



PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT • Report

Master in Digital Sport Management

LUNEX INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH, EXERCISE & SPORTS



Programme Assessment • Report

MASTER IN DIGITAL SPORT MANAGEMENT

LUNEX INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH, EXERCISE & SPORTS S.A.

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1 Executive Summary

This document reports on the assessment of the Master in Digital Sport Management which the Differdange-based LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports S.A. intends to offer as of September 2021. The assessment is carried out by an international expert panel convened by the Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg. This same panel already visited LUNEX early 2020 when it performed a combined assessment of the institution and its programmes. While it issued a positive advice to the Ministry on the institutional quality of both LUNEX and three of its programmes, the panel at the time considered that the proposed master programme in International Sport Management was premature. As the ministry took over the panel's recommendations, LUNEX decided to submit a revised Master in Digital Sport Management for accreditation. The panel studied the new information materials put at disposition by LUNEX and discussed the state of play of the programme with a variety of stakeholders on the 1st and 2nd of February 2021. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed to perform the assessment visit online.

Based on findings and considerations elaborated in the report, the panel recommends positively on the quality of the proposed Master in Digital Sport Management of the LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports S.A. in Differdange, Luxembourg. This positive conclusion is based on three considerations. Firstly, the panel thinks that the issues it had identified as problematic in the previous application have now been largely resolved. The programme developers have put in a lot of effort to improve the quality of the proposed new master programme in Digital Sport Management. Secondly, the new programme will be fully embedded in the structure and approach of LUNEX and will benefit from the provisions in terms of governance, quality assurance, research policy, assessment regulations, facilities, etc. Given the panel's appreciation of these structures and approaches in its previous assessment report, the panel considers that the new programme is fully covered by the LUNEX institutional framework arrangements. Thirdly, the panel judges that the new master programme complies with all five criteria of the evaluation framework.

The new master programme has a relevant and quite specific profile (digitalisation in sport management) that will not only answer to a need in sport business in Luxembourg (and beyond) but will also fill a gap in the education of sport managers. The intended learning outcomes reflect both the profile and the level of the new programme. At graduation, students should be digitally skilled and highly reflective individuals with a critical and global mindset who can not only use their advanced knowledge about sport management issues to analyse and solve complex problems, but can also contribute individually and in teams to the digital transformation of their organisation.

The teaching and learning environment enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. The set-up of the curriculum is clear and there is close alignment between the profile of the programme and its implementation through the curriculum. The set of learning outcomes provides a good framework for the learning goals of the respective modules. The quality of the academic staff is excellent and the programme can rely on the facilities offered by LUNEX. However, as the new programme is not operational yet, the panel relies on the proposed curriculum in terms of module contents, pedagogical approach in both on-campus and online variants, student support and assessment. Also, additional staff hiring

should follow programme operationalisation and development in compliance with the proposed set-up.

Assessment of the master programme is aligned with provisions for assessment at the central level. The structure of the respective modules in the new programme is clear, which in turn provides a rationale for the chosen assessment methods. Across the programme there is a good balance in the assessment methods, and course assessment is transparent for students as they know in advance what they need to study for the exam as well as how they will be assessed.

The programme has relevant institution-wide and programme-specific quality assurance tools to monitor the individual modules, the respective module variants, and the overall programme. Students evaluate modules in a formal and structural way, while their input will also be heard in group and across programme variants. Moreover, prospective students feel at ease within LUNEX and voice their concerns openly and directly.

LUNEX is providing focused attention to research, which in turn leads to academic staff providing research-informed education to students. This consideration applies to the envisaged master programme as digital/international sport management is one of the institution's research pillars. Moreover, the staff envisaged for the new programme have extensive expertise in the domain of digital sport management to offer research-informed teaching and assist master students in a range of academically or professionally oriented theses.

In closing, while acknowledging that an initial programme accreditation consists of verifying the intended delivery of a programme, the panel considers that the application for the new Master programme in Digital Sport Management contained sufficient concrete information on the operationalisation of the intended programme to warrant a positive advice. Nonetheless, the panel is very much aware that the new programme is not yet fully developed. Hence the panel recommends that, before the start of the academic year 2021-2022, the programme management assures consistency between admission criteria as presented in the programme materials and posted on the website, provides the Ministry of Higher Education and Research a copy of the co-operation agreement with ELG and informs the Ministry on the provisions on the validation of prior learning and the recognition of foreign diplomas. In addition, the panel recommends that programme management annually reports to the Ministry on recruitment, comparing projections and the state of effective realizations, and submits a self-evaluation report by the start of the academic year 2022-2023, demonstrating the equivalence between the on-campus and the blended variants of the programme.

The Hague, 12 April 2021

On behalf of the international expert panel charged with the initial programme assessment of the Master Digital Sport Management of LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports in Differdange, Luxembourg.

Walter Nonneman
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

2 Introduction

2.1 Procedure

The Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg requested NVAO to carry out the initial accreditation of the master programme in Digital Sport Management, which the LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports S.A. (LUNEX) in Differdange (Luxembourg) intends to offer as of autumn 2021. LUNEX is a private initiative, established in 2014 by the German COGNOS AB, and aims to provide higher education in the areas of health and fitness, physiotherapy and preventive medicine. LUNEX was accredited as a specialised higher education institution in 2015 - and again in 2020 - by the Ministry for Higher Education and Research in Luxembourg. It currently offers several programmes that comply with the legal regulations in Luxembourg. Three programmes were accredited by the Ministry following the assessment by an NVAO panel in 2020.

This initial accreditation constitutes a re-assessment of the Master in International Sport Management, which the NVAO panel evaluated negatively in 2020. The Ministry asked NVAO to focus on the weaknesses laid out during the previous assessment and check the specific as well as general development of the new proposal. Given this particular situation, the NVAO convened the same international panel of experts that had performed the institutional and programme assessments in 2020. This panel consists of:

- Prof. dr. Walter Nonneman, Belgium, chair
- Dr. Jorit Meesters, The Netherlands, member
- Dr. Inge Derom, Belgium, member
- Dr. Elisa Pelosi, Italy, member
- Geert Hendriks MSc, Switzerland, member
- Dale Whelehan BSc, Ireland, student member

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO for this accreditation exercise. Short CV's of the panel members are provided in annex 1. On behalf of NVAO, Dr. Mark Frederiks was responsible for the coordination of the assessment process. The external secretary certified by NVAO, Mark Delmartino MA, drafted this report in close cooperation with the panel members and in agreement with the chair. All panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel is carrying out the assessment after which the Board of NVAO will make a recommendation to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg. It is up to the Ministry to make the final decision on the accreditation of the programme. The framework for assessment comprises the criteria under article 4 of the Grand Ducal Regulation of 24 August 2016 on accreditation of institutions and programmes of higher education, as well as the Flemish standards for programme assessment.

Having studied the documentation provided by LUNEX before the visit, the panel members submitted their preliminary findings to the external secretary, who compiled the impressions. This compilation document served as a basis for discussion during the panel's preparatory meeting on 1 February 2021. Annex 3 lists the materials made available by the programme.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed to hold the visit online on the 1st and 2nd of February 2021. After an internal meeting to discuss its preliminary finding, the panel talked to representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. During this meeting, the ministry representatives provided useful clarifications on the criteria for programme assessment and specific concerns. Furthermore, the panel spoke to the management of the institution and the programme, as well as to lecturers, potential students who were current undergraduates at LUNEX, and representatives from the sports industry. The schedule of the online visit is presented in annex 2.

Immediately after the online meetings and discussions, the panel formulated its considerations and preliminary conclusions, based on the findings of the site visit and built on the assessment of the documents. They constitute a stand-alone evaluation of the new proposal while focussing on the remedial adjustments made to the previous proposal. The panel chair reported these observations to the institutional and programme management of LUNEX. The panel ended its online visit with a debriefing of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research in Luxembourg. After the visit, the external secretary drafted the advisory report and circulated it to all panel members for review and feedback. The feedback of the panel was incorporated in a second version, which was validated by the chair and submitted to LUNEX for comments on factual errors. Following this review, a final draft was prepared and submitted on behalf of the panel to NVAO, which in turn will send the report to the Ministry in Luxembourg.

2.2 Panel report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary, while the current chapter is the introduction. The third chapter describes the institution and the programme and their position within the higher education system of Luxembourg. The fourth chapter describes the quality of the Master programme in Digital Sport Management. For each standard the panel describes its findings and considerations and issues a judgement. Findings are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the complementary materials and during the interviews. Considerations are the panel's interpretation of these findings and their respective importance. The considerations of the panel logically lead to a concluding assessment per standard. The panel concludes the chapter with an overall judgement on the quality of the programme and a table containing an overview of its assessments. The document concludes with annexes on panel composition, meeting sessions, the programme materials and abbreviations.

3 Description of the institution and the programme

3.1 Overview

Institution: LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports S.A
Location: Differdange
Country: Luxembourg
Status: privately funded institution

Programme: Master in Digital Sport Management
Institution: LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports S.A
Location: Differdange
Country: Luxembourg
Degree: Master
Study load: 120 ECTS
Variants: on site and hybrid (partly on-line, partly on-site)

3.2 Profile of the institution

LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise and Sports was established in 2014 as a Société Anonyme (S.A., public stock company) according to Luxembourg law. It is a 100% subsidiary of the German COGNOS AG Group. LUNEX is a specialised higher education institution in the areas of health, fitness, sports, physiotherapy and preventive medicine. LUNEX is based in Differdange: it has a 30-year leasehold contract with the city of Differdange for its campus, can use the nearby sports facilities of the municipality, and is located a few kilometres from the Belval campus of the University of Luxembourg.

LUNEX aims to be a leading international higher education institution for sport and health in Europe. It is the only higher education institution in Luxembourg that offers academic degree programmes in physiotherapy, sport and exercise science and sport management. Since the start of its activities, LUNEX is recognised by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research as a higher education institution; this accreditation has been renewed in 2020.

3.3 Profile of the programme

LUNEX is currently offering three bachelor and two master programmes, as well as one Foundation (preparatory) programme. All programmes are taught in English and the five degree programmes have been (re-)accredited by the Luxembourg authorities in 2019 and 2020. This report looks at the revised application for a sixth programme, the Master in Digital Sport Management, which builds further on the previously accredited bachelor's programme International Sport Management (BISM).

The master's programme in Digital Sport Management (MDSM) is a new programme that LUNEX wants to start in autumn 2021. It is designed as a two-year 120 ECTS programme that also allows for part-time study. Part of the curriculum is offered in two variants: on-campus lectures and online education. It is the intention of the programme to ensure that all students study at the LUNEX campus at least during the second year. The application for MDSM

constitutes a revision and elaboration of a previous proposal for a Master in International Sport Management, which the assessment panel found premature in 2020. The new proposal for the MDSM programme builds on the one hand on the existing BISM programme; on the other hand, it is developed to answer a specific need for highly qualified and skilled managers able to work in global and complex situations in a sport sector that is increasingly demanding for digital skills and knowledge.

4 Programme assessment – Master in Digital Sport Management

4.1 Standard 1 – intended exit level

Findings

The Master in Digital Sport Management (MDSM) is based on the master in International Sport Management, which LUNEX submitted for accreditation in 2019-2020 but which the panel found to be premature in its development at the time. As a result, the programme management revised the programme and created a new proposal. The resulting MDSM aspires to meet the needs of the sports industry, to fill a gap in the education of current sports managers, and to address the flaws identified by the panel in the previous proposal.

The panel noticed from the information materials that the programme developers have made significant attempts to develop and - compared to the previous proposal - strengthen the rationale for the new programme. It was designed following an extensive review of existing master programmes on sport management, sport business and sport economics and a benchmarking exercise of similar master programmes in the wider region around Luxembourg. Moreover, the programme developers were inspired by the priorities and results of several European networks and projects they are involved in. Furthermore, research undertaken with sports organisations in Luxembourg on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the new programme profile. The developers noticed that the sports industry increasingly calls for qualified experts and that the educational/academic requirements for professionals in sport business are increasing. At the same time, the digitalisation of society has created numerous challenges – and an equal number of opportunities – for the sports sector, such as social media-based sponsorship, digital branding, e-sport, and value co-creation. As a result, sport clubs and federations are looking for educated managers who can assist and lead the digital transformation of their organisation. The panel investigated the above-mentioned reviews and spoke to professional field representatives; both sources confirm the state of play that was described in the proposal and advocated skilfully by the programme leader during the interviews.

The preparatory work of the programme team revealed that digitalisation is an actual topic among sport organisations, and that there are several higher education programmes that educate towards (international) sport management, but that these programmes do not pay much attention – at least not according to their titles - to the digital dimension of sport management. Hence, the programme developers are confident that the proposed MDSM will not only answer a need in sport business but also fill a gap in the education of sport managers: it aims to meet the sporting industry's need by educating digitally skilled and highly reflective individuals with a critical and global mindset who can not only use their advanced knowledge about sport management issues to analyse and solve complex problems but can also contribute individually and in teams to the digital transformation of their organisation.

The panel noticed furthermore that the new master programme would carry a different title (Master in Digital Sport Management). In view of the programme's specific profile on

digitalisation in sport management, the panel thinks the new title indeed covers the contents of the new programme. Internal discussions within LUNEX, however, have led to the programme team to identify a potential misunderstanding regarding the title of the programme to address digital sport rather than digitalisation and digital strategy. As a result, the panel was informed that LUNEX would like to change the title of the programme to reflect its focus on digitalisation and not the management of digital sport. The panel understands that offering a programme on digital sport management may be interpreted as management of digital sport, and this potential misunderstanding should be avoided.

In addition to developing a clear programme objective, the development team also elaborated programme learning outcomes that reflect not only the level (master) and the domain (sport management) of the programme, but also take into account the advanced digital skills that are promoted by the European Digital Competence Framework. The combination of key digital competences and specific sport management skills constitutes the basis for the formulation of the MDSM programme learning outcomes. The panel noticed that the resulting set of 15 programme learning outcomes are presented according to the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework and that their formulation indeed reflects (master) level 7 of the framework. The set of learning outcomes consists of 5 advanced knowledge outcomes, 5 specialised skills, and 5 outcomes that refer to attitudes (such as responsibility and autonomy). Moreover, the learning outcomes reflect Bloom's taxonomy according to which master students are not only expected to understand and apply knowledge but also to analyse and evaluate information and data, as well as create new content. Finally, the learning outcomes cover the seven general and transferable learning goals identified by the so-called "Masterness toolkit", such as business analysis, critical thinking, leadership and team-working.

The panel also noticed that the learning outcomes at programme level are broken down in learning goals per module. These learning goals are described in the module handbook and are brought together in the matrix of module goals and programme outcomes. Overall, the panel found that the breakdown of programme outcomes in learning goals per module has been done adequately. As a result, it seems likely that students who achieve the learning goals per module will, upon graduation, acquire the learning outcomes at programme level.

When the panel assessed the previous proposal last year, they were not entirely convinced by the profile and learning outcomes of the Master of International Sport Management. This time, however, the panel finds the proposal of a much better quality: the new MDSM offers graduates from the LUNEX Bachelor programme in International Sport Management an additional level and domain profile. Moreover, the formulation of the intended learning outcomes is much more precise and set at the right level. Thirdly, the unique selling proposition of the new MDSM is clear – and much more outspoken than the profile presented in the previous application. And finally, the orientation of the new MDSM is straightforward: the programme is largely aimed at master students who upon graduation want to pursue a professional career in the sports industry; nonetheless, it also offers opportunities for students who aspire a more academically-oriented position or those who would like to pursue a PhD afterwards.

Considerations

The panel considers that the intended exit level of the new master programme reflects the requirements that have been set for the programme by the professional field and the sport management discipline from an international perspective.

The new master programme has a relevant profile that is likely to cater for a good number of bachelor graduates and professionals who want to start / build a career in the sports management sector in Luxembourg and beyond. The panel welcomes the efforts of the programme team to develop a master's programme that not only ensures a continuity with the bachelor's programme but whose profile is also based on an identified need for highly qualified and skilled managers in the sport sector. Moreover, the panel appreciates the comprehensive work of the programme developers in designing a programme with a specific profile (digitalisation in sport management) and underpinning this profile in good detail. According to the panel, the programme developers have ensured that the learning outcomes reflect both the profile and the level of the MDSM programme. In this exercise, the situation in Luxembourg and the relevance of the programme for the sport sector in Luxembourg has been considered.

In so far as the title of the programme is concerned, the panel considers that the new programme profile and its contents are about digitalisation in sport management, and therefore suggest renaming the programme as 'Master in Sport Management and Digitalisation', or a similar title to assure that the contents of the programme are properly reflected in the title.

Moreover, the panel found that the learning goals at course level relate to the programme learning outcomes. While the programme has been designed having in mind master students who aspire a professional career, the panel considers that the programme also includes opportunities for an academic pathway afterwards.

Finally, the panel considers that the master programme in Digital Sport Management fulfils the following reference criteria for accreditation set by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research with regard to the intended exit level:

- it has a structured curriculum which reflects the objectives of the programme;
- it is defined in line with European standards and the Bologna process;
- it is designed taking into account the principles of student-centred learning;
- it is divided into modules with which are assigned a certain number of credits;
- the objectives and learning goals of each MDSM module are clearly defined.

Conclusion

The panel judges standard 1, intended learning outcomes, to be **satisfactory**.

4.2 Standard 2 – teaching-learning environment

Findings

The Master in Digital Sport Management (MDSM) is based on the master in International Sport Management, which LUNEX submitted for accreditation in 2019-2020 but which the

panel found to be premature in its development with regards to several elements. These included the study load of the respective modules, the specifics of the online variant, the viability and sustainability of both variants, and the considerable understaffing of the LUNEX department International Sport Management that would be sustaining not only a recently created bachelor programme but also a master programme in full development.

The new MDSM programme amounts to 120 ECTS, which are spread equally across two years of two semesters each. The programme set-up is such that it also accommodates part-time students. The curriculum consists of 9 modules, including a placement (20 ECTS) and a research project (30 ECTS). The first six courses (60 ECTS in total) are offered in two variants: either as on-campus lectures or through distance (online) learning.

The panel noticed from the materials and the discussions that since the previous proposal a lot of work has been undertaken by the programme developers with regard to making the new programme not only interesting content-wise, but also viable from a quality / accreditation point of view. Moreover, the preparations for the online variant of the programme have advanced. The panel found that the discussions with programme staff and online developers were particularly helpful in getting a more detailed and complete picture of the curriculum and the plans of the programme team with regard to contents, programme variants, module deliverables, and staffing.

The elaboration of the online variant is a co-creation process of LUNEX and the E-Learning Group (ELG). The panel understood from the materials that ELG has the credentials to operate as a relevant partner in this endeavour. This impression was furthermore confirmed during the discussion with – and the introduction to the platform by - two ELG staff members who are working on the assignment with LUNEX. However, the presentation only covered online course capabilities and tools, rather than course material so that final quality and course level is difficult to judge in this stage of the online programme development. The panel expects that programme management will monitor and guarantee that the finalised modules of the online variant will indeed be of good quality and will be equivalent in content and level to the on-campus variant of the modules.

The panel established from the discussions that it will not be possible to follow the programme in an online variant only as both the event and the internship are taking place in Luxembourg. In situations when individual students would be allowed to perform one of these assignments “abroad” (e.g. an internship at PSG football club), each student will still be expected to come to the LUNEX campus for the scheduled contact hours on event management, internship and thesis. In fact, the programme team explicitly confirmed that the contact moments related to the final three modules (event management, internship, thesis) are only held on campus in Luxembourg. These courses are organised every semester to avoid study delays and facilitate the ‘blending’ of students who followed the first part of the curriculum on-campus and online.

The new master programme is likely to attract a wide variety of students with different educational backgrounds. While such variety can be interesting and enriching for both student group and staff, the panel noticed that the information on the LUNEX website and in the programme materials about the admission criteria are not consistent. In fact, it is not clear whether students with a bachelor degree in a domain that is not related to business or

sport (e.g. engineering) can be admitted. While it makes sense to admit all interested candidates with a bachelor degree from a recognised higher education institution without setting additional requirements as to the domain of the degree, this situation may attract students with very diverse prior knowledge and skills which cannot lead to a standardised baseline level of required knowledge amongst the student population at the beginning of the programme or brought up to par in the first module on digital sport management. With regard to the recognition of foreign diplomas and the validation of prior learning are concerned, LUNEX informed the panel that its Student Office is reviewing the (reliability of) foreign diplomas prior to accepting candidates. The documentation it provided on the accreditation of prior learning demonstrates that LUNEX has a system in place to consider applications for waivers.

While the panel acknowledges that the programme development work has advanced considerably, it also notices that still a lot needs to be done before programme inception as of Autumn 2021 with almost no finalised deliverables at the time of the assessment visit. The panel understands that a full commitment in the development of the programme is an overly risky investment in resources and staff, prior to programme accreditation. In this regard, the programme development team has produced a credible planning with deadlines for the development, testing and finalisation of each module and its variants to be ready for start-up in October 2021.

In terms of staffing, the information materials provided extensive information on the qualifications of the current teaching staff envisaged for the MDSM, which consists of both permanent staff on the payroll of LUNEX and external lecturers. According to the panel, the division of the teaching load between permanent staff (80%) and guest lecturers (20%) looks appropriate, given the diversity of topics and the specific expertise of the external lecturers. Moreover, the panel acknowledges the particular expertise among the envisaged staff and guest lecturers with regard to the specific contents of the respective modules. Nonetheless, the number of permanent staff is not yet sufficient to fully deliver the programme. The information materials show that three modules still require the appointment of an academic staff member while one module needs a complementary guest lecturer. LUNEX is aware of this situation and is reportedly finalising the recruitment of an additional staff member in the domain of sport finance. It also has elaborated a recruitment plan according to which additional staff will be hired and take up their positions in time for the delivery of the respective modules. More staff will be hired in the next six years in case the student numbers are growing. ELG will dedicate a half-time staff member to support the online delivery of the modules during the first year, with an option to commit more staff in case the student numbers increase. The institutional and programme management confirmed their commitment to this plan during the interviews, on the condition that the new MDSM would be accredited and thus start in autumn 2021.

When it assessed the previous proposal last year, the panel was not convinced by the curriculum and the staffing of the Master of International Sport Management. This time, however, the panel finds the proposal of a much better quality: the stronger profile of the new programme (as described under the previous standard) has a positive effect on the curriculum. In fact, the link between the programme and the modules is stronger with learning goals at course level being more aligned with the learning outcomes at programme level. Moreover, the envisaged study load of the respective modules is better motivated in

the module handbook. The description of the internship and the thesis modules is more extensive and their rationale coincides with the above-mentioned orientation of the programme. This finding also applies to the sixth module on scientific research and the seventh module on event management. The discussions moreover learned that the research, internship and thesis components of the MDSM are clearly of a higher level than what is envisaged in similar modules of the bachelor programme.

One issue that the panel highlights as potentially problematic is the equivalence in the on-campus and online variants of the first six programme modules. Given that this is an initial accreditation of a two-year programme that has not yet started, the panel is aware that the new MDSM programme is not yet fully developed. At the time of the assessment visit, however, the programme materials were not developed to such an extent that the panel could verify that students who enrol on the on-campus variant would acquire the same competencies as their fellow students of the online variant for each of the six modules. Similarly, the panel could not establish whether both groups of students would receive the same level of support in their respective variants to accomplish the six modules.

Considerations

The panel considers that the teaching-learning environment of the new master programme enables students to achieve the programme objectives. The set-up of the curriculum and its close alignment with the objective and relevance of the programme, the clear link between the learning goals of the respective modules and the overall learning outcomes at programme level, the orientation of the master programme towards the professional field, and the disciplinary quality of the academic staff envisaged for the programme and its respective modules are strong elements to support this appreciation. Moreover, the panel acknowledges the efforts of the MDSM programme development team to address the flaws it had reported in the previous proposal.

Nonetheless, the panel is very much aware that the new MDSM programme is not yet fully developed. Given that this is an initial accreditation of a two-year programme that has not yet started, there is no hard evidence yet of its operationalisation in terms of module contents, pedagogical approach in both on-campus and online variants, student support, module deliverables and assessment. Also, the staffing picture is incomplete. However, the elements that are available and the elaborated plans on module development and staff recruitment are sufficiently convincing to allow the programme to go ahead. As there is still a lot of development work to be done before the start of the programme, this positive signal should trigger LUNEX and the programme management to develop and finalise its modules, to recruit additional staff and to decide on and implement the admission criteria. With regard to the latter, the programme may want to develop additional course materials or elaborate a foundation course for Bachelor graduates who do not meet the initial condition for entry, in order to ensure that all students can start the new programme more or less on the same footing.

To mitigate the elements that it cannot control at this moment, the panel urges the management to go ahead with the recruitment plans it announced and confirmed during the accreditation process. Moreover, the panel recommends the programme to draft a self-evaluation report on the equivalence between the on-campus and the online variants of the modules in terms of content, assessment, staff support for students etc. This report can be

produced and submitted to the authorities by the start of the academic year 2022-2023 when the curriculum of the first year has been fully delivered once.

Given that the online variant is produced in co-creation with an external provider, the panel suggests that LUNEX provides the Ministry of Higher Education and Research with a copy of the co-operation agreement with ELG in so far as intellectual property, quality assurance, student support and GDPR-related issues are concerned. Further to the information provided by LUNEX and reviewed by the panel during the assessment visit, the panel invites LUNEX to inform the Ministry about the provisions it has put in place regarding the validation of prior learning, including the recognition of foreign diplomas.

In sum, the panel considers that at the time of the assessment visit, the proposed MDSM is sufficiently developed to warrant a positive appreciation on the teaching-learning environment. Moreover, the panel considers that the new master programme in Digital Sport Management fulfils following reference criteria for accreditation set by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research regarding the teaching-learning environment:

- it has an appropriate and correctly distributed workload;
- it offers an adequate balance between theoretical and practical modules;
- the admission criteria are clear and published;
- the programme can rely on sufficient human, financial and material resources;
- its staff is qualified in terms of disciplinary know-how and didactical skills;
- the proportion of permanent teachers and external speakers is adequate;
- the staff has opportunities for continuing education;
- students get adequate supervision;
- students are offered tutoring.

Conclusion

The panel judges standard 2, teaching learning environment, to be **satisfactory**.

4.3 Standard 3 – exit level to be achieved

Findings

During its previous assessment of both institution and programmes, the panel understood from the materials and the discussions that student assessment in the different programmes is based on the assessment policy and provisions laid down in the Assessment Regulations of LUNEX. At that time, the panel studied these regulations and found that the document covered all relevant aspects in the broad domain of assessment. Moreover, the Examination Board was functioning adequately, and its members had good expertise. In so far as the current accreditation exercise is concerned, the institutional and programme management confirmed that the panel's previous observations on the applicability of assessment policy and provisions also hold true for the new Master programme in Digital Sport Management.

The new MDSM is based on the Master in International Sport Management, which LUNEX submitted for accreditation in 2019-2020 but which the panel found to be premature in its development at the time because it contained too little information on the assessment methods in the respective modules and because the criteria for evaluation of the internship

module and the evaluation form for the master thesis were not designed to the expected level. Also, there was no specific information on the assessment of the online variants of the modules.

The panel noticed from the materials and the discussions that since the previous review, the programme developers have been looking at the assessment component of the new MDSM. The structure of the respective modules and their position within the curriculum have been strengthened, and this also goes for the different assessment methods through which students are expected to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning goals of the modules. There is more information available on the internship and thesis modules, and their assessment has been thought through. In this regard, the panel found that the orientation of the programme towards master students aspiring a professional career in the sports industry puts the content of the second year modules (event management, internship, thesis) in an appropriate context, and provides a good motivation for choosing a particular assessment method and evaluation form. This rationale for a professionally oriented master programme will however not shy away students who envisage a more academic trajectory: in fact, the institution, the programme and the staff are in the position to support and assess – through the module on advanced research methods and the thesis – the competencies of those individuals who enter the programme with academic ambitions.

While the panel acknowledges that the programme development work on assessment has advanced, it also notices that still a lot needs to be done before programme inception. In line with its observations on the teaching-learning environment, the panel found that at the time of the assessment visit (i.e. seven months before the start) the programme still had little to show in terms of how assessment would be operationalised, particularly for online modules. This raises again the concern that the equivalence in assessment of the on-campus and online variants of six programme modules could not be established at the time of the assessment visit. The panel understood from the materials and the interviews that the assessment will be similar for on-campus and online students but that the assessment mode for the latter group of students will be slightly adapted to the online format. For instance, written exams for online students will consist of multiple-choice questions; proctoring software of ELG will ensure that the exam is taken in line with the required safety measures. While it acknowledges the importance of testing students' knowledge of the module-specific theories and methodologies through written examinations, the panel wonders whether the multiple-choice format is the most appropriate evaluation method to establish this know-how with master students. Moreover, the panel wonders if such assessment method will allow to establish in an equivalent way that both online and on-campus students have attained the learning goals of a given module to a similar extent. Confronted with this observation, the programme management indicated that it concerns three written exams (out of a total 18 pieces of assessment for the entire programme) and that each of these written exams is combined with another form of assessment which will be similar for both the on-campus and on-line students. Finally, the panel trusts that the proctoring software fulfils the requirements of the Luxembourg law about GDPR but invites the programme management to inform – and get validation by - the authorities of this approach prior to the start of the programme.

Considerations

The panel considers that the new master programme has an adequate assessment, testing and examination system in place to ascertain whether the intended learning outcomes are

being achieved. The assessment of the master programme is aligned with the provisions set at central institution level. The structure of the respective modules in the MDSM is clear, which in turn provides a rationale for the chosen assessment methods. Across the programme there is a good balance in the assessment methods, and course assessment is transparent for students as they know in advance what they need to study for the exam and how they will be assessed. Moreover, the panel acknowledges the efforts of the MDSM programme development team to address the flaws regarding assessment it had reported in the previous proposal. In this regard, the clarification about the orientation of the programme leads to a better understanding of the way the second-year modules on event management, internship and thesis will be tested.

Nonetheless, the panel is very much aware that the new MDSM programme is not yet fully developed. Given that this is an initial accreditation of a two-year programme that has not yet started, there is little evidence yet of its full operationalisation in terms of module assessment, notably with regard to the first six courses that will be offered in an on-campus and an online variant. In this regard, the panel extends its recommendation for a self-evaluation report, issued under the previous standard, that addresses the equivalence in assessment of the module variants.

In sum, the panel considers that at the time of the assessment visit, the proposed MDSM is sufficiently developed to warrant a positive appreciation on the exit level to be achieved. Moreover, the panel considers that the new master programme in Digital Sport Management fulfils following reference criteria for accreditation set by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research regarding the exit level to be achieved:

- the evaluation methods are defined on the basis of the educational objectives;
- the evaluation methods are communicated to students;
- the diplomas provide information on the acquired qualification.

Conclusion

The panel judges standard 3, assessment, to be **satisfactory**.

4.4 Standard 4 – internal quality assurance

Findings

During its previous assessment of both institution and programmes, the panel understood from the materials and the discussions that the quality assurance (QA) provisions that were in place at LUNEX and its accredited programmes would also apply to the envisaged Master programme International Sport Management. In its report, the panel noted that the set-up and organisation of internal quality assurance are aimed at systematically improving the programme with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders. Nonetheless, there was room for improvement regarding awareness raising on opportunities for student representation. Moreover, the programme would benefit from a more structural involvement of the professional field.

In so far as the current accreditation exercise is concerned, the institutional and programme management confirmed that the panel's previous observation on the applicability of QA provisions also holds true for the new Master programme in Digital Sport Management. The current panel moreover gathered from several discussions that QA is on the minds of the programme management and that students, staff and the professional field are involved in evaluating the programme components, monitoring their quality and improving the relevance of MDSM. Given that some modules are taught online and consist of two variants, the programme management will monitor carefully that the quality of both variants is similar and that students appreciate each variant similarly.

LUNEX and ELG, the provider of the online variant of the modules, are currently cooperating on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement will be formalised before the start of the new programme and include provisions to ensure that the results of the course evaluations are incorporated in the jointly developed online modules that are offered through the ELG platform.

In addition to regular module evaluations that exist for all modules and all programmes at LUNEX, the MDSM programme will establish a student staff consultative committee that will meet once per semester and include a video-chat with student representatives who follow the online variant.

Furthermore, the panel understood from the materials and the discussions that the professional field has been consulted in the preparation of this master programme. The representatives of the professional field whom the panel spoke to are highly enthusiastic about the relevance and timeliness of the new programme. They confirmed that their suggestions had been taken on board during the preparatory phase and that they will continue to monitor the quality of the new programme in the future. They will have an opportunity to do so – informally – by mentoring MDSM students during their internships and evaluating their competencies.

Given that the curriculum contains two modules (event management and internship) that require students to be actively involved with sports organisations, the MDSM programme will have enough opportunities to involve external stakeholders. In this way, a growing number and network of professional field representatives can monitor the relevance of the programme.

Considerations

The panel considers that the set-up and the organisation of internal quality assurance are aimed at systematically improving the new master programme with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

Given that the programme has not yet started, it is not possible to refer to any hard evidence. However, the discussions have convinced the panel that the programme has relevant institution-wide and programme-specific tools at disposition to monitor the quality of the individual modules, the respective module variants and the overall programme. In this regard, the panel considers that also MDSM students will have good opportunities to evaluate individual modules in a formal and structural way and that their comments will be heard. Moreover, the discussion with prospective students indicates that students feel at ease within

LUNEX and can also voice their concerns openly and directly. If anything, the extensive internship period is likely to require a specific quality assurance process, with students providing feedback on the internship and formal mechanisms being in place between LUNEX and the placement provider for the purposes of quality enhancement.

Furthermore, the panel also welcomes the efforts of the MDSM management to address the QA flaws which the panel had observed previously regarding student representation and stakeholder involvement.

Finally, the panel considers that the master programme in Digital Sport Management fulfils the reference criteria for accreditation set by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research on internal quality assurance:

- it is subject to internal review to ensure it reflects the latest results of research and teaching and fulfils the needs of students and society;
- teachers and students can voice their opinion and participate in the decision making process;
- it collects, analyses and uses information for the management and improvement of its programmes;
- it has an internal and external QA system that is part of its strategic management;
- the QA system complies with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG);
- it has defined responsibilities, competencies and decision-making process in the institution;
- it has a dedicated person/committee to deal with equal opportunities.

Conclusion

The panel judges standard 4, internal quality assurance, to be **satisfactory**.

4.5 Standard 5 - research

Findings

During its previous assessment of both institution and programmes, the panel understood from the materials and the discussions that the attention of LUNEX to research, as well as the research activities coordinated by the Research Council and performed in the department international sport management, will also extend to and apply for the envisaged Master programme International Sport Management. In so far as the current accreditation exercise is concerned, the institutional and programme management confirmed that the panel's previous observations about the organisation, implementation and dissemination of research also hold true for the new Master programme in Digital Sport Management.

The panel noticed in the materials and during the discussions on the new MDSM programme that LUNEX is paying considerable attention to research and that there is a clear link between the research of the academic staff and the topics that will become part of the new programme. In fact, LUNEX staff is undertaking research in areas such as Sport governance and ethics, Digitalisation and innovation in sport, and Vital cities and social impact of sport. This research, which is both self-funded and based on (inter)national research grants, contributes to knowledge in the field of sport management and to the professionalisation and

digitalisation of sport organisations. Examples include research on the digitalisation of sport organisations by the envisaged course coordinator for the modules 2 (Digital skills for sport business) and 4 (Digital sport marketing), and research on the impact of COVID-19 on the sport sector in Luxembourg, which is likely to affect modules 1 (digital sport management principles), 5 (digital sport leadership) and 7 (event management). Furthermore, the year-long research focus of the department staff ensures that MDSM students of the modules 6 (advanced research methods for sport) and 9 (master thesis) will benefit from the experience of research-active staff.

Considerations

The panel considers that LUNEX is paying good attention to research and that this attention is demonstrated through academic staff providing research-informed education to students. This consideration is valid for all programmes at LUNEX and certainly applies to the envisaged master programme in Digital Sport Management. The ‘theme’ of digital/international sport management is one of the research pillars of LUNEX. Moreover, the staff within this research department are already delivering a dedicated programme at bachelor level.

According to the panel, the materials and discussions show that the individuals who are already on the LUNEX payroll to deliver the new programme have adequate research expertise in the domain of digital sport management to offer research-informed teaching to master students and to assist these students in a very broad range of academically or professionally oriented master theses.

Finally, the panel considers that the master programme in Digital Sport Management fulfils the reference criteria for accreditation set by the Luxembourg Ministry of Higher Education and Research with regard to research:

- It performs basic oriented research activities or applied research activities that lead to publications in international scientific and peer-reviewed journals;
- It incorporates the results of its research in the education it is providing.

Conclusion

The panel judges standard 5, research, to be **satisfactory**.

4.6 Overall conclusion

Having judged all five standards as “satisfactory”, the panel’s overall judgement of the new master’s programme in Digital Sport Management is positive.

The panel considers that the new programme will be fully embedded in the structure and approach of LUNEX and will benefit to a similar extent as all other existing programmes of the general provisions in terms of governance, quality assurance, research policy, assessment regulations, facilities, etc. Given the panel’s appreciation of these structures and approaches in its previous assessment report on the institution and several of its programmes, the panel is confident that the envisaged programme MDSM will eventually benefit from this integration.

While acknowledging that an initial programme accreditation consists of verifying the intended delivery of a programme, the panel found that the application contained sufficient concrete information on the operationalisation of the intended programme to warrant a positive advice. Hence, the panel's conclusion that the new master programme complies with all five criteria of the evaluation framework.

In this regard, the panel considers that the (application for a) new master programme in Digital Sport Management constitutes a considerable improvement compared to the previous proposal it reviewed early 2020, to the extent that the issues it had identified as problematic in the previous application have now largely been resolved.

Nonetheless, the panel is very much aware that the new programme is not yet fully developed. Hence, the panel recommends that before the start of the academic year 2021-2022, the programme management:

- assures consistency between admission criteria as presented in the programme materials and posted on the website;
- provides the Ministry of Higher Education and Research with a copy of the co-operation agreement with ELG in so far as intellectual property, quality assurance, student support and GDPR-related issues are concerned;
- informs the Ministry about the provisions it has put in place regarding the validation of prior learning, including the recognition of foreign diplomas.

In order to ensure that the intended recruitment plan for MDSM is implemented according to the projections announced, the panel recommends that the programme management annually reports to the Ministry comparing projections and the state of effective realizations.

Finally, the panel recommends that the programme management submits a self-evaluation report to the Ministry by the start of the academic year 2022-2023, when the first year of the programme (featuring six modules in both online and on-campus variants) has been rolled out completely for the first time, demonstrating the equivalence between the on-campus and the blended variants of the programme in terms of module contents, assessment, and student support.

4.7 Overview of the assessments

Standard		Judgement
1	Intended exit level	satisfactory
2	Teaching-learning environment	satisfactory
3	Exit level to be achieved	satisfactory
4	Internal quality assurance	satisfactory
5	Research	satisfactory
Overall judgement		positive

5 Annexes

5.1 Annex 1 – Composition of the panel

Prof. Dr. Walter Nonneman, panel chair

Emeritus Professor in Economics, University of Antwerp. Worked with Harvard Business School and Warwick University. Specialised in management in the public and non - profit sector, economic policy, and public economics. Board/supervisory positions at KBC, Cera, Fluxys België N.V. Expert in previous NVAO assessments in Luxembourg.

Dr. Jorit Meesters, expert

Postdoc researcher at the department of Orthopedics, Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy at Leiden University Medical Centre. Professor of applied sciences in Rehabilitation and Technology at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. Head researcher at Basalt rehabilitation centre in The Hague. PhD at Leiden UMC, MSc at Faculty of Human Movement Sciences of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, BA at Academy for Physical Therapy in Enschede.

Dr. Inge Derom, expert

Professor in Sport Management, Sport marketing and communication, Sport business etc. at the Department of Movement and Sport Sciences of Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). PhD in Sport Management at University of British Columbia (Canada). M.A. in Sport Management at University of Windsor (Canada). M.A. in Physical Education at KU Leuven.

Dr. Elisa Pelosin, expert

Assistant Professor at the University of Genova (Italy) - Dipartimento di Neuroscienze, Riabilitazione, Oftalmologia, Genetica e Scienze Materno - Infantili (DINO GMI). Associate Professor candidate, Physiotherapist and expert in Neurological Rehabilitation.

Geert Hendriks MSc, expert

CEO of The SHIFT / Sustainability experts in Lausanne. Former Head of Projects at the International Academy of Sports Science and Technology. Master in Sports Administration and Technology at the International Academy of Sports Science and Technology in Lausanne.

Dale Whelehan BSc, student expert

PhD candidate in Behaviour Science at Trinity College Dublin, BSc in Physiotherapy at Trinity College Dublin, Diploma in Sports Medicine at FIFA (Switzerland). Physiotherapist at Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin. Quality expert reviewer in ENQA, freelance student quality consultant, ESU QA student pool, Former Deputy President Trinity College Dublin Students Union.

The panel was supported by:

- Mark Delmartino MA, secretary trained and certified by NVAO
- Dr. Mark Frederiks, NVAO process coordinator

All panel members and the secretary have signed a declaration of independence

5.2 Annex 2 – Schedule of the online visit

Monday 1 February 2021

- 13.00 Internal preparatory meeting of the panel
- 15.15 Meeting with Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg
- 16.15 Preparatory meeting of the panel
- 17.00 End of day one

Tuesday 2 February 2021

- 09.00 Meeting with institutional and programme management
- 10.15 Meeting with teachers and researchers on MDSM
- 11.15 Meeting with technical support staff and demonstration of digital platform
- 12.15 Lunch
- 13.00 Meeting with prospective students
- 13.30 Meeting with prospective employers
- 14.15 Optional interview with institutional and programme management
- 15.00 Internal panel meeting – preliminary assessment
- 16.40 Feedback to LUNEX institutional and programme management
- 17.00 Briefing of Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg
- 17.30 End of online visit

5.3 Annex 3 – Documents reviewed

LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise & Sports, Request for Accreditation Master in Digital Sport Management, October 2020.

Annexes to the request for accreditation

- Module Handbook
- Master Benchmarking
- Matrix of Learning Outcomes
- Academic staff workload
- Internship agreement
- MDSM internship evaluation by mentor
- Master thesis module online
- Admission request to master thesis
- Master thesis proposal assessment

Additional information sent by LUNEX on the Accreditation of Prior Learning

Assessment report LUNEX institution and programmes, NVAO 2020.

Framework for the assessment of the Master in Digital Sport Management

5.4 Annex 4 – Abbreviations used

BISM - Bachelor's programme in International Sport Management

ECTS - European Credit Transfer Scheme

FTE - full-time equivalent

LUNEX - Lunex International University of Health, Exercise & Sports

MDSM - Master's programme in Digital Sport Management

MISM - Master's programme in International Sport Management

NVAO - Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders

QA - Quality Assurance

S.A. - Société Anonyme

TLC - Teaching and Learning Council

Colophon

Master in Digital Sport Management
LUNEX International University of Health, Exercise and Sports S.A.
Programme Assessment • Report
April 2021
*Final report submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education and
Research of Luxembourg on 6 May 2021.*



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