. This will support students to formulate adequate research questions and find relevant theoretical frameworks.
- The assessment forms can be filled in more scrupulously to gear the comments to the marks (ref. standard 3), and gear the analytical approach with exact criteria to the holistic approach of how a student performed.
- In recent years the programme has improved the pdca cycle. However the awareness of 'research hygiene' of the examiners can still be increased. The panel concluded from the interview with the assurance panel that they are aware that more attention can be paid to the formal aspects of doing research.

Students and graduates feel well prepared to enter the professional field.

Conclusion

The programme has demonstrated that all the learning outcomes are assessed on the highest level before students start on their graduation assignment.

This graduation assignment is the integral proof of the pudding in which students show they are ready for the professional field. The panel is convinced that all graduates have demonstrated the bachelor level, in the final assessments and in the graduation assignment. With regard to the research skills demonstrated in the theses the panel has some recommendations for the programme concerning the research hygiene and the assessment forms.

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses standard 4 as **satisfactory**.

2 General conclusion of the study programme

Assessments of the standards

The audit team comes to the following judgements with regard to the standards:

Standard	Assessment
<i>Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes</i>	Good
<i>Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment</i>	Good
<i>Standard 3 Assessment</i>	Satisfactory
<i>Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes</i>	Satisfactory

Considerations and conclusion

The audit panel is impressed by the way the international and intercultural aspect form an integral part of the whole curriculum. IBL students in Emmen are well prepared for an international career, with their proficiency in foreign languages and their experiences abroad. The content of the curriculum offers students enough knowledge and skills in business subjects. The panel sees room for improvement in the execution of research assignments, especially in the underpinning of the choices and conclusions.

The audit panel assesses the quality of the hbo bachelor programme International Business and Languages of Stenden University of Applied Sciences as **satisfactory**.

3 Recommendations

The audit panel has the following recommendations for the study programme:

Standard 1

- The panel thinks the programme may formulate its aspirations with regard to the level of English more ambitiously. The level of English of the students is clearly above average.

Standard 2

- The panel recommends to extend the external validation of the CEFR level by using tests and insights of other institutes (e.g. Cito, Dialang, Goethe, Cambridge, Delft and Cervantes).
- As the whole programme is taught in English, the panel recommends IBL to invest even more in the proficiency of English of the lecturers. The English lecturers now sometimes gives support to colleagues. This could be enhanced by having English lecturers sit in on lessons by colleagues on a more structural basis.

Standard 4

The panel advises the programme to improve the quality of the theses by paying attention to the following issues.

- The check on the proposal in which the students offers their research plan, theoretical framework and the methodology they want to apply, could be more focussed on the scope of the research. A more narrowed research question increases feasibility. This will support students to formulate adequate research questions and find relevant theoretical frameworks.
- The assessment forms can be filled in more scrupulously to gear the comments to the marks (ref. standard 3), and gear the analytical approach with exact criteria to the holistic approach of how a student performed.
- In recent years the programme has improved the pdca cycle. However the awareness of 'research hygiene' of the examiners can still be increased. The panel concluded from the interview with the assurance panel that they are aware that more attention can be paid to the formal aspects of doing research.

4 Appendices

Final qualifications International Business and Languages**1. International Business**

The IBL graduate is able to develop, manage and execute the professional processes, in particular the commercial processes surrounding international business, in a professional manner.

1. Initiate and create (contemporary) products and services for large or small international markets.
2. Implement, interpret, assess and evaluate (international) market research.
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.
4. Develop a marketing policy for a company operating nationally or internationally and be able to support the choices made.
5. Set up, execute and adjust various plans on internationalisation from a marketing policy point of view.
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).

2. International Communication

The IBL graduate is able to carry out international business communication in a professional manner in three modern foreign languages.

1. Communicate in three modern foreign languages with awareness of cultural differences, internal and external, national and international.
2. 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.
3. Interpersonal, social and communication skills.

3. Intercultural Awareness

The IBL graduate has insight and knowledge of the importance of intercultural differences in the various phases of the process of international business and can empathize with different cultures in support of the professional processes involved in international business.

1. 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 him/her representing the interests of the company on site indirectly (promotion, research) or by working in direct contact with the client. He/she 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 student:
 - a. Interest in and curiosity of other cultures and empathic powers with respect to other cultures (cultural intelligence).

- b. Entrepreneurial and explorative spirit for finding solutions to important problems and issues taking place abroad for the company.
 - c. Deal with insecurity, be socially resilient and have the courage to step into situations that are unknown to him or her. This means that the IBL graduate student will regularly end up in foreign contexts that are unknown to him or her and that he or she is capable of dealing with the related insecurities and questions that those contexts could bring about.
 - d. Adapt to the international environment in which he or she must operate. Capable of respecting the norms and values and of behaving appropriately.
 - e. Bridge differences deriving from culture-bound behaviour in every phase of the business relations process and demonstrate sufficient personal resolve, both in the business and moral sense, in those situations.
 - f. Know the products and services of his or her own organisation to such an extent that he or she is able to communicate about them with foreign buyers and suppliers.
2. Self-managing competency (intrapersonal or professional).

Appendix 2 Study programme structure

Schematic overview of the curriculum of the cohorts 2010 - 2013

Year 1	Period 1.1	Period 1.2	Period 1.3	Period 1.4
	Study career counselling / Self-management			
	<i>"Intercultural Communication⁷"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Innovate don't imitate"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Trendy Tours"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"The Lions Den"</i> Supporting building blocks
	English	English		
	Modern Foreign Language 2 (3, 3, 3, 3 ec)			
Year 2	Period 2.1	Period 2.2	Period 2.3	Period 2.4
	Study career counselling / Self-management			
	<i>"Trade mission impossible"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Export Management"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Integrated Communication Plan"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Made (up) for each other"</i> Supporting building blocks
	English		English	
	Modern Foreign Language 3 (3, 3, 3, 3 ec)			
Year 3	Period 3.1 and 3.2		Period 3.3 and 3.4	
	Work placement		Study Abroad	
Year 4	Period 4.1 and 4.2		Period 4.3 and 4.4	
	<i>"International Marketing and Cross Cultural Management"</i>		Graduation phase	
	End level test Modern Foreign Languages 2, 3			

⁷ Italic: Integrative building block

Schematic overview of the curriculum of the cohorts as from 2014.

Year 1	Period 1.1	Period 1.2	Period 1.3	Period 1.4
	Study career counselling / Self-management			
	<i>"Intercultural Communication"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Innovate don't imitate"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Trade Mission"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"The Lions Den"</i> Supporting building blocks
	English	English		
	Modern Foreign Language 2 (3, 3, 6, 3 EC)			
	INCA Portfolio of Intercultural Competence			
Year 2	Period 2.1	Period 2.2	Period 2.3	Period 2.4
	Study career counselling / Self-management			
	<i>"To explore beyond frontiers 1"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"To explore beyond frontiers 2"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Integrated Communication Plan"</i> Supporting building blocks	<i>"Made (up) for each other"</i> Supporting building blocks
	English		English	
	Modern Foreign Language 3 (3, 3, 3, 6 EC)			
	INCA Portfolio of Intercultural Competence			
Year 3	Periods 3.1 and 3.2		Periods 3.3 and 3.4	
	Work placement		Study Abroad	
			Modern Foreign Language 2 / 3 (1.5 / 1.5 EC)	
	INCA Portfolio of Intercultural Competence			
Year 4	Periods 4.1 and 4.2		Periods 4.3 and 4.4	
	<i>International Marketing and Cross Cultural Management</i>		Graduation phase	
	Modern Foreign Language 2 / 3 (1.5 / 1.5 EC)			
	INCA Portfolio of Intercultural Competence			

Appendix 3

Quantitative data regarding the study programme

Academic year	0910	1011	1112	1213	1314	1415
Total number of registered students (1 October)	194	191	162	152	158	147

Table I Number of registered students per academic year

Dropout rate during the first year in % of the cohort

The proportion of the total number of full-time students (first year higher education) who are no longer registered with the programme, if possible for the last six cohorts.

Dropout rate from the bachelor programmes

The proportion of full-time bachelor students who re-enrol with the programme after the first year of study (re-enrollers), and who drop out of the programme within the nominal study duration without having obtained their diploma, if possible for the last three cohorts.

Pass rate

The proportion of full-time bachelor students who re-enrol with the programme after the first year of study (re-enrollers) and who obtain their bachelor degree within the nominal study duration + one year, if possible for the last three cohorts.

Key indicators cohorts	0607	0708	0809	0910	1011	1112	1213	1314
Dropout rate during the first year in % of the cohort		25.0	18.2	38.5	22.6	20.8	36.0	41.2
Dropout rate from the bachelor programmes		16.3	3.0	12.5	4.5			
Pass rate	76.2	76.7	84.8	62.5				

Table II Inflow and outflow data per academic year

Lecturer quality

The proportion of lecturers with a master's degree and the proportion of lecturers with a PhD of the total number of lecturers (Teaching Staff).

Highest Educational level	Current number		Of which engaged in a study	Number after completion of study	
PhD	0	0%	0	3	11%
Master	20	74%	3	20	74%
Bachelor	7	26%	3	4	15%

Table III Educational level lecturers M and IBL

Lecturer-student ratio

The ratio between the total number of registered full-time students and the total number of FTEs for teaching staff of the programme during the most recent academic year.

Because of the interconnectedness of the Marketing and International Business and Languages programmes, it is not possible to calculate the lecturer-student ratio for these programmes separately. On 1 October 2014 the lecturer-student ratio was 1:30.

Number of registered students	Number of FTEs	lecturer-student ratio
603	20.1	1:30

Table IV Lecturer-student ratio

Contact time

The average number of scheduled contact hours per week, for each year of the programme.

For year 3, the number of contact hours depends on the foreign partner institution chosen by the student and is therefore not listed in Table V.

Phase	Average contact time per week
Propaedeutic phase	12.2
Major, year 2	11.7
Major/Work placement, year 3	1.3
Study abroad, year 3	Depending on partner institutions
Major, year 4	11.4
Major/Graduation phase, year 4	1.4

Table V Average contact time (in hours per week), 2014-2015 academic year

Appendix 4**Expertise members auditpanel and secretary**

1	Mr drs. D.W. Righters MBA is lecturer Organizational Behavior & Marketing and lecturer Research at Rotterdam Business School; besides he is a lecturer Business Economical, Marketing and Finance & Accounting at Hogeschool Rotterdam. He is owner of Q-minds B.V, a consultancy in economical issues and quality management.
2	Mr ing. V.J.M. Guyt is owner of FINDINGYOURWAY, Advice & Implementation Internationalisation SMEs.
3	Mr prof. dr. G.J. Westhoff is managing director at Westhoff Learning & Teaching, an agency for analysis and development of the quality of education.
4	Mr G.M. Baake is a student at the hbo-bachelor International Business and Languages at Saxion Hogeschool.
5	Ms P. Göbel is senior auditor and consultant at NQA.

Appendix 5 Programme for the site visit

Date: **October 29, 2015**
Location: **Auditorium KCE, Stenden Emmen**

Time	Activity	Participants
08:45 – 09:00	Welcome in Lobby	Management team
09:00 – 09:30	Presentation of the programme: "Showcase"	Management and students
09:30 – 11:15	Preparation and documentation study	Panel
11:00 – 11:30	Thesis meeting	Thesis assessors
11:15 – 11:45	Consulting time and guided tour	Tour guides
11:45 – 12:45	Meeting with Students and Alumni	Students and Alumni
12:45 – 13:30	Evaluation and lunch	Panel
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting with Lecturers and Assessors	Lecturers and Assessors
14:30 – 14:45	Break	Panel
14:45 – 15:15	Meeting with the Management team	Management team
15:15 – 15:30	Break	Panel
15:30 – 16:00	Meeting with Assurance committees	Assurance committees
16:00 – 16:30	Time for optional additional meetings	Unknown
16:30 – 17:15	Internal panel discussion	Panel
17:15 – 17:30	Feedback session with the management team	Management team
17:30 – 18:00	Plenary feedback session	All

Appendix 6 Documents examined

Aanvullend document Bachelor Of Commerce, 2008

Archivering eindwerken

Basisgegevens opleiding International Business and Languages

BBA matrix, competentiegebieden en niveaus ten behoeve van IBL, 2013

Benchmark Questionnaire BBA International Business, 2013

Body of Knowledge & Skills van de opleidingsdomeinen Business Administration, Commerce, Communications, Economics en Laws binnen het hoger economisch onderwijs, 2008

Competentiematrix International Business and Languages, 2014

Course Document International Business and Languages, 2013

De Laatste Horde, *Beoordeling afstudeerperiode*, Stenden hogeschool v3 DEF, 2011

De Laatste Ronde, *De afstudeeropdracht, CE, IBL en SBRM*, 2014

De Lat, *Eindwerken International Business and Languages*, 2014

De Start, *Instroombeleid Commerciële Economie, International Business and Languages*, 2012

De Werkplaats, Curriculumontwikkeling competentiegericht onderwijs, 2012

Diversity Matters, *Strategy plan Internationalisation at Home*, School of Commerce M and IBL, 2014

Domeincompetenties en Illustraties Commerce, HBO-raad, 2005

Fact sheet NSS 2014

Graduation handbook 2014-2015 part A and B

Handleiding Toetsen, *Commerciële Economie / International Business and Languages*, 2013

IBL shows its colours, *National Professional and Competency Profile*, 2010

Improvement plan Internationalisation IBL, 2013

Internationalisation of the IBL programme, 2014

International benchmark Business programmes, 2014

International business relations, *Competentieprofiel 2003 International Business & Languages*, 2003

MINT Voortgangsanalyse IBL, 2014

MOU Stenden – Haaga Helia, 2014

Nederlands Instellingsbeleid, studenten internationaliseren in eigen land, Nuffic, 2014

Notitie '*naar Stenden Onderzoekseenheden*', Onderzoeksbeleid Stenden 2013-2017

Onderwijs- en Toetsbeleid International Business and Languages, 2012

Placement Handbook 2014-2015 part A and B

Rapportage Werkveldonderzoek 2012-2014, 2014

Representatieve selectie onderwijsmateriaal

Representatieve selectie stageverslagen

Selectie eindwerken

Standard Bachelor of Business Administration, hbo-raad, 2011

Student projects Vietnam

Teaching and Examination Regulation, 2014-2015

Trade Benefits Society, 2014

Werkplannen Curriculumcommissie, Opleidingscommissie, Examencommissie, Scriptiecommissie, Toetscommissie, 2012

World-wise, Education and Research, Stenden's compass for 2013-2017, 2013

Appendix 7 Summary theses

Below a summary of the students whose theses have been examined by the panel. According to NVAO's rules only student numbers are included.

21022232
21024898
21026157
21025495
21025517
21023573
21016089
21003556
21024944
21031088
21030014
21029989
21016186
21025584
21022593



Declaration of completeness and accuracy of the information

concerning the assessment of study programme:

International Business and Languages

Organisation: Stenden Hogeschool

Date of visit: 29-10-2015

Undersigned: ... *Hanny van Gelfen*

representing the management of the above mentioned study programme,

in the position of: ... *Head of school of Commerce*

declares that all information on behalf of the accreditation of the above mentioned study programme has been made available completely and accurately, *including information on alternative graduation routes that exist currently and/or have existed in the past 6 years*, so the visitation panel can form a properly fact-based judgement.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Hanny van Gelfen'.

Date: *4 oktober 2015*

