

NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor International Business

Limited Study Programme Assessment

Summary

In February 2020 the bachelor study programme International Business at the NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences was visited by an NQA audit panel. This is a fulltime programme in Emmen and Leeuwarden, taught in English. The panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **Conditionally positive**.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 1. The IB programme prepares students to work in international business, for example in positions on sales, marketing, export, import or communication. The study programme finds the development of autonomous thinking and professional identity for students important. Per location there are clear different accents on the basis of four specialisations, which can be further developed and used for marketing purposes. The study programme has clear intended learning outcomes on the bachelor level, that are directly derived from the national *Framework International Business* (National Platform International Business, 2018). The intended learning outcomes tie in with requirements currently set by the international professional field and relevant disciplines with regard to the contents. The *Framework International Business* has also been adequately benchmarked internationally, as to be expected for an internationally oriented study programme. The national *Framework International Business* shows important similarities with the previous frameworks of IBMS and IBL, which is consistent with the planning neutral conversion. The study programme safeguards the topicality and relevancy of the profile through regular consults with their own business advisory board.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 2. The IB programme is logically derived from the intended learning outcomes and learning objectives are clearly communicated. The new IB programme has a topical, broad, international, practice oriented and challenging programme. The NHL Stenden principle of Design Based Education (DBE) is a real asset of the IB study programme. Students as well as the professional field are enthusiastic about the way students are challenged towards creativity and self-guidance in the practice-oriented DBE projects in ateliers. The DBE projects offer sufficient research skills in an integrated way. Students IBMS, IBL and IB come from different nationalities and backgrounds, which causes a natural international classroom. This brings challenges in guiding students, that are well addressed to by the lecturers. IBMS, IBL and IB students appreciate the personal and adequate guidance. The committed team of staff members holds the necessary expertise on international business, didactics and the English language to execute the IBMS, IBL and IB programmes. An important challenge for this study programme is to facilitate staff members sufficiently in for example workload, training in the DBE concept, the development of the new IB programme and the maintenance of the quality of the IBMS and IBL programmes. Internationalisation is logically and evidently interwoven in the IB curriculum with different compulsory elements such as short International Student Activities abroad or at home, English as a main language, and one (Leeuwarden) or two (Emmen) extra modern languages by choice. Dutch students are obliged to go abroad for 30 EC, which can be done within an exchange programme, an internship or a minor within the NHL Stenden 'Grand tour'.

Standard 3: Student assessment

The study programme **partially meets** the generic quality on standard 3. Regulations concerning student assessment are described adequately in separate *Teaching and Examination Regulations 2019-2020* for IBMS, IBL and IB. The examination committee has the task to safeguard the level and the quality of examination for all three programmes. The IB programme has a decent system of assessment that follows DBE logically. This assessment system is based on the idea of mainly assessing through authentic professional products and a system of constant feedback. There is a sufficient variety of tests on the expected level, such as knowledge tests, assessments, essays, portfolios and reflection reports. In part of the knowledge tests in the IB programme, the majority of the students fails at the first attempt and it is advisable paying attention to this. The IBMS and IBL procedures for assessing the research thesis can be improved for Emmen, Leeuwarden and Qatar by aligning assessment forms with the *graduation handbooks* and applying a common way of working for filling in the assessment forms. There are concerns about the quality assurance of the assessment. There are points of improvement for the quality of knowledge tests and the graduation projects. Even though there is awareness about most of these points with the study programme and there are plans for improvement, there have not been taken up enough measures for improvement yet. Most measures are still in a planning phase, while the study programme and the assessment safeguarding committees could have already taken clear and proactive actions. Because of the limited recent safeguarding actions and the lack of proactivity on the safeguarding of assessment, standard 3 is judged as 'partially meets the standard' and a recovery period is advised. There is confidence that the current staff has the potential, with the right time and resources, to improve the quality assurance of the final assessment of IBMS and IBL and pick up the quality assurance of the (final) assessment for the IB programme sufficiently, within two years.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 4. Alumni feel well prepared for the professional field as they have learned a lot of practical skills to manage in a broad range of positions. Alumni for example start working in positions like account manager, global alliances manager, general manager, supply chain manager or sales representative with mostly international companies that have a basis in the Netherlands. The study programme has an alumni federation for IBMS and is planning to intensify the relations with alumni. In general graduates show a sufficient bachelor level in the graduation theses, good writing skills and a good command of the English language. There are some recommendations to strengthen the quality and level of the theses. It is advisable giving students more guidance in formulating a suitable and broad enough research question and to choose a research question that is internationally enough. Furthermore, the study programme could improve research skills and 'methodological hygiene' in the graduation theses. For assessment, it is advisable giving more feedback to students on the assessment forms to underpin grades clearer.

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Introduction

This is the assessment report of the existing bachelor study programme International Business at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (NHL Stenden) in Emmen and Leeuwarden. The assessment was conducted by an audit panel compiled by Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA) and commissioned by NHL Stenden. Prior to the assessment process the audit panel has been approved by the NVAO.

In this report the audit panel gives account of its findings, considerations and conclusions. The assessment was undertaken according to the *Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands* of the NVAO (September 2018) and the *NQA Guideline 2019 for a limited programme assessment*.

The site visit took place on February 4 and 5, 2020. The audit panel consisted of:

Mr ing. J.C. de Jong (chairman, domain expert)
Mr drs. D.J.N.M. Rijnders (domain expert)
Ms W.J. Hazelhoff-Pouwer MSc (domain expert)
Ms J.J.M. Gouwens (student member)

Ms drs. M. Schoots, NQA-auditor, acted as secretary of the panel.

The study programme is part of the visitation group 'HBO IBMS groep 1 Noord'. Panel members received an instruction regarding the *NVAO Assessment framework*. The assessment criteria calibrated between Hobéon and NQA are part of this instruction. Next to this, alignment between sub-panels is guaranteed by experts being a member in several sub-panels. In addition, taking into account that each programme assessment is an individual assessment, panel members reflected on previous visits within this visitation group. Because of the cooperation for the (phasing out) study programme International Business and Management Studies between Van Hall Larenstein and NHL Stenden, the site visit of the International Business programme at Van Hall Larenstein was planned in the same week as the site visit of International Business at NHL Stenden. Except for Ms Hazelhoff-Pouwer, the same panel judged the programme at Van Hall Larenstein.

The study programme offered a self-evaluation report that was structured according to the requirements of the NVAO framework. The audit panel studied the self-evaluation report and appendices (see Appendix 2). During a preliminary panel consultation, the site visit was prepared, and panel members were instructed on the NQA working method and the *NVAO Assessment framework*. Preliminary findings were discussed during the preliminary consultation. In line with the *NVAO Assessment framework*, graduation files that were of a doubtful level or raised questions about the assessment procedure, were read by a second panel member. Findings from the preliminary panel consultation were communicated to the study programme, to give direction to the site visit.

During the site visit, the panel has spoken with various stakeholders of the programme, such as students, alumni, lecturers and a representative from the professional field. Staff members and students of the study programme were given the opportunity to approach the panel, in addition to


the site visit. One staff member used this opportunity to meet with the panel, one student has shared his thoughts through email. The panel studied the additional material related to the study programme during the site visit (see Appendix 2). The self-evaluation and all other (oral and written) information have enabled the panel to reach a deliberate judgement. At the end of the site visit, the audit panel formulated a preliminary assessment with substantiation. During the final feedback session, the chair of the panel communicated the preliminary assessment and important findings to the representatives of the study programme.

After the site visit the secretary wrote a concept report, based on the information and opinions of the panel members. The panel members gave feedback on the concept report, after which a second concept report was prepared. The second concept report was presented to the representatives of the study programme, whom reacted on factual inaccuracies. The panel members have seen the reaction of the study programme and the secretary adjusted the report where necessary. After that, the final advisory report was prepared.

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

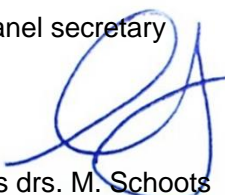
Utrecht, April 20, 2020

Panel chairman



Mr ing. J.C. de Jong

Panel secretary



Ms drs. M. Schoots

Administrative data

Name study programme as in CROHO	International Business
Orientation and level study programme	Hbo-bachelor
Variations	Fulltime
Degree	Bachelor of Business Administration
Credits	240 EC
Location	Emmen and Leeuwarden
Specialisations IB	Sales & Marketing Finance & Accounting Organisation & People Operations & Supply chain
Language	English
Registration number in CROHO	30029
Financial status	Funded
Cluster	HBO IBMS groep 1 Noord
Date of return	01-05-2020

Outline of the study programme

International Business programme

The current International Business (IB) study programme at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences ('NHL Stenden') is offered since September 2018 in Emmen and Leeuwarden. The IB programme has currently 48 students in Emmen and 273 in Leeuwarden. Both locations use the same educational profile, with different accents within the curricula on each location. The IBL programme in Emmen was mentioned as a 'Topopleiding' in the *Keuzegids hbo 2020*, the IB programme in Leeuwarden was mentioned as a 'Top 5 programme'. The IB programme is part of the Academy Commerce & International Business, one of the 14 academies within NHL Stenden. Other study programmes that are offered within this academy are Marketing Management and Entrepreneurship & Retail Management.

The IB programme starts with four module periods in the first year, that are similar for Emmen and Leeuwarden. Each module contains learning outcomes for Tools for Working & Management and the by NHL Stenden so-called Business Transformers (Ways of Thinking, Ways of Working and Living in the World, see standard 1). A module is centred around a Design Based Education project (DBE, see Educational approach). In each module there is specific attention for underlying skills, knowledge and languages, that support the DBE projects. In the second year there are two semester modules, which again hold learning outcomes for Tools for Working & Management and Business Transformers. Here, modules are again centred around a DBE project and supported by classes for knowledge, skills and languages. The second year is slightly different in Emmen and Leeuwarden: Emmen offers one modern language by choice extra and Leeuwarden offers an elective instead. The order of modules is also different per location. The third year is divided in a study period of 30 EC (which can be a minor or an exchange) and an internship of 30 EC. In the fourth year students choose their specialisation major of 30 EC and complete a graduation project of 30 EC that fits the specialisation.

Planning neutral conversion

The IB programme originates from the previously offered study programmes International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) and International Business and Languages (IBL). The change into IB was a planning neutral conversion (letter NVAO 16-05-2017). Because of the planning neutral conversion, the panel has -next to the first two years of the IB programme- studied three phasing out curricula for their third and fourth year: IBMS (Leeuwarden), IBL (Emmen) and IBL (Leeuwarden). IBMS has currently 241 active students in the third and fourth year and IBL has 156.

Cooperation Van Hall Larenstein (IBMS)

At the time of the accreditation process a joint enterprise with Van Hall Larenstein since 2002 for the IBMS programme is phased out. The joint enterprise was an arrangement within article 8.1 of the WHW. The study programme has explained this situation together with Van Hall Larenstein in the *Addendum zelfevaluatie rapport opleiding International Business*. IBMS students have been starting their studies at (NHL) Stenden and follow a common programme for the first 150 EC. After this common programme, students choose a specialisation that lasts for the final 90 EC of their studies. Three specialisations are offered at NHL Stenden and one specialisation is offered at Van Hall Larenstein:

NHL Stenden	Business to Business
NHL Stenden	Innovation and Leadership
NHL Stenden	Retail Management
Van Hall Larenstein	International Sustainability Management

As a result of the merger of Stenden and NHL as of January 2018, a new situation arose in which NHL Stenden cancelled the 8.1 agreement with Van Hall Larenstein regarding IBMS. The two institutes will cooperate on the IBMS programme until the programme is fully phased out. There can be students in the IBMS programme until September 2023.

Previous accreditations IBMS and IBL

IBL at NHL in Leeuwarden was assessed as ‘satisfactory’ in the last accreditation that took place in October 2017. For example, the panel was positive about the level of the intended learning outcomes, the small scale and personal context, the goals on internationalisation, the quality safeguarding of assessments by the examination committee and the level of graduation theses. Points of improvement were the attention for innovative content such as online marketing and sustainability in the curriculum and the graduation theses, and the assessment forms that lean still too much on sister programme Commerciële Economie.

The study programme has adequately improved the most important improvement points that were mentioned during this accreditation.

IBL at Stenden in Emmen was assessed as ‘satisfactory’ in the last accreditation that took place in October 2015. For example, the panel was positive about the approach on internationalisation, the level of English of the students, the quality safeguarding of assessments by the examination committee and the level of graduation theses. Points of improvement were the filling in of assessment forms and more ‘research hygiene’ in graduation theses.

The approach on internationalisation is still strong in the IB and IBL programmes. The study programme has shown that the quality safeguarding of the assessment has weakened in the current IBL and IB programmes. The level of graduation theses, the filling in of assessment forms and more ‘research hygiene’ in graduation theses are still points for improvement (see standard 3 and 4).

IBMS at Stenden (and NHL and Van Hall Larenstein) in Leeuwarden was assessed as ‘satisfactory’ in the last accreditation that took place in June 2013. For example, the panel was positive about the profile, the curriculum and the added value of the three partner universities NHL, Stenden and Van Hall Larenstein. A point of improvement mentioned by the panel was the quality assurance of assessments and the level of graduation theses.

The panel still recognizes the positive points from this previous accreditation. The quality assurance of assessments and the level of graduation theses are still points for improvement.

The IBMS and IBL programmes have obtained a *Certificate for quality in internationalisation* by the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education in 2018.

Outline Stenden Qatar IBMS

'Stenden Qatar', in Doha, offers an IBMS programme that is based on the IBMS programme at NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden. Since September 2019 (one year later than NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden) Stenden Qatar started offering an IB programme instead of the IBMS programme, that is also based on the IB programme at NHL Stenden in Leeuwarden. IBMS students from Stenden Qatar can apply for a Dutch degree under conditions.

In May 2019 the *Inspectie van het onderwijs* published the results of an investigation about the quality assurance of handing out Dutch degrees to Qatar students. In this report the *Inspectie van het onderwijs* states that there is insufficient safeguarding of the end level of the Dutch degrees that are handed out to students from Stenden Qatar. NHL Stenden replied to this report with the document '*Plan van aanpak; naar aanleiding van het rapport van de Inspectie van het Onderwijs van 31 mei 2019 over de graadverlening aan studenten van de Qatarrese vestiging van NHL Stenden Hogeschool*' (November 6, 2019). The plan indicates that students who start their IB studies at Stenden Qatar in September 2020 or later, will in principle study for a degree under Qatar legislation. A Dutch degree can only be obtained under regular applications of exemptions at the examination committee at NHL Stenden. These changes in regulations are described by the study programme in Appendix 3.

At the time of the site visit the *Plan van aanpak* was presented to the *Inspectie van het onderwijs*. The *Inspectie van het onderwijs* has not yet determined how the quality assurance of the Dutch degrees of Qatar students will be monitored from now on. The panel has been able to read the *Plan van aanpak* but could not yet judge if this plan is adequately implemented or safeguarded because the *Plan van aanpak* was not yet processed into regulations such as the *Teaching and Examination Regulations*. The end level of Qatar students was indeed an explicit topic of this visitation, as was agreed on between NHL Stenden and NQA. Therefore, the panel has assessed a selection of graduation theses from students that graduated in Qatar and achieved a Dutch degree under the current regulations (see standard 4).

Cooperation South-Africa

A point of attention according to the panel is that the study programme has indicated towards the panel that they have plans to work together with a university in South-Afrika while developing an IB programme. The plans are in an orientating phase at the time of the site visit. If this succeeds the study programme would like to market the same possibilities that will be offered to Qatar students as of September 2020. The panel feels that it would be recommendable to first give attention to the Qatar arrangements and get them right according to the *Inspectie van het onderwijs*, before starting a new cooperation.

Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Conclusion

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 1. The IB programme prepares students to work in international business, for example in positions on sales, marketing, export, import or communication. The study programme finds the development of autonomous thinking and professional identity for students important. Per location there are clear different accents on the basis of four specialisations, which can be further developed and used for marketing purposes according to the panel. The panel is of the opinion that the study programme has clear intended learning outcomes on the bachelor level, that are directly derived from the national *Framework International Business* (National Platform International Business, 2018). The intended learning outcomes tie in with requirements currently set by the international professional field and relevant disciplines with regard to the contents. The *Framework International Business* has also been adequately benchmarked internationally, as to be expected for an internationally oriented study programme. The national *Framework International Business* shows important similarities with the previous frameworks of IBMS and IBL, which is consistent with the planning neutral conversion. The study programme safeguards the topicality and relevancy of the profile through regular consults with their own business advisory board.

Findings and considerations

Professional profile

The IB programme prepares students to work in international business, for example in positions on sales, marketing, export, import or communication. Students are educated to be competent and confident starting business professionals who can help organisations to realise their international ambitions anywhere in the world. The study programme finds the development of autonomous thinking and professional identity for students important.

Educational profile

The panel is of the opinion that the study programme has clear intended learning outcomes on an adequate bachelor level. The intended learning outcomes of the study programme are directly derived from the *Framework International Business* (National Platform International Business, 2018). The learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin descriptors on the bachelor level and match level 6 of the European Qualification Framework. In the national development process of the intended learning outcomes, representatives from different internationally oriented study programmes in the Netherlands, more than 140 international companies and 11 international universities were involved. According to the panel, this shows an adequate international benchmarking of the profile, as to be expected for an internationally oriented study programme.

The intended learning outcomes are adequately concretised according to the panel. The learning outcomes are derived from four domains, which each holds several themes. These themes are

translated into in total 24 learning outcomes for the IB programme. The *Framework International Business* distinguishes three levels for the learning outcomes that are based on complexity and autonomy. According to the *Framework International Business* almost all learning outcomes should be achieved on level 3, except for the languages and the following four themes in the Tools for Working and Management domain: Marketing & Sales, Finance & Accounting, Operations & Supply Chain Management and Organisation & People. Of these four themes, at least one should be accomplished on level 3. The other themes should be accomplished on level 2. The study programme follows these guidelines, as the panel has seen in the *IB Course document 2019-2020*.

Domains in KSAVE model	Themes in IB new Framework	HEO standard	Dublin
Ways of Thinking	Critical Thinking	2	3
	Innovation & Creativity	3	2,3
	International Business Awareness	3	2,3
Ways of Working	International Business Communication	3	4
	Collaboration	3	4
	Management of information as digital citizen	2	3
Living in the World	Personal & Professional Development	4	3,5
	Ethical & Social Responsibility	4	3,5
	Intercultural Proficiency	4	3,5
Tools for Working & Management	Marketing & Sales	1	1,2
	Finance & Accounting	1	1,2
	Operations & Supply chain management	1	1,2
	Organisation & People	1	1,2
	Business Research	2	1,2,3

Planning neutral conversion

Students that graduate within the study programme of IBMS and IBL have to accomplish different intended learning outcomes. The IBMS learning outcomes are based on the national *Framework competencies IBMS* (2010) and the IBL learning outcomes are based on the national framework *IBL bekent kleur* (2010). The IB profile shows important similarities with the previous frameworks of IBMS and IBL, which is consistent with the planning neutral conversion. For example, important themes like research, business, intercultural competences, entrepreneurship, marketing and organisational behaviour are found in all three frameworks. The *Framework International Business* is updated in comparison to the IBMS and IBL frameworks from 2010 and shows for example less focus on languages.

Specific profile

In line with the *Framework International Business*, there are four main specialisation choices within the IB study programme. Each location will offer three of them in the fourth year of the study programme. Emmen will offer a specialisation Sales & Marketing, Organisation & People and Operations & Supply Chain. Leeuwarden will offer Sales & Marketing, Finance & Accounting and Organisation & People. The panel feels that the choices give clear different accents to both locations, that fits the professional field at each location. The panel encourages the study

programme to develop these accents even further and use them in marketing. This way they can attract more students on the basis of these specialisations, as the study programme wishes for.

Cooperation professional field

The panel has spoken to the business advisory board, that consists of representatives from companies and alumni. The panel has seen that this board consists of members that represent most international contexts that are relevant to the study programme. The board meets four times a year and advises the study programme about the learning outcomes, the (specific) profile and the curriculum. Advises of the business advisory board are taken seriously by the programme management. An example of an advice of the business advisory board is to give attention to the financial part in the curriculum and the board feels that this point is seriously acted on by the study programme for the new IB curriculum. The board is actively involved and wishes for even more involvement. The panel encourages the study programme to use this commitment of the business advisory board to its full extend. For example, for the further external safeguarding of graduation theses (see standard 4) or further development of the specific profile on each location.

Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 2. At the time of the site visit, the IB programme is fully developed for the first and second year. The third and fourth year are developed in outlines. The IB programme is logically derived from the intended learning outcomes and learning objectives are clearly communicated in *Module books*. The panel is positive about the new IB programme and sees a topical, broad, international, practice oriented and challenging programme. The NHL Stenden principle of Design Based Education (DBE) is a real asset for the IB study programme according to the panel. Students as well as the professional field are enthusiastic about the way students are challenged towards creativity and self-guidance in the practice-oriented DBE projects in ateliers. The DBE projects offer sufficient research skills in an integrated way. The admission criteria of the IB programme are conform legal demands. Students IBMS, IBL and IB come from different nationalities and backgrounds, which causes a natural international classroom. This brings challenges in guiding students, that are well addressed to by the lecturers. IBMS, IBL and IB students appreciate the personal and adequate guidance. The committed team of staff members holds the necessary expertise on international business, didactics and the English language to execute the IBMS, IBL and IB programmes. An important challenge for this study programme according to the panel, is to facilitate staff members sufficiently in for example workload, training in the DBE concept, the development of the new IB programme and the maintenance of the quality of the IBMS and IBL programmes. Internationalisation is logically and evidently interwoven in the IB curriculum with different compulsory elements such as short International Student Activities abroad or at home, English as a main language, and one (Leeuwarden) or two (Emmen) extra modern languages by choice. Dutch students are obliged to go abroad for 30 EC, which can be done within an exchange programme, an internship or a minor within the NHL Stenden 'Grand tour'. Procedures for these abroad experiences were already a part of the IBMS and IBL programmes and are adequately in place.

Findings and considerations

At the time of the site visit, the IB programme is fully developed for the first and second year. The third and fourth year are developed in outlines. Students started the IB programme for the first time in September 2018.

The IB curriculum

The IB programme is logically derived from the intended learning outcomes according to the panel. In the self-evaluation report the study programme has indicated which learning outcomes are assessed at which level in each period. The learning outcomes are clearly communicated to students in *Module books* and form a transparent base for each module to students, so the panel has heard from students. The *Module books* also contain a description of the module, the way students work on their modern foreign languages, learning trajectories, study material and

information about examination. For the upcoming third and fourth year, students IB feel well informed about their general study path.

The panel sees an actual IB curriculum that is broad, international, practice oriented and challenging to students. Important changes in the IB programme -in comparison to IBMS and IBL- are the project wise study method of DBE and less focus on modern languages in Leeuwarden. Basic themes on international business such as marketing, sales, management and finance are well represented in the IB curriculum overview and course materials. Students and alumni from the different programmes tell the panel that actual themes such as digital developments, ethics, social responsibility and sustainability are more addressed to in the IB programme than in the IBMS and IBL programmes. IB students confirm the positive image of the study programme in general to the panel and give high scores to atmosphere, content and skills in the *Nationale Studenten Enquête* (2019). IBMS and IBL alumni and students, are in general satisfied with the contents of study programmes. In the IBL programme there have been pilots with the DBE concept in projects, which were appreciated by the students.

Admission and inflow

The admission criteria of the IB programme are conform legal demands: a vwo, havo or mbo level 4 diploma, or an equivalent of these diploma's from abroad. For havo students with the profile 'Cultuur & Maatschappij' there are extra demands for maths. At the IB programme in Emmen all students start in September and the IB programme in Leeuwarden has enrolments in September and February. Nationalities that are represented in the student population are for example Syrian, Ukrainian, German and Dutch. The different nationalities and backgrounds bring challenges for the guidance of students and for students in working together. The panel has seen that lecturers are aware of these differences and the challenges that this great diversity of national backgrounds brings. The panel has also heard from students that lecturers offer adequate guidance on this diversity and getting to know the Dutch way of studying. Students tell the panel that these differences grow towards each other rather soon because of the cooperation that is needed within the DBE projects.

Design Based Education

The educational approach of the IB programme is based on DBE, which is introduced broadly within NHL Stenden. DBE is a real asset of the IB study programme according to the panel. The idea of DBE is that students perform project wise assignments for clients in the professional field. This is done in a group of four to six students. What makes DBE unique, is that there is a cyclic way of working with actual testing of professional products in the professional field and readjusting on the basis of this testing ('design thinking'). Other features of DBE are multidisciplinary cooperation, international and intercultural proficiency, personal leadership and sustainable education.

The panel has witnessed students working enthusiastically and engaged in an 'atelier' on a real-life project during the site visit. The panel sees the values of autonomous thinking and professional identity (see standard 1) clearly reflected in the guidance of the DBE projects. Because students have to cooperate independently with the professional field from the beginning of their studies, they develop their own identity and autonomy in this. Students are explicitly stimulated to take on self-guidance and to find out more about topics and possible solutions themselves during the DBE projects, as the panel has seen while visiting a DBE 'atelier'. An

atelier is a physical room with the different facilities to work together. The DBE projects are mainly being executed in ateliers under guidance of a 'project manager' (lecturer). Next to that, guest lecturers and representatives of the professional field or professional clients visit the atelier. Students also make relevant field trips during a DBE project. The panel heard from students and lecturers that creative didactical tools are used in the ateliers, such as a writing-wall, thinking hats and Lego plates. Students of different nationalities highly appreciate this way of learning by doing and feel challenged to be creative while working for real practice and working together with other students from different nationalities. Because of the DBE concept, students start building contacts in the professional field from the beginning of their studies. The business advisory board is also very enthusiastic about DBE, as students learn to take on an active mindset and can contribute to real organisations. An example of a DBE project in the first year is the further development of an existing food product, taking into account all environmental circumstances.

Student guidance

Students IBMS, IBL and IB are satisfied about the guidance they receive from lecturers. Each IB student is assigned with a coach, that focuses on the personal development with regards to the Business Transformers ('BT coach'). This coach also serves as a first contact point for all kinds of study related questions. IB students use the BT coach indeed as a first point of contact, as the panel heard from students. Students in the IBMS and IBL programme have a similar point of contact, that is referred to by students as the 'mentor'.

In terms of communication about the organisation of the study programme, students and alumni of IBMS, IBL and IB indicate that there is room for improvement. Students sometimes have to search for the right person within NHL Stenden and there have been several unclarities because of incorrect or unclear communication to students. The panel advises to take improvement measures if necessary.

International orientation

The panel has explicitly looked at the necessity of the English language in this study programme. NHL Stenden strives for an international multi-campus environment for their students and the IBMS, IBL and IB programmes are explicit examples of this international environment. English is the main language for all three programmes because of the English-spoken contexts for which students are educated. The panel has seen that there is a need for these kinds of internationally orientated graduates and that alumni indeed start working with multinationals in the Netherlands or abroad, where English is the main language. Students come from different countries and need to work together in projects. This creates an international classroom in a natural way according to the panel.

Internationalisation is filled in with different compulsory activities within the IB programme. First of all, Dutch students need to spend at least 30 EC abroad, which can be realised in a third- or fourth-year exchange, minor or internship. The minor period can also be used to make the NHL Stenden 'Grand tour'. In the Grand tour students study abroad on one of the campuses of NHL Stenden in Qatar, Bali, Thailand or South-Africa. These campuses offer minor programmes in for example business or hospitality. A fair part of the IBMS and IBL students uses the opportunities for a Grand tour, an exchange or an internship abroad already. Because of this, procedures for the abroad experiences are already in place within the IBMS and IBL programme. The exchange programme is arranged with one of the numerous partner universities of NHL Stenden in different

countries all over the world, such as in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, China, Chile, South Korea or United States of America. Foreign exchange programmes need to be applied for through the digital system *iGo* (a system of NHL Stenden) and must be approved by a study coach from NHL Stenden. Together with the partner university, there must be settled a Learning Agreement. For internships abroad the study programme asks for an adequate business agreement on tasks, hours and safety, as is confirmed by the students that the panel has spoken to. The panel feels that procedures for exchange and internships abroad are adequate. Foreign students are not obliged to follow a part of their studies abroad, as they are already abroad in the Netherlands.

Secondly, IB students follow International Student Activities that are spread out during the study programme. Within IBMS and IBL these activities already existed. The International Student Activities are short international projects organised abroad and 'at home' to broaden cultural perspective and global awareness. An example is a project with partner university Haaga-Helia in Finland, where IB students write a Learning diary on a project that aims to develop cross-cultural, management and transversal skills. Other countries that students have visited for International Student Activities are for example Morocco, Egypt and Belgium. The study programme also offers at home possibilities for International Student Activities. An example is a project in Leeuwarden, where students learn about intercultural communication through Skype. Students are very enthusiastic about the intercultural awareness that they develop during the International Student Activities, especially in the ones abroad. Although the 'at home' options are fairly affordable for most students, students tell the panel that they feel that mainly international students miss out on the more interesting abroad options for an International Student Activity, because of the costs. This was also the case for the 'Busi days' (a conference from BusiNET¹). The panel understands that this not easy to solve and appreciates the fact there is an alternative in the Netherlands offered for International Student Activities.

In the new *Framework International Business* there is less of a focus on modern languages next to English, in comparison to IBMS and IBL. Even though, the IB programme on location Leeuwarden offers one extra modern language of choice next to English, and the programme in Emmen offers a choice of two extra modern languages. Choices on languages are both in Emmen and Leeuwarden: French, Spanish, German and Dutch (for foreigners). Generally, these languages start at beginners' level to make it possible for all students to attend these courses. To describe the level of command of modern foreign languages, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is used, which is a usual level indicator for students in higher education. The following levels have been determined for the IB programme: C1 for English and B1+ for the other modern foreign languages. The panel is of the opinion that these levels are suitable for an IB programme.

Finally, students are very enthusiastic about the international fraternities Stenden Emmen *Foodies Fraternity* and *Global Web*. Students use these fraternities actively to network and internationally socialize.

Research

¹ BusiNET was established in 1987 by a group of higher education business institutions keen to develop international programmes in Business and to promote opportunities for Institutes of Higher Education, their staff, and their students. At the moment the organisation has 114 members and is represented in 31 countries. Source: businet.org.uk

The representatives of the IB programme consider it important that students learn to underpin professional practice and develop a critical and innovative attitude. The programme feels that executing practice-oriented research is a means of achieving this. Developing underpinned concepts and testing them in practice is a basic aspect of the DBE educational concept. Learning to be critical and inquisitive is in that way an integral part of the projects. Students confirm to the panel that research skills are covered in the steps taken in every DBE project. The panel judges the attention for research skills for IB students as sufficient for the first two years on the basis of the project results of IB students that the panel has studied during the site visit. For the IBMS and IBL programmes the panel sees room for improvement (see standard 4).

The study programme has connections to the research group International Entrepreneurship ('lectoraat'). Six IB lecturers are part-time active as a researcher for this research group. Per year approximately 200 IB, IBMS and IBL students take part in research activities for this research group. An example of a research project is a research on 21st century skills. Students have investigated which competences are essential for international companies. The results were among others: handle insecurity, intercultural awareness and cooperation skills. The study programme mentions that they would like to make the participation of students for the research group more structural.

Staff quality

The panel has seen two committed teams of lecturers in Emmen and Leeuwarden that have the right expertise to execute the study programmes of IBMS, IBL and IB. Students of all three programmes appreciate the friendly and personal guidance and feel that lectures are always willing to help. There are 50 teaching staff members at the time of the site visit. Of the teaching staff members 76 percent has a master's degree, 1 lecturer has a PhD and 1 lecturer is a PhD candidate. Lecturers have sufficient didactical skills and sufficient command of the English language. Several lecturers (mostly language lecturers) are from abroad. Part of the lecturers participate in BusiNET, regional export clubs or the research group International entrepreneurship. Other lecturers own a small company in international business. There are two lecturers with an NWO² grant. One lecturer is member of the Scientific Committee of the international conference *The Future of Education*. The panel feels that lecturers have a good connection with the professional field through these activities.

The teams are willing to work together more but feel that the distance between the two locations makes cooperation challenging. Even though, lecturers cooperate on the level of individual modules and there is for example a shared curriculum committee and a shared examination committee. The panel believes that the teams can strengthen the IB programme by using each other's expertise and experience even more. For example, guest lectures can be offered together, and business contacts and contacts with partner universities can be of use for both locations.

Mentioned this, the panel sees that prioritising is extremely important within this study programme, that is in a dynamic phase. The team has to deal with so many different developments, that a more important advice of the panel to the programme management is to keep staff well facilitated and keep on evaluating the new IB programme actively. This concerns for example the workload, training in the DBE concept, enough time for the development of the

² Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

new IB programme and enough time to maintain the quality of the phasing out IBMS and IBL programmes.

Standard 3 Student assessment

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

Conclusion

The study programme **partially meets** the generic quality on standard 3. Regulations concerning student assessment are described adequately in separate *Teaching and Examination Regulations 2019-2020* for IBMS, IBL and IB. The examination committee has the task to safeguard the level and the quality of examination for all three programmes. The IB programme has a decent system of assessment that follows DBE logically. This assessment system is based on the idea of mainly assessing through authentic professional products and a system of constant feedback. The panel sees a sufficient variety of tests on the expected level, such as knowledge tests, assessments, essays, portfolios and reflection reports. In part of the knowledge tests in the IB programme, the majority of the students fails at the first attempt and the panel advises paying attention to this. The IBMS and IBL procedures on assessing the research thesis can be improved on several aspects for graduates from Emmen, Leeuwarden and Qatar. The panel advises to align assessment forms with the *graduation handbooks* and agree on a common way of working for filling in the assessment forms for graduation projects.

The panel has concerns about the quality assurance of the assessment. There are points of improvement for knowledge tests and the graduation projects. Even though there is awareness about most of these points with the study programme and there are plans for improvement, the panel has not seen that the study programme has taken up enough measures for improvement yet. Most measures are still in a planning phase, while the panel feels that the study programme and the assessment safeguarding committees could have already taken clear and proactive actions. Because of the limited recent safeguarding actions and the lack of proactivity on the safeguarding of assessment, the panel judges standard 3 as 'partially meets the standard' and advises to assign a recovery period. The panel has confidence that the current staff has the potential, with the right time and resources, to improve the quality assurance of the final assessment of IBMS and IBL and pick up the quality assurance of the (final) assessment for the IB programme sufficiently, within two years.

Findings and considerations

Assessment system

Regulations for assessments are adequately captured in the *Teaching and Examination Regulations 2019-2020*. For the phasing out programmes of IBMS and IBL there are separate test schedules and *Teaching and Examination Regulations*, that also look suitable to the panel. The assessment system of the IB programme follows the DBE-structure logically and aims for an integral assessment system that is mainly based on authentic professional products. The study programme aims for an interconnection between learning and testing and aims to give feedback and feedforward during classes and assessments to stimulate the learning process. Formative evaluation is done regularly during the DBE projects or whenever students ask for it.

Students of all three programmes are in general satisfied with the examination and feedback they receive. Students find the assessments transparent because assessment forms are handed out

in advance. If students have questions or complaints, they find their way to the concerning examiner or examination committee and feel that there is a sufficient reaction to requests or questions. Exams can be looked at afterwards, which students appreciate.

Examination IB

Tests are developed by a test owner, that always consults another examiner before finalizing a test. Examiners involve as much as possible the examiner on the same subject of the other location (Emmen or Leeuwarden) for this four-eyes-principle, so heard the panel of examiners. The study programmes in Emmen and Leeuwarden use mostly the same tests and assessments for IB, with a few minor differences. The panel sees a sufficient variety of tests. The panel has seen a selection of IB student products from the first two years and judges the quality and the level of these tests as good. Contents of the tests are up to date and student products show the expected level. Tests from year 3 of IBMS and IBL that the panel has seen, are judged as sufficient by the panel in terms of level and quality.

The knowledge tests aim to assess the learning outcomes that are linked to knowledge and languages through a combination of multiple choice, open questions and essays. Every period there are one or more knowledge tests, and one or more language tests as they are a basis for the more integral assessments (see below). Students need to pass the knowledge tests to be able to get a positive judgement for a module. The panel has talked to students about the knowledge tests. They appreciate the quality of the group classes that prepare them for the tests but were not always sure what they should learn for the knowledge tests. Adding on that, students and lecturers tell the panel that in part of the knowledge tests, the majority of the students fails at the first attempt. The study programme has indicated that this concerns mainly the finance related knowledge tests and that they are trying to find out how to improve this. The panel advises the study programme to inform students better about what they have to learn for the knowledge tests and work actively on improving the number of students that pass the knowledge tests that have a large fail rate.

During the first and second year the professional products are assessed in authentic assessments, that aim to assess the learning outcomes that are linked to the Tools for Working within a module. The assessments are based on a professional product and feedback on the professional product that is gathered from peers, professional field and lecturers. This feedback needs to be visibly processed into the professional product. The written professional product is being assessed separately before the student can enter the assessment. The oral assessment is executed by two examiners from NHL Stenden and in most cases the involved professional field gives an advice for the judgement.

Most authentic assessments are based on group projects with four to six students, as fits the DBE-principle of cooperation and co-creating. Students need to individually defend the professional product and show their competences in a criterium directed interview in the authentic assessments. The panel has heard from students IB that 'freeriding' with group members is not possible. There is a good system in place where students can be removed from the group if they receive three 'strikes' from fellow students. A cooperation arrangement is written down on paper for each group that starts to work together, and the strikes are defined in this arrangement. The panel has seen several assessment forms belonging to students within the same group. These

forms confirm that students are individually assessed and judged for the DBE projects: feedback and grades were different per person.

The Business Transformers (Ways of Thinking, Ways of Working and Living in the World) are assessed in different ways. Students need to develop the Business Transformers skills during the DBE project and reflect on them through for example reflection reports, portfolios, videos and interviews. In year 1 the skills are assessed separately and in year 2 they are assessed within the authentic assessments.

Graduation procedures IBMS and IBL

For IBMS most learning outcomes from the national *Framework competencies IBMS (2010)* are assessed in a thesis (30 EC). Procedures are described in the *IBMS graduation handbook Leeuwarden*. Students work fulltime in an organisation on international business topics for 17 weeks. Within this period, students perform a research-based graduation assignment that leads to a thesis. The thesis needs to be in line with the specialisation that the student has chosen. Within the specialisations of NHL Stenden, the thesis is guided by a supervisor, who is also the first examiner. All IBMS-theses at NHL Stenden are assessed by a second, external assessor.

For IBMS at Stenden Qatar there is a similar graduation phase as for IBMS in Leeuwarden. Procedures are described in the *IBMS graduation handbook Qatar*. Theses are assessed by two examiners from Qatar and a third and decisive examiner from the Netherlands. If the external assessor judges that a thesis in Qatar is not sufficient, that will be the final judgement and the Qatar student needs to do a resit. All three examiners are appointed by the examination committee of NHL Stenden. The third, external assessor reports to NHL Stenden about his judgement and also advises NHL Stenden about the quality of assessment procedures at Stenden Qatar.

For IBL most learning outcomes from the national framework *IBL be kent kleur (2010)* are assessed in a combined thesis and one or more professional products (together 30 EC). Procedures are adequately described in the *IBL Leeuwarden graduation handbook* and the *IBL Emmen graduation handbook*. For Emmen and Leeuwarden there is a slightly different approach. IBL students perform a professional assignment for a company during their graduation phase, that leads to a professional product. Research serves the development of the professional product. The graduation project is assessed by two examiners: a first examiner and the tutor during the graduation project.

The panel has seen several possibilities for improvement in the assessment procedures of the graduation theses that apply IBMS and IBL in Emmen, Leeuwarden and Qatar. First of all, assessment forms are not always completely filled in or at least differently filled in by different examiners. This makes it quite difficult for the panel to see the coherence between judgements from the two or three different examiners. The panel advises the examiners to agree on a common way of working for filling in the assessment forms. Further on, the panel sees limited feedback on the assessment forms. The panel recommends giving more extensive written feedback. The panel feels that underpinning the given grades to students is an added value, that can help students to develop further at the start of a professional career. Solid feedback on assessment forms further on helps in calibration meetings among examiners, to understand each other's considerations. A final point of attention is the fact that guidelines in the *graduation*

handbooks are not always in line with assessment forms. An example is the fact that a summary is required in the *graduation handbooks* but is not obligated during the assessment.

Preview graduation programme IB

The new graduation programme of IB is based on the national *Framework International Business* (2018). In line with this *framework* students will be able to graduate within one out of four specialisations (see standard 1). The graduation phase will be consisting of a research and a professional product, as is the case for IBL at the moment. Design thinking will be introduced as the main tool for research, as fits the DBE concept of the new IB programme.

Quality assurance

Examiners are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills on examination. 47 Percent of the examiners holds a Basic Examination Qualification (BEQ) and one examiner in Emmen holds a Senior Examination Qualification (SEQ). The panel encourages the study programme to get more examiners BEQ and SEQ certified, to improve the quality of assessment further. Calibration is regularly done between examiners on one location, and also happens with colleague study programmes such as Commerciële Economie. The panel has heard during conversations with examiners that calibration sessions for Emmen and Leeuwarden together, are organised approximately once a year. The panel recommends intensifying this calibration between the two locations, because both locations use mainly the same tests.

The examination committee International Business has the task to safeguard the level and the quality of examination according to legislation. The examination committee does this for example by appointing examiners, responding to requests for exemptions and issuing certificates and diplomas. The examination committee consists of three internal members, one external member and two secretaries. The examination committee acts independently of the management. There are separate examination committee chambers for the diverse programmes: IB, IBMS Leeuwarden, IBL Emmen and IBL Leeuwarden. The chair of the examination committee of Van Hall Larenstein is a member in the IBMS chamber, to keep a connection to Van Hall Larenstein while phasing out the joint programme of IBMS.

The panel has a serious concern about the quality assurance of assessment. There are points of improvement for the quality of the assessment of knowledge tests and the graduation projects. The panel is worried because most of these points for improvement are known by the study programme for some time already. Most points were earlier addressed to in previous accreditations, by the examination committee or by the external examiner in Leeuwarden and Qatar. Yet, the study programme has undertaken too little action for improvement and has shown too little proactivity in the eyes of the panel. The examination committee has for example no explicit criteria for appointing examiners and has not looked at samples of graduation theses from Leeuwarden, Emmen and Qatar for at least 1.5 years. A test committee for IBMS, IBL and IB was installed in September 2019, but has not generated results yet. The panel feels that the quality assurance of IBMS and IBL falls short with this. Adding to that, the IB programme also needs the regular attention of the examination committee and there have been no visible actions on the examination of IB yet.

The panel has openly talked about these concerns to the examiners, the examination committee and the programme management. The programme management has orally mentioned plans for

improvements such as the installation of a graduation committee to judge research proposals and the acceptance of special funds to relief pressure on the exam and test committee. The examination committee has plans to take samples of graduation products for evaluation. The panel feels that these plans are indicating a suitable direction but should have been executed earlier or at least been more concrete in written procedures already. Adding to that, the panel sees a study programme with multiple challenges that make time and resources of staff members, examination committee, test committee and management scarce. The panel understands that the study programme is going through a challenging phase but is also worried that this will continue to be a reason not to start acting on quality assurance of the assessment. These challenges of the study programme concern among others the merger of NHL and Stenden, the changing cooperation with VHL, the development of the new educational concept DBE, the actions that are needed towards the *Inspectie van het onderwijs*, the cooperation between Emmen and Leeuwarden and the planning neutral conversion from IBMS and IBL towards IB.

Because of this, the panel judges standard 3 as 'partially meets the standard' and advises to assign a recovery period for the quality assurance of at least the final assessment. The panel has confidence that the current staff has the potential, with the right time and resources, to improve the quality assurance of the assessment of IBMS and IBL and pick up the quality assurance of the assessment for the IB programme, within two years. This confidence of the panel is based on the self-reflection, good intentions and expertise of the staff and examination committee that the panel has seen during the site visit. The management and examination committee are clearly committed to improve the quality assurance of assessment. To improve the safeguarding of the assessment and to meet the generic quality on standard 3, the panel requires that the study programme can -within two years- show (1) sufficient adequate and executed actions to safeguard and improve the final assessments of IBMS and IBL, and (2) sufficient adequate and executed actions to safeguard and improve the assessment of IB, including sufficient concrete plans to start safeguarding the final assessment of IB.

Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Conclusion

The study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 4. Alumni feel well prepared for the professional field as they have learned a lot of practical skills to manage in a broad range of positions. Alumni for example start working in positions like account manager, global alliances manager, general manager, supply chain manager or sales representative with mostly international companies that have a basis in the Netherlands. The study programme has an alumni federation for IBMS and is planning to intensify the relations with alumni. In general graduates show a sufficient bachelor level in the graduation theses, good writing skills and a good command of the English language. The panel has some recommendations to strengthen the quality and level of the theses. The panel recommends giving students more guidance in formulating a suitable and broad enough research question and to choose a research question that is internationally enough. Furthermore, the panel advises the study programme to improve research skills and 'methodological hygiene' in the graduation theses. For assessment, the panel advises giving more feedback to students on the assessment forms to underpin grades clearer.

Findings and considerations

Achieved learning outcomes IBMS and IBL

The panel has selected and examined the graduation theses and corresponding assessments forms of 25 graduates. The panel examined 15 theses of IBMS, of which 7 theses from Leeuwarden and 8 from Qatar. For the IBL programme, the panel has studied 10 theses and professional products, of which 7 from Emmen and 3 from Leeuwarden. Different nationalities and graduation tracks are represented in the selection. The selection was made accordingly to the number of graduates in each study programme on each location over the last two years. The wider selection of 25 was chosen in good consultation between the study programme and NQA because of the variety in graduates from different locations and study programmes. The selection comprises a reasonable balance between satisfactory, good, and very good theses.

The panel in general sees graduates with good writing skills and a good command of the English language. It is clear that most graduates have put a lot of effort into their thesis and most graduates use extensive theory. Grades are generally recognized by the panel but to underpin grades clearer, the panel advises giving more feedback to students on the assessment forms. The level of the theses varies from a good level with strong analysis and a convincing depth, to theses that can be improved in terms of depth. These graduates show that they have achieved this depth in other products, such as internship reports. The problems that the panel has seen in part of the theses, can be improved by intensifying the guidance during the graduation phase and is not due to the competences of the graduates, in the opinion of the panel. Although the points for improvement were most strongly seen in theses from the IBMS programme, they were also noticed in IBL theses by the panel. Recommendation thus concern IBMS and IBL, and all three locations.

A first point for improvement is a narrow research question or a too narrow approach of the subject in part of the theses. The panel advises to guide students better in choosing a suitable graduation subject and to formulate a broad enough research question. Secondly, the international character is a point of attention for a part of the theses. Some theses have strong international components, and others are executed for an international company or a company abroad but show minimal aspects of internationalisation. This also something that can be more strictly looked at by tutors during the research proposal phase. A final remark of the panel regarding the quality of the theses concern the research skills and 'methodological hygiene'. For example, points and comma's in numbers are written down incorrectly sometimes (which makes a large difference for financial matters) and research methods are not always substantiated or correctly explained by students.

After graduating

Alumni IBMS and IBL are satisfied about their education. They feel well prepared for the professional field as they have learned a lot of practical skills to manage in a broad range of positions. Alumni for example start working in positions like account manager, global alliances manager, general manager, supply chain manager or sales representative. On the list of alumni with their current positions that the study programme has provided, the panel mainly sees international companies that have a basis in the Netherlands, and some international companies abroad.

The study programme has an alumni federation for IBMS and is planning to intensify the relations with alumni.

General conclusion

Assessments of the standards

The panel comes to the following judgements regarding the standards:

Standard	Judgement
<i>Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes</i>	Meets the standard
<i>Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment</i>	Meets the standard
<i>Standard 3 Student assessment</i>	Partially meets the standard
<i>Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes</i>	Meets the standard

Considerations and conclusion

The panel sees a study programme that is in development both internal and external. The actual new IB programme is set up from clear intended learning outcomes and holds the valuable educational concept of Design Based Education (DBE). The DBE concept is a real asset of this study programme where students learn to interact with the professional field right from the beginning of their studies and learn research and professional skills in an integral way. The learning environment offers interesting and broad opportunities to develop international competences. Examination is nicely in line with the DBE-principle of integral and practice orientated learning and assessing. The panel is of the opinion that the quality assurance of assessment needs several important improvements, which leads to the judgement of 'partially meets the standard' on standard 3 and the advice for a recovery period of two years. The achieved learning outcomes are up to standard and can be improved by a better guidance on several aspects and improving research skills.

The findings and judgements are weighted and substantiated according to the guidelines of the NVAO. The panel assesses the quality of the fulltime bachelor study programme International Business at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences in Emmen and Leeuwarden as **Conditionally positive (recovery period)**.

Recommendations

The panel has the following recommendations:

Standard 1

- Develop the different accents on each location even further and use them for marketing purposes to attract more IB students.

Standard 2

- Facilitate staff members sufficiently in for example workload, training in the DBE concept, the development of the new IB programme and the maintenance of the quality of the IBMS and IBL programmes.

Standard 3

- Requirements to meet the generic quality on standard 3:
 - sufficient adequate and executed actions that safeguard and improve the final assessments of the IBMS and IBL study programmes;
 - sufficient adequate and executed actions that safeguard and improve the assessment of the IB programme, explicitly including knowledge tests and sufficient concrete plans to start safeguarding the final assessment of the IB study programme.
- Use a common way of working for filling in the assessment forms to make assessments more transparent.
- Align assessment forms with the *Graduation handbooks*.

Standard 4

- Give students more guidance in formulating a suitable and broad enough research question for the graduation theses and in choosing a research question that is internationally enough for the graduation theses.
- Improve research skills and 'methodological hygiene' in the graduation theses.
- Give more feedback to students on the assessment forms to underpin grades clearer.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Programme site visit

Programme Date visit Location	B International Business - Emmen February 4, 2020 Emmen	
12.00 – 12.30 hrs	- Presentation IB - IBL - IBMS - Explanation material	Director Academy Commerce & IB Teamleader IB Emmen Teamleader IB Leeuwarden
12.30 – 13.45 hrs	Lunch, Material study and preliminary consultation	Auditors panel
13.45 – 14.15 hrs	Interview graduation examiners Emmen and Leeuwarden selected student files	Examiners (5) graduation theses Dutch students
14.15 – 14.45 hrs	Interview graduation examiners Qatar selected student files	Examiners (4) graduation theses Qatar students
15.00 – 15.45 hrs	Interview students IB / IBL Emmen	Student IB Emmen, year 1 Student IB Emmen, year 2, member programme committee Student IB Emmen, year 2 Student IB Emmen, year 2 Student IBL Emmen, year 4
16.00 – 16.45 hrs	Interview lecturers IB / IBL / IBMS	Lecturers Emmen (3) Lecturers Leeuwarden (3)
17.00 – 17.30 hrs	Development interview Topic: Profiling the IB programme We would like to discuss the opportunities to further develop the specialisations in our programme via: - Tools for working and management: Sales and Marketing, Finance and Accounting, Organisation & People, Operations & Supply Chain - 3rd modern language in Emmen What choices can best be made at each location given the scale on which each location operates?	Director Academy Commerce & IB Teamleader IB Emmen Teamleader IB Leeuwarden Language lecturer NB: Discussion in Dutch

Programme Date visit Location	B International Business - Leeuwarden February 5, 2020 Leeuwarden	
9.00 – 9.15 hrs	Explanation material	Director Academy Commerce & IB Teamleader IB Emmen Teamleader IB Leeuwarden
9.15 – 10.15 hrs	Material study and preliminary consultation	Auditors panel:
10.15 – 10.45 hrs	Visit DBE session	Atelier room, different student groups
11.00 – 11.45 hrs	Interview students IB/IBL/IBMS Leeuwarden	Student IB Lwd, year 2, member program committee Student IB Lwd, year 2 Student IBL Lwd, year 3 Student IBMS: no show
11.45 – 12.00 hrs	Quality assurance: external assessor	External assessor IBMS Qatar and Leeuwarden
12.00 – 12.30 hrs	Interview graduation lecturers (achieved learning outcomes)	Graduation supervisor IBL Emmen Graduation supervisor IBL Emmen Graduation supervisor IBL Lwd Graduation supervisor IBMS Lwd External assessor IBMS Qatar and Leeuwarden
12.30 – 13.00 hrs	Interview workfield and alumni (achieved learning outcomes)	Alumnus IBMS Lwd Alumnus IBL Lwd Member business advisory board
13.00 – 13.45 hrs	Lunch Open invitation	Auditors panel
13.45 – 14.15 hrs	Interview lecturers and alumni Qatar via video conference	Lecturers Qatar (2) Alumni Qatar (2)
14.30 – 15.15 hrs	Interview assurance and quality	Member examination committee Emmen Chair examination committee Leeuwarden Curriculum committee and test committee Emmen Member examination committee and test committee Leeuwarden Member curriculum committee and chair programme committee Leeuwarden Member examination committee Van Hall Larenstein and NHL Stenden
15.30 – 16.00 hrs	Interview management	Director Academy Commerce & IB Teamleader IB Emmen Teamleader IB Leeuwarden
16.00 – 16.45 hrs	Review consultation auditors	Auditors panel
16.45 – 17.00 hrs	Feedback findings	Auditors panel/programme management and other interested in

Appendix 2 Documents examined

Self-evaluation report IB NHL Stenden
Addendum ZER IBMS-samenwerking NHL Stenden en VHL
Letter NVAO conversie IB (16-05-2017)
Framework International Business (2018)
IB Course document 2019-2020
IB Leeuwarden curriculum schedule 2019-2020
IB Emmen curriculum schedule 2019-2020
IBMS curriculum schedule 2019-2020
IBL Emmen leerplanschema 2019-2020
IBL Leeuwarden leerplanschema 2019-2020
IB Leeuwarden overzicht personeel
IB Emmen overzicht personeel
IB TER 2019-2020
IBMS TER 2019-2020
IBL TER 2019-2020
IBL Emmen graduation handbook 2017-2019
IBL Leeuwarden graduation handbook 2018
IBMS graduation handbook 2018-2019
IBMS Qatar graduation handbook 2018-2019
List of graduates past two years
25 graduation files
Six extra files with student products, partly on end level, from selected graduates
Examples of student assessment products
Outline of the IB programme year 3 and 4
Selection of Module Books IB, IBMS and IBL
Overview working situation alumni IBMS and IBL
Overview of partners and projects DBE in the professional field
Jaarverslag examencommissie IB, IBL and IBMS 2018-2019 (January 2020)
Selection of minutes curriculum committee
Minutes business advisory board International Business
Year plan test committee 2019-2020
Information about exchange programmes 2020-2021
Certificate for quality in internationalisation IBMS (ECA, 2018)
Plan van aanpak; naar aanleiding van het rapport van de Inspectie van het Onderwijs van 31 mei 2019 over de graadverlening aan studenten van de Qatarrese vestiging van NHL Stenden Hogeschool (November 6, 2019)

Appendix 3 Information about Stenden Qatar

Students of preferred partner Stenden Qatar can no longer enrol in study programmes aimed at acquiring a Dutch degree. Students in Qatar can only register for courses leading to a Qatari degree, as provided by our preferred partner Stenden Qatar.

Henceforth, Qatari students of the partner institution who wish to be eligible for an NHL Stenden degree, are to enter the Dutch education system at NHL Stenden after having completed a substantial part of their education in Qatar. The students will enrol as regular students at NHL Stenden in the Netherlands, will continue their studies there for at least the final part of the study programme (= year 4 for bachelor programmes) and will receive a Dutch degree upon graduation. Qatari students will be treated in the same way as regular (foreign) students upon entering the Dutch system and during their enrolment in the study programme in the Netherlands.

Qatari students who wish to enrol at NHL Stenden so as to be eligible for a Dutch degree, are subject to the regular entry requirements in accordance with the (Dutch) Higher Education and Scientific Research Act. After admission and enrolment, the NHL Stenden examination committee will assess on a case-by-case basis which exemptions can be granted for the study programme in the Netherlands, based on competencies/learning outcomes already acquired in Qatar. We plan to set down further agreements in this regard in an articulation agreement with the partner institution in Qatar. This articulation agreement will be based on a programme comparison conducted by the NHL Stenden examination committee. The programme comparison will be reviewed annually. Students who pass the remaining, non-exempt part of the study programme in the Netherlands (which will in any case comprise the final part of the study programme), can be granted the Dutch degree in the Netherlands.

Current Qatari students who, by virtue of the '25% rule', have already attended a quarter of their studies in the Netherlands or who have started on a quarter of their studies by 1 February 2020, will be given the opportunity to complete their studies in accordance with the '25% rule' and thus obtain a Dutch degree. They have until 1 February 2023 (based on the remaining nominal study duration plus one year for the last group of bachelor students who started their quarter share of their education in the Netherlands on 1 February 2020) to complete their studies.

As regards this group of students who fall under the '25% rule', a strict check was carried out on the entry requirements in the Netherlands and additional measures were taken to safeguard the quality of the exemptions and to strengthen the (autonomous) position of the NHL Stenden examination committee. The current examination committees of study programmes that were also offered in Qatar and structured into a Dutch Chamber and an International Chamber, will remain in place for this group of students only and will become defunct after 1 February 2023.

Other students who are currently in Qatar who are not part of the aforementioned group of students who fall under the '25% rule' will be enrolled - if not already enrolled - in a local degree programme at the partner institution as from 1 September 2020. These current students can no longer enrol in a Dutch degree programme in Qatar. If they wish to be eligible for a Dutch diploma, they must enter the Dutch system.