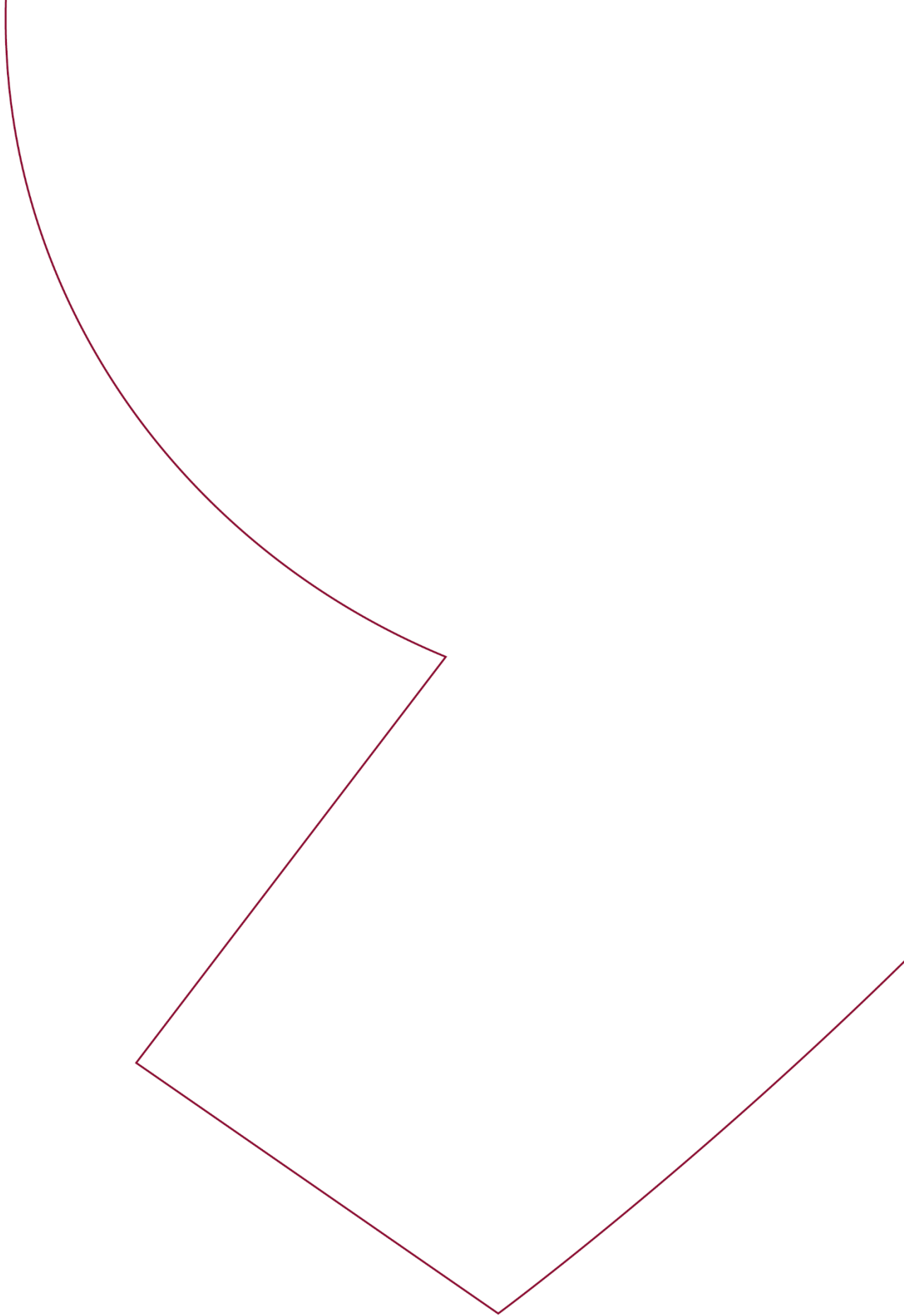# ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Limited programme assessments
## **Rotterdam School of Management**
## Erasmus University Rotterdam

BSc Bedrijfskunde | 50645
BSc International Business Administration | 50952
MSc International Management | 60256
MSc Executive MBA | 75045
MSc Global Executive MBA | 75046
MSc Corporate Communication | 75049
MSc International MBA | 75047
MSc Supply Chain Management | 60093
MSc Business Information Management | 60453
MSc Finance & Investments | 60409
MSc Marketing Management | 60063
MSc Management of Innovation | 60458
      Track: Medical Business Innovation
MSc Strategic Management | 60066
MSc Strategic Entrepreneurship | 60455
MSc Global Business & Sustainability | 60456
MSc People, Organisations & Change | 60991
MSc in Business Administration | 60644
      ▫ Track: Master in Management Fulltime
      ▫ Track: Master in Management Parttime
      ▫ Track: Accounting & Financial Management
      ▫ Track: Business Analytics & Management

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  ▫ Track: Master in Management Parttime
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# INHOUDSOPGAVE

# 1. GENERAL DATA

| Name Institution | **Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam** |
|---|---|
| Status | Funded |
| Outcomes of Institutional Quality Assessment | Positive, 6 April 2018 |
| Name of programmes in Register Instellingen Hoger Onderwijs (RIO) and ISAT-code | BSc Bedrijfskunde \| 50645<br>BSc International Business Administration \| 50952<br><br>MSc International Management \| 60256<br>MSc Executive MBA \| 75045<br>MSc Global Executive MBA \| 75046<br>MSc Corporate Communication \| 75049<br>MSc International MBA \| 75047<br><br>MSc Supply Chain Management \| 60093<br>MSc Business Information Management \| 60453<br>MSc Finance & Investments \| 60409<br>MSc Marketing Management \| 60063<br>MSc Management of Innovation \| 60458<br>      Track: Medical Business Innovation<br><br>MSc Strategic Management \| 60066<br>MSc Strategic Entrepreneurship \| 60455<br>MSc Global Business & Sustainability \| 60456<br>MSc People, Organisations & Change \| 60991<br><br>MSc in Business Administration \| 60644<br>    ▫ Track: Master in Management Fulltime<br>    ▫ Track: Master in Management Parttime<br>    ▫ Track: Accounting & Financial Management<br>    ▫ Track: Business Analytics & Management |
| Date site visit | January 22 to 24, 2025 |

## 2.    INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the assessment of the programme quality according to the NVAO framework of 17 academic degree programmes that are currently offered by the Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR).

RSM is the largest of the nine Schools of Erasmus University Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) was founded in 1913 under the name of "The Netherlands School of Trade and Commerce". Today EUR is one of the 13 public research universities in the Netherlands and an international knowledge institute for critical thinking and academic training. Education and research focus on three domains: (i) economics & management; (ii) medicine & health sciences; (iii) law, culture and society.

Since 2018 RSM has adopted the mission statement "to be a force for positive change in the world". RSM aims to help, educate and prepare students, academics and people in business to become critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinkers and doers. Both mission and values are inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which provide a framework for advancing the mind- set and capabilities of students, staff and faculty, so that these goals will be embedded in the research, education and services of RSM.

RSM is organised in 5 clusters: the bachelor programmes, the executive masters, a group of five topical master programmes, a group of four strategic masters and the master of business administration, including four separate tracks. All programmes have provided extensive documentation including a self assessment report per programme and track.

In order to further align the setups of the different Executive MBA programmes (EMBA, Ft MBA, GEMBA) according to the AMBA requirements, RSM is implementing minor changes in the credit table 2025 of EMBA, Ft MBA and GEMBA to harmonise the study load of each programme to 65 EC. The credit tables of these programmes reflect the new situation in order to represent the actual status of the programme.  These marginal changes have no impact on either the intended or achieved learning outcomes. The changes also reflect the recommendation of the previous audit panel to further harmonise the Executive MBA's.

The audit panel consists of 9 auditees including two student members, 14 referents, supported by 3 secretaries. The panel members have been introduced to the audit process, studied the documentation and discussed their preliminary findings and points for clarification during an online meeting previous to the site visit.

This document includes a chapter with general findings and recommendations, followed by programme-specific reports detailing findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each programme

# 3.    GENERAL FINDINGS

Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) offers 17 programmes (ISAT). Each of these programmes has been individually assessed by the panel. The findings, considerations and conclusions for each programme are included in the following chapters of this report.

In recent years, RSM has made significant investments in further developing its programmes, with a strong emphasis on its mission. This process is still ongoing. This chapter outlines the developments within RSM that have influenced the programmes it offers. The panel presents general findings in this chapter that apply to multiple or all programmes. Where relevant, these findings are referenced in the programme-specific reports.

While the panel recognises that the accreditation assessment is conducted at the programme level (ISAT code), it has nevertheless endeavoured to formulate a summarising conclusion regarding the overarching findings at the RSM level.

**RSM's Mission, vision and strategy**
RSM is transforming from a compliance-driven to a mission-drive organisation. The panel understood that the goal of this process is to develop a future-oriented education framework. While RSM previously operated primarily in response to short-term external pressures, such as accreditation requirements (NVAO, AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA) and the COVID-19 pandemic, it now aims to focus on its long-term strategy.

The Program for Quality & Innovation (PQI) with a school-wide scope was launched, coinciding with the HOKA[1] initiatives that took place across the university from 2018 to 2024. This programme  set the stage for a new strategic positioning and a vision  or goal-oriented organisation.

In 2021, the education portfolio was renewed, marking the beginning of a new strategic phase. The 2022-2025 Education Strategy introduced eight priorities, with a strong emphasis on competency-based education. This approach is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to succeed in an evolving workforce and an ever-changing world. RSM has formulated seven design principles that shape competency-based education, that is: (1) real-world relevance (experiential learning), (2) student autonomy and self-regulation, (3) programme-wide holistic perspective, (4) mastery-based learning, (5) assessment for learning (balanced formative and summative learning and transformative feedback), (6) personalised learning (blended learning), and (7) Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA).

As a blessing in disguise, the COVID-19 pandemic sped up innovation in education. Teachers had to quickly adapt to online teaching, and the pandemic accelerated RSM's journey towards integrating blended learning into its programmes. The panel learned that these experiences were instrumental in shaping RSM's post-pandemic educational strategy, where digital transformation was not seen as a temporary fix, but as a fundamental component of the school's long-term vision. This is evident, among other things, from the fully online MSc in Sustainability Management (parttime), which will be added to the portfolio starting in September 2025. Regarding the 17 programmes under review, the panel observes that all programmes utilise digital learning platforms and blended learning methods, though to highly varying degrees.

The management views the incorporation of educational technology as a way to enhance the flexibility and scalability of education. Conversations with teachers and academic directors have made it clear to the panel that not all of them are confident that the use of educational technology will provide a solution to the growing student numbers and/or the decrease of teaching faculty and other resources. They are unsure whether they can maintain the same

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[1] HOKA: Hoger Onderwijs Kwaliteitsafspraken

quality while using digital tools. The panel advises management to focus on this issue and, more than at present, to leverage leading programmes to inspire confidence among other educational teams that educational technology can enhance both the quality and feasibility of education. However, the panel would like to emphasize that technology does not always contribute to improving the quality of education. It is important to learn from each other about the conditions necessary to achieve this.

*Be a force of positive change*
In the last strategic period RSM adopted a new mission: be a force for positive change in the world. With this mission RSM strives for impactful knowledge, transformative education and purposeful engagement. It aims to educate students to become critical academics and responsible leaders who can make a difference through, among other things, their ability to identify and address societal challenges.

Throughout the panel's discussions, RSM's mission was frequently highlighted. The panel discovered that it is the responsibility of the Academic Directors to translate this mission into practice within their programmes. The panel noted that almost all programmes have incorporated the mission into their Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), although the degree of integration varies. The panel is confident that the programmes are continuously working to improve the implementation of RSM's mission at the course level, although there is still work to be done. In particular, when it comes to developing and assessing an attitude that fosters positive change, the panel identifies significant potential for improvement.

## Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes

During the previous review, it was noted that there was room for improvement in fine-tuning the formulation of the intended learning outcomes and aligning these with the educational goals at the course level, as well as with RSM's newly formulated mission and values. In recent years, all programmes have adjusted their intended learning outcomes to align with RSM's shift towards competency-based education. The panel observes that each programme has formulated its intended learning outcomes in its own way, appropriate to their field, mostly using a classification based on knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The panel observes widespread support for RSM's new mission, as evidenced in both the reviewed documentation and discussions with staff and students. This mission has been explicitly integrated into knowledge- and skills-based intended learning outcomes (ILOs) across many programmes, and into attitude-based ILOs in a few. The panel acknowledges the importance of attitude in achieving a better world, but it also recognises the complexity of systematically implementing and assessing an attitude-based ILO.

In conclusion, the panel notes clear progress in aligning the intended learning outcomes with RSM's mission and the principles of competency-based education. The revised ILOs reflect a thoughtful integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, tailored to each programme's disciplinary context. The panel appreciates how RSM's mission has generally been thoughtfully incorporated into the knowledge- and skills-based ILOs across programmes, while acknowledging the ongoing challenge of implementing and assessing attitude-based ILOs.

## Standard 2 – Teaching and learning environment

### Application and admission
RSM has a strong reputation. Students want to study at RSM because of its high ranking and highly qualified staff. The panel noticed that this creates a self-sustaining cycle, as RSM attracts a higher proportion of dedicated and ambitious students who are eager to work hard, motivated to excel and achieve excellent results.

To guarantee a high level of influx in the master programmes, RSM requires applicants to demonstrate a high level of mastery and ambition. For students from Dutch research universities (WO), a minimum GPA of 7.0 is required. The panel learned that a considerable number of the pre-experience master's degree programmes are capped,[2] meaning that applications will close either when the maximum number of students[3] has been reached or when the formal application deadline has passed. RSM follows the principle of 'first come, first served'.

RSM offers both a Dutch and an English language premaster programme for students who will complete or have completed a bachelor's degree at an accredited University of Applied Sciences. The premaster is also intended for students who have completed their bachelor's at a research university but are missing the required content in qualitative and quantitative research methods and statistics.

Some of the Academic Directors of Master's programmes cite the growing number of incoming students as a potential risk. They question how personal attention can be maintained when scaling up. Although the panel understands this concern, it also notes that within RSM several Master's programmes have already experienced comparable growth and scaling. These programmes can offer inspiration and best practices to those programmes about to embark on a growth process. This does not diminish the fact that the panel urges the management of RSM to take the concerns of the Academic Directors seriously and to support them in maintaining quality amidst an increase in the number of incoming students as well as the pending budget cuts.

**From ILOs to curriculum**
The panel found that there is an RSM-wide approach to representing the relationship between the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and their translation into the programme. For each programme, a Curriculum Map has been created according to a standardised format. This map provides an overview of the ILO coverage by the core courses. Additionally, a separate tab shows how the course learning outcomes (CLOs) are aligned with the programme ILOs.

**Blended learning**
The use of technology to personalise education is a core aspect of RSM's strategy. Based on reviewed documents and discussions with faculty members, professional services staff, and students, the panel concludes that nearly all programmes have started to leverage the opportunities educational technology offers. Examples include recording lessons, organizing online quizzes, and introducing ANS as online assessment software. While blended learning encompasses more than these practices, the panel observes that a few programmes already exceed the basic use of digitalization. However, most programmes remain quite traditional. The implementation of blended learning varies across programmes and courses/teachers. Since blended learning is a foundational part of RSM's educational strategy, the panel still sees significant potential for further growth and enhancement of blended learning practices. The MSc in Business Information Management is a notable example from which other programmes can learn a lot.

**Position of the academic directors**
The mandate of the Academic Director (AD) was puzzling to the panel. The panel observed significant variation in how this role is defined and the extent to which the Academic Director is truly the programme leader. In some cases, the AD takes on a clear leadership role and provides direction for the programme. There are also some ADs who function as informal leaders of the

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[2] Exceptions are the Master in Management of Innovation, the MScBA Parttime Master in Management, the Master People, Organisations and Change, and the Master Supply Chain Management.
[3] The maximum capacity of incoming students in the masters programmes varies between 100 and 500. The Bachelor International Business Administration has a numerus fixus of 750.

teaching team, a *primus inter pares*. In other cases, the AD appears to be positioned between, on the one hand, the teaching faculty, and on the other hand, management and the independent task of the Exam Board. A clear balance is needed between the lecturer as an expert (and thus with a certain degree of autonomy) and the management of the programme (to safeguard coherent curriculum / constructive alignment of learning objectives, curriculum, and assessment), while safeguarding the task of the Exam Board. Managing the programme is the responsibility of the Academic Directors. They must align with RSM's mission and strategy, while also receiving support and cooperation from both management and teaching staff to effectively fulfill their role.

**Teaching faculty**
Programmes show connection to the research departments of RSM. Professors, associate professors, and assistant professors provide (part of) the education. In general, students describe their professors and lecturers as experts who are very approachable and enthusiastic. Students are complimentary about the interaction with and the openness of the teaching faculty.

*Professional development*
The panel noted that most teachers hold a teaching qualification or are currently enrolled in the Basic Teaching Qualification training (in Dutch: BKO). If this is not the case, they are often exempt due to their extensive teaching experience. Additionally, there are professional development opportunities available for faculty members. In particular, the panel is pleased with the Leadership in Education course (*Leergang Onderwijskundig Leiderschap*). However, the panel believes that the professional development offerings could be more closely aligned with the faculty's vision and educational strategy, particularly in areas such as blended learning and feedback literacy for formative assessment. Additionally, offerings related to ethics, responsibility, sustainability, and the SDGs could be valuable, along with knowledge and skills in change management to support RSM's mission of being a force for positive change.

*Workload*
Both the teaching staff and several Academic Directors informed the panel that they perceive the workload as high. RSM's ambitious goals in research, education and impact (aligned with its mission), along with the high number of students, already create a challenging and demanding work environment. The panel identifies several other factors contributing to the perceived workload, including uncertainty about the potential implications of new government policies regarding the teaching language in Bachelor programmes, as well as the School's financial position, which has led to budget cuts. These factors contribute to a general atmosphere of uncertainty and financial pressure.

The panel heard from teachers of various programmes – both bachelor's and master's – that for financial reasons the number of teaching assistants (TAs) has decreased. This has further increased the workload for teachers, especially in programmes with many students. Teachers are concerned that this will have a negative impact on the quality of education.

On the other hand, a part of the workload may be self-inflicted by the teaching faculty. As these experts are (especially content wise) considered to enjoy a high level of autonomy, they sometimes need to make necessary choices in *programme* content. The Academic Director should take on their role and make these tough decisions, together with faculty. At the same time the panel noticed tendencies for a high level of extensification of education in e.g., the bachelor programmes, which needs to be carefully evaluated. Workload in academia is often a combination of teaching and research, and the panel warns against solely seeking workload reduction within teaching.

There may be some room to be found to reduce workload in the assessment system and educational design by limiting the number of summative assessments associated with smaller courses (especially electives). The panel does stress that this is by no means the silver bullet to

reduce the perceived workload as formative assessment requires getting used to as well and needs constant activation of students to keep their commitment up to par.

Overall, the panel observes that RSM is managing the workload by scaling back activities and postponing overly ambitious projects and initiatives resulting in doing less tasks when there is less staff. The panel also observes that types of activities are being adjusted with the aim of enhancing efficiency and quality. The panel encourages this double focus on both efficiency and quality improvement.

**Cross-fertilization**
In general, the panel found there is room for improvement when it comes to the cross-fertilization between the various programmes of RSM. The panel encourages Academic Directors and faculty to get together across programmes and share best practices. At this moment, the integration seems to mainly take place in the Learning Innovation Team (LIT), and to a lesser extent in a formal way and at a strategic level.

**Ties with industry**
Based on various telling examples from teachers, students and alumni of all programmes (bachelors, pre-experience masters and executive masters) the panel notes that a large portion of the programmes have strong ties with industry. Case studies and other industry-related assignments contribute positively to this, but also guest lectures, workshops and internships help students to prepare for entering the workforce. The panel also appreciates that students are very proactive in developing these activities alongside their studies – a mindset that appears to be nurtured by RSM.

**Positive change agents**
The panel is impressed by the way the programmes already align with RSM's mission to train students to become a force for positive change in the world. Many programmes have aligned their courses with one or more Sustainable Development Goals, although the panel believes that the selection of SDGs could be more deliberate. Nonetheless, the panel observed striking examples of assignments in which students are asked to examine case studies from a multiple-perspective approach (people, planet, profit/prosperity).

The panel notes that achieving the goal of fostering positive change requires an interdisciplinary perspective and approach. It identifies further opportunities in enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration with students from other programmes, including those outside of RSM. As many of the challenges society faces – including climate change, poverty, and healthcare – are too complex to be addressed by a single discipline, interdisciplinary collaboration allows professionals to approach these challenges from various perspectives and develop holistic solutions that create a broader positive impact.

Furthermore, the panel considers it advisable for students (and maybe also teaching staff) to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effect positive change. The current emphasis is primarily on 'what' to change, whereas 'how' to change is equally important for the realisation of RSM's mission.

**Thesis supervision**
There is a document for students and faculty members that deals with the process of thesis supervision. However, the Student Chapters and the meeting with alumni indicated that there is an enormous variety in engagement from the thesis supervisors. The panel recommends that both the process (guidance, intensity) and the content (as discussed later) should be internally calibrated to reduce the variation in the process, which has also been acknowledged by several lecturers as being too large. Currently, the programmes (specifically in Cluster 4) are reviewing the supervisory process. The plan is to establish clear basic rules / guidelines / expectation

management / communication for both supervisors and students. The panel emphasises the importance of adhering to the agreed-upon supervision process.

Furthermore, the panel identified a significant variation between programmes in the way thesis topics are selected, and that some master's thesis trajectories can be combined with an internship. In some programmes, topics are almost prescribed based on the lecturers' expertise, while other programmes offer such a wide variety that the connection to the field of study is sometimes barely recognizable. The panel believes that RSM would benefit from introducing more uniformity in this area.

*Ethical Review Board*
The Ethical Review Board is currently not being used - with some exceptions - for research conducted by students working on the thesis. One of the teachers said: "*We will need a different ERB process and clear standards.*" The panel endorses this.

**Research approaches**
The panel observed a variety of research approaches applied in the reviewed theses. From the documentation, it was unclear to what extent expectations for the different research approaches are sufficiently explicated, both for the students as well as for the thesis supervisor. While this is taught in different research courses in the various programmes, it is important to calibrate these expectations beforehand. Particularly for qualitative research, the panel signalled issues in this regard. In some cases, the number of interviews was very low (3-5), which, in the panel's view, is insufficient. RSM has already acknowledged this issue and is currently in the process of formalizing the criteria for qualitative research. The panel views this as a positive development, as it will reduce reliance on the opinions of individual supervisors. Yet in general, expectations should be calibrated more across all research methods.

**Language of Instruction and Programme Names**
In line with the societal debate regarding the value of offering English-language instruction in higher education programmes, the panel discussed RSM's rationale for this approach. With the exception of the Dutch-taught Bachelor's in Business Administration (*BSc in Bedrijfskunde)* and the Dutch-taught Part-time Master in Management, all other programmes offered by RSM are taught in English.

According to the panel, one of the unique selling points of Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) is its strong reputation and high ranking as an international business school. This attracts highly motivated students from Europe and beyond. To maintain its strong international reputation, offering the programmes in English is essential. The panel also considers English as the language of instruction an appropriate choice for the 15 programmes involved for several other reasons.

Firstly, English serves as the global *lingua franca* in their professional fields and the labor market, which for most of the graduates will be international. This could be abroad, but English is also the language of communication in many Netherlands-based companies in this field, as they collaborate with international partners or provide goods and services to foreign customers. Only by using English as the language of instruction, the programmes foster truly international classrooms, creating an environment where students' diverse national backgrounds enhance the learning experience for both their peers and instructors and help students build an international network. Furthermore, the most relevant and up-to-date study materials are available exclusively in English, offering instructors the opportunity to introduce students into the state-of-the-art of their discipline.

Given that most programmes are taught in English, the panel believes it is essential for the programme names to also be presented in English.
RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and

students confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language, and students expressed satisfaction with their teachers' language proficiency.

**Facilities**

The panel found that, in general, students of all programmes are satisfied with the facilities that RSM offers. RSM's public programmes are taught on EUR's Woudestein campus, mainly in the Mandeville building. EUR has invested in new facilities, including a recording studio, which proved invaluable during the Covid pandemic. The campus features various lecture rooms varying from 12 to more than 900 seats. Some rooms are equipped with IT workstations, so instructors can deliver content in hybrid formats or provide recordings.

All non-funded programmes of RSM are primarily taught in the Bayle building, which is also located on the Woudestein campus. This building houses both office and teaching spaces for RSM's post-experience programmes. In 2022/2023 significant investments were made to improve the classrooms, establish a digital teaching space, and enhance workspaces. During the audit, the panel visited both buildings and confirmed that the facilities are sufficient and in good condition.

In recent years, RSM has taken steps to ensure that the campus is accessible[4], including for students with physical disabilities.

RSM has a Case Development Centre that supports instructors in creating teaching cases. Instructors have access to Harvard Business School Publishing and an educational resource repository, both integrated with Canvas.

Online resources for students include Canvas, an e-portfolio, and an online thesis platform (TOP). Modern AV technology and software are available, with programme information published via the Learning Management System. Preliminary grades are published on Canvas or SIN-Online, while final grades are registered in Osiris.

In summary, the panel has reached the conclusion that RSM's teaching and learning environment and the quality of the teaching teams is up to par. In general, the programmes attract highly motivated students and offer well-designed curricula with clear alignment between intended learning outcomes and course content. Students benefit from expert faculty members who are approachable and enthusiastic, strong ties with industry, and adequate facilities. While there are areas for improvement – such as enhancing cross-fertilization between programmes, addressing workload concerns, standardizing thesis supervision, and further developing blended learning –, the overall quality of the teaching-learning environment is sufficient. The panel endorses RSM's English-language instruction and the 'of Science' degree designation for all programmes.

## Standard 3 – Assessment

**RSM assessment policy**

RSM has defined 'Assessment for Learning' as one of the seven design principles of competency-based education. This approach emphasises a balanced use of formative and summative assessment, along with transformative feedback. Assessment is viewed as a positive learning experience and a tool to inform decision-making.

The panel had a look into RSM's assessment policy (November 2023) which outlines the vision on assessment and provides guidance for associated processes. It sets basic requirements, details programme assessment plans, clarifies examiner appointment rules, ensures final exam quality, and simplifies assessment processes.

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[4] [Accessibility on campus | Erasmus University Rotterdam](#)

The panel observes several positive developments in the assessment policy and ambitions regarding testing, including the reduction in the number of assessments, the increasing emphasis on formative assessment, and the new assessment format for the Bachelor Project. The panel also views favourably the change in de master's programmes, in which the co-reader now solely assumes an assessment role, with no supervisory function. This change facilitates independent judgment and also helps to alleviate workload.

The panel finds that the general standards for assessment, as outlined in the assessment policy, result in a valid, reliable, and transparent assessment process.

*Assessment Matrices*
Linked to the Curriculum Map, an Assessment Matrix has been developed for each programme following a standardised format. The panel reviewed these Assessment Matrices, which indicate that the programmes typically employ a combination of individual and group assignments. Additionally, there is a sufficient variety in the types of assessment, such as oral exams, written exams, peer feedback, self-reflection, and quizzes. The latter three are often used as formative assessments. Overall, the chosen assessment methods align well with the course learning outcomes. However, the panel noted that a considerable number of summative assessments are still being administered. There is still room for improvement in this regard.

*Assessment of Attitude-Related Learning Outcomes*
The panel views the recent development of attitude-related learning objectives (as part of competency-based learning) as a positive step and a still ongoing process that aligns with the mission and vision of RSM. However, also assessing these objectives requires further attention, as evaluating attitudes necessitates a somewhat different approach than assessing knowledge and skills.

*Programmatic assessment*
The panel heard on several occasions programmatic assessment being mentioned as an option or ambition of numerous programmes. The assessment experts in the panel feel a stern warning is justified, particularly as a) this was often mentioned in relation to reducing workload and b) the panel noticed many misunderstandings about what programmatic assessment actually contains. Programmatic assessment implies a major change in assessment culture. Though well executed programmatic assessment can yield substantial educational benefits, it will take a considerable amount of time before any relief in assessment workload is experienced, if any. It needs collective ownership of the programme and requires a meticulous management of constructive alignment across courses, both in content as well as assessment. The panel likes to stress that it supports the direction towards more formative and integral assessment as a valid way of providing evidence of the achievement of ILOs.

**Transparency of thesis assessments**
The panel reviewed numerous theses and noted that the transparency and traceability of final grades could be improved. The current assessment rubrics primarily use evaluative language (e.g., unclear, clear). The panel advocates for a revision of the thesis assessment rubrics, primarily employing descriptive language, to ensure that students clearly understand what is expected of them. Additionally, it is recommended that descriptive language be used in the justification of grades.

As a result of the previous accreditation by the NVAO, the panel encouraged the programme management to find ways to demonstrate the active and independent involvement of the co-reader in the thesis assessment. The current panel learned that a Thesis Online Platform (TOP) has been introduced, where examiners must provide their assessments independently, including feedback, before arriving at a joint final judgement.

The panel noted that during the thesis review, it encountered assessment forms from various programmes that appeared to suggest a joint assessment or simply an 'I agree' from the co-reader. The panel understood that this likely refers to the final assessment form, where the examiners' and co-readers' individual evaluations are merged.

However, the panel recommends that the programme management ensures careful monitoring of this process, making sure that both the examiner and co-reader independently form their judgments and document them prior to collaborating to reach a final, substantiated decision. Furthermore, the panel recommends continuing to organise calibration sessions for the quality assurance of thesis assessment.

**Examination Board**
Within RSM, there is a single Examination Board (EB) with two chambers: one for pre-experience programmes and one for post-experience programmes. Both chambers are chaired by the same person, and since the beginning of this academic year, they have been supported by a joint office consisting of six secretaries.

The Examination Board faces the challenging task of overseeing the quality of assessments across 17 ISAT-programmes. This is no easy responsibility. Based on the reviewed annual reports of and discussion with the Examination Board, the panel concludes that the EB is well-positioned to carry out this task. The EB is well-informed about developments in education, is notified when significant changes are made to assessments, appoints examiners, conducts sampling, reviews assessment analyses, and supervises the organisation of calibration sessions.

At the same time, the panel identified areas for further improvement. The panel recommends that the Examination Board adopt a more proactive approach in certain areas, such as enhancing quality control of assessments. The panel understood that the Academic Director is responsible for a programme's assessment plan, while oversight of assessment quality lies with the Examination Board. The considerable autonomy granted to programmes and their individual lecturers regarding assessment formats adds complexity to the Board's role. Therefore, the panel suggests that RSM consider establishing an Assessment Committee to which the Examination Board could delegate some of its responsibilities.

*Generative Artificial Intelligence*
The panel has reviewed the document "Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI): Guidance in Education" (August 2024), in which RSM outlines its perspectives on GenAI. The document identifies risks, as well as benefits and opportunities, associated with the integration of GenAI. Furthermore, it provides recommendations for the use of GenAI in both teaching and assessment practices. The panel has actively brought the topic of Generative Artificial Intelligence into discussions across the majority of programmes. It has observed that all programmes are engaging with the topic, albeit to varying degrees. Some programmes have adopted a proactive and innovative approach, while others remain more cautious in their exploration of GenAI's potential implications and applications. The panel encourages RSM to foster greater collaboration and exchange of practices between programmes. By sharing insights, experiences, and practical strategies, programmes can collectively contribute to enhancing the current policy document.

As GenAI becomes increasingly prevalent in educational, professional, and creative environments, it raises significant challenges surrounding fairness, accuracy, and accountability. The panel has observed that the Examination Board is engaged in this discourse. It wishes to emphasise the importance of maintaining ongoing attention to the impact of GenAI on education, particularly with regard to assessment and evaluation. Furthermore, the panel suggests that RSM explore assessment methods that explicitly evaluate whether students have effectively absorbed and mastered the subject matter.

In conclusion, the panel determines that RSM's assessment system is adequate. The assessment policy establishes a solid framework for valid, reliable, and transparent assessment processes. The panel appreciates the positive developments, including the shift towards more formative assessment and improvements in thesis evaluation procedures. While there are areas for enhancement – such as the assessment of attitude-related learning outcomes, greater transparency in thesis assessment, and a more proactive role for the Examination Board – the panel deems the overall quality of the assessment system to be satisfactory. The panel encourages RSM to continue its evolution towards more formative and integral assessment and the integration of GenAI.

## Standard 4 – Learning outcomes achieved

The panel found that all programmes meet the requirements of standard 4. Through their theses or portfolios, students demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. Given the large sample size of approximately 230 theses and portfolios, it was almost inevitable that the panel assessed a few as insufficient. However, these instances never exceeded one thesis per programme. Therefore, the panel concludes that these cases are exceptions and that, overall, the graduates consistently demonstrate professionalism in their respective fields of expertise. Some theses were even of exceptionally high quality, worthy of publication.

Alumni shared with the panel that they also feel well-prepared to enter the labour market after their studies, as was confirmed by industry representatives.

In conclusion, based on the review of approximately 230 theses and portfolios and the positive feedback of alumni and industry representatives, the panel confirms that students consistently demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

## General recommendations

Because the panel conducted an audit in which all programmes at Rotterdam School of Management were assessed over the course of three days, it was able to form a clear understanding of the developments within the school. The panel identified several general aspects that could be enhanced at the RSM level. These broad recommendations are outlined in this chapter, while programme-specific recommendations can be found in the respective programme-related chapters.

The panel distinguishes between suggestions and recommendations. This chapter includes only the recommendations, which are the issues that RSM must address and report on at the next accreditation.

1. The panel advises management to focus on and support programmes with the implementation of educational technology and, more than at present, to leverage leading programmes in this respect to inspire confidence among other educational teams.

2. The panel encourages Academic Directors and faculty to get together across programmes and share best practices. At this moment, the integration seems to mainly take place in the Learning & Innovation Team (LIT), and to a lesser extent directly across programmes, in a formal way and at a strategic level.

3. The panel believes that the faculty professional development offerings could be more closely aligned with the faculty's vision and educational strategy, particularly in areas such as blended learning and feedback literacy for formative assessment. Additionally, offerings related to ethics, responsibility, sustainability, and the SDGs could be valuable, along with knowledge and skills in change management to support RSM's mission of being a force for

positive change.

4. The panel thinks it is important to consider the inclusion of ILOs in the area of change management to contribute to RSM's mission to become a force for positive change. Besides, aim to increase the teaching of interdisciplinary approaches and a stressing of collaboration, for student (continuous) learning purposes, inside and/or outside RSM.

5. The panel recommends that RSM develop clear guidelines to ensure that all students, regardless of the form their final work takes within the programme, receive a comparable level of supervision intensity. International calibration of supervision practices could also help to reduce variation in this process.

6. The panel suggests that RSM considers establishing an Assessment Committee to which the Examination Board could delegate some of its responsibilities.

7. The panel recommends that the programmes closely monitor the workload of both lecturers and academic directors, and carefully evaluate the impact of current and future measures on both workload and the quality of education.

8. The panel has observed that the Examination Board is engaged in the discourse about GenAI. It wishes to emphasise the importance of maintaining ongoing attention to the impact of GenAI on education, particularly with regard to assessment and evaluation. Furthermore, the panel suggests that RSM explore assessment methods that explicitly evaluate whether students have effectively absorbed and mastered the subject matter.

# 4. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS CLUSTER 1

Rotterdam School of Management offers both a Dutch-language bachelor's programme in Business Administration (*Bedrijfskunde*) and an English-language bachelor's programme in International Business Administration. Both programmes have the same learning outcomes. This also applies to the design of the curriculum and the courses taught. Also, the assessments and the graduation process are identical for both programmes. For these reasons, it has been decided to include the findings of both programmes – each with its own ISAT code – in one report. This report highlights the differences in admission procedures, the international classroom experience, the context in which the material is applied (regional vs. global), and the lecturers employed.

## 4.1. Bachelor Bedrijfskunde and Bachelor International Business Administration

### 4.1.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Bedrijfskunde | International Business Administration |
|---|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 50645 | 50952 |
| Domain/sector | Economy | |
| Orientation | Academic | |
| Level | Bachelor | |
| Degree | Bachelor of Science | Bachelor of Science |
| Number of credits | 180 EC | |
| Specialisations | N/A | |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam | |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime | |
| Language(s) | Dutch (3$^{rd}$ year in English) | English |

### 4.1.2. Introduction

The bachelor's programme in Business Administration (*Bedrijfskunde*) is a three-year (180 EC) full-time programme. The first two years are taught in Dutch, while the final year is (mostly) delivered in English. The programme started in 2002 and was last re-accredited by NVAO in 2018. The Self-Assessment Report mentions that 1065 new students were enrolled in 2022-2023 and that 939 new students joined in 2023-2024.

The bachelor programme International Business Administration (IBA) is a three-year full-time programme taught entirely in English. The programme started in 2000, was re-accredited by NVAO in 2018. The Self-Assessment Report mentions that 610 new students were enrolled in 2022-2023 and that 622 new students joined in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| According to the panel the quality of the thesis evaluation can be improved in three ways: more attention to individual / differentiated grading within one thesis team; more qualitative feedback that is registered in the evaluation form; and clear instruments to assess student teams presenting assignments and theses that deviate from the prescribed format. | Currently, the Bachelor Project is being implemented, which replaces the previous Bachelor Thesis. In developing the Bachelor Project, the programme has taken into account the panel's recommendations. Students complete the Bachelor Project on a self-selected topic related to their track. This aligns with the specialised part of the T-shaped learning model that underpins the BSc programme. The project includes an individual component, and students apply their knowledge from the tracks as well as all the courses in the earlier blocks leading up to the track. |

### 4.1.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*

The bachelor's programme in Business Administration aims to equip students with a deep understanding of the dynamics of organisational functioning. They develop academic knowledge and skills to excel as entrepreneurs, managers, or consultants. Students are taught to approach issues from multiple perspectives, incorporating management, social, and psychological aspects into their decisions and recommendations.

To achieve this ambition, the programme has established ten intended learning outcomes (ILOs), displayed in Table 1. These ILOs are clustered into knowledge, skills, and attitudes, fitting the competence-based approach of education by RSM. The panel reviewed the ILOs and concluded that they accurately represent the academic bachelor's level. The programme has clearly substantiated this by relating the ILOs to the Dublin Descriptors at the bachelor's level. For example, knowledge of the core areas of management and business administration is addressed in ILO1. The development of knowledge about methods and techniques of scientific research is covered by ILO3. Communication skills are incorporated in ILO5, and the descriptor on problem-solving is represented by ILO4. The levels of independence and complexity outlined in the ILOs are well-suited to the bachelor's level.

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam, RSM strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel recognises this ambition in the ILOs of the BSc programmes. The programme highlights the importance of corporate social responsibility and sustainability as core values (ILO8), and through its attitude-based ILOs, it emphasises the need for students to adopt a multi-perspective approach when assessing the impact of business-related decisions on society

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly highlight the academic focus of these bachelor's programmes. Various competencies reflect research-related knowledge and skills. The ILOs not only emphasise the importance of theoretical knowledge and understanding, but also stress the need for students to develop a range of relevant skills and apply both quantitative and qualitative techniques to investigate business problems and develop solutions through a scientific research approach. The panel considers this well-articulated and appropriate for the programmes' final level.

The panel considers the Bachelor of Science degree appropriate for the Business Administration and International Business Administration programmes, taking into account the field in which the students operate and the content of the curriculum (also see standard 2). It also noted that related offerings use a corresponding degree.

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| **International Business Administration** | | |
| 1. Demonstrate knowledge of key management theories and models as well as most influential empirical findings related to all functional areas in business administration and adjacent disciplines.<br><br>2. Demonstrate knowledge of the economic, environmental and social impact of organisations on societies locally and globally.<br><br>3. Demonstrate knowledge of methods of scientific research in the business field. | 4. Demonstrate the mastery of analytical skills while using quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyse business problems and design solutions for those problems using a scientific research approach.<br><br>5. Demonstrate the mastery of communication skills on an individual as well as team-based level, for example to prepare a written and/or oral research-based report about a business topic, present and defend that report in front of a specialist or non-specialist audience.<br><br>6. Demonstrate being able to work in diverse teams.<br><br>7. Demonstrate the mastery of lifelong learning skills to challenge one's own limitations, recognise opportunities for learning, acquire new knowledge, and undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy. | 8. Demonstrate a mindset of working according to principles of trust and integrity, make the values of a multicultural and international orientation the basis of their view of people and society, and accept corporate social responsibility and sustainability as values.<br><br>9. Demonstrate an awareness of understanding and accepting ethical and normative ways of thinking in scientific research in business, and critically make independent choices for knowledge increase and scientific research in business.<br><br>10. Demonstrate a critical mindset of recognising one's own limitations, be prepared to revise one's own views when needed, and understand and interpret cultural limitations and restrictions. |

*Table 1: Intended learning outcomes Bachelor International Business Administration / Bedrijfskunde*

**Conclusion**

Judgement BSc Business Administration: Meets the standard
Judgement BSc International Business Administration: Meets the standard

The bachelor's programmes in Business Administration and International Business Administration both meet the requirements of Standard 1. The ten intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of both programmes are clearly defined and aligned with the Dublin Descriptors, ensuring they reflect the academic level expected of a bachelor's degree. The ILOs emphasise theoretical knowledge, (research) skills, and attitudes, as well as a multi-perspective approach to business problems, highlighting the academic focus of the programmes and their commitment to being a force for positive change.

## 4.1.4. Teaching-learning environment

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**Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

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**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The curricula of the BSc Business Administration (in Dutch: *Bedrijfskunde*) and the BSc International Business Administration include the same courses, yet they are distinct in some of the material covered and examples employed. The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into specific learning outcomes for each course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map.' For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLOs) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the courses in the programme. The panel also observes that, with the exception of ILO7, all other ILOs are addressed in all three years of study.

*Curriculum content and structure*
The panel reviewed the curricula of both programmes. On paper, the curricula for BA and IBA are identical. It is clear that both programmes have chosen to offer a fixed curriculum for the first two years, covering the essential knowledge and skills that every student must acquire. The third year provides opportunities for differentiation and specialisation. RSM has developed some well-defined learning lines across the three years of the bachelor's programmes.

In the first year, students are introduced to business processes through courses such as *Introduction to Business*, *Organisational Behaviour*, *Economics*, and *Business Information Management*. Additionally, courses like *Mathematics* and *Statistics* provide the foundation for more advanced topics in the subsequent years. A key course in the first year is the *Strategic Business Plan* course (5 EC). During the first three blocks, students collaborate with a company of their choice, conducting company visits and analysing market and environmental data. Ultimately, students submit a well-reasoned and practically relevant report containing strategic advice for both the company and the university.

In the second year, students delve deeper into management topics. The panel learned that they tackle various management issues through courses such as *Strategic Management*, *Innovation Management*, *Management Accounting*, and *Corporate Finance*. Additionally, students learn how to manage business processes and explore the connection to entrepreneurship. During blocks 5 to 7, students participate in the *Research Project* course (10 EC), which focuses on conducting empirical research to address business and societal challenges. This course combines practical experience with essential research methods and theoretical knowledge about the principles behind these methods. It covers all phases of the empirical cycle, serving as preparation for the *Bachelor Project* in the third year.

The panel observes that the third year of the (I)BA programme offers students a range of opportunities to explore and develop their individual interests. In the first semester of the third year, students can choose to participate in an international exchange, an (international) internship, an academic minor, or a project. They may also combine these options with elective courses. In the second semester of the third year, students take two core courses: *Advanced Research Methods* (3 EC) and *Digital Business* (5 EC). Additionally, they choose from six different tracks that align with their individual interests. Each track consists of three specific modules, each worth 5 EC. The tracks available for students to choose from are: (i) Analytical Decision-Makers (data, operations), (ii) Behavioural Experts (marketing, diversity, behaviour), (iii) Business Developers (entrepreneurship, innovation), (iv) Financial Strategists (finance, accounting), (v) Global Thinkers (international business, strategy), and (vi) Performance Analysts (finance, accounting). These tracks prepare students for specific master's programmes offered by RSM, although they are not prerequisites for admission to any master's programme.

The self-evaluation report provides an overview of the key changes in teaching methods and course content implemented over the past few years. It is clear to the panel that the programme continuously enhances and updates its curriculum based on research findings and feedback from key stakeholders, including students. The students the panel spoke with, some of whom are members of the programme committee, also feel that their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon.

Based on its observations, the panel believes that greater attention should be given to the impact of Generative AI on the professional field.

*Graduation*
During the third year, students work on their *Bachelor Project* (7 EC), which falls within their chosen track and is considered to be their final work. Graduation takes place in groups of four students. The theme for the Bachelor Project is provided by one of RSM's research departments, and students are guided by academic staff.

Although the panel understands the programme's considerations (workload for supervisors, financial consequences) for choosing group graduation, it questions whether this is the best option for students. Students gain little experience in independently designing and conducting academic research during their bachelor's, which is expected of them in their master's. The panel noted that the assessment of the *Bachelor Project* does include individual components, but these are strongly linked to the groupwork and mainly focus on students demonstrating reflection skills (see Standard 3). Furthermore, the panel notes that the end work does not meet the standards set by RSM, which require at least 60% of a course to be assessed individually. Currently, the final project consists of 55% group work and 45% individual work. The academic directors indicated that, in combination with the track, which is also part of the final semester of the programme, the 60% requirement for individual assessment is met. The panel finds this calculation somewhat artificial.

*Coherence*
According to the panel, the curriculum is sufficiently coherent. For example, students take the *Finance* course in the first year, which is built upon in the *Corporate Finance* course in the second year. The panel learned that, to ensure a logical progression and coherence throughout the programme, the curriculum includes several specific learning lines. One such example is the quantitative learning line, which includes courses like *Mathematics, Statistics*, *Spreadsheet Modelling*, and *Quantitative Decision Making*. Until recently, these learning lines had coordinators funded by HOKA funds. However, due to the cessation of HOKA, there are no longer any learning line coordinators. To maintain coherence within the programme, the panel recommends ensuring strong communication and coordination both within years, between learning lines, and across the years. As one of the lecturers aptly put it: "Be more connected; that is really key to understanding the programme and your specific contribution to it."

Another way the programme creates coherence is through larger projects, such as the previously mentioned Bachelor Project and the course on Entrepreneurship. In these, students must integrate knowledge and skills from previously taken courses in order to succeed. Additionally, the programme is experimenting with capstone assessments, where exams combine material from various courses. This also contributes to the awareness and consideration of the coherence between courses.

*International orientation*
The field of business administration and management has an international orientation, much like RSM and the city of Rotterdam. As a result, the third year of the BA programme is taught entirely in English, with courses delivered by international lecturers and managers from global organisations.

The panel observes that while the business principles taught to BA and IBA students are the same, the context in which they are applied differs significantly. The IBA programme uses many more international examples and case studies, whereas the BA programme focuses more on companies and cases from a national context and the Rotterdam region, although international companies are also covered. An exception is the third year, where BA and IBA students attend core courses together.

While the panel did not observe a separate learning line on International Business within the IBA programme, there is a clear emphasis on the opportunities provided by the international classroom in terms of intercultural communication, diverse perspectives (see further on) and international case studies. The panel, along with the programme itself, believes there are opportunities to further highlight the international focus of the programme and suggests that IBA consider developing a separate International Business learning line.

*Professional Development (PD)*
The programme acknowledges that skills are increasingly important for professionals to be successful in the industry. Therefore, the courses *Professional Development I & II* (both 5 EC) are part of the curriculum. These courses, spanning the entire duration of the first and second years, aim to equip students with skills to collaborate effectively, communicate efficiently, and continuously develop themselves both personally and professionally. In addition, these courses aim to stimulate students to identify their interests and emphasise developing skills and attitudes that empower students to drive positive change in the world

The panel spoke with the academic directors, as well as lecturers and students from BA and IBA about the *Professional Development* courses. It became clear that the *PD* track has been redesigned several times in the past four years and that the programme, together with student representatives, is still searching for the 'ideal design'. One student suggested: "Make *PD* more professional and less of a high school track." The academic directors agree that ideally, *PD* would be more integrated into other courses. However, by programming it separately, it is possible to provide targeted feedback on specific (soft) skills such as presenting and academic writing rather than on subject-specific aspects.

Students report that *Professional Development* helps them build their skill set. For example, they appreciate learning how to give peer feedback during *PD*. However, they feel that they primarily develop skills through learning by doing, particularly in the context of collaboration. They suggest that there could be more alignment with other courses in the curriculum. The panel encourages the programme to address this. For instance, students believe that the second year could be improved by focusing on new content rather than revisiting topics covered in the first year.

Although students feel that *PD* lessons are not held very frequently, the panel views positively the fact that this course provides students with a 'home base'—a mentor and a fixed group of

about 25 students—where they can exchange experiences and develop their skills in a small-scale, safe environment.

*Research skills*
Although the panel has doubts about the desirability of conducting research in groups in the end works, it acknowledges that the programme sufficiently focuses on the (individual) development of research skills. During the *Strategic Business Plan* course in the first year, students begin learning to conduct research, with courses such as *Statistics* and Spreadsheet Modelling contributing to this foundation. In the second year, the Research Project course centres on learning to conduct empirical research to solve business and societal problems. In the third year, students take the Advanced Research Methods course, which supports them in conducting their Bachelor Project. Students feel adequately prepared for graduation.

*Admission to the programme*
The panel notes that there are three factors that create differences between the Business Administration (BA) and International Business Administration (IBA) programmes: the admission procedure, the composition of the student population, and – consequently – the learning environment.

To be admitted to the Dutch-language bachelor's programme in Business Administration, a VWO diploma is required. Depending on the VWO profile, students must have an additional qualification in Mathematics A or B. Students with an HBO bachelor's propaedeuse can be admitted if they have a GPA of at least 7.5 and demonstrate sufficient mathematical skills. The Dutch-language programme does not have a numerus fixus; every student who applies and meets the admission requirements is guaranteed admission.

International Business Administration is a numerus fixus programme, with 750 students admitted each year. Because applicants are admitted based on their grades (GPA of at least 7.0) and motivation, this results in a (relatively more) highly motivated student population. This is reflected in higher attendance rates and a different dynamic during lectures and working groups. Due to the international outlook of IBA, it self-selects students that are interested in pursuing an international career.

*Learning environment*
Based on the didactical vision of RSM, all programmes are transitioning towards more transformative and competency-based education. As mentioned in the general part of this report, eight design principles are central to the educational approach. The panel observes that several of these design principles are being utilised by both bachelor programmes to create a challenging learning environment for students. For example, real-world relevance is evident in courses such as *Strategic Business Plan* and *Research Project*, where students can choose their own topics or organisations. Additionally, a course like *Entrepreneurship*, which includes a start-up challenge, also stimulates student motivation. The *Business Simulation* course is another excellent example of an engaging teaching method. In this simulation game, students must try to create value for their consumers by making sound decisions. However, students signal a need for more applications in the real-world context, and more emphasis on practical application of knowledge.

The design of the third year embodies the principle of a student-focused programme giving students the opportunity to choose a track in their specific field of interest and also giving them the opportunity to study abroad or do an internship.

Both Business Administration and International Business Administration are large programmes with many students. Lectures are often held for all students in a cohort. The panel noted that lecturers also record these lectures so that students can watch them later. Furthermore, there are workshops with 250 students and, to make education more small-scale, there are also

working groups ranging from 20 to 100 students. Working groups and workshops are regularly facilitated by teaching assistants. The panel understood that, due to financial reasons, the number of teaching assistants is currently being reduced. The panel advises the programme to keep the quality of education and the interests of students in mind when making such decisions.

Students are generally satisfied with the learning environment, as evidenced by the discussions and the student chapter in the self-assessment report. The provision of information is satisfactory.

*International classroom*
Another difference between BA and IBA is, of course, the language in which the programme is taught. In the BA programme, 98% of the students are Dutch. The IBA population is truly international. In 2023-2024, over 80% of the intake consisted of international students (approximately 60% from the EEA and approximately 22% from non-EEA countries). This international profile also applies to the teaching team.

Both lecturers and academic directors find that the international setting truly adds value to the IBA programme and the learning process of students. "It is a different type of student," they note. IBA students strive for higher grades and are more focused on making a positive impact on the world. They are also more interested in getting to know each other, forming a close learning community. Furthermore, the intercultural dimension enriches classroom discussions. This is something the panel recognises. The international classroom of IBA also offers opportunities to develop additional competencies. In cross-cultural teams, students encounter different challenges. To stimulate collaboration and learning in multicultural teams, IBA students are placed in groups for some projects, while for other projects they can choose their own group composition. The students, as well as the panel, appreciate the variety that the programme offers in this regard.

*Force for positive change*
One of the first sentences that (prospective) students read when visiting the website of both bachelor's programmes is: "(I)BA offers a challenging and rewarding learning experience, equipping you with the knowledge, values, and abilities to drive positive change in the international business world." The lecturers mentioned that each course must demonstrate a connection to at least one Sustainable Development Goal. Instructors try to integrate real-life cases into the curriculum to add value to assignments. For example, in the BA programme, students complete an assignment for the municipality of Rotterdam, focusing on how to promote healthy food choices among the population in the south of Rotterdam. Another example is the second-year course *Responsible Business Leadership* (4 EC). This course is designed to be thought-provoking and reflective, aligning with RSM's mission to be a force for positive change in the world. It addresses the contributions of businesses and their managers to both local and global societal issues, such as inequality, corruption, and climate change.

BA students have noted that some instructors are particularly passionate about sustainability. However, they also feel that the courses remain relatively traditional and profit-focused. The panel concludes that there is potential for further development in this area. Specifically, the programme could consider incorporating tools and concepts more closely aligned with RSM's goal of fostering positive change. This might include rethinking the teaching methods used to cultivate attitudes, such as the technology-augmented behavior course that includes a real-life project that requires students to reflect on norms and values. Currently, students primarily focus on the SDGs, which provides a solid framework, but being a catalyst for positive change also involves developing corresponding values and norms, as reflected in the attitude-based ILOs.

As one of the lecturers aptly put it, "It's not about our students being forced to become changemakers; it's about them wanting to become one." While this is already emphasised in the *Professional Development* courses, the panel sees opportunities to integrate this approach more widely across other courses.

*Student well-being*
The panel spoke with students about the study load and the pressure they feel to perform well. While the students made it clear that the study load is manageable, particularly IBA students are highly motivated to participate in committee work and other extracurricular activities alongside their studies. They acknowledged that this can sometimes be stressful, but they understand that it is a choice they make.

Because RSM requires a GPA of 7 for entry into its master's programmes, this contributes to the high-performance culture that prevails. According to the Academic directors, this high-performance culture is also present in the business world, making it a valuable learning experience for students. At the same time, the ADs notice that students, especially in the third year, can sometimes be quite stressed.

With the introduction of the *Professional Development* course, the programme has deliberately ensured small groups of around 25 students, creating a space where they can discuss issues like study pressure in a safe environment. The panel also learned that in some courses, grades have been replaced with a pass/fail system. Students confirmed that the programme pays close attention to their well-being, and they are regularly informed about available resources, such as consulting a study advisor.

*Faculty*
Initially, the panel reviewed the list of lecturers/professors coordinating the various courses in the bachelor's programme. The panel noticed that many of the coordinators (over 60%) oversee both the BA and IBA courses. There is also considerable overlap among the lecturers teaching these courses.

The panel also examined a list of the lecturers' qualifications. It appears that, with few exceptions, almost all lecturers are didactically competent. They have completed BKO and/or SKO training. The lecturers the panel spoke with confirmed that all lecturers must undergo BKO training. Additionally, the lecturers are academically competent, with many holding positions as assistant professors or associate professors. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

Students are generally satisfied with their lecturers, although they do experience some differences between them.

The panel learned that some very large courses are taught by only a single lecturer. The panel finds this approach vulnerable in the event of the lecturer being sick or otherwise unavailable.

Given the large number of students, the use of teaching assistants (TAs) is essential for the programme, particularly during workshops, to ensure individual students receive adequate attention and feedback. The panel discussed the training of TAs with the lecturers and learned that a Tutor Academy was established four years ago. They handle the recruitment and general training of TAs. Subsequently, the lecturer provides course-specific instruction to the TAs.

Overall, the panel concludes that the teaching staff is both academically and didactically competent to deliver the education, and it is clear who is responsible for the pedagogical and subject-specific training and guidance of TAs. Students also understand the involvement of TAs. One student remarked: "That's just inevitable with such large programmes.

The panel has expressed concerns regarding the workload of the two Academic Directors (ADs) overseeing the BA and IBA programmes. These concerns were raised during discussions with both the directors and several lecturers, who noted, "Over the past two years, the academic directors have been working extremely hard." The ADs face the demanding responsibility of liaising with various departments, coordinators, and lecturers involved in delivering the bachelor's programmes, each of whom has their own preferences and ideas for their courses. These courses must ultimately come together to form a cohesive and aligned programme. While this is generally achieved, the panel has observed a certain tension between the academic freedom of coordinators and lecturers and the efficiency goals set by RSM's management. In light of this, the panel refers to the recommendation regarding the positioning of the academic director in the general chapter of this report, which is highly relevant to both bachelor programmes. Furthermore, the panel strongly encourages the management of RSM to ensure that the Academic Directors of the BA and IBA programmes have adequate capacity to fulfil their responsibilities, particularly given that the coordinators of the learning lines had to step down due to the cessation of HOKA funds.

**Conclusion**

Judgement BSc Business Administration: Meets the standard
Judgement BSc International Business Administration: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that both the BSc in Business Administration and the BSc in International Business Administration fulfil the requirements of standard 2. This is evidenced by the alignment of the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) with the curriculum. The curriculum map guarantees comprehensive coverage of ILOs across all courses. The fixed curriculum in the first two years imparts essential knowledge and skills, while the third year offers opportunities for specialisation. Research skills are systematically developed through courses such as *Statistics*, *Spreadsheet Modelling*, and *Advanced Research Methods*, effectively preparing students for their graduation projects. The *Professional Development* courses foster skills for collaboration, communication, and self-development. The panel sees opportunities for improvement in increasing the focus on GenAI and the development of an International Business Learning Line for IBA.

The programmes succeed in providing a challenging learning environment with sufficient real-world relevance, exemplified by courses like *Strategic Business Plan* and *Research Project*, and a student-centred approach, including opportunities to study abroad or undertake internships. The programmes ensure that the teaching staff are both academically and didactically competent, and those teaching in IBA have sufficient command of the English language. The panel views the delivery of large courses by a single lecturer as a potential risk.
The use of teaching assistants guarantees individual attention for students, although this is currently being challenged due to budget cuts. The panel recommends that both programmes closely monitor the workload of both lecturers and academic directors, and carefully evaluate the impact of current and future (efficiency) measures on both workload and the quality of education.

The panel also observes that the IBA, with its more selective admission process and international classroom, offers a potentially richer learning experience for students compared to the BA. Nevertheless, the panel believes that both programmes effectively create an environment that allows students to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

## 4.1.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

### Findings

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the BSc Business Administration and the BSc International Business Administration programmes. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods, such as written assignments, group projects, exams with closed questions, and oral assignments and exams. Most of the assessments consist of group and individual written assignments. Within the programme, quizzes and class participation are also utilised as methods of assessment.

The panel noted the programmes' exceptionally high number of assessments, and discussed this with the Academic Directors and lecturers. It was revealed that the extensive use of assessments aims to maintain student engagement. As one of the academic directors remarked, "There is a fine line between over-assessing and losing students who are not engaged." In an effort to reduce the number of assessments, the Academic Directors have recently asked lecturers to review their courses and identify any assessments that may be redundant and could be eliminated. This review process is still underway. Additionally, the programme is exploring the potential of using technology for grading. For multiple choice exams the programmes already use the digital assessment tool, ANS.

While implementing programmatic assessment is not a goal for the BA/IBA programmes, they are exploring some of its design principles. During the audit discussions, it was revealed that BA and IBA are experimenting with larger capstone assessments across courses. However, both the programme team and the panel acknowledged the challenge posed by Erasmus University Rotterdam's strict Binding Study Advice (BSA) of 60 EC in the first year. This raises concerns, particularly for the first year, about how to effectively integrate the larger capstone assessments.

The programme has already integrated more formative elements into the assessment process. Regular feedback helps students monitor their progress and pinpoint areas for improvement, with constructive feedback playing a crucial role in supporting effective learning. The panel also learned that, in an effort to personalise the learning experience, students who struggle academically are offered an additional module. Conversely, high-achieving students have the opportunity to take an extra 'excellence' module.

Students generally hold a positive view of the assessments. They appreciate the well-rounded mix of assessment formats, which include multiple-choice questions, case studies, and workshops, with evaluation based on participation in discussions. However, the programme could improve the transparency of the assessment criteria. Students report that for some assessments, they are informed of the criteria in advance, while for others, they only discover the criteria afterwards. The assessments are generally well-aligned with the material covered, and the feedback provided on assignments or first drafts is considered valuable for learning. That said, students feel that the learning value of multiple-choice tests is somewhat limited.

Students have expressed difficulties with the timing of the exams, which is also a topic of discussion within the Programme Committee, as the panel learned. The exam week coincides with the deadlines for several projects, resulting in a peak in the study workload. Moreover, the timing of the resits is not ideal, causing students to fall into a cycle of resits. The panel concurs that this issue requires attention.

To ensure the quality of assessments, both programmes adhere to the four-eyes principle in assessment development, meaning that each assessment is always reviewed by a peer. Furthermore, all assessments must receive approval from the Academic Director. While this process requires considerable effort, it enables the Academic Directors to become thoroughly familiar with all courses. They first approve the learning outcomes for each course and then review the associated assessments.

As part of its quality assurance practices, course coordinators organise calibration sessions for lecturers and teaching assistants. The panel learned that teaching assistants also participate in grading assessments. During these calibration sessions, TAs are trained on how to provide feedback and engage in discussions regarding the assessment rubric and grading criteria. However, the ultimate responsibility for evaluation remains with the lecturers. Students have expressed a need for more effective and consistent feedback. Therefore, despite the efforts already made, providing constructive feedback requires additional attention.

*Graduation*
The Bachelor Project serves as the graduation project for the (I)BA programme. Following the recommendations from the previous NVAO accreditation, the programme has transitioned from a 100% group assignment to a *Bachelor Project* comprising both group (55%) and individual (45%) components. The panel views this as a positive development. However, in order to comply with the internal guidelines, 60% of the assessment should be individually based. The *Bachelor Project* includes a pre-assignment in the form of a team charter, and five assignments: a literature review, the project design, an individual video, the bachelor project report, and an individual conclusion chapter. Only the last three components are assessed summatively. The panel has reviewed the assessment rubrics for these five assignments and found them to be generally clear and workable.

In examining a selection of bachelor projects from the Business Administration (BA) and International Business Administration (IBA) programmes, the panel observed that the evaluations are clear and well-detailed. The panel noted that students receive 1.5 points for the criterion of originality, which is defined as 'no plagiarism committed.' The panel questions whether this should be considered a merit that warrants 1.5 points, or if it should instead be treated as a conditional criterion.

*Examination Board* (see Chapter 4, General findings)
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions. The Examination Board

was consulted in the design of the new Bachelor Project, with the individual component being increased, partly based on the advice of the Examination Board.

Additionally, discussions about Generative AI and assessment within the programmes are influenced by the advice of the Examination Board. Following the Board's advice, there is a concerted effort on examinations in a controlled environment, to reduce the emphasis on written assignments and to incorporate more presentations, oral exams, and practical assignments. For these bachelor programmes, which involve many written assignments, this will be quite a challenge.


**Conclusion**

Judgement BSc Business Administration: Meets the standard
Judgement BSc International Business Administration: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is well-designed. Based on its findings, the panel notes that the system results in valid and reliable assessments. The assessment matrix effectively aligns the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with the evaluation methods, ensuring that all ILOs are covered through a range of assessments, such as presentations, written assignments, and group projects. Constructive and formative feedback plays a key role in supporting students' progress. Teaching assistants receive instruction on grading and providing feedback. Nonetheless, providing constructive feedback requires additional attention.

While the transparency of assessments can be improved by ensuring that the assessment criteria of all assessments are communicated in advance, students generally express satisfaction with their assessments and the knowledge they gain from them. However, they believe that the timing of exams could be coordinated in a better way.

The Examination Board ensures the quality of assessments and is actively involved and consulted in the new Bachelor Project format. The panel also finds the Bachelor Project to be well-structured. The programme has made significant strides in individual assessment during graduation since the previous NVAO review. To fully meet its own requirement of 60% individual assessment per course, the programme still needs to make some additional improvements. The evaluations of the various components of the Bachelor Project are based on a detailed matrix.

Although the panel has identified some areas for improvement, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 4.1.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The typical path for both BA and IBA students is to continue onto a master's programme. The round-table discussion with recent graduates revealed that the connection between the bachelor's and master's programmes at RSM is strong. Alumni reported feeling well-prepared to begin their master's studies. They praised the bachelor's programme for its substantive and didactic versatility, as well as the opportunity for exchange programmes. They suggested that the programme and its students could benefit from making more connections with industry in the first year, such as by inviting guest speakers.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen theses from the last two cohorts of both the BSc Business Administration and the BSc International Business Administration.

Within the BA selection, one thesis was deemed insufficient, which is considered an exception. This thesis failed to provide a critical review of the literature, lacked a clear methodology, and did not present convincing findings. However, the other Bachelor Projects strongly demonstrate that BA students achieve the intended learning outcomes, with important and interesting research questions and adequate empirical analysis.

The panel concurs with the assessments given to the fifteen IBA theses. It classified the projects from satisfactory to excellent. The assessment process is clear and structured, and the feedback from examiners is in general constructive; The students have rightfully passed. The panel highlights the practical relevance and applicability of the projects as a notable strength. However, the generalisability of the projects' results is identified as a general area for improvement.

**Conclusion**

Judgement BSc Business Administration: Meets the standard
Judgement BSc International Business Administration: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that students in both the BA and IBA programmes successfully achieve the intended learning outcomes at the bachelor's level. After reviewing 30 theses—15 from BA and 15 from IBA—the panel found them to be generally satisfactory to excellent, featuring interesting research questions and practical relevance. Alumni feel well-prepared for their master's studies.

### 4.1.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the BSc Business Administration and the BSc International Business Administration both meet the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding these bachelor programmes is 'positive'.

### 4.1.8. Recommendations

*Balance*
Due to the large size of the programmes, the workload for both academic directors and lecturers is considerable, sometimes leading to compromises. For example, while more individual assessments may be preferable, they would also require significantly more time and resources. The reduction in the number of teaching assistants could further impact these decisions. The panel advises the programme to maintain open communication with both lecturers and students to carefully balance lectures and more personal attention in tutorials, alongside group assignments and individual assessments, ensuring alignment with the quality the programme aims to provide its students.

*Assessments*
The programme also needs to find a balance between formative and summative assessments. At present, there are still many summative assessments. The panel does observe a shift towards more capstone assessments, but this approach still requires further development.

*Planning of exams*
The panel recommends ensuring that the scheduling of exams and the deadlines for major projects do not overlap. Furthermore, it is important to prevent students who need to retake exams from falling into a re-sit loop due to the timing of exams and re-sits.

*Generative AI*
The panel recommends that the curriculum place greater emphasis on generative AI, enabling students to learn how to effectively work with AI tools. Additionally, AI is impacting assessments. At present, much of the work involves written group and individual assignments, which are highly susceptible to the use of AI. The panel urges the programme to address this issue.

# 5. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS CLUSTER 2

## 5.1. Master International Management

### 5.1.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | International Management |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60256 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 90 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 5.1.2. Introduction

The 18-month IM/CEMS programme aims to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical insights into the economic, social, and environmental challenges faced by international organisations operating in diverse cultural contexts. A key component of the programme is its integration with CEMS, the Global Alliance in Management Education. Students are required to complete a semester abroad at one of the 33 CEMS partner universities, an experience that enables them to develop a global perspective on business challenges and opportunities.

IM-CEMS uses a cap of around 65 students being selected on a number of criteria indicating excellence. The number of registered incoming students in 2022/23 was 65, with 43% female participation and half of the students entering the programme internationally.

*Follow-up of recommendations previous accreditation:*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| The main recommendation of the NVAO accreditation in 2018 was to enhance the process of quality control and registration of thesis feedback | The programme has taken a number of steps to ensure good quality feedback from supervisors and second readers. The Thesis Online Platform (TOP) was improved to enable supervisors and second readers to respectively record their (oral) feedback in the platform. The programme also participated in a pilot in an academic year to test a new Thesis Management System, but it was not satisfactory and hence the programme continues to use TOP. Thesis feedback is properly documented, but more work needs to be done to streamline the process as some professors continue to provide feedback in thesis documents (which can be recovered, but not automatically transferred into TOP). |

### 5.1.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of the programme are structured into three key domains: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In terms of knowledge, the programme covers core management fields, including strategic management, leadership in multicultural contexts, marketing, finance and control, supply chain management, innovation, and corporate venturing. These subject areas ensure that students gain a comprehensive understanding of the various functional disciplines within international business.

Skills development is another essential aspect of the programme. Students are trained to develop strong analytical, managerial, and interpersonal competencies that enable them to function effectively in complex and dynamic international business environments. These skills are fostered through case studies, simulations, teamwork exercises, and project-based learning.

Furthermore, the panel found that the programme entails essential attitudes and values, such as respect, corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, professionalism, self-reflection, and an appreciation of international diversity.

| Intended Learning Outcomes M IM/CEMS | |
|---|---|
| **Knowledge and insight into the challenges of internationally operating firms, relating to:** | |
| ILO 1.1 | Strategic management of international and multinational companies |
| ILO 1.2 | Leadership and HR issues associated with multicultural environments. |
| ILO 1.3 | Marketing of products and services in different countries |
| ILO 1.4 | Finance and control of multinational firms |
| ILO 1.5 | Management of global supply chains |
| ILO 1.6 | Management of innovation processes |
| ILO 1.7 | Management of corporate venturing |
| **Skills to operate effectively in international contexts** | |
| ILO 2.1 | Analytical skills |
| ILO 2.2 | Management skills |
| ILO 2.3 | Interpersonal skills such as communication, intercultural, team and leadership skills |
| **Attitudes – the mindset to deal with international differences, act responsibly** | |
| ILO 3.1 | Being respectful of others and acknowledge CSR and sustainability as values |
| ILO 3.2 | Act professionally, have insight in own personal competences strengths and weaknesses in management settings |
| ILO 3.3 | Understand and appreciate international differences. |

*Table 2: Intended learning outcomes IM-CEMS*

The panel determines that these elements align with the mission of RSM to be a force for positive change and adhere to the Dublin Descriptors of the Master's level. The IM/CEMS programme also places a strong emphasis on ethical leadership and responsible decision-making, ensuring that graduates contribute positively to the organisations and societies in which they operate.

Since students are offered a dual qualification programme, the 5 learning outcomes of the global alliance CEMS are integrated in the curriculum. These learning outcomes are worded as: Internationalism, Business Embeddedness, Responsible Citizenship, Reflective Critical Thinking and Comprehensive Leadership.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. IM/CEMS reflects this situation throughout the programme, including the SEMS semester abroad. Internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in the international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence. These elements and the learning culture of IM/CEMS enables students to access a global community of ambitious students from top business schools around the world, and to corporate partners.

The intended learning outcomes of IM/CEMS align internationally with the global alliance of CEMS and the Dublin Descriptors for the master level. They fulfil the expectations of the professional field for an academic orientation in International Management.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme, e.g. ILO2.1. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to this field. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme (also see standard 2).

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel has reviewed the programme's objectives and considers that the IM/CEMS learning outcomes are clearly defined and align with international expectations in the field. The academic orientation in combination with theoretical and practical exposure ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the next step for their global careers. The programme's international focus, reinforced by the CEMS network, provides students with exposure to global business challenges. The panel judges that Standard 1 is satisfactorily met.

## 5.1.4.  Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Curriculum*
The IM/CEMS programme is taught across three semesters. The first two cover the CEMS core courses and IM/CEMS exclusive courses: Global Supply Chain Management, Innovation Management and Climate Change Strategy Role-play. Some of these courses are shared with other RSM programmes.
Students spend either the first or second semester at a CEMS partner university. The RSM home students study together during the third semester, dedicated to academic development and thesis writing. In many cases students also include (or follow-up thesis completion) an internship abroad.

Based on the documentation, the panel found that the curriculum of the programme supports that students achieve the ILOs. The programme provided the panel with a insightful matrix that illustrates how the intended learning outcomes and programme goals are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced way.

The research-oriented approach is reflected by ILO 2.1 (analytical) and using academic perspectives to understand, predict and solve organisational challenges is a key aspect of all courses. Typical examples are Business Analytics for International Managers and the research clinics.
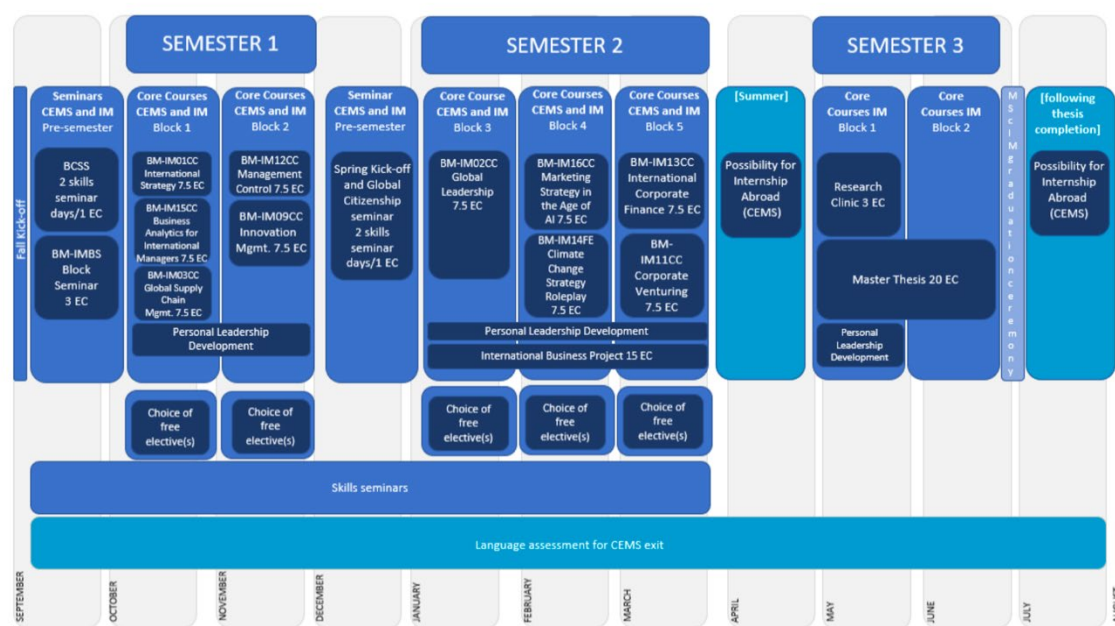
*Figure 1: Overview of MSc IM-CEMS programme curriculum*

*Learning environment*
The learning environment of the programme supports the intellectual and professional growth of the student by real-world relevance in case-based experiential learning, student autonomy including personal choices, enabling students to show their mastery both in an academic level in the Master Thesis as in application in the Business Project.
The learning process is supported by both formative and summative assessment.
The panel deemed the learning environment as effectively enabling students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

*Master thesis*
The thesis is written individually, carrying out an academic research project, concluded with an oral defence. In this thesis the integration of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated.

*Teaching staff*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The teaching staff of the IM/CEMS programme consists of 19 lecturers of which 13 are BKO-qualified (or exempted because of senior assessment expertise) and the team has SKO-qualification available as well. Another 4 members of the team have participated in the course Educational Leadership offered by Erasmus, Leiden and Delft universities. This course covers the BKO-subject and adds finance, management and accreditation. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. The faculty's expertise, coupled with a number of professional activities, ensures that students receive a high-quality education. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.
Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel acknowledges the complicated, yet rigorous structure of the curriculum and the effective learning environment provided by IM/CEMS. The integration of electives with other programmes and the international cooperation with partner universities add value by promoting broader perspectives. The faculty's expertise, coupled with a number of professionalisation activities, ensures their adequate quality in terms of content and didactics and that students receive a high-quality education. The panel deems Standard 2 to be satisfactorily met.

## 5.1.5.   Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment matrix*
The programme uses a variety of assessment methods, both individually as group work. The nature of the programme and the ILOs support the rational to the group assessment in a number of assignments. The panel notes that the assessment matrix combined with the curriculum mapping ensures that ILOs are assessed on the appropriate level in a reliable and valid manner. Students are quite pleased with the transparency and validity of the assessment praxis in IM/CEMS.

*Thesis assessment*
The programme uses a thesis assessment rubric that enables assessors to find a common and transparent judgment of the student's achievement. The programme participates in the RSM thesis monitor and all the sampled theses grades were supported by peer assessors last year. Even though the programme has experimented with new forms of feedback registration the teaching and assessing staff have not yet been able to find a compromise how to register detailed feedback in a uniform way. The most relevant feedback is of course registered in the Thesis Online Platform.

The thesis assessments the panel members studied provided evidence the observations of the examiners were valid and reliable across different theses and aligned with the opinion of the panel members.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel acknowledges the quality of student assessment within IM/CEMS, including the reliability, validity, transparency and independence of assessments. The RSM Exam Board is in position and adequately consulted. The graduation process safeguards ample evidence of the ILOs being successfully achieved, Standard 3 is judged to be satisfactorily met, with ongoing efforts to address the issue of feedback registration of thesis assessors.

### 5.1.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

| **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.** |
|---|
| Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes. |

**Findings**

Both the documentation and the interviews the auditors conducted with alumni and employers did provide ample evidence that the programme is deemed highly relevant and effective for graduates. The examples of (types of) organisations that employ alumni is relevant and substantial according to the audit panel.

The audit panel studied 15 theses of the last two cohorts of IM/CEMS. The auditors and referents deemed all theses as reflecting the expected level of Master of Science, both in the professional development and in the quality of research. The audit panel could understand the reasoning of the assessors of the programme to issue the end grade.

The programme provides substantial evidence that students achieve the intended learning outcomes through assessments, final projects, and career placements.

Graduates of IM/CEMS are well-regarded in the job market, reflecting the strength of the curriculum. The international exposure and hands-on learning experiences provided by the programme significantly enhance graduates' employability.

Students have suggested additional research support during the thesis-writing process, particularly in the form of exemplary past theses. Addressing this concern could enhance the research potential of students and further elevate the quality of their final projects. Strengthening support structures such as thesis-writing workshops and individual research coaching could contribute to improved outcomes.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel finds that IM/CEMS successfully enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, additional support for thesis research could enhance student performance. Standard 4 is deemed satisfactorily met.

Based upon the quality of research in the thesis the audit panel observed, the panel supports the registration of the programme as Master of Science.

### 5.1.7.    Overall conclusion

The IM/CEMS programme at RSM effectively prepares students for international careers through a well-structured curriculum, a dynamic learning environment, and rigorous assessments. The programme aligns with international standards and the expectations of the professional field. While minor improvements could be made in student assessment methods and thesis support, the overall quality of the programme meets the required benchmarks.

### 5.1.8.    Recommendations

- Implement a uniform way of issuing and registering feedback on theses

- Consider offering additional research support for thesis research, as requested by students.

## 5.2.    Executive MBA

### 5.2.1.    General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Executive MBA (not funded) |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 75045 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Post initial master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 65 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Parttime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 5.2.2.    Introduction

The Executive MBA (EMBA) programme at Rotterdam School of Management (RSM), Erasmus University, is a well-established academic programme aimed at developing mid-career professionals into future leaders. Over the years, the programme has evolved to align with RSM's mission of being a force for positive change in the world. The curriculum is designed to foster leadership potential, equip students with strategic decision-making capabilities, and enhance their entrepreneurial mindset. The programme aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and practical leadership skills, preparing students for impactful roles in various industries.

The most recent cohort of the EMBA programme consists of 79 students, slowly declining from 137 in 2019. The programme is continuing the trend of international representation, with approximately 57% of students coming from abroad. The gender diversity within the programme is a point of attention, with female representation fluctuating between 26% and 36% in recent years.

This evaluation considers the main recommendations from the previous NVAO accreditation and assesses the progress made in implementing those recommendations.

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| First recommendation of the NVAO in 2018 touched upon the administrative quality keeping records of grades. | This has been no problem in this evaluation and the programme has implemented several systems (Osiris, Registrar, Canvas) to safeguard products and grades. |

| Second recommendation was an encouragement to enhance the coherency of the package that reflects the end level of the programme. | EMBA has redesigned this package to underline the integrative character in courses like the In-Company project and Strategic Management. |

## 5.2.3.  Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The EMBA programme at RSM is structured to develop executives who can assume leadership positions across diverse industries. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the programme are explicitly aligned with RSM's overarching mission of sustainability and positive societal impact. The audit panel acknowledges that the ILOs incorporate a well-balanced mix of theoretical knowledge, research competencies, and leadership skills, which are essential for executives aiming for international career progression, also according to international workfield representatives the panel consulted and the curriculum advisory board of the programme. The programme supported the formulation of ILOs with a transparent linking matrix with the Dublin Descriptors and the EQF for the MSc-level.

The Intended learning outcomes of EMBA are:

| Intended Learning Outcomes M Executive MBA | |
|---|---|
| Knowledge – Master foundational and advanced global business disciplines | |
| ILO 1 | Explain the foundational knowledge of management and leadership |
| ILO 2 | Explain specialised knowledge concerning one or more subfields of (international) management and leadership. |
| ILO 3 | Analyse complex business issues and create options to address them, by applying different fields of management and leadership and by applying the principles of applied research. |
| Skills – Develop competences critical to effective management practices | |
| ILO 4 | Demonstrate (inter)personal leadership skills such as communication, building trust and commitment, and providing a sense of direction. |
| ILO 5 | Employ business analyst skills in business decision making and problem solving. |
| ILO 6 | Describe, appraise, and regulate one's identity, needs, and impact on others. |
| Attitudes – Be an effective responsible business leader | |
| ILO 7 | Appreciate the importance and complexity of ethics, diversity, and sustainability for business. |
| ILO 8 | Adhere to critical thinking and the scientific method to understand and solve complex business problems. |
| ILO 9 | Increased openness to personal reflection and transformation. |

*Table 3: Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for EMBA*

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), RSM strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel sees ambition reflected in the ILOs of EMBA, particularly in the attitude-related ILOs.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by internatiorial forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom (on average 30 nationalities) benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

Academic orientation
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies, e.g. ILO3 and 8. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to their field. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme (see Standard 2).

The panel deems the Master of Science degree suitable for the EMBA programme, given the discipline and the curriculum's content (see also standard 2). It also observed that similar programmes award a comparable degree.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The profile of the programme is clearly linked to the mission of RSM, the academic orientation is reflected in the ILOs that are adequately connected to the Dublin Descriptors and EQF for the Msc-level. The panel finds that the profile, the academic orientation and the intended learning outcomes of the EMBA programme meet the required academic standards.

## 5.2.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

The curriculum of the EMBA programme is designed to offer a comprehensive blend of theoretical insights and practical applications to mid-career professionals. The structure of the programme, which involves bi-weekly in-person sessions, allows students to balance their professional responsibilities with academic learning. This format facilitates an interactive learning environment where students can apply newly acquired knowledge directly to their professional contexts.

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The panel found that the core courses (Leading People, Managerial Accounting, Data Driven Decision Making, Marketing Management, Financial Management, Personal leadership Development, Strategic Management, Operations Management) cover all ILOs adequately and the electives, study tour and trip and the In Company Project enhance students to achieve the ILOs to the required depth.

*Curriculum structure*
The curriculum of EMBA is divided into four modules starting off with a module of core courses. The second module consists of four electives and the international study tour, the third module covers the advanced core courses Strategic Management, Leading Strategic Business Change, Operations Management and the Business of Sustainability. The curriculum is finalised with the In Company Project and the international study trip to South Africa. Interwoven is the course Personal Leadership Development of 6 EC.
The panel deems this structure as beneficial for the learning process of students providing a strong basis and facilitating students to create their personal emphasis.

*In-company project*
As an end-level assessment EMBA has an in-company project where students apply and integrate the knowledge of various foundational and specialised managerial and organisational disciplines to address a complex business issue, requiring application of scientific research methodologies.

The goal of this endeavour is to identify, investigate and provide advice about a substantial issue and/or opportunity in an organisation or unit through using the knowledge and skills the student has gained during the programme.

*Academic research skills*
The panel learned that the research skills are instrumental to a number of courses and form a foundation for the In-company Project. The research-oriented approach of EMBA is underlined

explicitly in ILOs 3 (applied research) and 8 (scientific methods). For instance, practically all core courses of the programme contribute to ILO8.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
The mission of RSM is clearly visible in the programme in several courses, the overarching culture of the programme, its international classroom and the study trips. Leading lecturers of every course have included elements that reflect the RSM mission, like the SDG's, purposeful change and corporate social responsibility. The audit panel deems this one of the strong points of the programme.

*Study load*
Students have indicated to the panel that the study load of the programme is demanding yet workable. The variation in the time required to finalise the programme is according to the panel members largely dependent on the balancing choices the individual students make between personal, professional and educational duties. The students have not indicated this is a matter of concern for them.

Students describe the study guidance as adequate and the information provision via Canvas is up to par. Students feel well informed via the course manuals and easy access to faculty.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The EMBA courses involve 51 RSM faculty members, of which the overwhelming majority is PhD-qualified in their field of expertise. Didactical qualifications vary since externally hired teaching staff is not required to be BKO-qualified, but all faculty is qualified to lecture in an international context. Of the RSM-based faculty 7 lecturers are exempt from BKO-qualification based upon senior assessment expertise. Ten lecturers are BKO-qualified. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the teaching-learning environment, including the teaching staff effectively supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Students underlined the challenging and satisfying content of the curriculum. The In Company Project is an adequate way to integrate the achieved learning results and the emphasis on an international perspective is beneficial to the ILOs concerning the attitude of students. The panel rates this standard as 'meets the standard'.

## 5.2.5.  Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the EMBA programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix transparently demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments, including the In-company project to assess the end level of achieved learning outcomes. It also reveals that the programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods, including individual and group assignments, written exams and report writing (In-company project). These methods align with the course learning outcomes (and consequentially the ILOs) as well as with the Assessment Policy of RSM. These observations convince the panel the assessment is reliable, valid and transparent for students.

*Final In-company project*
Students hand in a written report to provide proof of achieving the intended learning outcomes during their 4 months project to advise on improvement of an issue or exploiting an opportunity of the organisation. This includes a reflection of their personal professional growth during this process. The panel members noticed that the specific requirements for this report leave room for a large variety. The feedback provided by the assessors showed variation as well in regard to providing explicit support for the judgment issued, both in top-end as in marginal cases.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on relevant criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is correctly designed. Based on the findings, the panel concludes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate.

The Examination Board adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The graduation process is properly structured, according to the panel.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development especially in formulating more strict requirements of the In-company report and the providing support of the grading by the assessors, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 5.2.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

Alumni and work field are satisfied with the level of graduates and the way the programme has prepared them for their position, according to the documentation and the discussions the panel members engaged in.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen In-company projects from the last two cohorts of EMBA. These included projects based on practical issues from companies, as well as more scientific research applied to the case at hand. The panel classifies the projects as topical and relevant to an executive MBA programme. The panel also reviewed some final projects clearly related to sustainability. The panel finds the final project contributes to the further development of both the academic research and the professional field.

The panel members noticed that the requirements for this report leave room for improvement. Though some reports studied were exemplary, one lacked references to academic literature linked to the empirical part of the business problem at hand.

Based on the projects examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. In general, the final projects are well-constructed, according to the panel. Naturally, there is a variation in quality between the projects, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners, though the wording of the support of their final grade is sometimes rather minimal or more of a feedforward character. The panel finds that the assessments are sufficiently transparent both for students as for the panel members.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for EMBA and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 5.2.7.   Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the Executive MBA programme is 'positive'.

### 5.2.8.   Recommendations

- Tighten the bandwidth of the In-company report by describing more stringent minimal requirements concerning the academic quality of the report.

- Encourage assessors to provide tangible support for the grade they issue, especially during grading the In-company report.

## 5.3. Global Executive MBA

### 5.3.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Global Executive MBA (not funded) |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 75046 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Post initial master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 64 EC[5] |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Parttime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 5.3.2. Introduction

The Global Executive MBA programme during the last accreditation was partner in the global OneMBA-consortium with a number of esteemed business schools worldwide. During the Covid-pandemic RSM decided to leave the consortium due to hampered improvement and innovation of the consortium programme and the effect of travel restrictions in this period especially detrimental to the Global Experimental Learning modules (GELs). The new setup still benefits from an extensive network of foreign partners and the GELs now focus on Leading digital transformation, Leading entrepreneurship and venturing, Leading corporate strategy and development and Leading with impact in developing and emerging markets. The NVAO-visitation panel approved of the neutral conversion from OneMBA to GEMBA in 2022.

| Points of attention 2022 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Points of attention defined at the 2022 visitation were: the implementation of the digital platform to support the learning process of students, building a strong network of cooperation partners, the organisation of GELs and the monitoring of the coherence and global character of the programme. | The recommendations from the 2022 visitation were fully realised, including the implementation of an ePortfolio to support the development and learning of students, the partnerships with high-quality international business schools (such as Singapore Management University, Stockholm School of Economics, Georgetown University, University of Cape Town), and the re-design of GEL's to have clearer focus on specific global challenges, improve its organisation, and integration with core courses. |

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[5] The programme is implementing a minor change to the credit table to 65 EC per 2025/2026. The panel has based its findings upon the old and new design. See p2, AMBA harmonisation.

The most recent intake of the programme has 28 students with ample work experience (on average 18 years). Over the last five years the average age of enrolled students was 41. The current cohort consists of 79% international students and 14% female students.

### 5.3.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**
*Intended learning outcomes*
The purpose of the Global Executive MBA (GEMBA) programme is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to operate effectively as strategic leaders in a global business environment. The programme is designed to foster self-awareness, decision-making skills in uncertain conditions, and an understanding of the motivations and drivers of others. The learning outcomes align with both international academic and professional standards, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for senior leadership positions across various industries.

The panel observes that the GEMBA programme integrates strategic leadership development with a competency-based approach, fostering essential skills such as critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and global business acumen. The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are appropriately structured for an executive education programme and clearly mapped to the Dublin Descriptors for a master's level qualification. The programme's mission includes a strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are reflected in both the core courses and elective offerings.

The wording of the ILOs is coherent with the ILOs of the previous OneMBA-programme because of the neutral conversion of the NVAO-accreditation in 2022.

| Knowledge | |
|---|---|
| ILO1 | Outline the evolution and structure of the global environment, and distinguish the specificities of developed versus emergent market economies. |
| ILO2 | Study business models and theories, and recognise the context and diversity of global and local business practices. |
| ILO3 | Understand and recognise leadership models, techniques and skills per personal, team and organisational development. |
| Skills and Attitude | |
| ILO4 | Ability to recognise the importance and complexity of integrity, ethics and sustainability for international businesses. |
| ILO5 | Apply critical thinking and scientific methods to understand and solve complex business problems. |
| ILO6 | Apply analytical and managerial skills in multidisciplinary course deliverables. |
| ILO7 | Exchange and integrate individual perspectives on business and leadership in cross-cultural, diverse global team settings. |
| ILO8 | Demonstrate leadership ability to effectively manage relationships and to positively impact global business and society. |
| ILO9 | Ability to define and communicate strategies and to lead change processes in volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous contexts. |

*Table 4: Intended Learning Outcomes GEMBA*

The self-assessment report demonstrates that the ILOs were developed in consultation with faculty, industry professionals, and alumni, ensuring that they remain relevant and aligned with contemporary executive education standards. The programme undergoes regular reviews to ensure that the ILOs remain current and responsive to global business challenges, including geopolitical dynamics and economic fragmentation. The programme explicitly states the ambition to customise the ILOs over the next period to reflect the specificity of the GEMBA-programme.

*International dimension*
As indicated by the name of the programme internationalisation is the very core of the Global Executive MBA. Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies, e.g. ILO5 and 6. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to their field. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

Considering the field of study and the curriculum content (see standard 2), the panel finds the Master of Science degree appropriate for the GEMBA programme. It further notes that equivalent programmes confer the same degree.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the GEMBA programme has well-formulated and internationally relevant intended learning outcomes. that reflect the master-level and the academic orientation. The focus on strategic leadership, sustainability, and global business challenges ensures that students are well-equipped for leadership roles and the RSM mission is clearly recognisable in these ILOs. The panel rates Standard 1 as "meets the standard".

## 5.3.4. Teaching-learning environment

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**Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

<u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

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**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The GEMBA curriculum is structured to ensure that students develop both theoretical knowledge and practical leadership skills. Each course within the programme is mapped to the relevant intended learning outcomes, ensuring comprehensive coverage of essential competencies. The curriculum map demonstrates clear links between course learning outcomes (CLOs) and programme-level ILOs, with particular attention given to the application of strategic decision-making in complex business environments.

The core courses gradually shift the focus on the level of analysis from the single business level, through the multiple business and corporate level, to the global economic, social, natural, and political and geopolitical environment of business.

The GEMBA programme's didactic approach emphasises transformative learning experiences that go beyond traditional classroom-based instruction. Students engage in real-world projects, simulation exercises, and case-based learning, enabling them to apply theories directly to executive-level decision-making scenarios. The programme promotes a competency-based education model, ensuring that learning is not merely theoretical but also fosters practical skills that align with industry needs.

An important aspect of this approach is the use of immersive Global Experience Learning (GELs), which place students in different cultural and business environments to test their leadership and decision-making skills. These GELs expose students to complex global business challenges and demand that they engage in collaborative problem-solving, strategic thinking, and ethical decision-making. The panel commends the integration of these experiential elements, as they align well with the programme's overarching goal of preparing students for senior executive roles in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world.

While the programme's intensity and academic rigor are appreciated by students, some concerns have been raised regarding workload management. Students indicate that balancing coursework, assignments, and experiential learning components can be demanding, especially for executives who are simultaneously managing their professional careers. The panel acknowledges this challenge and encourages the programme to explore mechanisms that allow for greater flexibility in learning paths while maintaining high academic standards. For example, adopting more blended learning techniques or providing customised learning tracks could help accommodate diverse professional backgrounds and schedules.

*Curriculum Structure*

The programme is structured around Global Experience Learning (GELs), which focus on key strategic challenges: Leading Digitalisation, Leading Entrepreneurship and Venturing, Leading Corporate Strategy and Development, and Leading with Impact in Emerging and Developing Economies. These experiential learning modules are delivered in collaboration with renowned international institutions such as Singapore Management University, Stockholm School of Economics, Georgetown University, and the University of Cape Town.

The curriculum of the programme supports that the intended learning outcomes are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced way.
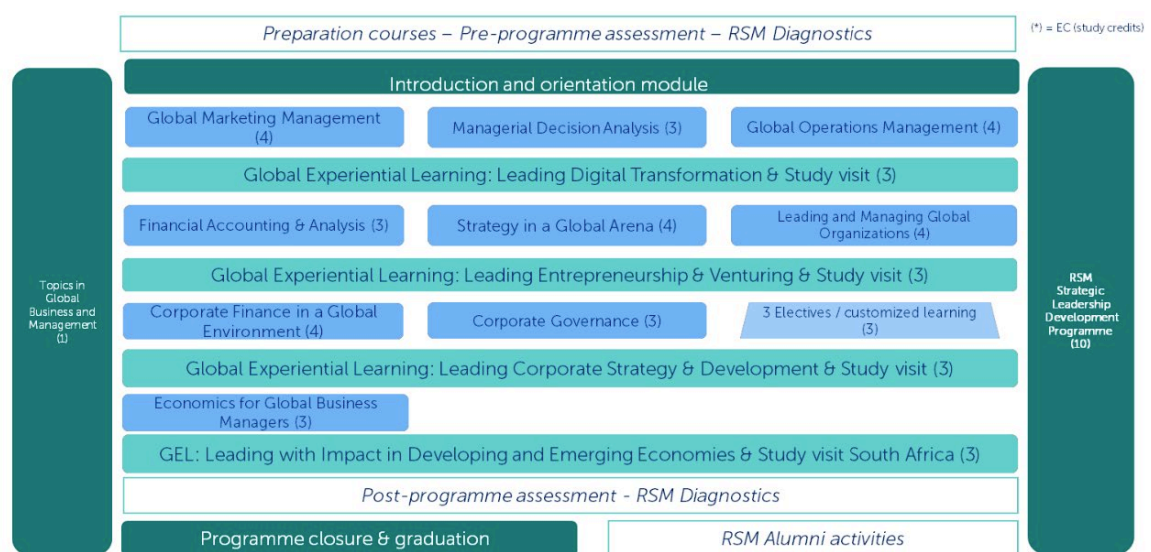


*Figure 2: schematic overview of GEMBA curriculum.*[6]

The structure of the curriculum is designed to integrate these GELs with the core courses, ensuring a seamless learning experience that aligns with executive leadership demands. Each module builds upon the previous one, reinforcing knowledge accumulation and application. The programme follows a structure, where students take a combination of core courses, elective courses, and GELs, providing a balance between strategic management theory and practice. The panel acknowledges that this approach allows students to customise their learning journey to their career needs.

Students appreciate the cohort-based learning model, which enhances peer-to-peer learning and professional networking. The coherence of the programme is of particular concern given the programme's diverse cohort. Students come from different industries and leadership backgrounds.

The curriculum also includes capstone projects and real-world business simulations, ensuring that students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge to tangible strategic challenges. The integration of cross-disciplinary themes, such as digital transformation, sustainability, and ethical leadership, strengthens the relevance of the programme to contemporary business

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[6] Due to the alignment across Executive MBA programmes the course Student Leadership Development has been enhanced with an extra credit to provide formal recognition of the reflective learning process.

environments. The panel commends this interdisciplinary approach, as it reflects the complex realities faced by executive leaders today.

While the curriculum is well-structured and rigorous, the panel suggests that a periodic review of course sequencing and student feedback loops would ensure continuous improvement. Furthermore, the adoption of more flexible learning pathways, including online and hybrid options in delivery, could enhance accessibility for a broader range of executive professionals.

*Academic orientation*
The research oriented approach of the programme is visible in ILOs 5 (scientific methods) and 6 (analytical skills), which are covered by practically all of the core courses of the programme.

*Teaching Faculty and Learning Support*
The panel notes that the faculty consists of highly qualified academics and experienced industry professionals. Students describe the teaching staff as knowledgeable, supportive, and engaged in executive education best practices. Faculty expertise is well-aligned with the programme's strategic objectives, ensuring a balance between academic rigour and practical relevance. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

*Support Structures and Learning Resources*
To facilitate learning, the GEMBA programme provides access to a wide range of academic and professional resources, including online libraries, case study databases, and industry reports. Students benefit from the expertise of faculty members who not only bring strong academic credentials but also substantial industry experience, ensuring that theoretical concepts are contextualised with real-world applications.

Additionally, learning is supported by mentoring and coaching services, which help students navigate their professional development goals. The panel notes that while these services are effective, there is potential for expanding mentorship opportunities, particularly through stronger alumni engagement. Given that networking and career progression are critical elements of an executive MBA programme, the panel recommends that the GEMBA team consider formalising an alumni mentorship programme to further support students' leadership development and career transitions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel is satisfied with the overall design of the teaching-learning environment and the structured approach taken to executive education. The GEMBA programme successfully integrates theoretical knowledge with applied learning experiences.

The Course Learning Outcomes are clearly derived from the ILOs, the international context is extremely beneficial for the students, the programme strives to accommodate students personal learning ambitions. The staff of the programme consists of highly qualified lecturers either in academia or the professional field.

The panel encourages further development of customised and competency-based learning pathways, in line with the programme's ambition for greater flexibility and individualisation. Based on these findings, the panel concludes that Standard 2 "meets the standard".

## 5.3.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment System*
The assessment policy is based on RSM's educational vision and Assessment Policy (November 2023), ensuring that evaluations are valid, reliable, and transparent. The assessment matrix confirms that all ILOs are sufficiently covered through diverse methods, including written assignments, oral presentations, group projects, and reflective essays. Students report that while assessments are rigorous, they contribute meaningfully to their learning process.

*Portfolio-Based and Formative Assessment*
A notable feature of the programme is its portfolio-based assessment model, which emphasises pass/fail grading for personal development components. This approach encourages students to focus on professional growth rather than grades without compromising validity, reliability and transparency of the assessment. The panel appreciates this innovation and encourages further refinement of the portfolio assessment process. The panel encourages the programme to share these experiences with other programmes of RSM.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded portfolios is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel acknowledges that the assessment system is well-designed and aligned with academic and professional expectations. The way the portfolio-assessment is aligned with the RSM assessment policy ensures according to the panel the validity, reliability and independence of the assessment. Students find the transparency of the assessment supporting their learning process. The experiences with portfolio-assessment could be of use for other programmes within RSM. The panel concludes that Standard 3 "meets the standard".

## 5.3.6.   Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

*Graduate Employability and Alumni Success*
The GEMBA programme has a strong track record of graduate employability, with alumni securing leadership positions in top global firms, including Microsoft, Shell, Heineken, and Capgemini. The panel in discussions noted that alumni would like to stay in closer contact after graduation. Employer feedback confirms that graduates possess the necessary competencies to lead complex organisations in a dynamic global environment. Position change is quite normal in this student population, because the programme stimulates reorientation on a personal level.

*Quality of final portfolio*
The panel reviewed a representative sample of GEMBA portfolios and found them to be topical, methodologically sound, and aligned with the programme's strategic leadership objectives. The relevant assessment matrices ensure that final projects meet the expected academic and professional standards.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that GEMBA graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes at the appropriate master's level. Employers and alumni confirm the value of the degree, and the thesis component provides a robust demonstration of executive competencies. Therefore, Standard 4 "meets the standard".

### 5.3.7.  Overall conclusion

Based on the assessment of the four standards, the panel determines that the Global Executive MBA (GEMBA) programme meets the required quality standards. The programme structure, learning environment, and assessment system are appropriately designed to support executive education. While minor improvements are recommended, alumni engagement and crosspollination on assessment experiences, the panel considers the GEMBA programme to be of high quality. The final evaluation judges the programme as "positive".

### 5.3.8.  Recommendations

- Alumni Engagement: The programme could further leverage alumni networks to support students' professional transitions and job searches.

- Personalised Learning: The panel encourages further development of customised and competency-based learning pathways, in line with the programme's ambition for greater flexibility and individualisation. The panel acknowledges this challenge and encourages the programme to explore mechanisms that allow for greater flexibility in learning paths while maintaining high academic standards. For example, adopting more blended learning techniques or providing customised learning tracks could help accommodate diverse professional backgrounds and schedules.

- Actively share the experiences with alternative forms of assessment with other programmes, at least with the other master programmes of RSM and likewise learn from their experiences.

## 5.4. Master Corporate Communication

### 5.4.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Corporate Communication (not funded) |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 75049 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Post initial master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Parttime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 5.4.2. Introduction

The master Corporate Communication is a post-experience part-time 60 EC programme. It started before 2000 and was part of the previous accreditation round. According to programme documentation, 17 students were enrolled in 2022-2023, of which 41% were international and 82% female. An additional group of students participates in parts of the programme as non-degree seeking students. The number of students that participated in parts of the programme in 22-23 was 284, of which 39% was international and 77% female.

**Follow-up programme specific recommendations NVAO 2018:**

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Improve the personal development track and the feasibility to finish the entire programme in time. | The programme has incorporated personal skill development into the core courses, e.g. Leadership and is considering adding another module of professional personal development. The time to finish the programme varies in reality from a minimum of 18 months to an average of 3,5 years. The part time character of the programme limits the influence of the programme on the time students take. |
| Improve the documentation of written feedback during the thesis writing process. | The programme has implemented the Thesis Online Platform and is monitoring the feedback from coaches to students in line with RSM protocol. |

## 5.4.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The purpose of the MSc Corporate Communication programme is to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and skills in corporate communication, preparing them for managerial and advisory roles within this domain. The programme aims to develop responsible leaders capable of addressing contemporary communication challenges. Upon graduation, students typically secure positions as communication managers, consultants, and advisors across various sectors, including corporate organisations, governmental institutions, and non-governmental organisations.

The programme aims for purpose-driven and conscientious branding, aligning with contemporary corporate communication strategies. The panel observes that the programme has clearly outlined intended learning outcomes (ILOs) that align with the field of corporate communication. The ILOs are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level, ensuring that students develop theoretical expertise, research skills, and professional competencies necessary for the field.

| ILO 1 | Mastering the theory of corporate communication and understand the different theoretical perspectives and schools of thought |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ILO 2 | Understand the main operational areas of corporate communication and the typical communication-related problems and challenges |
| ILO 3 | Develop effective communication strategies and solutions to practical problems |
| ILO 4 | Understand and apply the main methods of social scientific research |
| ILO 5 | Develop a critical attitude and professional communication and judgment skills |

*Table 5: Intended Learning Outcomes MCC*

The programme documentation effectively demonstrates how the ILOs correspond with the Dublin Descriptors for a master's level qualification. Furthermore, the panel notes that the competency-based approach of the programme ensures that students also develop essential practical skills, such as strategic communication planning, stakeholder engagement, and crisis communication management.

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), RSM strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel sees this ambition reflected in the ILOs of MCC, particularly in the attitude-related ILOs. In the documentation the programme has also identified several SDGs for every course of the programme.

*.International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. In the MCC programme this is reflected e.g. in lecturers from highly regarded international business schools, international cases and study trips. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme, e.g. ILO4: Understand and apply the main methods of social scientific research. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to communication issues. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

The panel acknowledges that the ILOs have been established through consultation with various stakeholders, including faculty members, industry professionals, and alumni. The most recent revision of the ILOs reflects an integration of contemporary communication challenges, ensuring that graduates remain relevant in the evolving landscape of corporate communication. The programme annually reviews the relevance of the ILOs, allowing for necessary adjustments in consultation with the academic director and faculty.

Based on the field of study and the curriculum content (see also standard 2), the panel considers the Master of Science degree to be an appropriate choice for this Corporate Communication programme. It also remarked that similar programmes award the same degree.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel concludes that the MSc Corporate Communication programme has well-defined ILOs that appropriately reflect the academic master's level and professional field. These outcomes are aligned with international standards and the expectations of both academia and industry. The ongoing evaluation process ensures their continued relevance and applicability. Based on these findings, the panel determines that the programme meets the standard.

## 5.4.4.   Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
According to the panel, the programme has effectively translated the ILOs into a well-structured curriculum, ensuring comprehensive coverage of essential competencies. The curriculum consists of core courses, elective modules (6 out of 15), a study trip and a master's thesis, offering a balance of theoretical grounding and practical application. The electives count for half of the study points (30EC).

The curriculum of the programme supports that the intended learning outcomes are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced way.

*Curriculum structure*
The panel finds the curriculum to be logically structured, with each module contributing to the overall competency development of students. The programme comprises key courses such as Organisational Identity, Corporate Branding, Reputation Management, and Strategic Communication. These courses are interlinked to provide students with an integrated understanding of corporate communication. Additionally, a research methods module prepares students for the thesis component, ensuring they possess the necessary analytical skills.

MCC has adopted a modular and blended online learning strategy that enables students to study alongside their jobs and to do the courses in the order that suits their development. Due to the significant number of external students, this approach presents some challenges. Since students are in a less fixed cohort, the group composition frequently changes, which can impact peer learning and group dynamics. However, this approach also fosters a close-knit learning community, with students forming strong bonds despite the flexible structure. The panel recognises that while the programme may not be easily scalable, the small group size creates an intimate learning environment beneficial to student engagement.

The international study trip of four days serves as a capstone experience where students integrate knowledge from previous courses and apply it to real-world business challenges on the theme of Sustainability, Purpose and Communication.

*Master thesis*
The thesis is written individually, where students show their ability to carry out an academic research project, which is concluded with an oral defence. The topics of these projects show a wide variety, sometimes the corporate communication aspect seems rather secondary.

*Study load*
Students reported a high level of satisfaction with the structure and coherence of the curriculum. They particularly appreciate the practical elements, including case studies, simulations, and company-based research projects. A noteworthy example is the case study presented by the Salvation Army, which effectively illustrated how corporate communication strategies can strengthen society, leaving a strong impact on students.
Some courses are quite demanding in workload according to students, some referring to the take-home assignments as mini-theses and discussing whether the part-time status is actually accurate. The panel notes concerns regarding the study load, also fuelled by the average study period of 3,5 years for a 60 EC programme, though panel members understand this is also due to students personal choices.

*Teaching faculty*
The programme benefits from a team of highly qualified faculty members, including full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and industry experts. These include guest lectures from esteemed universities abroad. The panel acknowledges that the faculty are well-qualified, both academically and professionally, to deliver the programme effectively. Students have expressed satisfaction with the accessibility and expertise of their instructors.
RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel finds that the teaching-learning environment of the MSc Corporate Communication programme is robust, providing students with a rich and engaging educational experience. The curriculum effectively supports the development of intended learning outcomes. The programme's commitment to high-quality instruction and practical relevance is commendable, also supported by a highly qualified, internationally experienced teaching team. Based on these findings, the panel determines that the programme meets the standard.

## 5.4.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

The assessment system of the programme is well-structured and aligned with institutional policies and legal requirements. The panel finds that the assessment matrix effectively links the ILOs with specific assessment methods, ensuring comprehensive evaluation of student competencies.

The programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods, including written assignments, oral presentations, case analyses, and examinations. The balance between formative and summative assessments supports student learning while maintaining rigour. The panel notes that students generally perceive assessments as fair and reflective of course content.

MCC is currently orienting itself towards different forms of assessment to ensure that evaluations are fit for purpose. The programme employs a high number of take-home exams, yet there is no clearly developed vision regarding the use and limitations of AI in assessments. The panel strongly recommends that the programme develops a structured policy on AI usage to maintain academic integrity while integrating digital advancements. The current GenAI guidance functions as a good starting point, the panel members and the lecturers of MCC agree that rapid developments in the field of AI necessitate an adaptive vision on assessment methods, beneficial for both students and faculty.

The thesis assessment process is transparent, with clear evaluation criteria outlined. The panel reviewed a sample of theses and found them to be of an appropriate academic standard. Feedback provided by assessors is constructive and supports student development. Thesis writing is an extensive process, but students feel well-prepared due to their experience in writing six mini-theses prior to their final project.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel finds that the assessment system is robust and supports valid, reliable, and transparent evaluations of student performance. Students are well-informed about assessment expectations and receive valuable feedback. The Exam Board is well positioned to fulfil its legal and educational requirements. The panel urges the programme to swiftly develop a clear vision

on AI in assessments, further implementation of the AI-policy and enhancement of AI-literacy of faculty. Based on these findings, the panel determines that the programme meets the standard.

### 5.4.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students. Conversations also revealed that alumni would appreciate more guidance on career opportunities and suitable vacancies within the programme. The panel acknowledges this as a developmental point and advises the programme to address it.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen theses from the last two cohorts of the Master's in Corporate Communication. These included theses based on practical issues from companies, as well as those with scientific research questions as their basis. In some qualitative cases the qualitative depth could be improved. The panel classifies the theses as topical and relevant to an MCC programme though it's not always clear whether the communication aspect is crucial in some cases. The panel also reviewed some final projects clearly related to sustainability.

Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. In general, the final projects are well-constructed, according to the panel. Naturally, there is a variation in quality between the theses, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners. The panel finds that the assessments are sufficiently transparent.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for MCC and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of corporate communication.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 5.4.7. Overall conclusion

The panel finds that the MSc Corporate Communication programme meets all four standards. The programme is well-designed, academically rigorous, and aligned with industry needs. The panel recommends improvements in AI assessment policy, and career guidance. Based on these findings, the panel issues a positive overall judgement.

### 5.4.8. Recommendations

- The study load of the MCC programme is a point of concern. In this context, the panel advises the programme to reassess the number of EC credits allocated to each course and the actual time investment required from students.
- Develop a structured policy on the use of AI in assessments, implementation of the policy combined with the enhancement of AI-literacy of faculty, specifically regarding the frequent use of takehome-exams as an assessment method.

- Benefit from assessment experiences in other programmes at RSM, other programmes might well have solutions to challenges the MCC-programme is facing or experience with solutions MCC is contemplating.

## 5.5. Master International MBA (FTMBA)

### 5.5.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | International MBA (not funded) |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 75047 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Post initial master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 65 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 5.5.2. Introduction

The International Full-time MBA (FTMBA) is a 12-month programme which has an international character as one of its key defining features with each year over 95% international students in class. The programme aims at aspiring leaders and changemakers with initial working experience and exposed to working in a multinational environment.
In this academic year the programme has an influx of 100 students, almost all international from 25 countries. Female students form 40% of the total number of incoming students.

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| During the last NVAO accreditation (2018) the audit panel made two recommendations concerning the administration of grades in an accountable manner and to review the coherence of the package that reflects the end level of the programme. | The FTMBA-programme has acted upon these recommendations by implementing the Osiris system (checked by Registrar) to administer grading. On the second recommendation the programme followed up by redesigning a portfolio assessment containing products of 5 curriculum courses contributing to the ILOs in different ways. The audit panel comments on these developments under standard 3, assessment. |

### 5.5.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The FTMBA programme aims to nurture confident and conscious leaders who have the competencies to succeed in an international management environment leading and managing organisations through major transitions in the face of complexity and uncertainty.
The programme has formulated the intended learning outcomes as below:

| Knowledge | |
|---|---|
| ILO 1 | Learning and understanding the foundational knowledge of international management |
| ILO 2 | Learning and understanding specialised knowledge concerning one or more specific sub-fields of management (finance, marketing, strategy, supply chain and/or social entrepreneurship). |
| Skills | |
| ILO 3 | Gaining managerial skills to be effective as a manager in an international context such as communication skills, networking skills, managing diversity skills etc. |
| ILO 4 | Gaining reflective and self-regulatory skills that foster sustained awareness concerning one's identity, needs, wishes, role and impact on others, as well as the ability to regulate these. |
| Attitudes | |
| ILO 5 | Appreciate the importance and complexity of integrity, ethics and sustainability for (international) business. |
| ILO 6 | Appreciate the complexity of business and the importance of critical thinking and the scientific method to understand and solve complex managerial problems. |

*Table 6: Intended Learning Outcomes FTMBA*

The mission of RSM is clearly visible in the ILOs 3, 4 and 5 and are substantiated in the curriculum in multiple places, for instance in dedicated courses like Business of Sustainability, Advanced Sustainability, Organisational behaviour, Personal Leadership Development and Strategic People Management. The panel members recognise the ILOs as internationally valid and representing the expected MSc-level. The ambitions of the programme are very relevant to the development of the professional field where these students come from and will proceed.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom (in the FTMBA programme 95% of the students come to Rotterdam from abroad) benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds,

enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies., e.g. ILO6.  Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to their field. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

The panel concludes that the Master of Science degree is fitting for the FTMBA programme, considering both the academic discipline and the curriculum (see standard 2). It also noted that this degree is in line with those awarded by related programmes.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the master's programme FTMBA has formulated ILOs that represent the academic master's level and meet international standards. The ILOs are aligned with both the academic and professional fields and are up to date. Additionally, the ILOs align with RSM's ambition to educate students to become a force for positive change in the world.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 5.5.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Curriculum*
The curriculum of FTMBA consists of 14 core courses, a study trip and 3 electives. All these elements are compulsory. The core courses contain foundational and advanced knowledge of business essentials (Finance, Marketing, Strategic, Operations, etc) as well as skills and attitude enhancing courses like Personal Leadership Development. The Course Learning Outcomes do cover the ILOs comprehensively, the alignment is clear for the panel members.

The programme is invested in a major review of the curriculum starting in 2028. Adaptations that can help to solve current issues or benefit the student's learning process are implemented earlier. As an example, a number of courses have been reorganised and a slight change of the number of credits assigned is implemented in 2025. The total number of credits (65 EC) is now aligned with the other post-experience MBAs and addresses the concerns of students about the study load of the programme.

The learning environment is appreciated by students and faculty. The electives facilitate the personal profile students want to develop and the emphasis on a changemaking attitude while embracing complexity and diversity fosters an educational climate where these students can fulfil their potential.

The criteria of candidates to be admitted in the programme are transparent and fit for purpose. Some students would advise to strengthen the check on the intrinsic motivation of candidates to work in multicultural groups and embrace diversity.

*Academic orientation*
The research-oriented approach is visible in the Intended learning outcome 6 (the importance of critical thinking and the scientific method to understand and solve complex managerial problems.) which is covered by 14 of the 20 core course learning outcomes. Students recognise this emphasis, in a survey in 2024, over 60% of the respondents agreed fully or largely that they appreciate the importance of critical thinking and the scientific method to understand and solve complex managerial problems (ILO6). One of the core courses that illustrates this is Quantative platform of business. The panel members find the academic orientation adequately represented in the curriculum core courses.

*Teaching team*
FTMBA engages 49 lecturers in teaching the programme of which 28 are BKO-qualified (or exempt on the basis of senior assessment expertise) and 2 members are SKO-qualified.
RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The students are appreciative of the teaching quality and the panel considers the teaching team well qualified and up to the task.
Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel concludes that the teaching-learning environment, including the teaching staff effectively supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The curriculum covers the ILOs, personalised profiling is facilitated and the students appreciate the learning process. The teaching team is well qualified both in terms of didactical and business expertise. The panel rates this standard as 'meets the standard'.

## 5.5.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

FTMBA is focussed on international students to implement their personal interests and business aspects into the curriculum. In concordance with the backbone of integration courses that cover the ILOs this leads to a complex portfolio and assessment praxis. The follow-up of the NVAO-recommendation to review the coherence of the final portfolio as evidence of the achieved learning outcomes is in full flow. The programme has made several changes to the way courses are being assessed, both in groups and individually. The programme aims to enhance the integrated character of assessments as well as safeguarding the burden of proof to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes on the course level. This has led to the introduction (starting 2025) of a new integrative course The Craft of Management that will tie into a graduation project.

FTMBA relies heavily on applied and experiential forms of assessment, for instance group or individual case assignments and demonstrations. The number of times that the 6 ILOs are assessed summatively is illustrative for the complexity of the assessment system of FTMBA: minimum 22 times (ILO2), maximum 63 times (ILO3).

*Portfolio Assessment*
FTMBA did not have a final project (will be different next year) but supported the achieved learning outcomes with a portfolio containing products (group and individual) of multiple modules of the curriculum: The Impact Experience, Business of Sustainability, Living Management Project, Advanced Course (student's choice) and Personal Leadership Development. The assessment of the assignments is supported by a rudimentary rubric, including an assessment matrix.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded portfolios is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

Based on the findings, the panel concludes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate. The panel finds the development towards more formative assessments in line with the vision of RSM and encourages the programme to further pursue this. The Examination Board adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The graduation process is reasonably structured, according to the panel.

The panel applauds the commitment of the staff to improve the assessment continuously and encourages the direction towards more personalised learning paths for students and to enhance formative assessment. The panel advises the assessors to invoke extra expertise in redesigning the assessment aspect of the new curriculum to reduce the complexity of the assessment system of FTMBA. This will enable assessors to focus on the most essential parts and not being overwhelmed with assessment moment, either formative or summative. The introduction of a final project is a step in this complexity reduction.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

### 5.5.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

Alumni and employers supported the programme wholeheartedly and the documentation showed that the employability of graduates is on par. Alumni stressed the importance of the integration of theory and application as one of the strongpoints of the FTMBA programme.

The panel studied 15 portfolios of the last two cohorts of graduates. Though some variation showed in the level and topics of the portfolios, the panel supported the grading of the assessors and deemed the portfolios as sufficient proof of the achieved learning outcomes on the expected level.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: meets the standard

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 5.5.7. Overall conclusion

Based on the assessment of the four standards, the panel determines that the FTMBA programme meets the required quality standards. The programme structure, learning environment, and assessment system are appropriately designed to support executive education.

### 5.5.8. Recommendations

- The panel advises the assessors to invoke extra expertise in redesigning the assessment aspect of the new curriculum to reduce the complexity of the assessment system of FTMBA

# 6. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS CLUSTER 3

## 6.1 Master Supply Chain Management

### 6.1.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Supply Chain Management |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60093 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 6.1.2. Introduction

The master Supply Chain Management (SCM) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. According to programme documentation, 111 students were enrolled in 2022-2023 and 133 students in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Discuss with students and lecturers the issues students raised in the evaluation section of the SAR: the international dimension of the curriculum and the additional skills required for the master thesis. | The programme has enhanced the international dimension through the introduction of the new course on Global Sustainable Supply Chains and the new elective on Advanced Topics in Global Supply Chains. Teaching cases are a compilation of international and Dutch context. Additionally, in group work, the instructors form mixed-nationality project teams to encourage international collaboration.<br>Based on student feedback, SCM has redesigned the Research Methods and Skills |

| | |
|---|---|
| | course to better prepare students for their master's thesis. |
| Assessors provide relatively little insightful feedback in the evaluation form on their appreciation of the respective thesis components and the overall grade. While the panel acknowledges that more oral feedback is provided to students the information should also be documented. Enhance the thesis assessment system. | The Thesis Online Platform (TOP) has been improved to enable thesis advisors and co-readers to record their respective oral feedback provided to students during the defence. During the thesis review, the panel also examined the evaluation forms and concludes that the feedback provided is concise but adequate. |
| Although the panel understands that providing written feedback on a thesis platform may seem a merely bureaucratic requirement, it does encourage assessors and programme management to look for ways in which insightful feedback is registered in a systematic way for external review and internal accountability purposes (all programmes) | This feedback has triggered some discussion in the Supply Chain Management section. SCM understands the comment and is looking into ways to streamline the detailed logging of feedback in TOP. A lot of coaches provide detailed feedback via comments in the thesis document. If needed, this feedback can be recovered but is not documented automatically in the system. |
| Monitor that students pay sufficient attention in the thesis trajectory to relevant academic literature and to presenting and justifying the theoretical foundations of their research hypotheses. | In the new thesis set-up, SCM provides more attention to this point, and asks students to start exploring the relevant literature in this area at an early stage. Last year SCM developed a thesis proposal evaluation guideline that helps students and coaches to set requirements and expectations more clearly.<br><br>SCM also notes that the thesis trajectory covers a broad variety of research questions and approaches and that only a small number of students focus on hypothesis-driven-theory-testing research. Most research can be categorised as design science which is focused on finding a solution of a business problem (design of a new process/practice or improvement of existing one) in the SCM area. |

### 6.1.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The purpose of the Supply Chain Management (SCM) programme is to equip students with knowledge and skills in various processes that together represent the field of supply chain management. It aims to develop responsible leaders who can design, plan, execute, and manage supply chains, balancing economic, social, and environmental perspectives. After their studies, graduates work as supply chain managers, consultants, operations managers, and information managers in both private and public sectors such as consulting, food and beverages, financial services, and consumer goods.

The programme focuses particularly on developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function in the evolving international scientific and applied field of supply chain management. The panel notes that the intended learning outcomes align with the field of supply chain management. The learning outcomes are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level. In the provided documentation, the programme has clearly demonstrated how the intended learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin Descriptors for master's level. Furthermore, the committee notes that, due to the competency-based approach, the programme also focuses on preparing students for the development of skills that are important in the professional field, such as the use of software tools and effective communication skills.

The panel learned that the programme has involved various stakeholders to develop the intended learning outcomes, including teachers and professors in the field of supply chain management and external partners from professional practice. The latest major revision of the intended learning outcomes aimed to embed RSM's mission into the programme ILOs and align with competency-based education. Each year, the relevance of the ILOs is reviewed. If teachers deem it necessary to adjust course learning outcomes, this is always discussed with the Academic Director, and the relationship with the programme ILOs is considered.

Table 7 shows the current intended learning outcomes of the master SCM.

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Students can explain the most important theories, models, and concepts in Supply Chain Management. 2. Students can select and apply the most appropriate theories, models, and concepts to analyse and design supply chains from an economic, social, and environmental perspective. | 3. Students can effectively use software tools to support complex supply chain management decisions. 4. Students can independently design, execute and report on scientific research into the diagnosis, the (re)design, and/or evaluation of current supply chain management practices. 5. Students can formulate clear conclusions and recommendations based on research that is supported by empirical data and sound argumentation. 6. Students can effectively communicate both verbally and in writing with people and groups of a diverse nature. 7. Students can generate judgements on the basis of (at times) incomplete, inaccurate or uncertain information and are able to defend their assumptions with sound arguments. | 8. Students know their own limitations and are proactive in acquiring the required knowledge and skills to deal with complex real-world supply chain challenges. 9. Students practice research integrity and responsible leadership to serve the long-term goals of society. |

*Table 7: Intended learning outcomes Master Supply Chain Management*


*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel sees ambition reflected in the ILOs of SCM, particularly in the attitude-related ILOs.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to supply chain management. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

The Master of Science degree is, in the panel's view, an appropriate fit for the Supply Chain Management programme, given the nature of the academic field and the curriculum (see standard 2). The panel also points out that equivalent programmes grant a corresponding degree.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the master's programme in Supply Chain Management has well-formulated ILOs that clearly represent the academic master's level and meet (inter)national standards. The ILOs are aligned with both the academic and professional fields and are up to date. Additionally, the ILOs align with RSM's ambition to educate students to become a force for positive change in the world.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 6.1.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into learning outcomes per course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map'. For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLO's) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the (core) courses in the programme.

*Curriculum structure*
The panel observes that the programme offers a structured and coherent curriculum. The programme consists of six content related core courses that follow the core supply chain processes. The programme starts in block 1 with the modules *Supply Chain Fundamentals* (4 EC), *Supply Chain Decision Analytics* (3 EC), and *Purchasing & Supply Management* (4 EC). In the panel's view, these courses provide a solid foundation. In block 2, students then follow the core courses on *Facility Logistics Management* (4 EC), *Global Sustainable Supply Chains* (4 EC), and *Distribution Networks* (3 EC).

SCM students told the panel that they find the structure of the courses very helpful. The students feel that the three courses in a block are all related to each other. To be allowed to follow the second block, students must have passed certain courses from block 1, as these build on the previously gained knowledge. Students appreciate this because it requires them to actively use the knowledge and skills they have previously acquired.

Alongside the content related core courses, the students also get core courses on *Research Methods and Skills* (3 EC) and *Your Future Career* (1 EC).

After building a broad foundational knowledge in supply chain management in the core courses, students can choose three elective courses (6 EC each) to deepen their knowledge of supply chains in specific domains. These electives align with RSM's didactic vision, in which personalised learning, student autonomy, and self-regulation are important aspects. These electives can be categorised into three different streams: (1) Analytics and Data Science; (2) Global Sourcing and Trade; and (3) People & Planet. Examples of electives to choose from include *Supply Chain Simulation, Supply Chain Forecasting, Strategic Sourcing, Behavioural Operations Management, Ports in Global Networks, Introduction to Commodity Trade and Supply Networks, Advanced Topics in Global Supply Chain Management, Health & Humanitarian Logistics*, and *Closed Loop Supply Chains*. The panel considers this a broad spectrum of interesting and relevant SCM-related topics to choose from.

*Master's thesis*
The SCM Master's thesis (16 EC) is an integral part of the overall Master's programme. From the very first semester, students begin preparing for their thesis. However, the actual execution and writing of the thesis take place in the second semester. The thesis is written individually and provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to conduct academic research, culminating in an oral defence. As the final component of the programme, the thesis synthesises the qualifications and competencies students have acquired throughout the other parts of the programme.

The panel was pleased to see that SCM encourages its students to undertake a company-based thesis. Such a project is carried out in collaboration with a company and is typically combined with a thesis internship. Students work on real-world supply chain projects challenges relevant to the company. The panel learned that approximately 50% of SCM students opt to pursue a company-based thesis. The other half of the students choose to do a theoretical thesis. These are academically oriented and allow students to explore complex supply chain concepts or methodologies in depth, often focusing on emerging theoretical developments or model-based research.

*Academic research skills*
During the master's programme, students build on the research skills they developed during their bachelor's studies. In the master's programme, these skills are further enhanced. This is specifically addressed in the course Research Methods and Skills, which prepares students for their thesis trajectory. Additionally, students apply their research skills in earlier core courses and electives. For example, they use qualitative and quantitative methods to gain insights into distinguishing factors of circular supply chains.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
The panel is enthusiastic about the way the programme addresses ethics and sustainability to become change agents. In the *Global Sustainable Supply Chains* core course and other courses students learn how to balance service and sustainability considerations, to apply ethical principles in purchasing and supplier management, and how to pay attention to the human aspects of supply chain operations. For example, students mentioned that they learn how to draft a good contract without exploiting people. The panel suggests that, in alignment with RSM's mission, the programme place greater emphasis on developing knowledge and skills in change management, as highlighted in the chapter on general findings.

*Study load*
The panel spoke with several students and alumni of SCM. From these conversations, it became clear that the study load of this programme is quite high. Students reported that they spend an average of over 40 hours on their studies. SCM is generally known as a demanding programme. During open days, students are already informed that the first months are going to be tough. Students mention that, although this is good for managing expectations, it can also become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Students further note that the high workload of a course does not always correspond to the number of credits assigned to it. The panel asks the programme to pay attention to this.

*International dimension*
Nowadays, the international dimension is ever-present, with virtually all companies and industries shaped by global influences. Consequently, internationalisation is woven throughout the entire SCM programme, rather than being limited to specific courses. It entails the integration of international, intercultural, and global elements not only within the curriculum's content. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to a wide range of perspectives brought by peers from diverse cultural and national backgrounds, enriching their critical thinking and deepening their understanding of global complexities. This environment fosters the development of intercultural competence.

*Learning environment*
Based on the didactical vision of RSM, all programmes are transitioning towards more transformative and competency-based education. As mentioned in the general part of this report, there are seven design principles central to the educational approach. The panel clearly recognises that the Master in Supply Chain Management programme utilises several of these design principles to create a challenging learning environment for students. For example, the panel highlights the opportunity for students to conduct their graduation research at a company (see Standards 3 and 4). Real world relevance (experiential learning) is also reflected in the simulation games used in the programme, such as the online simulation game The Fresh Connection.

Additionally, the electives embody the principle of a student-focused programme giving students the opportunity to specialise in their specific field of interest. The panel also observes the principle of IDEA[7] in the way lecturers form groups for collaborative assignments. In these groups, there is a mix of Dutch and international, as well as male and female students.

The didactical principles lead to a learning environment that students are positive about, as evidenced by the conversations. The panel particularly notes that working on real-world projects/assignments and collaborating in groups as done in the industry are strong assets. Regarding design principles such as blended learning and assessment for learning, the programme can make further progress in the coming period.

Students describe the study guidance as adequate and the information provision via Canvas is up to par. Students feel well informed via the course manuals.

*Internships*
The panel learned that it is possible for students to undertake an internship. A significant portion of the student population chooses this option because it strengthens their CV. The students mentioned that the programme encourages internships, but it is not part of the formal curriculum. However, the internships can be done in parallel to 1 year study via the Company-based Research Project elective so that their company-based thesis in combination with an internship will have the same thesis deadline and hence without extending study duration. However, the internship can be done in parallel to 1 year study via the Company-based Research Project elective so that their company-based thesis in combination with an internship will have the same thesis deadline and hence without extending study duration.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. Students describe their lecturers as very professional, caring, and willing to help. The teaching faculty includes full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, PhD students, and external professionals from the industry. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. Most lecturers hold a teaching qualification, or are otherwise qualified based on years of experience. Guest lecturers are not required to obtain a teaching qualification. The panel finds the use of guest lecturers valuable due to their industry experience. The panel observed that they are experts in fields such as intermodal transport or work as procurement transformation manager in the industry. The programme also employs a guest lecturer from the Erasmus Centre for Urban, Port, and Transport Economics.

RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

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[7] IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility

When asked, the SCM teachers shared some suggestions regarding educational support. They have observed that, since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in the centralisation of the educational support and also in the number of support staff at central level. Teachers indicate that they are still trying to find the right balance in this collaboration, particularly in areas such as didactics and assessment expertise. While the learning innovation consultants have good intentions and high-quality expertise, they often lack the time to gain firsthand experience of what happens in the classroom. For instance, they have not attended lectures or workgroups. The teachers would like to see this change, as it would allow the learning innovation consultants to offer recommendations and support based on first-hand experience, rather than solely on theoretical pedagogy.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes have been translated into a substantively adequate programme. According to the panel, the programme offers students a structured route to develop appropriate knowledge and skills in the field of supply chain management. In alignment with RSM's mission, more emphasis could be placed on developing knowledge and skills in change management. Furthermore, the panel recommends that the programme continues to monitor whether the number of credits assigned to a course is proportionate to the workload experienced by students for that course.

The panel is positive about the learning environment for students. In particular, the integration of real-world case studies and a simulation game has an activating and motivating effect on students. The way the programme uses classroom diversity to develop competencies (collaboration, intercultural communication) is also positive. The panel sees that the programme can still make progress in developing an online learning environment (blended learning). The programme has a qualified teaching team for course delivery. The use of guest lecturers from the industry adds value to students' understanding of the practical application of what they learn. The language of instruction is English; both students and teachers have sufficient command of the language.

Based on these arguments, the panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, and that the programme "meets the standard" of standard 2.

## 6.1.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the Supply Chain Management programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs a range of assessment methods, including written assignments, exams with open-ended questions, presentations, oral exams, quizzes, and peer feedback. These methods align with the course learning outcomes and consequentially the ILOs. In the context of competency-based education, the panel suggests that more emphasis could be placed on assessing students' attitudes.

In addition, the panel notes a healthy mix of group assessments and individual assessments. While some of these appear to be formative (e.g., self-reflections, peer assessments, prerecorded exercises, and quizzes), others are summative (individual final written exam, open questions exam, and written team assignments.

Although the number of formative and summative assessments is considerable – 40 assessments in the first semester – students do not oppose assessments, as the panel gathered from their discussions. However, students believe that the study load could be reduced by spreading exams and assignments over a longer period, instead of scheduling them all within the same weeks. While SCM and RSM cannot influence the schedule of exam weeks which is organised centrally on the university level, the panel recommends that the Academic Director and teaching faculty conduct a more thorough, collaborative review on the assignment deadlines.

Furthermore, the panel notes that SCM students are satisfied with the information provided about the assessments. They feel well-informed about what to expect. Overall, students are also satisfied with the quality of the assessments, as shown in their feedback. Both the documents and conversations indicate that assessments contribute to the students' learning processes. Students report learning from the assessments and the feedback they receive from assessors.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The

Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied to both company-based and theoretical theses. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Based on the review of 15 SCM theses, the panel further notes that the assessment by the coach and co-reader is, overall, clear and well justified.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is correctly designed. Based on the findings, the panel notes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate. The panel finds the development towards more "formative" assessments in line with the vision of RSM and encourages the programme to further pursue this. It would be advisable to combine this with a re-evaluation of the assessment scheduling, as students report experiencing peak workload during specific periods. Examination Board adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The graduation process is properly structured, according to the panel.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is convinced that the programme meets the quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 6.1.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. They are particularly satisfied with the connection of the courses with the reality of the work field. Through realistic cases and assignments, they are well prepared. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen theses from the last two cohorts of the Master in Supply Chain Management. These included theses based on practical issues from companies, as well as those with scientific research questions as their basis. The panel classifies the theses as topical and relevant to an SCM programme. These include, for example, warehouse optimization. The panel also reviewed some final projects clearly related to sustainability.

Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. In general, the final projects are well-constructed, according to the panel. Naturally, there is a variation in quality between the theses, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners. The panel finds that the assessments are sufficiently transparent.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates, who also feel well-prepared for the workforce. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for SCM and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of supply chain management.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 6.1.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the master programme Supply Chain Management is 'positive'.

### 6.1.8. Recommendations

*Study load*
The study load of the SCM programme is a point of concern. In this context, the panel advises the programme to reassess the number of EC credits allocated to each course and the actual time investment required from students.

Additionally, regarding study load, the panel advises re-evaluating the assessment schedule, as students report experiencing peak study load during specific periods due to an accumulation of tests. While SCM and RSM cannot directly influence the schedule of exam weeks which is organised centrally on the university level, the panel recommends that the Academic Director and teaching faculty conduct a more thorough, collaborative review on the assignment deadlines.

*Assessment of students' attitudes*
In the context of competency-based education, the panel suggests that more emphasis could be placed on assessing students' attitudes.

## 6.2.  Master Business Information Management

### 6.2.1.  General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Business Information Management |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60453 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 6.2.2.  Introduction

The master programme Business Information Management (BIM) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme taught entirely in English. It was reported that 227 students were enrolled in 2021-2022 and that 162 new students joined in 2022-2023 and 194 new students in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Enhance the thesis assessment system | During defence sessions all coaches and co-readers were explicitly requested to include adequate feedback in the thesis online platform so that the assessment is also transparent beyond the oral feedback students receive. Also, calibration sessions were organised to align the expectation for each grade level. The current panel observes that these actions have yielded positive results (see Standard 4). |
| Further to comments from both students and thesis experts, the panel urges programme directors to investigate and monitor how all (and not merely most) lecturers and thesis coaches can live up to the expectations with regard to counselling and feedback (all programmes). | BIM hosted information sessions for all coaches/co-readers, where they discussed the expectations in terms of coaching, counselling, meetings, feedback moments and involvement in the thesis projects of the students. New hires and less experienced coaches are matched with experienced core faculty to ensure that adequate coaching is offered to all students. |

### 6.2.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
As mentioned in its self-assessment report, the Master in Business Information Management (BIM) "is designed for students who are interested in digital technologies and business analytics. The programme blends analytical skills with business knowledge, equipping students to manage information as a strategic resource and make data-driven decisions in today's fast-evolving digital landscape." After their studies, graduates work as consultants, business analysts, or information managers in sectors such as banking and investments, information technology, consulting, manufacturing, and education and research.

To achieve its ambition, the programme has established four intended learning outcomes (ILOs). In the development and ongoing evaluation of these ILOs, the programme has considered input from teaching faculty, industry partners, and alumni. The ILOs (see Table 8) reflect an appropriate set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must master to succeed in the industry. It is clear to the panel that the ILOs were meticulously designed to equip students with the competencies needed to excel in a dynamic, data-driven business environment. The ILOs align with the programme's mission to develop graduates who are proficient in research, ethical decision-making, information management, and the integration of technical and business domains.

In the panel's opinion, the ILOs are representative of the academic master's level. The programme has clearly substantiated this by relating the ILOs to the Dublin Descriptors at master's level. For example, communication skills are incorporated in ILO1 (report and interpret research findings), and the descriptor for making judgements is reflected in ILO2. The panel also recognises the descriptors of EQF/NLQF level 7 in the ILOs, such as problem-solving skills (all ILOs) and the acquisition of specialised knowledge in areas such as business models, enterprise architecture, and big data (ILO3). Additionally, the ILOs capture the degree of complexity and autonomy that is expected at master's level.

| ILOs MSc Business Information Management (2020) | |
|---|---|
| ILO1 | Students shall master the main methods of scientific research<br>a.  Identify research questions.<br>b.  Design research projects;<br>c.  Executive research projects;<br>d.  Report and interpret research findings. |
| ILO2 | Students recognise and handle ethical and privacy issues in practice, research and decision-making in business information management.<br>a.  Consciously identify and handle ethical dilemmas and privacy issues;<br>b.  Outline strategies to address the issues;<br>c.  Ensure correct implementation. |
| ILO3 | Students will master the key knowledge in information management.<br>a.  Analyse how it creates new business models and alter business practices;<br>b.  Identify enterprise architecture to ensure IT project systems;<br>c.  Identify and assess the prerequisites for business application development and implementation;<br>d.  Analyse structured and unstructured big data. |
| ILO4 | Students connect and synthesize the technical and business world.<br>a.  Create digital strategies for firms;<br>b.  Outline critical components for digital transformations;<br>c.  Use tools to support the analyses of business applications;<br>d.  Go through the cycle of data science. |

*Table 8: Intended learning outcomes Master Business Information Management*


*Academic orientation*
The academic orientation is clearly reflected in the intended learning outcomes. The ILOs indicate that students must be capable of independently designing, conducting, and reporting on scientific research related to business information management. The panel considers this to be well-articulated and suitable for the final level of the programme

The panel concludes that the Master of Science title is appropriate for the BIM programme, given the field of study and the content of the curriculum (also see standard 2). It further notes that the same degree is awarded in similar contexts.

*Profile*
Based on its mission and vision, the organisation strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel observes that this is particularly reflected in ILO2, with a focus on ethical conduct.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

Overall, the panel concludes that the master's programme in Business Information Management has clearly defined ILOs that accurately reflect the academic level of a master's degree and that meet both national and international standards. The ILOs are well-aligned with both academic and professional domains and are current. Furthermore, the ILOs are in harmony with RSM's ambition to equip students to become a force for positive change in the world.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 6.2.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The 'Curriculum Map BIM' shows that the programme effectively translates the intended learning outcomes into a comprehensive curriculum. The panel examined how the learning outcomes of the programme have been implemented and noted that they have been aligned with relevant professional and academic tasks and learning objectives. For each module, the learning objectives are clearly outlined, and the panel concludes that all intended learning outcomes are adequately covered throughout the programme.

*Curriculum structure*
The panel observes that the programme offers a structured and coherent curriculum. It consists of four core courses related to the subject matter, providing students with both a foundation in business management and the technical aspects of data analysis and digital transformation. The programme begins in block 1 with the modules Information Strategy (5 EC) and Designing Business Applications (5 EC). In block 2, students take the core courses in Business Architecture & Transformation (5 EC) and Big Data Management & Analytics (5 EC). During blocks 1 and 2, students also receive instruction in Research Methods (4 EC) for Business Information Management. In the panel's opinion, these courses provide a solid foundation.

After building a broad foundational knowledge of business information management, students can choose their area of specialization. The programme offers two standard tracks: the Digital Business track and the Data Science track. Depending on their choice, students select three electives, each worth 6 EC. For the Digital Business track, students can choose from courses such as Data Privacy and Cybersecurity, AI Technologies for Circular Business, Strategy and Economics of Platforms, Digital Energy Transition, and Digital Technologies & Social Change. In the Data Science track, the electives focus on the latest advances in methods and technologies which allow the collection and analysis of data (using R and/or Python). Students can choose from electives such as Big Data and Business Analytics, Web Mining and Analytics, Programming for Managers, and Introduction to Deep Learning. It is also possible for students to create an individual track by combining electives from both the Digital Business track and the Data Science track. 15% of students choose this option.

*Master's thesis*
Throughout the year, students engage in a master's thesis project (18 EC). The thesis is an integral component of the overall master's programme. Students write their thesis individually, providing them with the opportunity to showcase their ability to conduct an academic research project, which also includes an oral defence. As the final activity of the programme, the thesis

integrates the qualifications and competencies that students have acquired in all other parts of the programme.

*Academic research skills*
Throughout the BIM programme, students build upon the research skills gained during their bachelor's studies, further honing these abilities. This is explicitly addressed in the core course *BIM Research Methods* which prepares students for their thesis project. Additionally, students are required to apply their research skills in other core courses and electives. For example, in the course *Big Data Management and Analytics*, they learn to employ appropriate data science methods to tackle real-world business problems. Furthermore, the panel noted that students benefit from strong connections with the Department of Technology and Operations Management, as a large group of assistant, associate and full professors of this department contribute to the teaching.

*Didactical approach*
When it comes to the didactical approach and the relevance of the programme, the panel regards BIM as a frontrunner. Driven by RSM's didactical design principles, it serves as a prime example of a programme that continuously improves its curriculum taking into account feedback of all relevant stakeholders (students, alumni, teachers, researchers, industry). It uses blended learning to tailor education to individual strengths, needs, and interests of the students. Naturally, BIM has the advantage of having expertise in the area of (educational) technology, but the panel wishes to commend them for the way they make optimal use of it. BIM faculty proactively take full advantage of the flexibility that RSM provides in this regard. For example, one of the teachers mentioned that he teaches his classes in person but also live streams and records them. This offers flexibility to the students, allowing them to choose how they engage with the material. Additionally, he holds office hours where students can come to ask questions.

Another striking example is the way BIM handles GenAI. Within the programme, Generative AI is seen as a friend rather than an enemy. Students learn to use GenAI responsibly and leverage it to their advantage. This suits the profile and character of the BIM programme. The panel believes that, in doing so, the programme contributes to educating future-proof professionals and serves as an example for some of the other programmes.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
The way BIM integrates RSM's mission – to be a force for positive change in the world – into its curriculum is highly commendable. The emphasis on making a positive impact and making 'good' decisions is clear to the panel from the reviewed documentation and is also echoed by students. The latter noted that most assignments are directly linked to the SDGs. Students recognise that companies often prioritise profit. Quoting one of the students: "It is valuable that we also learn to consider different perspectives and values when determining what is 'the right' thing to do." The curriculum offers students this multifaceted and ethical perspective. For instance, the CLOs for the core course Big Data Management & Analytics include (i) Using the frameworks discussed in class, recognise the ethical dilemmas in collecting and analysing Big Data, and (ii) Evaluate the ethical position of a firm in a specific data collection situation. And during the core course Business Architecture & Transformation students explore the role of digital technologies in reshaping entire industries and address global challenges such as inequality, climate change, and peace and justice. And in the course Information Strategy discussions on the impact of generative AI on climate change are connected to the SDGs. The panel found that many other (elective) courses also contribute to developing responsible leaders, among others the courses Digital Technologies & Social Change, and Circular & Digital Business Design.

*Link to business practice*
Encouraged by the didactical vision of RSM, the programme successfully creates a connection between theory and business practice. The panel observes that the programme collaborates

with industry partners for this purpose. Students are challenged to solve real-world business cases. The programme also has a strong link to practice through guest lectures, real-life cases, company challenges, and networking and alumni events with business and data professionals. Furthermore, the panel noted that it is possible for students to replace an elective with the BIM Company-Based Research Project (CRP). Students, however, mentioned that because all classes in January and February are mandatory, it is difficult to do an internship in that (electives) period. The panel recommends that the programme reconsider this to ensure that students have the opportunity to complete an internship without any delays.

In addition, BIM students have the option to follow the course Your Future Career. This optional course helps students discover their interests and talents while preparing them for their career. Participation in workshops, networking with alumni, and developing job application skills are among the opportunities available to students taking this module.

*International dimension*
Today, the international dimension is ubiquitous, as nearly all companies and industries are influenced by global forces — this is certainly true in the field of Business Information Management. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in the curriculum's content. Students in this international classroom also benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and discussions, the panel concludes that the BIM team consists of dedicated and qualified lecturers. Almost all of the lecturers are active researchers within the Department of Technology and Operations Management. Of the approximately 20 lecturers, 10 hold the position of assistant professor, 4 are associate professors, and 2 are full professors. Additionally, there are several PhD candidates who teach within BIM.

Most of the lecturers hold a teaching qualification (BKO). Students speak very positively about their lecturers, describing them as passionate, knowledgeable, willing to help, and going the extra mile. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The panel has noticed that the BIM teaching team is eager to continuously improve the education, both in terms of content and technological-didactical aspects (e.g., blended learning, use of Generative AI). This seems to be embedded in the DNA of the people and the programme and is reinforced by a designated project manager who oversees the implementation of all educational innovation projects. BIM makes excellent use of all available grants and other financial resources to set up such projects and experiments. Exemplary of the lecturers' eagerness to innovate education is their ambition to conduct an experiment to test whether Generative AI as a Teaching Assistant can be compared in terms of effectiveness and efficiency with a Teaching Assistant in person. The team wants to investigate what works best and will of course also take students' experience into account.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the BIM programme amply meets the requirements of standard 2. The curriculum is well-structured and coherent, effectively translating the intended learning outcomes into a comprehensive educational experience. The programme offers a solid

foundation in business management and technical aspects of data analysis and digital transformation through its core courses. Students can further specialise in either the Digital Business track or the Data Science track, ensuring a tailored educational path.

The programme places a strong emphasis on academic research skills, with dedicated courses preparing students for their thesis projects. The integration of RSM's mission to be a force for positive change is evident, with assignments linked to the SDGs and a focus on ethical decision-making.

The didactical approach is innovative, incorporating blended learning and the responsible use of Generative AI, positioning BIM as a frontrunner in educational practices. The connection between theory and business practice is robust, with collaborations with industry partners, real-world business cases, and opportunities for company-based research projects.

The teaching faculty is highly qualified (in terms of content, didactics, and English language) and dedicated, continuously seeking to improve the programme. Their proactive approach to educational innovation, supported by a designated project manager, ensures that the curriculum remains relevant and effective.

## 6.2.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel noticed that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

The panel reviewed the Assessment Matrix for the Master in Business Information Management. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs various assessment methods, including oral assignments, peer feedback, and mixed methods exams. In the context of competency-based education, the panel suggests that more emphasis could be placed on assessing students' attitudes.

Additionally, the panel notes a well-balanced combination of individual and group assignments, as well as a good variety in assessment forms and assignments, such as blog contributions, homework write-ups, written tests, and group and individual assignments. Although several of the assessments appear to be formative, they are all categorised as summative in the Assessment Matrix.

The students are very satisfied with the assessments, as evidenced not only by the discussions during the audit but also by the Student Chapter. A survey conducted among BIM students shows that they ranked the items related to assessment highly, with an average score of ≥ 4.4 on a five-point scale. They describe the assessment rubrics as fair and transparent, and it is very clear to them what they need to know and be able to do in order to receive a good evaluation. Additionally, they are positive about the variety of assessment methods and the usefulness of the feedback they receive.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Based on the review of 15 BIM theses, the panel further notes that the assessments by the coach and co-reader are in general clearly written, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the theses.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the BIM programme's assessment system is robust, aligning with RSM's educational vision and assessment policy. The assessments are representative of the CLOs and related to the ILOs. The assessments are conducted in a valid, reliable, and transparent manner, as confirmed by the students. The assessment methods are adequately diverse, and there is a good distribution of individual and group assignments.

The panel concludes that the BIM programme meets the basic quality for Standard 3. Students are positive about the assessments, the Examination Board ensures quality and safeguards the final level, and thesis assessments are clear. However, the thesis rubrics could use more descriptive language.

## 6.2.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. They expressed their satisfaction with all aspects of the programme, and especially with the attention to critical thinking, soft skills, and the use of Generative AI. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students.

The panel reviewed a stratified sample of fifteen theses from the Master's programme in Business Information Management. It is noteworthy that the list of graduates, from which the panel selected the fifteen theses, contained a higher-than-average number of theses graded eight or higher. The panel concludes that this is entirely justified and categorises a significant portion of the examined theses as 'good' or 'excellent'. One of the panel members wrote the following about a thesis that was graded an 8.5 by the examiners: "The study and collected data that were conducted are astonishing for a master's thesis. Not often, students are able to obtain such data. Also, the addressed problem is a relevant research problem that could have been addressed by a researcher and not a student in a similar way. [.....] The results are interesting and well-described. The implications could have been discussed in more depth, but they are already informative." In general, the theses address relevant topics, with some being conducted in collaboration with a company or organisation (e.g., a football club). Several theses explicitly address sustainability issues, such as one thesis with the overarching goal of contributing to greater sustainability in the fashion sector.

Although in some cases, the results and the discussion of implications could be described in more depth, it is beyond doubt for the panel that the BIM students demonstrate a Master's level in their theses. They are capable of independently designing, conducting, and reporting on thorough research.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

Without a doubt, the panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the Master's level. The theses demonstrate an above-average level of mastery of the competencies. Alumni and the professional field are very satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the BIM programme meets the requirements for Standard 4.

### 6.2.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the master programme Business Information Management is 'positive'.

The panel identifies the BIM programme as a frontrunner. Other programmes could benefit and learn from the enthusiasm and courage of the BIM faculty when it comes to the use of GenAI.

### 6.2.8. Recommendations

The panel has no programme-specific recommendations for BIM.

## 6.3.    Master Finance & Investments

### 6.3.1.    General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Finance & Investments |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60409 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 6.3.2.    Introduction

The master programme Finance & Investments (FI) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. Based on the programme documentation, that 334 new students were enrolled in 2022-2023 and 415 new students joined in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Enhance the thesis assessment system. Not all assessors provide insightful comments in the evaluation form. While the panel acknowledges that more oral feedback is provided to students, this information should also be documented. | Written feedback is systematically provided by both the coach and co-reader after the thesis defence via the Thesis Online Platform (TOP). TOP has been improved to enable coach and co-reader to record oral feedback provided during defence. As for the core courses, explanation is systematically given via ANS about the exam questions. The perusal provides another possibility for students to get feedback. |
| Further to comments from both students and thesis experts, the panel urges programme directors to investigate and monitor how all (and not merely most) lecturers and thesis coaches can live up to the expectations with regard to counselling and feedback (all programmes). | FI has put effort in harmonising the counselling and feedback practices by (i) the introduction of information sessions for small groups of students with senior faculty early in the thesis trajectory, (ii) pairing experienced coaches with less experienced coaches, and (iii) sharing online content with students at early stages in the trajectory to provide more guidance. As for the core courses, explanation is systematically given via ANS about the exam questions. The perusal provides another possibility for students to get feedback. |

### 6.3.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The Master in Finance & Investments focuses on financial decision-making from a management perspective. The programme prepares students for leadership roles in finance and investments globally, whether at financial institutions, corporations, consulting firms, startups, NGOs, or government entities.

To realise this ambition, the programme has defined eight intended learning outcomes (ILOs). These ILOs (see Table x) represent a well-rounded set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must acquire to thrive in the industry. The ILOs are closely aligned with the programme's mission to develop graduates who are skilled in research, ethical decision-making, and possess a strong theoretical foundation in finance and investments.

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Evaluate financial decisions from the perspective of companies, with a particular emphasis on corporate investments, financing, risk management, the functioning of banks, and valuation. | 4. Demonstrate professional and managerial skills, including oral and written communication, team work, reflection, and time and project management. | 6. Appreciate the importance of ethics and integrity in financial decision making and in research. |
| 2. Evaluate financial decisions from the perspective of investors, with a particular emphasis on portfolio management, risk management, the functioning of financial markets, and asset pricing. | 5. Formulate conclusions, recommendations, and broader implications based on a research study in the area of finance and investments. | 7. Appreciate the broader context and role of financial decision making in addressing relevant societal challenges, including developments in technology, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability. |
| 3. **Analyse a research question** in the area of finance and investments using quantitative and qualitative techniques. | | 8. Demonstrate a critical, creative, caring, and collaborative mindset. |

*Table 9: Intended learning outcomes Master Business Information Management*

In the panel's view, the ILOs are representative of the master's level and its academic orientation. The programme has substantiated this by relating the ILOs to the Dublin Descriptors at the master's level. For example, communication skills are incorporated in ILO4, and the descriptor for making judgments is reflected in ILO1 and ILO2. The panel also recognises the descriptors of

EQF/NLQF level 7 in the ILOs, such as problem-solving skills (ILO3). Furthermore, the ILOs show that students must be able to take into account various perspectives and contexts, and to deal with complex and uncertain situations. This confirms for the panel that the ILOs are formulated at the master's level. The academic focus is reflected in the fact that students must be capable of independently addressing a research question using both qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as drawing conclusions and making recommendations based on their findings.

The panel observed that the programme adequately addressed the needs of the professional field, such as its attention to the understanding, analysis and evaluation of how financial markets function. The panel read in the Self-Evaluation Report that the programme started last academic year with evaluating and redeveloping its intended learning outcomes (ILOs) to align with future curriculum adjustments. This process takes into account RSM's competency-based educational vision and its mission to educate students to become a force for positive change in the world. The programme gathered feedback from students, alumni, employers, and faculty members through several focus groups, resulting in a suitable set of new intended learning outcomes that will be implemented in the next academic year.

*Academic orientation*
The academic focus is clearly embedded in the intended learning outcomes. These outcomes demonstrate that students should be able to analyse a research question within the field of finance and investments, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Furthermore, they are expected to draw conclusions, make recommendations, and identify broader implications based on a research study in this area. The panel finds this to be clearly articulated and appropriate for the programme's final level.

The panel finds that awarding a Master of Science degree aligns well with the Finance & Investments programme's focus and curriculum (also see standard 2). It also recognized that this degree is consistent with those granted by comparable programmes.

*Profile*
Based on its mission and vision, Rotterdam School of Management strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. This has been translated into the programme's own vision, which is formulated in the self-evaluation report as follows: "The vision of the master Finance & Investments is to be the flagship finance programme in the Benelux and to be recognised as one of the world's most successful and transformative finance education programmes for developing professionals who are a force for positive change in the world, as measured by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals." The panel notes that this mission is clearly demonstrated in the programme's ILO6, ILO7, and ILO8.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel considers that feedback from various stakeholders has resulted in a well-defined set of intended learning outcomes, focusing on financial decision-making from a management perspective and preparing students for global leadership roles in the relevant industry. The ILOs are well aligned with the Dublin Descriptors at master's level, ensuring academic rigor. Additionally, RSM's mission to equip students to become positive change makers in society is reflected in the programme's ILOs. Taken together, these findings lead to the conclusion that the MSc in Finance & Investments meets the requirements of Standard 1.

## 6.3.4.  Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The panel notes that the Curriculum Map provides an overview of the curriculum and the elaboration of the intended learning outcomes. The panel studied the Curriculum Map intently and concludes that the learning objectives of the core courses collectively build up to students achieving the ILOs. The competencies on programme level are elaborated in course learning objectives.

*Curriculum*
The curriculum comprises six core courses: *Investments* (5 EC), *Valuation* (4 EC), *Financial Modelling* (5 EC), *Corporate Finance* (5 EC), *Research Skills* (4 EC) and *Business Ethics* (1 EC). These courses are offered during the first semester. The panel learned that careful thought has been given to the interrelationship between the core courses. *Investments* and *Corporate Finance* lay the theoretical groundwork, whereas *Financial Modelling* and *Valuation* serve as their practical applications. Students also conveyed to the panel that the core courses are closely linked. For instance, a solid understanding of the theoretical principles covered in the core course Investments is essential to fully comprehend the concepts presented in Financial Modelling.

In the second semester, students take three electives (each worth 6 EC). According to the students, the elective courses build upon the knowledge gained in the core courses. Students can choose from over 15 electives, including *Banking and Financial Institutions*, *Advanced Valuation & Value Creation*, *FinTech and Blockchain*, *Sustainable Finance*, *Financial Data Analytics*, and *Investment Management.* It is also possible for students to replace an elective with an internship. The panel believes that the programme offers a comprehensive and relevant range of interesting electives to its students.

The panel asked lecturers from the FI programme how decisions are made about what should and should not be mandatory components of the core curriculum. The lecturers explained that while they would, of course, like to equip students with as much knowledge and skills as possible, this is not feasible within the 60 EC framework. Financial and investments is a broad discipline, and it is a challenge to determine what should be included in the core programme. For instance, the increasing importance of coding and programming in the industry has sparked debate within the team about whether or not all students should learn Python. The same applies to Fintech, which the panel believes should be integrated into the core curriculum as part of future-proof education. Moreover, the panel suggests that the programme takes a thoughtful approach in making these decisions, carefully considering industry trends and incorporating feedback from companies.

*Master thesis*
Currently, for their graduation, students are required to write a Master's thesis (16 EC) during the second semester of their studies. The thesis is written individually. Students show their ability to carry out an academic research project. The core course in *Research Skills* provides students with the essential tools necessary for the successful completion of their thesis. Students indicated that their lecturers actively advise and encourage them to undertake their graduation project within a company setting. The panel is positive about the programme's applied focus combined with academic rigor.

The panel does not fully support the plan proposed by FI to structurally embed replication as a crucial part of the Master thesis trajectory. The programme intends to make replication of an existing study an essential part of the final work, where a group of students, under the guidance of the same supervisor, would individually replicate the same study. Although the panel recognises replicability as a critical aspect of research quality and reliability, generalizing this approach fails to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to independently develop, investigate, and answer a new, more creative research question. Furthermore, even though the programme puts strong emphasis on the oral defense, the panel raises concerns about the implications of replicating an academic study, particularly considering recent developments in artificial intelligence. The panel therefore suggests giving substantial weight to extending existing research and making it possible to investigate new, creative subjects as well. Given the research focus of the programme, and the importance of replicability of research for graduates in FI, replicability of research can be taught as an important research strategy in other courses.

*Study load*
On the RSM website, it states about FI: "This demanding one-year full-time MSc in Finance & Investments requires a broad-thinking, proactive attitude." Students confirm investing a significant amount of time in their studies. Although this varies per student, some spend an average up to 50 hours per week on their studies. While the Finance & Investments programme is known as challenging, the panel asks the programme management to keep monitoring the balance between the number of credits and the actual time students spend on their studies.

*Curriculum revision*
As outlined in Standard 1, the programme is in the process of redesigning the ILOs, which aligns with the revamping of the FI curriculum. Some of the observations made by the panel had already been identified by the programme itself. This serves as the basis for the revision. The panel learned that the programme strives to strike a balance between academic rigor (essential for pursuing a PhD track) and practical knowledge and skills (vital for the job market). Additionally, the balance between formative and summative assessments (see Standard 3) and the student workload (see *Study load*) will be carefully considered in the curriculum revision, according to the programme.

*Learning environment*
In line with RSM's didactic vision, all programmes are evolving towards a more transformative and competency-driven approach to education. As outlined in the general section of this report, seven core design principles guide the educational methodology. The panel acknowledges that the Master in Finance & Investments incorporates several of these principles to foster a stimulating learning environment for students.

For instance, the FI programme acknowledges the importance of applying academic knowledge and skills in real-world settings. This is clearly demonstrated through the practical exercises in the core course *Valuation* and in the elective courses. Additionally, to bring the industry inside the programme, partners are regularly invited to give guest lectures, particularly in the electives (e.g. De Nederlandsche Bank, Impact Institute, Triton Partners, Robeco, EY, and SEO Economic Research). Furthermore, the panel learned from students that lecturers actively encourage them

to network and to identify different career paths in the job market. Special emphasis is placed on this aspect in the course *Your Future Career* (1 EC). The lecturers also encourage their students to pursue an internship and to carry out their graduation research within a company setting.

The FI programme provides a combination of individual and group assignments across the curriculum, ensuring that students develop the competencies and skills necessary to work both independently and collaboratively.

The Finance & Investments programme places special emphasis on onboarding new students by organizing an *Introduction Week* (1 EC). This course aims to help students get to know each other, the programme, and the industry. The panel believes this is a strong aspect of the programme, especially given its large size. It helps students feel welcomed from the very first week.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

Around 40% of the students in the programme are international, coming from more than 35 different countries. The panel learned from the FI students, that they were grouped during the Introduction Week to intentionally create a mix of cultures and backgrounds. However, the panel also heard that, in the later stages of the programme, students are allowed to form their own groups, which poses the risk that Dutch students may self-select. While this does certainly not apply to all groups, there seem to be instances where entirely Dutch groups are formed. The panel advises the programme to monitor this and ensure that the benefits of an international classroom are fully realised.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
The panel concludes that the mission of RSM has been successfully integrated into the Finance & Investments programme. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on integrity and sustainable finance within various core courses. The *Business Ethics* course further contributes to the development of responsible business leaders. It equips students with a deeper understanding of key ethics and compliance concepts, as well as the ways in which their ethical behavior can sometimes be influenced by external factors. But also in all the other core courses, broader perspectives – taking into consideration stakeholders such as employees, society at large, or the environment – are discussed. As one student remarked, "In finance, it's also about the ethical part; we don't want to create a new crisis." While there is still progress to be made, the panel appreciates the programme's efforts to align RSM's mission with new electives, including—but by no means limited to—the elective course on Sustainable Finance. The panel believes that students' positive contributions could be further enhanced by placing even greater emphasis on impact analyses.

*Teaching faculty*
Based on the documents and discussions, the panel concludes that the FI team is composed of dedicated and qualified lecturers. The programme includes more than 30 faculty members, the majority of whom are also engaged in active research. As outlined in the programme's self assessment report, among the teaching staff are 8 professors, 8 associate professors, and 4 assistant professors. Additionally, the teaching staff comprises several PhD candidates, (senior) lecturers, and researchers. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English.

Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

Students express high appreciation for their teachers and inform the panel that the instructors tailor their teaching methods to align with the specific learning objectives of each course.

This aligns with what the teaching staff shared with the panel. They strive to personalise their courses, but they are concerned about the workload. While they want to offer personalised education, it is nearly impossible for them to evaluate 300 assignments within a three-week period. Budget cuts have resulted in a reduction of teaching assistants, which has further increased the workload for lecturers. The panel urges the programme management – and RSM leadership – to address this issue.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the Finance & Investments programme meets the requirements of Standard 2. The curriculum is solid and well-structured, with six core courses in the first semester that provide both theoretical foundations and practical applications and adequately address all the intended learning outcomes. The interrelationship between these courses ensures that students build a comprehensive understanding of finance and investments. The elective courses in the second semester further enhance this knowledge, offering a wide range of options that align with industry trends and student interests.

The programme's approach to curriculum revision, including the redesign of intended learning outcomes (ILOs), demonstrates a commitment to maintaining academic rigor while further incorporating practical skills essential for the job market. The panel is pleased to see that the revision also takes into account the programme's study load and workload.

The panel notes that the onboarding process, including the Introduction Week, fosters a sense of community and inclusivity, helping students feel welcomed and supported from the start. Furthermore, the teaching staff is composed of dedicated and qualified lecturers, many of whom are active researchers.

Despite challenges such as budget cuts and an increased workload for teaching staff, the programme successfully offers a challenging teaching and learning environment for its students, supporting them in achieving the intended learning outcomes. As a result, the panel concludes that the programme 'meets this standard.' However, the panel stresses that it is crucial for the future of the programme to find ways to maintain the quality of education without overburdening the lecturers. The programme is aware of this issue and is taking it into account in the curriculum revision.

## 6.3.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel noticed that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Programme Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the Master in Finance & Investments. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. It clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments, both individually as in groupwork. Students note that there is more focus on group projects. However, they see this as representative for their future careers. The panel agrees but also advises the programme to continue monitoring the individual contributions of students to group work.

The matrix also reveals that the programme employs various assessment methods, including written assignments, exams with open-ended questions, quizzes, and assessment of class participation in some courses. The panel is somewhat concerned about the fact that almost all assessments in this programme are summative. Furthermore, the panel observed that there is only one oral exam, which takes the form of a group presentation. The panel understands that conducting individual oral exams for 300 students is a logistical challenge. However, in light of the growing role of Generative AI, the panel recommends that the programme and lecturers explore ways to ensure that students truly master the knowledge and skills themselves. The panel also advises that the intended introduction of replication research as part of the graduation process be considered in this context

The student chapter indicates that students perceive the assessments and grading as fair and transparent. Students also mention that there is a good variety of assessment types. The assessment rubrics are provided for each graded assessment, which helps them understand the key criteria.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics

and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Based on the review of 15 theses of the Master in Finance & Investments, the panel further notes that the assessments are in general clearly written. The grading is fair and aligns with the expectations for a master's student. However, the panel believes that, regularly, the co-reader could provide additional details in their assessment. In several instances, the co-reader merely states that he/she agrees with the coach's feedback.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The assessment system for the Master in Finance & Investments at RSM is well-structured and aligns with the institution's educational vision and assessment policy. The system ensures valid, reliable, and transparent evaluations, with clear guidelines for developing assessment plans and handling academic integrity issues. The assessments within the FI programme cover all ILOs, both on the individual as on the group level and using a variety of assessment methods. While students appreciate the focus on group projects as reflective of their future careers, the panel notes that the assessment is sufficiently independent but advises continued monitoring of individual contributions.

Thesis assessments are generally fair and well-documented, although the panel suggests providing more detailed feedback from co-readers. The potential introduction of replication research as part of the Master thesis trajectory raises some concerns as reproducing existing work in combination with (inappropriate) use of Generative AI may make it very difficult to assess whether students meet end terms for this work.

The Examination Board actively maintains assessment quality through the appointment of examiners, regular reviews, and calibration sessions, demonstrating that it is in control.

### 6.3.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> <u>Explanation</u>: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with alumni and representatives from the field confirmed the very high ambitions of students in this programme. In particular, alumni are very positive at how the programme prepared them for their careers in finance. They agree that the workload in the programme was substantial, but do not see this at all as a burden.
The panel reviewed a stratified sample of fifteen theses from the Master's programme in Finance & Investments selected from the last two cohorts of graduates. Based on the thesis review, the panel concludes that the FI students have rightfully graduated. Most theses deal with topical issues, such as investor attention, ESG[8] criteria and institutional investor monitoring, and the effect of a new online payment method on retail sales (fintech). In general, the research question is well defined. Students develop a theoretical framework based on existing literature and use appropriate empirical methods to test the hypotheses posited.

The panel agrees with the grades given by the examiners to the theses. Some theses are of excellent quality, while others, which received lower grades, show some weaknesses.

The examined theses demonstrate that the students are capable of independently conducting academic research. They clearly show that students have the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the challenging world of corporate finance and investments.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

Based on the round-table discussions and thesis reviews, the panel concludes that the Master's programme in Finance & Investments meets the requirements of standard 4. Graduates perform well in practice and feel adequately prepared for their careers. The theses demonstrate students' ability to conduct independent research on current topics, using appropriate empirical methods. The panel agrees with the grades awarded and confirms that students possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude, as set out in the programme's learning outcomes, for a successful career in corporate finance and investments.

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[8] Environmental, Social, and Governance; this refers to the criteria used by institutional investors to assess the performance of companies based on sustainability and ethical standards.

### 6.3.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the master programme Finance & Investments is 'positive'.

### 6.3.8. Recommendations

*FinTech*
The panel recommends that the programme strongly consider incorporating FinTech, which is currently offered as an elective, into the core curriculum to better prepare students for the evolving demands of the industry and ensure future-proof education.

*Replicating research*
While the panel acknowledges the potential efficiency benefits of replication research as part (40%) of the Master thesis trajectory, it raises some concerns about this approach. The panel advises the programme to carefully evaluate whether a replication research requires the same level of skills, competencies and creativity from students as independent theoretical or company-based research.

## 6.4.  Master Marketing Management

### 6.4.1.  General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Marketing Management |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60063 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 6.4.2.  Introduction

The master Marking Management (MM) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. According to programme documentation, 231 students were enrolled in 2022-2023 and 259 new students joined in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Enhance the thesis assessment system. Not all assessors provide insightful comments in the evaluation form. While the panel acknowledges that more oral feedback is provided to students, this information should also be documented. | The Thesis Online Platform (TOP) has been improved to enable thesis advisors and co-readers to record their respective (oral) feedback provided to students before and during the defence. |
| Further to comments from both students and thesis experts, the panel urges programme directors to investigate and monitor how all (and not merely most) lecturers and thesis coaches can live up to the expectations with regard to counselling and feedback (all programmes). | Coaches were asked to not grant more than 6 individual meetings as described in the coach manual. However, the programme management noted that a few external coaches were generous with their time and still granted more meetings than the standard number. This is point for discussion, as external coaches had strong incentives to see students passing their thesis. |
| Has the transparency increased in a way assessors provide insightful feedback on their scores and demonstrate that the joint assessment is a result of two independent reviewers. | All coaches and co-readers were asked to give detailed feedback on the Thesis Online Platform (TOP). In this way, the feedback is seen by coaches, co-readers and students. This ensures the transparency of evaluations. |

## 6.4.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

By examining consumer behaviour and marketing processes, students gain insights into how strategies and tactics influence the success or failure of products and services. Marketing plays a crucial role in driving organisational performance. With this understanding, students can craft effective visions and strategies for their businesses. Graduates of the MSc in Marketing Management programme can pursue careers as product or brand managers, market researchers, marketing management trainees, account managers, media planners, category managers, advertising strategists, or in many other related roles.

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, the programme implemented a new set of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The revision of the ILOs was partly driven by the new competency-based education vision of RSM. Additionally, the programme simultaneously considered the three key roles of a marketing specialist (researcher, manager, communicator) and incorporated these into the formulation of the programme ILOs.

| Role | Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Researcher (EXPLORING academic, economic, environmental, or social value) | 1. Remember, understand and use scientific marketing research methods, data collection, and data analysis. | 3. Analyse empirical data, evaluate the quality and relevance of evidence, and develop marketing research to explore value. | 6. Analyse the value of challenging the status quo in an ethical and evidence-based manner. |
| Manager (CREATING value for consumers, businesses, society, academics…) | 2. Remember, understand and use the frameworks involving strategic and tactical aspects of marketing management that affect various stakeholders. | 4. Translate marketing knowledge into sustainable value by analysing, evaluating and creating solutions for complex problems. | 7. Evaluate one's responsibility towards various stakeholders. |
| Communicator (COMMUNICATING value) | | 5. Construct, defend and criticize information effectively and persuasively | |

*Table 10: Intended learning outcomes Master Business Information Management*

In developing the ILOs, the programme consulted all teaching faculty, programme management, lecturers, alumni, and industry partners. According to the panel, this collaboration

resulted in a well-thought-out and cohesive set of seven ILOs that effectively express the three components of competencies (columns: knowledge, skills, and attitude) as well as the three roles of the marketer (rows: researcher, manager, and communicator).

The programme used the Dublin descriptors to guide the revision of the ILOs. The panel reviewed the programme's justification, which clearly explains how the ILOs relate to the Dublin descriptors. For example, the Dublin descriptors *Applying Knowledge and Understanding* and *Making Judgements* are primarily found in the second column of Table 9. Additionally, the descriptor for *Communication Skills* is located in the third row (communicator, ILO5). The academic orientation is also adequately represented through ILO1, ILO3, and ILO6 (row: researcher).

*Academic orientation*
The academic orientation of the Marketing Management programme is clearly reflected in its intended learning outcomes. These ILOs show that students are expected to analyse empirical data, evaluate the quality and relevance of evidence, apply scientific marketing research methods and design research focused on exploring value creation. The panel regards these outcomes as clearly formulated and appropriate for the programme's final level.

The panel concludes that the Master of Science degree is appropriate for the MM programme, due to the field of study and the curriculum content (see also standard 2). It also remarked that related offerings use a corresponding degree addition.

*Profile*
Based on its mission and vision, Rotterdam School of Management strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. This has been translated into the programme's ambition to "serve society at large by educating, training and developing responsible managers who will make a positive contribution to society". The panel notes that this ambition is clearly demonstrated in the programme's attitude-related ILOs, specifically ILO6 and ILO7.


**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The MSc in Marketing Management programme at Rotterdam School of Management meets the requirements of Standard 1. The programme's recently revised Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are aligned with the new competency-based educational vision of RSM and the Dublin descriptors. The ILOs successfully incorporate the three core roles of a marketeer — as researcher, manager, and communicator — and demonstrate both the appropriate academic orientation and alignment with master's level standards.

The collaborative development process, involving faculty, programme committee and industry partners, has resulted in a cohesive and comprehensive set of ILOs. The programme's mission to educate responsible managers is clearly reflected in the attitude-related ILOs, demonstrating a commitment to positive societal impact.

## 6.4.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The MSc in Marketing Management programme has mapped the intended learning outcomes to specific course-level outcomes. The panel examined this alignment, as outlined in the 'curriculum map'. For each course, it is clear which learning outcomes are addressed and how they align with the programme's intended learning outcomes. The panel concludes that all ILOs are adequately covered by the core courses within the programme.

*Curriculum structure*
During the 12-month MSc in Marketing Management programme, students follow the compulsory core courses (22 EC) in the autumn semester. Then students choose their master electives (18 EC) in the spring semester. In addition to their coursework, they will also work on their master thesis project (20 EC) throughout the year.

The curriculum comprises five core courses, all taught in the first semester. According to the panel, these courses provide students with a solid theoretical foundation and the skills to apply their knowledge in practice. The programme has carefully structured these courses to ensure they complement each other effectively. In the first block, students explore consumer behavior in the marketplace (*Consumer Behavior*, 6 EC) and learn to use data analytical tools to uncover value (*Consumer Marketing Research*, 4 EC). In the second block, students study how managers create value through effective marketing (*Marketing Strategy*, 6 EC) and further employ data analytical tools to explore market value (*Market Strategy Research*, 4 EC). The *Consumer Behavior* and *Marketing Strategy* courses emphasise the manager's role, while the *Consumer Marketing Research* and *Market Strategy Research* courses focus on the researcher's role. The discussions made it clear to the panel that the coherence within the programme is well thought out. Students note that they need to apply what they have previously learned in subsequent courses. This approach ensures that the knowledge is retained and reinforced.

In the second semester, MM students can select three electives, each worth 6 EC. Depending on their career ambitions, students can choose one out of two specialization tracks: Brand and Product Management or Digital Marketing and Analytics. Additionally, students can opt for an individual study plan. This means they can choose from all 14 MM electives and include a maximum of one non-Marketing Management elective. This track is ideal for students who want to create a more personalised profile.

The panel finds that the programme provides students with clear career paths while also allowing them the flexibility to make their own choices. The MSc in Marketing Management offers its students a wide, topical and attractive range of electives, such as *Advertising and*

*Communication, Customer Centricity, Consumer Psychology and Emerging Technology, Platform Economics and Marketing*, and *Digital Footprints of Consumer Preferences*.

*Master's thesis*

The master's thesis is a crucial component of the MSc in Marketing Management, accounting for nearly a third of the EC required for successful completion of the programme. Written individually, the thesis allows students to showcase their ability to conduct an academic research project, culminating in an oral defense. Through the thesis, students develop and demonstrate their independent skills in problem formulation, analysis, application of methods, critical judgment, and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

The panel appreciates that the programme places significant emphasis on the development of the thesis research proposal. The thesis process starts already in the first block with the *Thesis Topic Development* core course (1 EC), where students receive an introduction to the thesis trajectory. This course is followed by the Thesis Clinic (4 EC), which aims to develop the topic development paper from the Thesis Topic Development into a formal proposal. During the sessions, individual coaches discuss the research questions, study design, and plans for data collection and analysis with the students. In the second semester, students conduct their research and write their thesis (16 EC).

The panel was informed that, within the Marketing Management programme, combining the thesis with an internship is currently not possible. Since students rate the thesis trajectory lower than other aspects of the programme, discussions are underway to explore the possibility of incorporating an internship, including opportunities for data collection. However, there is no consensus within the faculty as some members are concerned that allowing internships might undermine the programme's high academic standards. The panel suggests that the programme consider initiating a small-scale pilot to explore the feasibility of allowing students to write a company-based thesis without compromising academic quality.

The panel wonders if the lower score for the thesis trajectory could be due to the fact that students in this programme are accustomed to working on group assignments, and may therefore feel less comfortable with the individual nature of the graduation project. It might be beneficial for the programme to engage in a discussion with students to better understand their concerns.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*

In its self-evaluation report, the programme has extensively described how RSM's mission is incorporated into the various core courses. Some examples include:

- In one of the assignments for the *Consumer Marketing Research* course, students examine marketing interventions to reduce energy consumption.
- In the *Marketing Strategy* course, a full case discussion is dedicated to social and environmental marketing objectives and how to combine them to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Another session of this course focuses on improving sustainability in the fashion industry.

Moreover, many electives are designed to educate and cultivate responsible leadership. For example, students in the *Advertising and Communication* course develop a communication plan for a charitable organisation. In the *Brand Development* course, students discuss businesses and brands that pursue higher purpose goals, including sustainability, social justice, gender equality, and accessibility. And one of the students told the panel she worked on a case from L'Oréal about inclusivity and sustainability as part of the elective course in *International Product Management*. Moreover, several courses address issues related to marketing ethics, preparing students to practice the values of social responsibility.

The panel is convinced that the programme has fully integrated RSM's mission into its teaching, as demonstrated by numerous compelling examples.

*International dimension*
The field of marketing does not stop at national borders; it is inherently international in nature. Consequently, internationalisation is embedded throughout the entire MM programme rather than being limited to specific modules. It encompasses the inclusion of international, intercultural, and global perspectives within the curriculum content, as well as in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in this international classroom benefit from exposure to a wide range of viewpoints brought by peers from diverse cultural and national backgrounds. This not only enhances their critical thinking but also deepens their understanding of global complexities. Such an environment fosters the development of intercultural competence.

*Learning environment*
Building on the didactical vision of RSM, all programmes are moving towards a more transformative and competency-based approach to education. As highlighted in the general section of this report, seven design principles are key to the educational framework. The panel recognises that the MSc in Marketing Management effectively applies several of these principles to foster a challenging learning environment for its students.

For example, the panel learned that guest lecturers from various companies and organisations are invited, such as Deichmann, Danone, The House of Marketing, Philips, and Stanford GSB. Students also highlighted real-world applications and case studies involving companies – from tech to food and beverage – as key strengths of the programme. They also appreciate the hands-on aspect of the MSc in Marketing Management, where they learn to work with R codes for case studies and use Artstudio for painting and photo editing. The use of GenAI as a source of inspiration – not to be blindly copied – is also encouraged within the programme.

The programme includes numerous collaborative assignments, which students appreciate as they feel it better prepares them for real-world work environments. They also highlight the valuable learning that occurs through collaboration with peers. Instructors support this by encouraging students to participate in discussions, think critically, and (self)reflect. Furthermore, students have expressed a desire for more interdisciplinary collaboration, not only in electives but also within the core courses. They have already raised this suggestion with the programme management.

The use of digital educational technology, which is a key focus of RSM's ambition to promote blended learning, appears to be in its early stages within the Marketing Management programme.

*Teaching faculty*
MSc programmes are typically linked to a research group, led by accomplished researchers who make significant contributions to their respective fields. The MSc in Marketing Management is associated with the Department of Marketing Management. The panel reviewed the list of lecturers involved in the programme, which includes approximately 20 teaching staff members, comprising 5 professors, 6 associate professors, and 8 assistant professors. This supports the panel's impression of a research-driven and highly qualified faculty, which plays a key role in shaping and delivering the curriculum.

The panel observed that the majority of teachers hold a teaching qualification. Students value the expertise and dedication of their instructors, which contributes to making the classes both enjoyable and educational. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel takes into consideration that the MSc in Marketing Management programme at RSM demonstrates a strong alignment between its intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and the curriculum. The programme's structure, with five core courses in the first semester, provides a solid theoretical foundation and practical skills. The second semester offers flexibility with elective choices and specialization tracks, catering to diverse career ambitions.

The master thesis, a significant component of the programme, emphasises independent research skills. The structured thesis process, starting with topic development and culminating in a formal proposal and final thesis, is well-supported by faculty. Although combining the thesis with an internship is currently not possible, the panel encourages further discussions to explore this possibility while maintaining academic standards.

The programme effectively integrates RSM's mission of responsible leadership and positive change, as evidenced by course content and assignments focused on sustainability, social justice, and ethical marketing. The learning environment is enriched by guest lecturers, real-world cases, and hands-on experiences.

The teaching faculty, comprising highly qualified researchers, ensures a research-driven curriculum. The majority of teachers hold teaching qualifications, and their competence and engagement are highly valued by students, contributing to an enjoyable and educational experience.

Overall, the MSc in Marketing Management programme meets the criteria of standard 2, offering a well-structured, flexible, and mission-driven education that enables students to develop the competencies outlined by the programme

## 6.4.5.  Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel noticed that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the MSc in Marketing Management. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. It clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments, both individually as in groupwork. Students have noted the emphasis on group work within the programme. The assessment matrix confirms that a portion of the written assignments are based on group projects. At the same time, the programme also includes individual assessments, such as written assignments and exams with open-ended questions, offering a balanced approach to evaluation. The panel is pleased to note that, to assess individual contributions to an oral group presentation, the programme also uses peer feedback as a form of group member evaluation.

The panel observes that the instructors, who, according to the self-evaluation report, have full autonomy in determining the assessment format, give careful thought to the role of assessments. As one student mentioned, "We have two or three major assignments per block, but I don't have to do an exam every week." To help students master the material and gain practical experience, the programme incorporates formative assessments. The panel learned that quizzes based on company cases, as well as pre-class surveys, are integral components of the programme's approach. For instance, in the *Marketing Strategy* course, pre-class surveys account for 10% of the grade, alongside a group assignment (40%) and a written exam (50%).

An area for further development within the Marketing Management programme is the constructiveness of the feedback students receive in their assessments and its potential to foster improvement. While students rate this aspect around 3 on a scale of 5, indicating a solid foundation, there is an opportunity to enhance the feedback process even further, as noted by the panel.

The panel discussed with instructors the impact of GenAI on assessments. When asked, it was shared that this topic is regularly discussed during strategy days. Many instructors have adapted their assessment methods accordingly. For instance, take-home exams are no longer used; instead, exams are now conducted in the lecture hall to prevent cheating. Another change is that group assignments are increasingly combined with meetings and/or presentations to verify the authenticity of the work. A well-written assignment but a poor presentation or oral exam will result in a lower grade. Additionally, the oral defence of the thesis has become increasingly

important. The panel notes that in the Marketing Management programme, assessments are closely monitored and adjusted as necessary to maintain their effectiveness.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Furthermore, the panel notes that in some forms, the assessment of the process and defence is clearly described, while in other forms, the justification of the process and oral defence is absent. The same applies to the feedback from the co-reader. In several thesis evaluations, it is clear that the assessment is made jointly, while in other theses, the contribution of the co-reader remains unclear. The panel recommends that the programme address this issue in the assessment process.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The MSc in Marketing Management programme has a robust assessment system aligned with RSM's educational vision and assessment policy. The assessment matrix ensures that all Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are addressed through a balanced mix of group and individual assessments. Assessments are valid, reliable and transparent. The programme incorporates formative assessments, such as quizzes and pre-class surveys, to help students master the material. The thesis assessment process is well-structured, though there is room for improvement in the clarity of feedback and co-reader contributions.

The Examination Board actively safeguards assessment quality through the appointment of examiners, regular reviews, and calibration sessions, demonstrating that it is in control.

Overall, the panel concludes that while there are areas for further improvement, the programme exhibits solid assessment practices and fulfils the requirements of standard 3.

## 6.4.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with industry representatives and alumni highlighted that graduates of this programme excel in their professional roles. Alumni shared that they feel well-prepared to enter their field, and the industry has expressed satisfaction with the calibre of students. A recent alumni survey indicates that many graduates successfully find employment at leading multinational corporations, including Unilever, Samsung, and Beiersdorf.

The panel reviewed a stratified sample of fifteen theses from the Master's programme in Marketing Management, selected from the most recent two cohorts of graduates. In general, the theses present relevant research topics in the field of marketing management. The sample comprised theses with high, low, and average grades. Based on this comprehensive review, the panel concludes that the programme effectively prepares graduates for successful careers in both industry and academia, thereby demonstrating that they have attained the requisite master's level learning outcome. However, there is a notable variation in the quality of work among students. The sample included some re-sits, which were of significantly lower quality compared to the exemplary theses. This disparity is clearly reflected in the grades awarded.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The programme meets the requirements of standard 4. Alumni and representatives from the professional field confirm that graduates perform well and are adequately prepared. The panel's review of theses demonstrates that the master's level learning outcomes have been achieved, despite variations in quality.

### 6.4.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the master programme in Marketing Management is 'positive'.

### 6.4.8. Recommendations

*Thesis assessment*
The panel notes that in some forms, the assessment of the thesis process and defence is clearly described, while in other forms, the justification of the process and oral defence is absent. The same applies to the feedback from the co-reader. In several thesis evaluations, it is clear that the assessment is made jointly, while in other theses, the contribution of the co-reader remains unclear. The panel recommends that the programme address this issue in the assessment process.

*Constructive feedback*
The panel highlights the formative role of assessment, particularly the provision of constructive feedback, as areas for further development within the Marketing Management programme. The panel advises the programme to maintain ongoing attention to this area.

## 6.5. Master Management of Innovation

### 6.5.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Management of Innovation |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60458 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | Medical Business & Innovation |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 6.5.2. Introduction

The master Management of Innovation (MI) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. The programme introduced a track on Medical Business Innovation (MBI) in 2022-2023. This track is tailored to individuals with prior experience in medicine, nursing or life sciences but also students with other backgrounds such as law, and offers a specialised pathway for those interested in innovation within the healthcare sector.
According to programme documentation, 102 students were enrolled in 2022-2023 (83 in MI and 19 in MBI) and 115 new students (98 in MI and 17 in MBI) joined in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up programme specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| Enhance the thesis assessment system. Not all assessors provide insightful comments in the evaluation form. While the panel acknowledges that more oral feedback is provided to students, this information should also be documented. | RSM has improved the Thesis Online Platform (TOP) to enable advisors a co-readers to respectively record their (oral) feedback to students before and during their defence. MI improved the thesis assessment system, through (i) dedication of a faculty member to the thesis system as thesis coordinator, (ii) internal seminars with peer alignment among faculty, (iii) active coordination between supervisors and co-readers to check and improve the quality of the written feedback in the system, and (iv) guiding students through the process with the research fundamentals course. |
| Further to comments from both students and thesis experts, the panel urges programme directors to investigate and monitor how all (and not merely most) lecturers and thesis coaches can live up to the expectations with regard to counselling and feedback (all programmes). | MI organised internal feedback and seminars to improve it. |

## 6.5.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The MSc Management of Innovation (MI) at Rotterdam School of Management is designed to equip students with the skills to manage innovation within both business and societal contexts. Students learn to drive innovation responsibly, making a positive impact in areas such as sustainability and digital transformation, and healthcare innovation.

To achieve this goal, the programme has established eight intended learning outcomes (ILOs), which are regularly evaluated with internal and external stakeholders. These ILOs (see Table 10) encompass a comprehensive range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students must develop to effectively drive innovation. Students are equipped to design innovation strategies, foster a culture of innovation within organisations, promote creative thinking, and lead innovation initiatives with a strong focus on social responsibility.

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Students possess a thorough and critical understanding of the core aspects of innovation management.<br><br>2. Students know how to systematically analyse and explain the appropriateness of strategy and organization of innovation activities within a unit, firm or ecosystem.<br><br>3. Students know how to identify unmet innovation needs, create ideas, evaluate their value, and execute those ideas. | 4. Students develop and apply processes, tools and organizational forms to transform businesses and society.<br><br>5. Students communicate their ideas, solutions and visions effectively to inspire and lead diverse set of stakeholders to create positive change.<br><br>6. Students evaluate and conduct research on innovation management using scientific methods | 7. Students demonstrate ethics and integrity in science and business<br><br>8. Students combine an entrepreneurial and innovative attitude with high scientific quality. |

*Table 11: Intended learning outcomes MSc Management of Innovation*

Starting from the 2022-2023 academic year, the programme offers a specialised track in Medical Business and Innovation, focusing on innovation in the healthcare and life sciences sector. The same ILOs apply to this track. Their project assignments and their theses are related to healthcare business and medical innovation.

In the panel's view, the ILOs appropriately reflect the master's level and its academic focus. The programme has substantiated this by relating the ILOs to the Dublin Descriptors at the master's level. For instance, the ILOs encompass both the acquisition and application of knowledge in key areas of innovation management. Through the ILOs, students also develop crucial skills such as systematically analysing innovation strategies, leading cross-functional teams, and effectively communicating complex ideas to diverse audiences. The ILOs address academic research skills as well. The panel concludes that the ILOs are well-suited to the field of innovation management and effectively reflect the expectations of an academic master's programme.

*Academic orientation*
The academic orientation is embedded in the intended learning outcomes of the Management of Innovation programme. These ILOs demonstrate that students must be able to evaluate and conduct research on innovation management using scientific methods. Furthermore, the ILOs also emphasise the importance of combining an entrepreneurial and innovative attitude with high scientific quality. The panel finds this to be clearly articulated and appropriate for the programme's final level.

The panel deems the Master of Science degree suitable for the Management of Innovation programme, given the discipline and the curriculum's content (see also standard 2). It also observed that related offerings award a corresponding degree.

*Profile*
Guided by its mission and vision, RSM aims to prepare its students to be positive change makers. This goal is reflected in the programme's aspirations, as outlined in the self-evaluation report: "By programme's end, graduates emerge equipped to actively champion socially impactful and transformative changes across products, services, technologies and business paradigms. These new leaders not only drive innovation within organisations, but they also embody a culture of continuous self-renewal, thereby fostering a ripple effect of innovation within both institutional frameworks and individual capacities". The panel observes that this ambition is clearly embodied in the programme's ILO4, ILO5, and ILO7.


**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The MSc Management of Innovation (MI) at Rotterdam School of Management effectively equips students with the skills to manage innovation in both business and societal contexts. The programme's eight intended learning outcomes (ILOs) align with the Dublin Descriptors at the master's level, covering essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes for driving innovation. These ILOs ensure students can design innovation strategies, foster a culture of innovation, and lead initiatives with a focus on social responsibility. The panel concludes that the ILOs are appropriate for the field of innovation management and reflect the master's level and academic orientation expectations.

## 6.5.4.  Teaching-learning environment

**Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

<u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has mapped the intended learning outcomes to specific course-level outcomes. The panel examined this alignment, as outlined in the 'curriculum map'. For each course, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLOs) are addressed and how they align with the programme's intended learning outcomes. The panel concludes that all ILOs are adequately covered by the core courses within the programme.

*Curriculum structure*
Since 2023/2024, the curriculum of the MSc Management of Innovation consists of five core courses, all of which are taught in the first semester. These courses provide students with a solid theoretical foundation and equip them with the skills necessary to apply their knowledge in practice. The programme has carefully structured these courses to ensure they complement each other effectively. In the first block, the core courses *Strategy of Innovation* (5 EC) and *Organisation of Innovation* (5 EC) are primarily theoretical. In the second block, the core courses *Implementing Innovations* (5 EC) and *Design Thinking* (5 EC) emphasise practical application, which is essential for students transitioning into professional roles.

Students enrolled in the Medical Business Innovation (MBI) track follow the same core courses as their peers in the Management of Innovation (MI) programme in the first semester but apply the concepts in projects and cases specific to the healthcare sector. Additionally, MBI students take two extra core courses, which replace one elective from the MI programme. These courses are *Medical Innovation* (3 EC) and *Intellectual Property* (3 EC) taught in block 3.

In the second semester, MI students can select three electives, each worth 6 EC. MBI students, on the other hand, choose two electives. The panel reviewed the list of electives and concluded that they offer students the opportunity to either deepen or broaden their knowledge and skills in innovation management. The programme offers several electives, including *Managing Innovation in a New Era: Web3*, *Open Innovation*, *Coaching for Innovation*, and *Digital Transformation in Healthcare*. Students also have the option to replace an elective with a company-based research project (internship).

Based on its own observations and feedback from students, the panel concludes that the MI programme offers a well-structured and relevant curriculum that effectively enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Out of curiosity, the panel asked students about the balance between product and process innovation within the programme. In response, they explained that the programme is predominantly focused on product innovation. While process innovation is discussed in some

courses, it is not a dedicated course on its own. Students expressed a desire to learn more about process innovation. They also mentioned that they have some freedom to choose their own projects, which allows them to develop a new process if they wish. However, most students tend to opt for product innovation. The panel suggests that the programme consider allocating more attention to process innovation, possibly through an elective course.

*Master's thesis*
A feature of the MI programme is that the thesis trajectory (20 EC) begins at the start of the academic year and continues until the end of it. The process starts with students selecting a project and writing a research proposal. Throughout the thesis process, students are trained in various research methodologies and practical skills essential for carrying out their research projects. By the beginning of the second semester, students commence their research, which is academically grounded yet application-oriented.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
According to the panel, the nature of the programme reflects the commitment to achieving sustainable innovation. The fifth core course, which has not been mentioned yet, is the *Positive Impact Seminar*. This seminar is designed to introduce MSc in Management of Innovation students to real-world examples of positive impact within the context of innovation. It equips them with the necessary insights to reflect on their own attitudes towards positive impact issues and learn how to address contemporary societal challenges through innovative solutions. Other courses, such as the elective on Social Entrepreneurship, also explicitly contribute to RSM's mission. Overall, the collaborative spirit of this master's programme prepares students to become leaders in sustainable innovation, aiming to combine excellence with the ability to provide innovative solutions.

*International dimension*
It is clear to the panel that innovation management is an international field of study. The curriculum is informed by academic research published in internationally renowned journals and incorporates international, intercultural, and global perspectives both in its content and in the methods of instruction. Students in the international Management of Innovation classroom benefit from exposure to a wide range of viewpoints from peers with diverse cultural and national backgrounds, which enhances their critical thinking and deepens their understanding of global complexities. This environment fosters the development of intercultural competence.

*Learning environment*
Based on the didactical vision of RSM, all programmes are transitioning towards more transformative and competency-based education. As mentioned in the general part of this report, there are seven design principles central to the educational approach. The panel clearly recognises that the MSc in Management of Innovation utilise several of these design principles to create a challenging learning environment for students.

For example, the panel learned that for the MBI-specific courses, guest lecturers from various universities and institutes are invited. They, for example, speak about digital transformation in healthcare. Additionally, lectures are delivered by patients and representatives from hospitals, including the Erasmus Medical Centre. Students are tasked with working on real projects within healthcare institutions, particularly in courses such as *Medical Innovation* and *Intellectual Property*. In this way, the programme creates experiential learning.

From the MI students, the panel learned that the programme also works with company challenges. The company introduces the challenges, steering and guiding students to solve a challenge for them. Additionally, students can recruit their own assignments for some projects. This all contributes to the engagement of the student body, although students would like to have more company visits. The panel also notes that, due to the relatively small scale of the

programme, the instructors make the lessons interactive by encouraging discussions, allowing students to learn a great deal from one another.

The panel noted that there has been no mention of the use of digital educational technology within the MI programme.

*Teaching faculty*
The panel reviewed the list of lecturers teaching in the MSc Management of Innovation programme. The teaching staff comprises approximately 15 teaching staff, predominantly associate professors and PhD candidates who actively conduct research in their respective fields. Nearly all teaching staff hold a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ, or BKO in Dutch). RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The panel learned that programmes and their teaching staff receive support from the Learning Innovation Team (LIT). Operating at the school level, this team assists in enhancing courses and improving teaching practices. For smaller programmes, the LIT plays a particularly valuable role, as not all educational expertise may be available within the teaching team itself.

Based on the documents and discussions, the panel concludes that the programme benefits from a team of dedicated and highly qualified teaching staff. The quality of teaching is highly praised by students, who commend the professors for effectively engaging them through lectures, guest lectures, and hands-on projects. Students particularly appreciate the small scale of the programme, which facilitates personal contact with professors and is viewed as a significant advantage, especially during the thesis process.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The MSc Management of Innovation programme effectively aligns its intended learning outcomes (ILOs) with specific course-level outcomes (CLOs), ensuring comprehensive coverage through its core courses. The curriculum is well-structured, combining theoretical and practical courses to provide students with a solid foundation and necessary skills. The Medical Business Innovation (MBI) track allows for sector-specific application of concepts.

Experiential learning is emphasised through real-world projects, company challenges, and interactive teaching methods. The small-scale nature of the programme fosters personal contact between students and professors, enhancing the learning experience. The thesis trajectory integrates academic rigor with practical orientation.

The teaching staff, comprising dedicated and qualified lecturers, is highly praised by students for their engagement and expertise.

Overall, the MSc Management of Innovation programme meets the requirements of standard 2, offering a relevant and well-structured curriculum that prepares students to become leaders in sustainable innovation.

## 6.5.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel noticed that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the MSc Management of Innovation. This matrix is a tool that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring that the evaluation methods align with the expected learning outcomes. It clearly shows that all ILOs are addressed through the assessments.

The matrix also reveals that the MI programme employs a wide variety of assessment methods. Students informed the panel that they do not have traditional exams; instead, all summative assessments are based on individual and group projects. They expressed satisfaction with this approach, describing the assessments as well-organised, transparent, and fair. The panel notes that relying solely on individual and group assignments makes the programme vulnerable to the potential negative impacts of GenAI. It urges the programme to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing this issue.

The panel notes that the MSc Management of Innovation utilises a combination of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include preparatory quizzes, task sessions, and take-home exams. Students are satisfied with the feedback they receive, as it helps them improve and refine their work.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

The panel reviewed a selection of 15 theses from the MSc Management of Innovation programme, including those from the Medical Business Innovation track. Based on this review, the panel concludes that, overall, the examiners clearly express their opinions on the theses and the criteria used for their assessment. In several instances, particularly within the MBI track, the feedback provided is exemplary. However, there are  some assessments where the co-reader appears to have offered no additional feedback. The lack of further comments from the co-reader detracts from the dual assessment process, which is a key component of the evaluation. The panel recommends that the programme give careful attention to the individual assessments conducted by both the examiner and the co-reader, ensuring that these are properly documented in the assessment form.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on adequate criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The MSc Management of Innovation programme adheres to RSM's Assessment Policy, ensuring valid, reliable, and transparent evaluations. The assessment matrix covers all ILOs and shows a variety of assessment methods, such as quizzes, assignments, presentations, and self-reflections, incorporating both individual and group evaluations. Students appreciate the project-based assessments, finding it transparent and fair.

Formative and summative assessments offer constructive feedback, supporting students' development. Thesis evaluations follow a standardised matrix, though the panel suggests clearer rubrics and more consistent feedback from co-readers.

The Examination Board plays an active role in maintaining assessment quality, engaging in educational developments and organizing calibration sessions. According to the panel, the programme meets the requirements of Standard 3, providing a robust and effective assessment system.

## 6.5.6.  Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni highlighted that graduates of this programme excel in their careers. Alumni mentioned that they feel well-prepared to enter their respective fields. Additionally, the professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students.

The panel reviewed a stratified sample of fifteen theses from the Master's programme in Management of Innovation, selected from the last two cohorts of graduates. The sample also included two theses from the Medical Business Innovation track. Based on the thesis review, the panel concludes that, with one exception, the MSc MI students have demonstrated that they deserved to graduate. The sample included one thesis where, according to the panel, the methodology employed (qualitative interviews) does not match the type of research question and hypotheses development. All the other theses demonstrated good mastery of knowledge and skills.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

Based on the round-table discussions and thesis reviews, the panel concludes that the Master's programme in Management of Innovation meets the requirements of standard 4. Graduates perform well in practice and feel adequately prepared for their careers. With one permitted exception, the theses demonstrate that students achieve the intended learning outcomes. The theses show students' ability to conduct independent academic research with a practical focus.

### 6.5.7. Overall conclusion

The panel considers that the programme meets the quality requirements on each of the four standards. Consequently, the overall judgement of the panel regarding the master programme Management of Innovation, including the Medical Business Innovation track, is 'positive'.

### 6.5.8. Recommendations

*Assignments and AI*
The panel notes that relying solely on individual and group assignments makes the programme vulnerable to the potential negative impacts of AI. It recommends the programme to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing this issue.

# 7. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS CLUSTER 4

## 7.1. Master Strategic Management

### 7.1.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Strategic Management |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60066 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 7.1.2. Introduction

The master Strategic Management (SM) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. It was part of the previous accreditation round. It is one of RSM's largest programmes. According to program documentation, 328 students were enrolled in 2022-2023, of which 32.9% were international, and 297 new students were enrolled in 2023-2024. The programme has a maximum intake per 2024-2025 of 350 students.

*Follow-up program specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| The previous panel identified key areas for improvement, particularly in feedback provision and assessment transparency. The panel highlighted the need for more insightful and systematically documented thesis feedback, including oral assessments. | The programme has taken several steps to enhance curriculum coherence, feedback quality, and assessment transparency. For example, thesis assessment has been improved with the further improvement of RSM's Thesis Online Platform (TOP), which ensures structured documentation of feedback – from advisors and co-readers respectively – on both final reports and intermediate deliverables. Assessment transparency has been strengthened by enabling systematic comparisons between supervisors' and second reviewers' evaluations. Stricter guidelines have also been introduced to standardise feedback, but ensuring all lecturers and thesis supervisors meet counselling and feedback expectations remains a priority. |

## 7.1.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the program; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the program (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or
> international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the program. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The Strategic Management (SM) programme wants to develop students into responsible strategic leaders – e.g. general manager and strategy consultant positions – for the sustainable, digital economy. The programme focuses on the bigger strategic decisions that firms need to make to secure their competitive advantage and create a long-term sustainable future. Students learn how to develop the strategic direction of an organization. They will explore how to approach complex strategic challenges, analyse the facts, and develop and evaluate effective strategic options.

The panel notes that the intended learning outcomes align with the field of strategic management. The learning outcomes are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level. In the provided documentation, the programme has clearly demonstrated how the intended learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin Descriptors for master's level. Furthermore, the panel notes that, due to the competency-based approach, the programme also focuses on preparing students for the development of skills that are important in the professional field, such as creative and critical strategic thinking, collaborating and cross-cultural communication skills.

The programme has revised its intended learning outcomes by assessing the current and future needs of businesses. Based on labour market research, six key competencies have been identified that were deemed essential for careers in the 21$^{st}$ century. When it comes to practical expectations, the programme makes a distinction between the expectations set by the first few jobs and the expectations for a long-term career. The competencies have been designed with a long-term career perspective in mind. The programme has translated these competencies into intended learning outcomes, which are applicable from the 2023-2024 academic year onwards. With this, the programme has also fulfilled the recommendation made by the panel that conducted the mid-term review in 2021.

The panel acknowledges that the ILOs have been established through consultation with various stakeholders, including faculty members, industry professionals, and alumni. The programme annually reviews the relevance of the ILOs, allowing for necessary adjustments in consultation with the academic director and faculty. At the time of the accreditation visit, the programme was in the process of establishing an Organisations and Alumni Advisory Committee (OAAC). The panel has expressed a positive opinion on this matter and advises the programme to use this advisory body for professionals and employers to institutionalise input, including for the validation of the intended learning outcomes.

Below, the panel presents the intended learning outcomes that were in effect until the 2022-2023 academic year and those applicable from the 2023-2024 academic year onwards (source: self-evaluation report SM).

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Master strategic management principles and the various strategy schools of thought.<br>1.1 Identify relevant theories to analyse a strategic problem / opportunity<br>1.2 Analyse the merits and shortcomings of the strategic management theories<br>1.3 Develop strategic options/alternative solutions to a specific strategic problem.<br>1.4 Assess the requirements for strategy implementation and its impact on various stakeholders<br>2. Have theoretical and practical insights on the role and impact of the external and internal business environment on firm's decision-making process and firm's strategy.<br>2.1 Discuss the rationale, process and outcomes of a strategic analysis to a target audience.<br>2.2 Prepare written reports and oral presentations about a strategic issue within a company<br>2.3 Lead discussion strategic issues facing a company before a heterogeneous audience<br>2.4 Manage task-oriented group project to reach pre-set goals within a specific time frame | 3. Understand the main philosophy and methods of scientific research in strategic management.<br>3.1 Identify a research topic based on the current strategic management literature<br>3.2 Select and develop a research design and method for data collection and analysis | 4. Recognise and provide solutions for ethical issues in strategy research and strategic decision making to further corporate social responsibility and sustainability.<br>4.1 Identify ethical issues and their consequences in research and strategic decision making and offer solution in line with a defined corporate social responsibility policy and sustainability<br>4.2 Approach complex dilemmas in (strategic) managerial behaviour in an ethical way<br>4.3 Demonstrate the ability to be self-critical and integrate the viewpoints of others |

*Table 12: Programme ILOs Master Strategic Management until 2022-2023*

| ILO 1 | Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of strategic management, founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with first cycle and provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas in a research context. |
|---|---|
| ILO 2 | Can apply their strategic management knowledge and understanding, and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader societal and transdisciplinary contexts related to strategic management, both independently and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. |
| ILO 3 | Can integrate strategic management knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments about strategic management with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments. |
| ILO 4 | Can communicate their conclusions about strategic management problems and corresponding solutions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously. |
| ILO 5 | Have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study strategic management in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous. |
| ILO 6 | Can assess and influence their own and others' behaviour in a strategic management context on a task, people, and ethical level. |
| ILO 7 | Aims to be a force for positive change in the world. |

*Table 13: Programme ILOs Master Strategic Management per 2023-2024*

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel sees ambition reflected in the ILOs of SM. ILO 6 en 7 are derived from RSM's mission to be a force for good. If students realise the first six ILOs, then they can use their knowledge and skills for the purpose of positive change in the world (ILO 7). The panel can imagine that the programme might further elaborate on the development of ILO 7 and explore how this could be assessed in concrete terms.

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. The first five ILOs are are a direct translation of the Dublin Descriptors to the strategic management field. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to strategic management challenges. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

Considering the field of study and the curriculum content of Strategic Management (see standard 2), the panel finds the Master of Science degree appropriate for this programme. It further notes that equivalent programmes confer the same degree.

**Conclusion**
Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the master's programme in Strategic Management has well-formulated intended learning outcomes that clearly align with the field of strategic management, meet master's level standards and academic orientation, and reflect the mission of Rotterdam School of Management to create a positive societal impact. Two out of seven ILOs specifically embody the mission of RSM, encouraging students to use their knowledge and skills for positive change in the world.

Based on labour market research, the programme identified six key competencies essential for 21st-century careers, balancing expectations for both early roles and long-term career growth. The ILOs, updated for the 2023-2024 academic year, were developed through stakeholder consultations and are reviewed annually for relevance. The panel encourages the establishment of an Organisations and Alumni Advisory Committee to institutionalise professional input and to systematically and structurally validate the intended learning outcomes.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 7.1.4. Teaching-learning environment

**Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the program is taught in a language other than Dutch, the program must justify its choice. This also applies if the program bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the program concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into learning outcomes per course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map'. For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLO's) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the (core) courses in the programme. The panel also observes that, when translating ILOs into learning objective per course, the programme monitors the balance between knowledge, skills and learning objectives.

*Curriculum content and structure*
The curriculum consists of core courses, elective modules and a master's thesis. The panel finds the curriculum to be logically structured, with each module contributing to the overall competency development of students, offering a balance of theoretical grounding and practical application.
- The programme starts in September with the foundational core courses (e.g. 'Corporate strategy' and 'Competitive strategy'). In the panel's view, these courses provide students with a solid understanding in strategic management theory and practice. The core courses cover key areas such as mergers and acquisitions, strategic innovation, forming strategic partnerships, and expanding internationally. Teachers utilize recent, high-quality scientific publications to familiarize students with the latest research developments and to deepen their understanding of scientific research, especially in preparation for their thesis. Peer-reviewed journal articles are included in the required reading for theoretical courses.
- In the practical (group) project ('RSM strategy case project') the focus is on applying knowledge in practice. Students learn skills that are relevant to their career, such as structured problem-solving, collaboration in teams, and the structured presentation of strategies and complex analyses.  To help solve the case, SM teaches the problem-solving method and techniques used by leading strategy consultancies. This project runs throughout the autumn semester parallel to the strategy courses.
- In addition, in block 2 the programme starts preparing the largest programme component, namely the thesis. In the so-called 'Research clinic', students learn to orient themselves on a topic and an appropriate research question. The January block is dedicated to the research methods that students will use in their thesis. The programme offers two alternatives: quantitative and qualitative research methods ('Qualitative or quantitative research in SM &SE').
- In spring, students choose three electives (18 EC) (such as 'Organising for technological transformation', 'Managing intellectual property in M&As and alliances' or 'Sustainable finance'). SM also offers an extracurricular honors class for a select group of 25 high-

performing and highly ambitious students. This is a relevant field research project in which students are guided by teachers and practitioners.

In the student evaluatie section students reported a high level of satisfaction with the structure and coherence of the curriculum. Nonetheless, they also formulated several suggestions for further improvement. Students suggested that the programme could benefit from increased opportunities for real-life experience and presentations. Furthermore, a stronger translation from theory to practice could make the relevance of (core) courses more apparent.

*Programme didactics*
The programme incorporates diverse educational models. Traditional knowledge transfer is combined with the Socratic model to engage students actively. Some subjects utilise the flipped classroom model, while constructivist approaches dominate workshops, encouraging hands-on learning. Project-based learning is key, involving real-world company problems, with a distinction between field projects and classroom cases. Case-based education features prominently, including the Strategy Case Project and thesis, both of which are field projects.

*Professional dimension*
The programme uses guest speakers from practitioner organisations, of which many are SM alumni, to ensure a connection to real-world practice. The panel finds the use of guest lecturers valuable due to their industry experience. In the National Student Survey[9], students expressed great enthusiasm for the use of guest speakers. They indicated a desire for more guest speakers, not only from large companies but also from smaller businesses they are likely to engage with in their future careers.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. This includes addressing international strategic issues during lectures and leveraging the international experiences of the student body. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
As with internationalization, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are integral to strategic management. The SM programme aims to ensure that student develop awareness of the ethical dimensions and considerations of their strategic actions and acquire the competencies to identify and address the societal issues in their role as strategic leaders. ESG's importance is reflected in the programme, with 3 out of 7 ILOs focusing on ethics, responsibility, and positive impact. Teachers incorporate ESG aspects across all components, starting from the programme's introduction, emphasizing that strategic management prioritizes broader societal responsibilities over maximizing shareholder value. Students expressed some criticism in the National Student Survey regarding certain companies associated with the programme. They indicated a preference for more companies with an active ESG policy. The panel considers this a valuable suggestion.

*Master thesis*
The SM Master's thesis (16 EC) is an integral part of the overall Master's programme. From the very first semester, students begin preparing for their thesis. However, the actual execution and writing of the thesis take place in the second semester. The thesis is written individually and provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to conduct academic research, culminating in an oral defence. As the final component of the programme, the thesis synthesises the qualifications and competencies students have acquired throughout the other parts of the programme.

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[9] Nationale Studenten Enquête®

Students identify opportunities for improvement in the thesis process. Each student is assigned a personal supervisor. Significant differences were noted in terms of accessibility of the supervisor, the number of contact moments, and the level of feedback. The programme is aware of this issue – *"some students were left alone, while others were spoon-fed with data"* – and has taken steps to address it, such as introducing guidelines for supervisors to ensure that thesis supervision is more consistent for all students. These guidelines encompass both the content of the supervision and the processes involved, specifically outlining what students can expect and what supervisors are required to provide in terms of guidance.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The teaching faculty includes full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, PhD students, and external professionals from the industry[10]. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. With specializations spanning competitive business strategy, corporate strategy, corporate governance, strategic leadership, strategic decision-making and entrepreneurship (a.o.), the SM staff brings extensive expertise in various areas of strategic management. Most lecturers hold a teaching qualification and some have exemptions based on years of experience. Guest lecturers are not required to obtain a teaching qualification. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

Students are generally positive about the lecturers. According to the audit discussion, most lecturers are highly passionate and are able to engage in exciting discussions. While some professors were highly engaging and demonstrated a strong grasp of the material, others were less so. Similarly, the presentation skills of some lecturers stood out as significantly more polished than those of their peers. Nonetheless, all the lecturers were clearly experts in their respective fields, according to the students. They all possess significant experience and/or expertise in a specific field. The student panel suggested it might be beneficial to organise a session for lecturers to refine their presentation techniques and exchange tips and feedback with one another. The panel would encourage such initiatives, as it helps to build/maintain a coherent and open community among the staff.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The Strategic Management programme ensures that all intended learning outcomes are effectively integrated into course-specific learning objectives, balancing knowledge, skills and attitudes. The curriculum, composed of core courses, electives, and a master's thesis, offers both theoretical foundations and practical application. Core courses cover strategic management topics and utilise high-quality academic resources, while group projects like the RSM Strategy Case Project focus on real-world application.

Students express satisfaction with the curriculum's structure but suggest incorporating more real-life experiences and stronger theory-to-practice translation. Diverse teaching models, including project-based and case-based learning, are employed, while guest speakers and internationalisation enrich professional and global dimensions. ESG factors are a key focus, promoting ethical awareness and social responsibility. The thesis process begins early, with

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[10] 59% scholarly academic, 5% practice academic, 3% scholarly practitioner, 8% instructional practitioner & 26% additional (source: Yearly Programme Report 2022-2023).

research methods tailored to student preferences. Improvements have been made to ensure consistent supervision quality.

With expertise covering competitive business strategy, corporate strategy, corporate governance, strategic leadership, strategic decision-making, and entrepreneurship (among others), the Strategic Management staff brings a wealth of knowledge across numerous aspects of the field. Students praise the teaching staff for their expertise, though variations in presentation skills have led to a suggestion for professional development sessions. Overall, the programme aims to prepare students as responsible leaders for a global, sustainable economy.

Based on these arguments, the panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. that the programme "meets the standard".

## 7.1.5.  Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The program has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the Strategic Management programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods, including individual written exams and group assignments for courses (such as case analysis). In the strategy case project students are asked to record a video in which they present their analysis and advice as a group. With a high emphasis on group work, there is some concern among students about being dependent on other group members. This issue warrants attention, especially given the emphasis on skills and attitude in the revised ILOs. For the thesis, the programme includes a personal defence and the assessment of the thesis report.

The programme aims to incorporate formative elements into the assessment process. In the strategy case project the programme has introduced self-assessments and peer assessments of the competencies of the RSM Competency Framework. In this way, students can evaluate their personal development on these competencies. The programme aims to place greater emphasis on this.

Furthermore, the panel notes that SM students are satisfied with the information provided about the assessments. Assessments and assessments rubrics are generally clear, according to the students, and they feel well-informed about what to expect. Prior to exams, students are provided with a mock exam and model answers, offering insight into expectations and assessment criteria. To improve, it is suggested to ensure consistent application of grading rubrics and provide clear, aligned expectations across all evaluators. Both the documents and conversations indicate that assessments contribute to the students' learning processes. The panel recommends providing richer and more specific feedback to enhance students' learning experience. Personalized feedback that addresses individual strengths and weaknesses fosters deeper understanding and supports ongoing academic development.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.
Based on the review of 10 SM theses, the panel further notes that the assessments by the coach and co-reader are, overall, sufficiently transparent, easy to follow and well justified. The feedback provided a consistent picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the theses and gives a good reasoning behind the assigned grades. "*The assessments reflect a balanced recognition of both the student's efforts and the shortcomings in the theses*", according to one of the thesis assessors of the panel. The panels agrees with the grades givens by the examiners.

As the programme involves a large number of thesis supervisors, it focuses on calibrating thesis assessments. "*They are not meant to be identical, but they are meant to be reasonably the same*", as noted by one of the lecturers during the discussion at the site visit. The programme has a thesis coordinator who coordinates the work of the individual supervisors and thus strives to harmonize the assessment practices. In addition, an assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is well designed. Based on the findings, the panel notes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. The assessment matrix aligns ILOs with evaluation methods, covering all ILOs through diverse assessments such as written exams, group assignments, and thesis defence. While group work is emphasised, some students express concerns about dependency on peers.

The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. Consistent grading and tailored feedback could further improve learning outcomes. The Examination Board adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments.

The thesis process is properly structured, according to the panel. Thesis evaluations use a detailed matrix with transparent and justified feedback. Calibration practices, including a Thesis Monitor, ensure consistency across supervisors. The panel encourages the continuation of these efforts and recommends refining rubrics for clearer language. Overall, the assessment system effectively supports student development and upholds academic standards.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 7.1.6.   Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The program demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**
The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students. 93 percent of graduates find employment within three months after graduation. Most graduates could find a starting position in management consultancy or in large companies. Some examples of popular starting positions have included strategy consultant, management consultant, project manager and business analyst. As mentioned in standard 1, the learning outcomes have been designed with a long-term career perspective in mind. However, the programme could communicate this more effectively to students. One of the alumni indicated that there was a disconnect between what they expected to do and the actual entry-level position they obtained. While this was understood in hindsight, clearer communication from the programme would have been appreciated.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of ten[11] theses from the last two cohorts of the Master Strategic Management. The panel classifies the theses from satisfactory to good (and even excellent). The panel saw relevant research questions, (fairly) decent literature studies and clear hypothesis development. According to the panel the theses are generally well structured, carefully analyzed and demonstrate an understanding of both the academic and practical implications. In some theses there was still room for improvement in (the argumentation of) the connection between (empirical) analyses and (the final) conclusions, especially in more complex research designs. The panel is well aware that this is generally a challenge for master's students. On the other hand, the panel also saw a number of theses that were eligible for publication in academic journals, given the innovative nature of the research.

Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. Naturally, there is a variation in quality between the theses, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners. With regard to the theses with lower grades, attention is needed to the importance of a thorough theoretical basis for master theses, clearly explaining methodological choices and interpretations, as well as encouraging critical reflection on the generalizability of findings.

**Conclusion**
The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for the Master Strategic Management and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of strategic management.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

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[11]

 Since there is a demonstrable overlap between the programs of the master SM and the master SE and they share an Examination Board, the panel decided to study 10 theses for both courses instead of 15.

### 7.1.7.    Overall conclusion

The panel finds that the Master Strategic Management programme meets all four standards. The programme is well-designed, academically rigorous, and aligned with industry needs. SM offers students a programme with a wide perspective on business and society. Based on these findings, the panel issues a positive overall judgement.

### 7.1.8.    Recommendations

- Aligning expectations, both in terms of content and process, is essential for both the student and the supervisor.

- Given the significant emphasis on group work within the programme, it is important to address students' concerns about dependence on their peers. The panel recommends ensuring greater transparency regarding individual contributions in group projects. This aligns with the revised ILOs, which emphasise skills and attitude.

- Consistent grading and richer and more specific feedback could further improve learning outcomes.

- Given the advancements in methodology, the panel suggests to carefully review the current methodological conventions and how these are aligned with the methods taught, and following that to (re)define what reasonably can be expected from an MSc student in terms of research methods in the thesis

## 7.2.    Master Strategic Entrepreneurship

### 7.2.1.    General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Strategic Entrepreneurship |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60455 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 7.2.2.    Introduction

The master Strategic Entrepreneurship (SE) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. According to programme documentation, 68 students were enrolled in 2022-2023, of which 23.9% were international, and 111 new students in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up program specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| The previous panel identified key areas for improvement, particularly in feedback provision and assessment transparency. The panel highlighted the need for more insightful and systematically documented thesis feedback, including oral assessments. | Efforts so far have shown improvement in documentation and clarity of assessments. RSM has further improved the Thesis Online Platform (TOP) to enable thesis advisors and co-readers to respectively record (oral) feedback provided to students before and during the defence. Initiatives like coaching and a buddy system are helping bridge gaps, but continued attention is required to maintain and further enhance these improvements. |

## 7.2.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the program; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the program (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the program. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The Strategic Entrepreneurship (SE) programme wants to deliver the next generation of ambitious, resilient and responsible entrepreneurs, skilled, equipped and inspired to develop new business ventures that positively impact the world. Students will gain knowledge about the phases and challenges in the entrepreneurial process, learn how to make decisions under uncertain circumstances, and develop the mindset needed to identify, pivot and grow opportunities within new ventures or established companies. Whether students are creating entrepreneurial opportunities for a startup, a scaleup, or within a corporation, explicit attention is given to the complex volatility of bringing positive impact to the world.

The panel notes that the intended learning outcomes align with the field of strategic entrepreneurship. The learning outcomes are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level. In the provided documentation, the programme has clearly demonstrated how the intended learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin Descriptors for master's level. Furthermore, the panel notes that, due to the competency-based approach, the programme also focuses on preparing students for the development of skills that are important in the professional field, such as creative and critical strategic thinking, collaborating and leadership skills.

The panel acknowledges that the ILOs have been established through consultation with various stakeholders, including faculty members, industry professionals (specialising in a.o. entrepreneurship, venture capital, entrepreneurship policy), and entrepreneurial alumni. The programme annually reviews the relevance of the ILOs, allowing for necessary adjustments in consultation with the academic director and faculty and the professional field (alumni, investors and employers).

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel explicitly recognises this ambition in the intended learning outcomes that will apply from the 2025–2026 academic year (see next page). The current intended learning outcomes reflect this ambition in their implementation within the programme. During the programme, students experience and learn to:
- generate opportunities that bring positive economic, social and environmental impact in business and society;
- cultivate and benefit from inclusion, diversity, equality and accessibility (IDEA) in business and society; and
- act with ethical awareness and integrity, and to rearrange processes that have potential negative effects on society.

Below, the panel presents the intended learning outcomes that were in effect during the accreditation audit and those applicable from the 2025-2026 academic year onwards (source: self-evaluation report SE).

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Students define, describe, and explain entrepreneurially oriented theoretical insights and factual findings on management of entrepreneurial processes<br><br>2. Students identify, explain, and analyse complex phenomena and research questions especially about the distinction between the nature, the problems, the possibilities, and the limitations of strategic entrepreneurship research<br><br>3. In analysing strategic entrepreneurship related issues, students combine and connect knowledge and theories from different sub disciplines and on that basis, be able to design solutions. | 4. Students practice and apply tools and concepts to explore the entrepreneurial process<br><br>5. Students formulate research questions based on managerial theories and concepts<br><br>6. Students select a (qualitative or quantitative) research method for their research questions.<br><br>7. Students assess and evaluate the results from their own research and formulate theoretical and practical implications<br><br>8. Students assess and evaluate uncertainties in the entrepreneurial process and be able to formulate an opinion even with incomplete and/or conflicting information.<br><br>9. Students are able to effectively and efficiently communicate both in writing and verbally with people and groups of a diverse nature. | 10. Students assess and evaluate consequences from their own actions for others in the entrepreneurial process, reflecting critically and with a creative attitude. |

*Table 14: Programme ILOs Master Strategic Entrepreneurship*

| ILO 1 | Cultivate a resilient, growth-oriented mindset to drive continuous learning and entrepreneurial success. |
|---|---|
| ILO 2 | Apply foundational and new SE theories to complex business and societal challenges. |
| ILO 3 | Formulate research questions based on SE knowledge to generate actionable outcomes. |
| ILO 4 | Design business solutions by integrating state-of-the-art multidisciplinary tools and skills to create positive economic, social, and environmental impact. |
| ILO 5 | Make informed decisions under various degrees of uncertainty, while considering social and ethical responsibilities. |
| ILO 6 | Communicate entrepreneurial insights effectively to diverse stakeholders across various social and professional contexts. |
| ILO 7 | Engage in creative, viable, and impact-driven actions to become agents for positive change. |

*Table 15: Programme ILOs Master Strategic Entrepreneurship per 2025-2026*

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. The programme has established a connection with the Dublin Descriptors in this regard. For example, knowledge and insights are covered in (current) ILOs 1, 2 en 3 and creative application of knowledge and insights are reflected in ILOs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

Taking into account the nature of the Strategic Entrepreneurship curriculum and its academic field (see standard 2), the panel deems the Master of Science degree appropriate. It further remarks that this is consistent with degrees awarded in similar programmes.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the master's programme in Strategic Entrepreneurship has well-formulated intended learning outcomes that clearly align with the field of strategic entrepreneurship. Students gain insight into the entrepreneurial process, decision-making under uncertainty, and the mindset required to innovate within both new and established organisations. Emphasis is placed on managing the complexities of generating positive societal impact. The panel highlights that the intended learning outcomes were shaped through collaboration with faculty, industry experts (e.g., in entrepreneurship and venture capital), and entrepreneurial alumni.

The intended learning outcomes meet master's level standards; the programme demonstrates alignment with the Dublin Descriptors, ensuring coherence with master's-level and academic orientation requirements. They also reflect the mission of Rotterdam School of Management to create a positive societal impact.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 7.2.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the program is taught in a language other than Dutch, the program must justify its choice. This also applies if the program bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the program concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into learning outcomes per course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map'. For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLO's) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the (core) courses in the programme. The panel also observes that, when translating ILOs into learning objective per course, the programme monitors the balance between knowledge, skills and learning objectives.

*Curriculum content and structure*
The curriculum consists of core courses, elective modules and a master's thesis. The panel finds the curriculum to be logically structured, with each module contributing to the overall competency development of students, offering a balance of theoretical grounding and practical application. The panel has determined that the programme remains up-to-date, among others by incorporating AI and other technologies within all core courses.
- The programme kicks-off with an extracurricular onboarding programme (i) to explore the Rotterdam entrepreneurial ecosystem; (ii) to be inspired by the programme's alumni; (iii) to get to know each other; and (iv) to familiarise students with the learning journey.
- After this, the students follow the foundational core courses which reflect the logic of new business startups and business growth: opportunity creation; validation; startup & growth and corporate entrepreneurship. In the panel's view, these courses provide students with a solid understanding in strategic entrepreneurship theory and practice.
- In addition, the programme starts preparing the largest programme component, namely the thesis. In the so-called 'Research clinic', students learn to orient themselves on a topic and an appropriate research question. The January block is dedicated to the research methods that students will use in their thesis. The programme offers two alternatives: quantitative and qualitative research methods ('Qualitative or quantitative research in SM &SE').
- In spring, students choose three electives (18 EC). The programme had multiple specialisation routes that can be mixed and matched (startup entrepreneurship; scaleup entrepreneurship; corporate venturing and venture capital (VC); impact entrepreneurship. The electives provide the students further room to specialise and 'deepen' their knowledge and experience.

In the student evaluation section students reported a high level of satisfaction with the structure and coherence of the curriculum. They commend the emphasis on the practical application of entrepreneurial thinking frameworks. They appreciate developing skills such as identifying pain points, understanding customers, and iterative problem-solving, supported by an impact-focused approach in projects. It has been noted that the core courses could place greater

emphasis on certain important aspects of entrepreneurship, such as scaling, interpersonal skills, and team composition.

*Programme didactics*
The educational approach is centred on (case-based) experiential learning, enabling students to apply their knowledge and skills to develop innovative venture ideas and real-world business solutions. In addition, the RSM competency framework encourages students to reflect on their learning and experiences. Each course is designed to focus on specific applications of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, aligning with the various stages of the entrepreneurial journey: opportunity creation, validation, startup and growth, and corporate entrepreneurship. The programme embraces a learning-by-doing approach, both on and off campus, which the panel considers highly appropriate given the nature of the programme. The programme incorporates interactive elements such as group discussions, debates, case studies and hands-on projects which encourage active participation.

*Professional dimension*
The programme demonstrates a strong connection to professional practice, offering students invaluable exposure to real-world scenarios. Throughout the curriculum, students are frequently encouraged—or even required—to step outside the classroom to present their ideas. They engage directly with actual clients, potential investors, and various other stakeholders, fostering practical skills and industry insights. Additionally, entrepreneurs, investors, and corporate venturing experts are invited into the classroom to share their expertise and provide valuable feedback on students' new venture creations and entrepreneurial solutions. This hands-on approach not only enriches students' learning experience but also equips them to navigate complex professional environments with confidence and competence. The panel highly values the inclusion of guest lecturers, whose industry expertise further enhances the practical relevance and depth of the programme.

Students express strong satisfaction with the company visit and guest lectures. They also praise the support system for business startups, alongside the connections facilitated by instructors and extracurricular activities, which aid in developing their own ventures. In the National Student Survey[12], students suggest introducing greater variety in the types of companies represented by guest speakers. They proposed including smaller, local enterprises alongside the larger, international companies (focused on sustainability, technology and/or finance) to ensure a more diverse perspective. According to the students, there is also room to showcase broader career options beyond traditional entrepreneurial pathways.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. The programme pays explicit attention to the global dimension of cases, challenges and solutions. It has a strong international perspective in terms of frameworks and principles, especially in the core courses 'Opportunity Creation' and 'Startup & Growth'. Furthermore, while not a formal part of the programme, a substantial share of students complement and/or extend their studies with an international exchange during their third semester. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
As with internationalisation, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors are integral to strategic entrepreneurship (see also standard 1 'profile'). The programme emphasises the role of students as positive change agents, starting with onboarding activities like the experiential SDG

[12] Nationale Studenten Enquête®

game. Students also visit the hubs that are involved in bringing solutions for sustainable consumption, circular economy and carbon-neutral transportation; for exampe, Blue City[13] Platform Zero and Yes!Delft. Key competencies assessed include: (i) generating ideas for positive societal impact, (ii) promoting inclusivity (IDEA), and (iii) acting with ethical awareness and integrity. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to pay attention to our societal challenges in their MSc thesis.

*Master thesis*
The SE Master's thesis (16 EC) is an integral part of the overall Master's programme. From the very first semester, students begin preparing for their thesis. However, the actual execution and writing of the thesis take place in the second semester. The thesis is written individually and provides students with the opportunity to design and execute a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods analysis of an entrepreneurial phenomenon. The "New Venture Thesis" pilot that started in the academic year 2023–2024 aims to enhance students' practical engagement by allowing students to integrate research for their own business solutions with the academic demands of a master's thesis. During the discussion held during the visitation, students expressed great enthusiasm for this initiative, which was shared by the panel as well.

Students identify opportunities for improvement in the thesis process. Each student is assigned a personal supervisor. Significant differences were noted in terms of accessibility of the supervisor, the number of contact moments, and the level of feedback. The programme is aware of this issue and has taken steps to address it. This also includes effective communication and managing expectations with students regarding the thesis process.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The teaching faculty includes lecturers, associate professors, assistant professors, PhD students, and external professionals from the industry. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. The teaching staff's content expertise aligns closely with the stages of the entrepreneurial journey – opportunity creation, validation and pivoting, startup and growth, and corporate entrepreneurship. Staff members observe each other's courses at least once annually and participate in quarterly meetings to exchange experiences and share best practices. The panel considers this to be a positive aspect. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

Students are positive about the lecturers. They are experts, according to the students, and create a collaborative environment. The guidance from lecturers and the course director is highly praised by students. They are satisfied with the quality of teaching in the programme, praising the practical courses and guest speakers. The teaching staff is described as excellent and engaging.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The Strategic Entrepreneurship programme ensures that all intended learning outcomes are effectively integrated into course-specific learning objectives, balancing knowledge, skills and attitudes. The curriculum includes core courses, electives, and a master's thesis, with clear links

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[13] BlueCity is a model city for the circular and blue economy and home to entrepreneurs. It's mission is to accelerate the transition from the linear to the circular economy through entrepreneurship.

between course learning outcomes and the programme's intended outcomes, as verified by the panel. The panel is positive about how the core courses reflect the various stages of the entrepreneurial journey, encompassing the process of setting up and scaling a start-up. Students develop skills in opportunity creation, validation, startup growth, and corporate entrepreneurship. Students express satisfaction with the curriculum's content and structure.

Experiential learning and case-based teaching are central to the educational approach, while guest speakers and industry professionals enrich the learning experience. ESG factors are a key focus, promoting social responsibility. The thesis process begins early, with research methods tailored to student preferences. The panel is enthusiastic about the new thesis format, which allows students to synthesise their learnings by developing a new venture, while simultaneously gathering data for their academic master's thesis and contributing to scholarly research on strategic entrepreneurship.

Teaching faculty, comprising skilled academics and industry experts, deliver high-quality, engaging instruction. Students praise the supportive environment, practical focus, and emphasis on entrepreneurship. Overall, the programme aims to prepare students for a future as strategic entrepreneurs.

Based on these arguments, the panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. that the programme "meets the standard".

## 7.2.5. Student assessment

**Standard 3: The program has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
<u>Explanation</u>: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the Strategic Entrepreneurship programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods, such as presentations, papers, quizzes and group projects with a strong emphasis on creating and presenting business opportunities, conducting research, and developing solutions. For the thesis, the programme includes a personal defence and the assessment of the thesis report.

The programme aims to incorporate formative elements into the assessment process. Regular feedback, both practical and academic, supports students in tracking their development and identifying areas for improvement. Providing constructive feedback plays a vital role in facilitating effective learning. The programme is taking further measures to make the assessments logic and achieved learning outcomes more apparent to the students. This means that each student will get formative feedback on all seven of the ILOs at least four times over the course of the programme, and only two summative assessments that relate to each of the ILOs.

Furthermore, the panel notes that SE students are satisfied with the information provided about the assessments. They generally view the grading rubrics and expectations as clear and they value the emphasis on group work and practical project assignments. However, some students feel that there is too much emphasis on group assignments. This issue warrants attention, especially given the emphasis on skills and attitude in the revised ILOs. Overall, variety in assessments is highly appreciated, though students suggest making feedback more consistent. Some international students felt that expectations could be clearer to accommodate different educational backgrounds (see also standard 2).

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions. The Examination Board is closely involved in the new thesis format (The "New Venture Thesis" pilot).

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Based on the review of 10 SE theses, the panel further notes that the assessments by the coach and co-reader are, overall, sufficiently transparent, easy to follow and well justified. The evaluation is mostly on point and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis. The panel agrees with the grades that were awarded, with only a half-point difference noted in some theses.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. While the Thesis Monitor provides valuable insights into the quality of grading, the programme lacks a distinct process outside of the Thesis Monitor for calibrating the evaluation of theses.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is well designed. Based on the findings, the panel notes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. The assessment matrix aligns ILOs with evaluation methods, covering all ILOs through diverse assessments such as presentations, papers, and group projects. Constructive and formative feedback supports students' progress, with at least four instances of formative feedback on each ILO provided throughout the programme.

The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied, though some feel there is an overemphasis on group assignments. Consistent grading and tailored feedback could further improve learning outcomes. The Examination Board adequately ensures the quality of assessments. It is also closely involved in the new thesis format, enabling students to graduate by developing business plans.

The graduation process is properly structured, according to the panel. Thesis evaluations use a detailed matrix with transparent and justified feedback. Grade distributions are reviewed annually, but the panel recommends establishing a more formal calibration process to ensure consistency and maintain high standards in the assessment of theses. The panel also recommends refining rubrics for clearer language. Overall, the assessment system effectively supports student development and upholds academic standards.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 7.2.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The program demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
>
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students. 92 percent of the programme's graduates were employed within three months after graduation. Overall and on average after graduating, 30% start a new business, 35% start in positions at scaleups and 35% begin traineeships in consultancies or larger organisations or start working in private equity.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of ten[14] theses from the last two cohorts of the Master Strategic Entrepreneurship. The panel had doubts about one thesis, which was very practical in nature. There was room to take the thesis to an academic level, but the student struggled to show it. The question – a typically applied question – did not help in this process. The panel found it confidence-inspiring that the parts of the thesis, indicated by the panel as weak, were evaluated by the assessors as insufficient on the grading form. The panel classifies the other nine theses from satisfactory to good (and even excellent). The panel saw interesting and relevant research questions, both theoretically and regarding its practical perspective. Most papers had a good literature review. Furthermore, the asked research questions, chosen designs, and analyses aligned well. Naturally, there was a variation in quality between the theses, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners. With regard to the theses with lower grades students struggle more with providing a clear contribution and with framing a critical literature review. At the same time, the panel also evaluated a thesis where the student dared to choose an unusual subject and an unusual approach of inquiry. Such unconventional choices where students can show case their talent are much appreciated as well.

Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. At the same time the panel would like to emphasize a couple of points.

- The panel draws attention to the data collection. It was generally noticeable that (very) few interviews are conducted when using a qualitative research approach.
- In some theses the models suffer from important endogeneity concerns (due to the lack of control variables).
- Keep discussing which topics still fall within the scope of the programme. One of the theses had a rather marketing-related topic.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for the Master Strategic Entrepreneurship and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of strategic entrepreneurship. The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

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[14] Since there is a demonstrable overlap between the programs of the master SM and the master SE and they share an Examination Board, the panel decided to study 10 theses for both courses instead of 15.

### 7.2.7. Overall conclusion

The panel finds that the Master Strategic Entrepreneurship programme meets all four standards. The programme is designed as an experiential learning journey. It allows students to develop themselves and decide where to make an impact. They learn to think critically, and they learn to apply their academic knowledge into actual, meaningful entrepreneurial efforts. The faculty team is involved, committed, and close to the students. There is an increasingly strong bond with alumni and experts in the field. Based on these findings, the panel issues a positive overall judgement.

### 7.2.8. Recommendations

- The panel recommends establishing a more formal calibration process to ensure consistency and maintain high standards in the assessment of theses.

- Given the significant emphasis on group work within the programme, it is important to address students' concerns about dependence on their peers. The panel recommends ensuring greater transparency regarding individual contributions in group projects. This aligns with the revised ILOs, which emphasise skills and attitude.

- The panel also recommends refining rubrics for clearer language.

- The panel draws attention to the empirical data collection/analysis. It was generally noticeable that in some theses (very) few interviews had been conducted without much attention for the qualitative data-analytical tools and techniques. The panel recommends establishing guidelines for both quantitative and qualitative data collection across supervisors in line with typical conventions in academic research and calibrate those expectations, including those pertaining to students' means of qualitative data-analysis.

### 7.3. Master Global Business & Sustainability

#### 7.3.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Global Business & Sustainability |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60456 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

#### 7.3.2. Introduction

The master Global Business & Sustainability (GBS) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme[15]. According to program documentation, 152 students were enrolled in 2022-2023, of which 38.8% were international, and 185 new students in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up program specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| The previous panel identified key areas for improvement, particularly in feedback provision and assessment transparency. The panel highlighted the need for more insightful and systematically documented thesis feedback, including oral assessments. The panel also identified room for improvement in strengthening the alignment between intended learning outcomes (ILOs) and curriculum components, as well as in making ethical perspectives within the ILOs more explicitly visible. | The programme has made significant efforts to address the panel's recommendations. To improve thesis assessment, the Thesis Online Platform (TOP) has been further developed in the last few years, allowing for clearer documentation of feedback and better differentiation between the input of coaches and co-readers. Additionally, in rare cases where supervision did not meet expectations, interventions were made to ensure quality guidance for students. The programme has also encouraged more detailed feedback from thesis coaches and co-readers, supported by best practice examples. Regarding curriculum alignment, steps have been taken to integrate ILOs more effectively into core and elective courses, particularly in relation to attitude and business sustainability. Furthermore, the assessment structure has been adjusted, ensuring that 70% of the evaluation is now based on individual work. |

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[15] Many students intentionally extend their GBS programme beyond a single year to pursue opportunities like internships or other extracurricular endeavors.

### 7.3.3. Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the program; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the program (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the program. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The Global Business & Sustainability programme investigates complex sustainability challenges in a broad, integrated and holistic manner, addressing the multiple perspectives of companies, governments and NGOs. Students learn about cutting-edge advancements in the theory and practice of sustainable business, and are challenged to formulate their own ideas and propose solutions for transformative change toward more sustainable societies. The mission of the MSc GBS programme is to produce a new generation of positive impact agents with the capacity to think critically about business strategies and develop new sustainable business models for positive change. Graduates from the programme can pursue careers in business, consultancy, government and the non-profit sector.

The learning outcomes are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level. In the provided documentation, the programme has clearly demonstrated how the intended learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin Descriptors for master's level. Furthermore, the panel notes that, due to the competency-based approach, the programme also focuses on preparing students for the development of skills that are important in the professional field, such as creative and critical strategic thinking, having a solution-oriented mindset and collaborating skills.

The panel acknowledges that the ILOs have been established through consultation with various stakeholders, including faculty members, industry professionals, and alumni. The programme annually reviews the relevance of the ILOs, allowing for necessary adjustments in consultation with the academic director and faculty. At the time of the accreditation visit, the programme was in the process of establishing an Organisations and Alumni Advisory Committee (OAAC). The panel has expressed a positive opinion on this matter and advises the programme to use this advisory body for professionals and employers to institutionalise input, including for the validation of the intended learning outcomes.

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. It is evident that GBS is deeply committed to this mission and vision, as the programme aims to educate students to be the sustainability leaders – "*Positive Impact Agents*" – of the future. Students are taught to develop proactive strategies addressing challenges like resource scarcity, inequalities, and climate threats, while innovating value-driven sustainability solutions. Graduates can apply these skills to transform organisations, collaborate on global challenges, or launch initiatives for positive change.

Below, the panel presents the intended learning outcomes of the GBS programme (source: self-evaluation report GBS).

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Students hold in-depth and systematic knowledge on managing for sustainability.<br><br>1.1 Explain the principal concepts and theories of managing for sustainability from a broad, holistic and multi-level perspective.<br><br>1.2 Analyse complex risks and opportunities of sustainability challenges affecting firms in a global context.<br><br>1.3 Construct progressive organizational strategies and business models for sustainability. | 2. Students are able to design and implement sound sustainability management research projects.<br><br>2.1 Formulate research studies in sustainability management research for intended theoretical and practical value.<br><br>2.2 Apply quantitative and qualitative techniques to sustainability management-related problems.<br><br>2.3 Evaluate findings of sustainability management research in order to draw reasoned conclusions and recommendations. | 3. Students hold solution-based skills and attitude to dealing with challenges of sustainability management.<br><br>3.1 Demonstrate a reflexive and creative attitude to handling sustainability dilemmas.<br><br>3.2 Demonstrate professional communication skills to effectively collaborate and proffer practical organizational solutions to sustainability challenges.<br><br>3.3 Critically evaluate solutions to sustainability challenges to make reasoned decisions for courses of action. |

*Table 16: Programme ILOs Master Global Business & Sustainability 2022-2023*

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge, skills and attitudes are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to apply that knowledge and understanding to create tailored, impact-focused sustainability strategies or targeted interventions that move the system toward a new, more sustainable regime. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

The panel deems the Master of Science degree suitable for this programme, given the discipline and the curriculum's content of Global Business & Sustainability (see also standard 2). It also observed that comparable programmes award a corresponding degree.

**Conclusion**
Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the master's programme in Global Business & Sustainability has well-formulated intended learning outcomes that follow a clear progression, ultimately equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to actively tackle today's significant societal challenges. The ILOs reflect undeniable - due to the nature of the programme – the mission of Rotterdam School of Management to create a positive societal impact.
The programme's ILOs align with master's level academic standards and focus on fostering research skills, creative and strategic thinking, and a solution-oriented mindset. The ILOs were developed through consultations with stakeholders and are regularly reviewed, and hence were aligned with the expectations of the professional field. The panel encourages the establishment of an Organisations and Alumni Advisory Committee to institutionalise professional input and to systematically and structurally validate the intended learning outcomes.
These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 7.3.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the program is taught in a language other than Dutch, the program must justify its choice. This also applies if the program bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the program concerned.

**Findings**

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into learning outcomes per course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map'. For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLO's) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the (core) courses in the programme. The panel also observes that, when translating ILOs into learning objective per course, the programme monitors the balance between knowledge, skills and learning objectives.

*Curriculum content and structure*
The curriculum consists of core courses, elective modules and a master's thesis. The panel finds the curriculum to be logically structured, with each module contributing to the overall competency development of students, offering a balance of theoretical grounding and practical application.
- The programme starts in September with the foundational core courses (e.g. 'Sustainability Leadership & Planetary Boundaries' and 'Global Business Strategies'). In the panel's view, these courses offers students a broad and multi-level perspective of business sustainability. The structuring of the programme is such that students are enriched with holistic, multi-level understanding of business sustainability and practical business-sustainability skills by learning about (i) business sustainability at a systemic, macro-level, (ii) sustainable strategies on an organizational, meso-level and (iii) sustainable behaviour on a micro-level. The core courses build toward a capstone course that directly requires knowledge, skills and attitude to address sustainability grand challenges.
- In spring, students choose three electives (18 EC) (such as Circular Economy, Sustainable Business Models, and Sustainability Accounting & Reporting). The electives build on this knowledge by homing in on specific type of solutions (e.g., cross-sector partnerships, circular economy).
- In addition, in block 2 the programme starts preparing the largest programme component, namely the thesis. Academic coaching and the research methods ('Research Methodology I and II') accommodate for quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method approaches and a wide variety of topics.

The GBS programme acknowledges the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability, integrating knowledge from various scientific fields into management studies. It incorporates Psychology and Philosophy within 'Sustainability Ethics & Sustainable Behaviour' and links natural sciences, like Systems Sciences and Earth System Sciences, through courses such as 'Sustainability Leadership & Planetary Boundaries'. One of the students noted in the National Student Survey[16]

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[16] Nationale Studenten Enquête®

that greater emphasis could potentially be placed on the quantitative aspects of environmental sciences, such as calculating $CO_2$ emissions (to give just one example).

Both the student chapter in the self-evaluation report and the PAC[17] report, as well as the audit discussion, highlight that students express high levels of satisfaction with the programme. They believe there is a good balance between theory and practice and appreciate the programme's structure, which provides them with tools they can apply to tackle the grand challenges. "*It's a great programme to start a deep dive into the business sustainability field"*, according to the student. "*The curriculum offer[s] valuable, in-depth insights into the field of sustainability and global business."*

Students have also identified areas for improvement, primarily related to better preparation for a career as a sustainability manager. While the programme already places significant emphasis on skill development, they would like to see additional focus on competencies such as conflict management and handling resistance; skills that will undoubtedly be crucial in their future careers. Most students in this programme, as they point out, share a certain bias: they are (almost) all intrinsically motivated to work on sustainability and consider this topic highly important. In reality, however, many people within companies or organisations view sustainability as far less important, or not important at all. These viewpoints could be more prominently addressed in the programme to better prepare students for their working experience. Students added that areas like sustainability accounting and project management – also useful expertise for a sustainability manager role – deserve greater emphasis as well.

*Programme didactics*
The programme incorporates competence-based design principles such as personalised learning, assessment for learning and student autonomy and self-regulation. Core courses accommodate up to 200 students, yet lectures are designed to be interactive, featuring quizzes and small-group discussions, or delivered in smaller groups of several dozen students. The elective 'Sustainable and Equitable Food Strategies' uses cooking workshops as part of a distinctly experiential educational model.  Non-interactive content is provided as asynchronous videos for flexible viewing. Seminars with fewer than 25 students and team assignments with interim teacher meetings enhance personalised learning.

The programme expressed some concerns about how small-scale education can be maintained when scaling up. In the Yearly Programme Report, the programme states the following: "*Even though the student numbers of GBS have increased fivefold in recent years, a key aim of GBS is to retain the small-scale nature of the programme, with ample room for classroom discussion*." The panel recommends that the programme explore insights from peer programmes that have already experienced growth.

*Professional dimension*
The programme integrates practical experience in various ways. They incorporate real-life case studies, invite guest speakers, and collaborate with companies to link fundamental knowledge to – down the road – practical applications. Students are given the opportunity to present solutions to companies, and they do so with notable success. The partner organisation for the course 'Sustainability Ethics and Sustainable Behaviour' appreciated student recommendations to the extent that they shared their suggestions during industry meetings to improve supply chains. GBS also offers a 6 ECTS "Organization-based company project". This is essentially a mini-internship where students research a specific question that an organisation would like to be answered. Thesis collaborations with companies are also common, and extracurricular sustainability internships are actively disseminated. In the National Student Survey and in the PAC-report, students expressed great enthusiasm for the use of guest speakers and case studies.

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[17] PAC = Programme Advisory Committee

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. Business cases discussed in the programme generally have a clear international nature. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence. GBS also features an Exchange programme, which is yearly utilised by up to 10% of the cohort.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
As mentioned earlier under standard 1, the missions of RSM and GBS align seamlessly. GBS aims to educate students to become the sustainability leaders of the future. As highlighted in the Yearly Programme Report, "*it shouldn't have to be spelled out that all SDG boxed are ticked.*" Most courses – if not all – directly teach sustainability, responsibility and ethics. Students are very pleased that GBS is not a 'greenwashing' master's programme and that they critically talk about planetary boundaries, degrowth and systems thinking.

*Master thesis*
The GBS Master's thesis (16 EC) is an integral part of the overall Master's programme. From the very first semester, students begin preparing for their thesis. However, the actual execution and writing of the thesis take place in the second semester. The thesis is written individually and offers students the opportunity to deepen their expertise in a specific knowledge area that they are passionate about. The GBS thesis trajectory places an emphasis on students finding their own topic of interest and curating a research question aimed at both scientific and societal relevance.

Students feel well-prepared for their thesis. The programme strongly emphasizes research methodologies, identifying the most relevant and reliable sources, understanding scientific research, and developing skills in articulation and reasoning/argumentation. In the PAC report, students noted significant differences in supervisors' approaches, particularly in the way feedback is provided. While some supervisors offer detailed, personalised feedback, others provide very little. Students expressed that greater harmonisation in this area would be beneficial, a sentiment echoed by the panel.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The teaching faculty includes full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, PhD students, and external professionals from the industry[18]. What unites staff in their content expertise is that they all aim to let business do better for society. The programme does have general business sustainability experts, but others might describe themselves more as experts in stakeholder management, grand challenges, international business, business ethics, etc. These domains are all represented in the GBS curriculum. Many – though not necessarily all – teachers can draw not only from academic, but also from professional perspectives for their courses, based on their experience in the field. By far the majority of courses also include expert guest lecturers. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

Students are generally (very) positive about the lecturers. In the National Student Survey, students indicate that lecturers are highly knowledgeable in their fields and are adept at clearly

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[18] 54% scholarly academic, 22% scholarly practitioner, 8% instructional practitioner & 17% additional. (source: Yearly Programme Report 2022-2023).

conveying concepts. Additionally, they are empathetic and considerate in their approach. According to the audit discussion, most lecturers are highly passionate and are able to engage in exciting discussions. They challenge students not to accept theories at face value but to think critically for themselves.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The Global Business & Sustainability programme ensures that all intended learning outcomes are effectively integrated into course-specific learning objectives, balancing knowledge, skills and attitudes. The curriculum, composed of core courses, electives, and a master's thesis, offers both theoretical foundations and practical application. The programme encourages students to cultivate a critical mindset and acquire comprehensive knowledge of sustainability management. It aligns with contemporary professional debates and practices, providing a multi-level approach to business sustainability. High satisfaction levels are reported, with students valuing the balance of theory and practice, although they request enhanced career preparation.

Programme didactics emphasise interactive and personalised learning, through small-scale teaching. Practical experience is incorporated via real-life cases, guest speakers, company collaborations, mini-internships, and thesis partnerships. The GBS Master's thesis is a key component of the programme, with preparation starting in the first semester and execution in the second. Students feel well-prepared but noted discrepancies in supervisor feedback quality, suggesting harmonisation, a view supported by the panel.

The teaching faculty consists of dedicated, qualified staff with expertise spanning sustainability, ethics, stakeholder management, and international business, as well as didactical expertise facilitating engaging discussions. Guest lecturers frequently contribute, bringing academic and professional insights. Students describe the lecturers as knowledgeable, empathetic, and engaging, and appreciate their encouragement to think critically. Overall, the programme aims to prepare students as responsible leaders for a global, sustainable economy.

Based on these arguments, the panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. that the programme "meets the standard".

## 7.3.5.  Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The program has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
>
> <u>Explanation</u>: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the Global Business & Sustainability programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments. It also reveals that the programme employs a diverse range of assessment methods. There are very few traditional exams in the GBS programme. Instead, students generally have to give presentations and write individual or team assignments that in many cases focus on a specific sustainability challenge or even directly provide sustainability advice to a company. For example, the capstone core course 'Sustainability Grand Challenges' features a pitch with a solution to the grand challenge to a multi-stakeholder jury which is further documented in the other assignments.

Although the programme had at least 60% of individually assessed components, students feel a strong emphasis on group work and there is some concern among them about being dependent on other group members. It sometimes doesn't lead to "*learning from each other but only to leaning on each other*", according to one of the students in the National Student Survey. This issue warrants attention, especially given the emphasis on skills and attitude in the revised ILOs. For the thesis, the programme includes a personal defence and the assessment of the thesis report.

Furthermore, the panel notes that GBS students are satisfied with the information provided about the assessments. Assessments and assessments rubrics are generally clear, according to the students, although they do notice some differences between courses here and there. Students express mixed opinions about the assessment methods in the National Student Survey and in the audit conversations. Some students find the frequent use of essay writing beneficial, as it allows them to share their knowledge and insights. "*Non-exam styles of assessment really match the content we learn and helps us to reflect and research deeper on the topics.*" However, others perceive this form of assessment as somewhat monotonous and would prefer more variety, "(…) *as writing only reports and papers becomes demotivating over time.*" Students appreciate the feedback they receive; however, they would prefer to receive it sooner sometimes, as this would allow them to incorporate it into their next assignments. In this way, they can truly learn from it. Noteworthy – and highly aligned with the nature of the programme – is the panel's recognition of students' remarks on the environmental impact of AI.

As the programme expands, it also faces challenges in maintaining its assessment approach. Currently, assessments rely on engaging, in-depth discussions in small classrooms and are complemented by detailed, personalised feedback. However, the increase in student numbers, coupled with budget constraints imposed by the government, puts pressure on these established methods.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

Based on the review of 15 GBS theses, the panel further notes that the assessments by the coach and co-reader are, overall, sufficiently transparent, easy to follow and well justified. The feedback provided a consistent picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the theses and gives a good reasoning behind the assigned grades. According to the panel, the examiners pinpointed the issues precisely. The panel agrees with the grades that were awarded, including the thesis that was evaluated as "*a borderline case that just made it across the line*" (with a 5.5).

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. During the audit, the academic director mentioned that calibration sessions are also held, where supervisors meet to align their requirements regarding research proposals and theses. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is well designed. Based on the findings, the panel notes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. The assessment matrix aligns ILOs with evaluation methods, covering all ILOs through diverse assessments such as individual and group assignments, essays and thesis defence. Assignments often address real-world sustainability challenges and encourage deeper reflection and effective expression of ideas.

The information provided regarding the assessments is adequate. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. Some students seek more variety in the assessment forms. Providing interim feedback before an assignment is submitted could further improve learning outcomes. The Examination Board adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments.

The graduation process is properly structured, according to the panel. Thesis evaluations use a detailed matrix with transparent and justified feedback. Calibration practices, including a Thesis Monitor, ensure consistency across supervisors. The panel encourages the continuation of these efforts and recommends refining rubrics for clearer language. Overall, the assessment system effectively supports student development and upholds academic standards.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 7.3.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The program demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> <u>Explanation</u>: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students. 70.5% of the programme's graduates were employed within six months after graduation. Positions held by the graduates include: sustainability or CSR manager, consultant or sustainability consultant, sustainability analyst, policy officer, project manager and PhD candidate.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen theses from the last two cohorts of the Master Global Business & Sustainability. The panel classifies the theses from satisfactory to good (and even excellent). The theses with higher grades had clear and relevant research questions; an extensive and well-structured literature review; excellent data collection and analysis (better than average) and also an excellent discussion and reflection on the results.

> To illustrate, one of the panel's findings with a thesis, graded with a 9: "*The thesis strikes a formidable balance between rigor and intuition in answering a long standing and difficult to answer research question in the field of sustainable business. (…) The collection of case-based evidence is impressive, and the inference is drawn with great care.*"

With regard to the theses with lower grades, the depth sometimes leaves something to be desired. In one of the theses for example the empirical analysis was solid, but remained somewhat superficial at times, leaving room for improvement to discuss, e.g. economic relevance of this thesis' findings. Another thesis remained descriptive in nature and thereby shed relatively little light on the research question. But at the same time, the writing in these theses was clear and students appeared to be very aware and transparent about the limitations, which overall made the theses an informative and pleasant read.

Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. The panel nevertheless wishes to emphasize a number of points.
- One area of enhancement is a critical discussion of the generalisability of findings. When there is a relatively small sample size, this warrants a more articulate discussion of the limitations of such a setting to draw firm inference.
- A possible route for further enhancement might be to complement the mostly qualitative analysis with quantitative investigations.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for the Master Global Business & Sustainability and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of sustainable business.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 7.3.7. Overall conclusion

The panel finds that the Master Global Business & Sustainability programme meets all four standards. The programme offers high-quality academic training in managing for sustainability through a blend of theoretical perspectives, engagement with practice and interactive learning. GBS is home to a vibrant community of students, faculty, and alumni dedicated to sustainability. Their enthusiasm ensures the programme stays aligned with current discussions and evolving professional trends. "*It is not only a study for obtaining a strong degree but also one that simply teaches people what they need to know to bring the world further* "¸ according to students. Based on these findings, the panel issues a positive overall judgement.

### 7.3.8. Recommendations

- The programme expressed some concerns about how small-scale education can be maintained when scaling up. The panel recommends that the programme explore insights from peer programmes that have already experienced growth.

- Aligning expectations during the master thesis, both in terms of content and process, is essential for both the student and the supervisor.

- Given the significant emphasis on group work within the programme, it is important to address students' concerns about dependence on their peers. The panel recommends ensuring greater transparency regarding individual contributions in group projects. This aligns with the revised ILOs, which emphasise skills and attitude.

- Critically discuss generalizability. Ensure that theses include a clear and detailed discussion of the limitations, especially when the sample size is small, to properly address the boundaries of the findings' applicability.

- Given the advancements in methodology, the panel suggests to carefully review the current methodological conventions and how these are aligned with the methods taught, and following that to (re)define what reasonably can be expected from an MSc student in terms of research methods in the thesis.

## 7.4. Master People, Organisations & Change

### 7.4.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | People, Organisations & Change |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60991 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations | N/A |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime |
| Language(s) | English |

### 7.4.2. Introduction

The master People, Organisations & Change (POC) is a one-year full-time 60 EC programme. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the MSc Human Resource Management (HRM) programme was combined with RSM's MSc Organisational Change and Consulting (OCC). This merger aimed to offer students a wider range of options and improve the efficiency of the education provided. By 2023-2024, the programme was rebranded as MSc People, Organisations & Change. The panel considers the new name to be a good reflection of the programme's content. According to program documentation, 77 students were enrolled in 2022-2023, of which 44% were international, and 82 new students in 2023-2024.

*Follow-up program specific recommendations 2018*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| The previous panel identified key areas for improvement, particularly in feedback provision and assessment transparency. The panel highlighted the need for more insightful and systematically documented thesis feedback, including oral assessments. The panel also identified room for improvement in ensuring that students can demonstrate their achievement of learning objectives related to practical HRM issues and qualitative research techniques in their thesis. | The programme has made significant strides in addressing feedback provision and assessment transparency. To better align thesis supervision with methodological approaches, the Research Methods course now offers two streams: qualitative and quantitative. Students are paired with thesis coaches and co-readers accordingly. Thesis assessment has been improved with the further improvement of the Thesis Online Platform (TOP), which ensures structured documentation of feedback on both final reports and intermediate deliverables by both thesis advisors and co-readers. Knowledge-sharing initiatives amongst coaches have been implemented to enhance thesis support, alongside clarified supervision expectations. Coaches now receive student evaluation reports to facilitate continuous improvement. |

### 7.4.3. Intended learning outcomes

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**Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the program; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.**

<u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the program (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the program. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

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**Findings**

*Intended learning outcomes*
The MSc People, Organisations & Change (POC) programme focuses on developing students' understanding of the complex, multi-layered challenges of the management of people, organisations and change. It provides insights into how to manage, develop and structure people within and beyond the organisational, driving and responding to changing contexts. Graduates of RSM's MSc POC start their careers knowing how to enable others to perform at their best while creating positive working lives, and how to lead change and development empathetically and effectively.

The learning outcomes are appropriate for the academic orientation and master's level. In the provided documentation, the programme has clearly demonstrated how the intended learning outcomes are linked to the Dublin Descriptors for master's level. Furthermore, the panel notes that, due to the competency-based approach, the programme also focuses on preparing students for the development of skills that are important in the professional field, such as leadership skills, collaborating and communication/stakeholder management.

After the merger between HRM and OCC, the programme has redeveloped its intended learning outcomes, incorporating input various stakeholders, including prospective and current students, alumni, faculty from RSM and other institutions, as well as practitioners from diverse organisations. This collaboration remains ongoing to see whether adjustments need to be made. Striking a balance in the new curriculum between HRM-related elements and the change management aspects is being done gradually.

*Profile*
Based on the mission and vision of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) strives to educate its students to become a force for positive change in the world. The panel sees ambition reflected in the ILOs of POC. The programme emphasises that good people, organisation & change management is at the heart of successful and sustainable organisations. In addition to the RSM's mission, POC also follows the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)[19], emphasising that achieving sustainable development requires consideration not only of organisational processes but also the broader social, cultural, economic, and political context in which organisations function.

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[19] PRME's mission is to transform management education and develop the responsible decision-makers of tomorrow to advance sustainable development.

Below, the panel presents the intended learning outcomes of the POC programme (source: self-evaluation report POC).

| Knowledge | Skills | Attitudes |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Critically evaluate the role and impact of individuals, leaders, and structures on organisational effectiveness<br><br>2. Develop context- and people-sensitive solutions to organisational challenges<br><br>3. Initiate and manage people dynamics for sustainable personal and/or organisational development<br><br>4. Analyse people and change management from behavioural, cognitive, political, social and organisational perspectives | 5. Reflect on one's own leadership capacity, strengths and areas for personal growth and development<br><br>6. Demonstrate managerial and leadership skills (including decision making, organisational design, teamwork, effective communication, managing diversity, and influencing and developing others)<br><br>7. Analyse information using critical thinking to drive people-related organisational decision-making | 8. Appreciate the importance of being a people-oriented responsible and ethical leader, manager, or consultant<br><br>9. Demonstrate an open and inquisitive attitude alongside a critical evidence-based mindset<br><br>10. Evaluate the importance of balancing the needs of various stakeholders in processes of people management, and/or change and organisational development |

*Table 17: Programme ILOs Master People, Organisations & Change*

*Academic orientation*
The ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme. Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to people, organisation & change management. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

The panel concludes that the Master of Science degree is fitting for the POC programme, considering both the academic discipline and the curriculum (see standard 2). It also noted that this degree is in line with those awarded by related programmes.

**Conclusion**
Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the MSc People, Organisations & Change programme has well-formulated intended learning outcomes that clearly align with the field of people, organisation & change management and reflect the mission of Rotterdam School of Management to create a positive societal impact. Following the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), the programme also highlights the importance of considering organisational processes alongside broader societal, cultural, economic, and political contexts.

The ILOs demonstrate a robust academic foundation, preparing students to independently design, conduct, and report on research in people, organisation, and change management, ensuring the programme's alignment with master's level standards. The programme integrates stakeholder feedback – including from students, alumni, faculty, and practitioners – and continuously reviews and updates its objectives.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 7.4.4. Teaching-learning environment

> **Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum,  and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the program is taught in a language other than Dutch, the program must justify its choice. This also applies if the program bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the program concerned.

### Findings

*Relation between the ILOs and the curriculum*
The programme has translated the intended learning outcomes into learning outcomes per course. The panel reviewed this translation, which is documented in the 'curriculum map'. For all courses, it is clear which course learning outcomes (CLO's) are addressed and how they relate to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel concludes that all ILOs are sufficiently covered by the (core) courses in the programme. The panel also observes that, when translating ILOs into learning objective per course, the programme monitors the balance between knowledge, skills and learning objectives.

During the discussion at the site visit, the lecturers mentioned that, following the merger, they placed extra emphasis on the constructive alignment of the courses. Regular meetings were held to discuss the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and to ensure there was no overlap. This consultation structure is still maintained by the programme. "*It is an effort from the redesign and it stuck.*"

*Curriculum content and structure*
The curriculum consists of core courses, elective modules and a master's thesis. The panel finds the curriculum to be logically structured, with each module contributing to the overall competency development of students, offering a balance of theoretical grounding and practical application.
- The first four months of the programme are designed around four knowledge and one skills course, linked together through a consultancy project. The four knowledge courses focus on developing students' specialist knowledge at different levels of abstraction: Strategic People Management; Managing the Organisational Environment; People Analytics; and Leading Organisational Change. The courses draw on multidisciplinary knowledge from: organisational behaviour (psychology), organisation theory (sociology), human resource management, management, economics, statistics.
- Students continuously apply the knowledge developed in these four courses through a four-month consultancy project. Most assignments (formative and summative) from the knowledge courses draws on the live case that the students are working on. They are supported in this through consultancy skills developed in the 'Professional Development & Consulting' course. As well as receiving support from their teachers they also have a mentor who is an alum of the programme to help them reflect on how they can apply their learning.
- In addition, in block 2 the programme starts preparing the largest programme component, namely the thesis. During an information session with students and faculty in this block, students are connected to a thesis supervisor and learn to orient themselves on a topic and an appropriate research question. The January block is dedicated to the research methods that students will use in their thesis. The programme offers two alternatives: quantitative and qualitative research methods.

- In spring, students choose three electives (18 EC) – two of which must be from within the MSc POC – that enable students to specialise in HR, organisational change or a more general focus.

In the student evaluation section students reported to be satisfied with the structure and coherence of the curriculum. Students appreciate the balance between HRM-related skills and advanced research methodology. However, the students wish to explore certain topics in more depth than the current course duration allows, particularly emphasizing the need for more specialized knowledge in the HRM field. Additionally, they noted that certain skills were touched upon – such as managing group dynamics, time management and decision-making – but they did not feel they could properly apply those skills.

*Programme didactics*
The programme offers a small-scale, highly interactive, competency-based learning environment. The programme emphasises applying research-based knowledge to practical problems and integrates learning across courses into a cohesive understanding of knowledge and skills. In the first four months, students deepen their understanding of individual, organisational, and societal contexts through content-based courses and apply this knowledge to a real-world consulting project. Support is provided by both professors and alumni mentors.

*Professional dimension*
Professional skills are explicitly addressed through the 'Professional Development & Consulting' course (a competency-based course linked to other core courses with a specific focus on consulting skills), a consultancy project, mentor programme, internship elective, and the 'Your Future Career' course delivered in partnership with RSM's Career Centre. The programme also uses guest speakers who contributed as non-academic external experts within the core courses.

In the National Student Survey[20], students expressed great enthusiasm for the use of guest speakers. From the PAC[21] report, it appears that they value the company project for its concept, practical relevance and the opportunity to choose the company. Students appreciated the steep learning curve, diverse teams and autonomy. There were challenges with the integration of the company project in every course assignment, dependence on companies for data and language barriers with some companies. "*The focus of the core courses on the same company (…) limits the options you have to explore different topics or different company situations*", according to one of the students in the National Student Survey

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

*Be a force for positive change in the world*
POC shares RSM's conviction that organisations can, should, and must play a key role in addressing and contributing to solving the many societal challenges that the world is facing. The programme addresses this across various courses. For example, in the course 'Strategic People Management,' students are taught to recognise the importance of sustainable and ethical HR practices in the context of the UN's sustainable development goal 8 (Decent work and sustainable economic growth).

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[20] Nationale Studenten Enquête®
[21] Programme Advisory Committee

*Master thesis*
The POC Master's thesis (16 EC) is an integral part of the overall Master's programme. From the very first semester, students begin preparing for their thesis. However, the actual execution and writing of the thesis take place in the second semester. The thesis is written individually and provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to conduct academic research, culminating in an oral defence. As the final component of the programme, the thesis synthesises the qualifications and competencies students have acquired in the other parts of the programme.

*Teaching faculty*
From the documents and conversations, the panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. The teaching faculty includes full professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, PhD students, and external professionals from the industry[22]. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language, and students expressed satisfaction with their teachers' language proficiency.

Students are generally positive about the lecturers. They appreciate the engaging, friendly and interactive approach of instructors. "*The passion demonstrated in the lectures by the professors is admirable*", one of the students pointed out in the survey. Students also expressed high satisfaction with the teachers and the support provided by the faculty, noting that professors and teaching assistants (TA) were extremely supportive, helpful, and adaptable to student needs.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The POC programme is designed with clear alignment between its intended learning outcomes and course-level outcomes, ensuring a balance between knowledge, skills, and practical application. The curriculum, composed of core courses, electives, and a master's thesis, offers both theoretical foundations and practical application. Core courses cover areas like Strategic People Management and People Analytics, while the consultancy projects focus on applying this knowledge to real-world challenges. Students value the structured curriculum, interactive teaching style, and emphasis on competency-based learning. However, there is a need for deeper exploration of certain topics across the curriculum and more practical applicability of the offered knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The POC staff brings a wealth of knowledge across numerous aspects of the field of people, organisations & change. Students appreciate the dedication and support of the teaching faculty, praising their passion and adaptability. Overall, the programme aims to prepare graduates to lead responsibly, addressing societal and organisational challenges effectively.

Based on these arguments, the panel concludes that the programme, the learning environment, and the quality of the teaching team enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. that the programme "meets the standard".

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[22] 74% scholarly academic, 11% scholarly practitioner, 5% instructional practitioner & 9% additional (source: Yearly Programme Report 2022-2023).

## 7.4.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The program has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel observes that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.

*Assessment Matrix*
The panel reviewed the assessment matrix for the People, Organisations & Change programme. This matrix is a table that links specific Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to assessments, ensuring alignment between the expected learning outcomes and the methods used to evaluate student performance. The matrix clearly demonstrates that all ILOs are addressed in the assessments.

The programme uses a combination of group and individual assessments, with a strong emphasis on evidence-based management. Students are primarily evaluated on their ability to apply research insights to practical problems and create context-sensitive, evidence-based recommendations. This is achieved through activities such as the consultancy project, smaller group-based live case studies, individual mini cases, analytical reports (e.g., applying People Analytics skills), and individual or group reports and exams testing specific knowledge. For the thesis, the programme includes a personal defence and the assessment of the thesis report. With a high emphasis on group work, there is some concern among students about being dependent on other group members. "*Group work led to unequal work distributions because of different grade aspirations*", one of the students remarked in het PAC-report. This issue warrants attention, especially given the emphasis on skills and attitude in the revised ILOs.

There has been a proactive effort to change the balance towards more formative (relative to summative) assessments. E.g. in the strategy case project the programme has introduced self-assessments and peer assessments of the competencies of the RSM Competency Framework. Evidence from student evaluations indicates that, as a result, students are focusing more on deepening their knowledge and learning new skills, rather than keeping a myopic focus on a final grade. Students do appreciate formative assessments when they include in-person feedback, peer discussions, early feedback before deadlines, regular submissions, and quizzes. Yet, students still need time to adjust to the number of self-assessments, as they do not always perceive their relevance.

POC students are satisfied with the information provided about the assessments. The assessments are generally fair and manageable, and their feedback is perceived as high quality. However, some students feel that there are some disparities in the feedback given across courses. "*It [sometimes] doesn't give much feedback on how you actually did, and how the teacher valued your work*", according to one of the students in het National Student Survey. The programme could benefit from being more consistent in this respect across the board.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment*
For the evaluation of graduation theses, the programme uses a thesis assessment matrix, which is applied for all RSM's master programmes. The panel reviewed the matrix and finds it workable but, as noted in the General Findings, recommends using less evaluative language in the rubrics and more descriptive language to clarify the interpretation of the qualifications and their relation to the final grade.

The panel reviewed 15 POC theses. In general, the panel agrees with the grades given by the examiners, although sometimes they could have been (slightly) higher. The panel observed some variations in the feedback provided by the assessors. Sometimes the assessment was clear, (reasonably) easy to follow and provided a good reasoning behind the assigned grades. The scores on the dimensions including the explanation matched the grade awarded. Other times it was not so obvious. The panel sometimes saw a (very) brief explanation and no substantiation of the scores on the dimensions. The panel discussed these findings with the lecturers, who acknowledged this observation. During the conversation, the lecturers explained that some assessors primarily provide feedback verbally, directly following the assessment. The programme is now taking steps to ensure that all assessors deliver clear written feedback. The panel welcomes this initiative and encourages the programme to further focus on calibration in this regard.

An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The lecturers also mentioned that they recently calibrated several qualitative theses. As a result, the programme has formulated guidelines regarding data collection in qualitative research. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is well designed. Based on the findings, the panel notes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. The assessment matrix aligns ILOs with evaluation methods, covering all ILOs. A mix of group and individual assessments focuses on applying research to practical problems, with students evaluated through projects, reports, and a thesis defence.

Efforts to include more formative assessments have encouraged deeper learning, though students are still adapting to self-assessments. While assessments are generally seen as fair and manageable with high-quality feedback, consistent grading and tailored feedback could further improve learning outcomes. The programme is addressing this by ensuring clear written feedback and emphasising calibration among assessors. The Examination Board adequately ensures the quality of assessments.

The graduation process is properly structured, according to the panel. Thesis evaluations use a detailed matrix with transparent and justified feedback. Overall, the assessment system effectively supports student development and upholds academic standards.

Although the panel has identified some areas for development, it is of the opinion that the programme meets the basic quality standards for student assessment (standard 3).

## 7.4.6. Achieved learning outcomes

**Standard 4: The program demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

The round-table discussion with representatives from the professional field and alumni revealed that graduates of this programme perform well in practice. Alumni indicated that they feel adequately prepared to work in their field. The professional field has expressed satisfaction with the quality of the students. 80% of the programme's graduates were employed within six months after graduation as HR business partner; recruitment consultant; people experience lead; associate consultant; HR coordinator; business analyst; programme manager; and business consultant.

The panel reviewed a representative stratified sample of fifteen theses from the last two cohorts of the Master People, Organisations & Change. According to the panel, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass (in terms of theory, empirics and finishing). The panel saw relevant topics and (fairly) decent literature studies. Based on the theses examined, the panel concludes that students demonstrate the intended learning outcomes at master's level and have justifiably graduated. Naturally, there is a variation in quality between the theses, and this difference has been appropriately graded by the examiners. In general, the panel could follow the students' reasoning, but the theses with lower grades lacked depth and alternative explanations for the results. In these theses more attention is also needed to the connection between the different steps (sections) of the study.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final projects are appropriate for the Master People, Organisations & Change and contribute to the further development of the research and/or the professional field.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 7.4.7. Overall conclusion

The panel finds that the MSc People, Organisations & Change programme meets all four standards. The programme is well-designed, academically rigorous, and aligned with industry needs. Based on these findings, the panel issues a positive overall judgement.

### 7.4.8. Recommendations

- Students feel the need for more faculty attention in their programme for the practical applicability of the offered knowledge, skills and attitudes. The panel recommends that the programme places greater emphasis on ensuring students can effectively apply the skills introduced during their studies. This includes focused support on areas such as managing group dynamics, time management, and decision-making, which were identified by students as being insufficiently addressed in practice.

- Consistent grading and richer and more specific feedback could further improve learning outcomes.

- Given the significant emphasis on group work within the programme, it is important to address students' concerns about dependence on their peers. The panel recommends ensuring greater transparency regarding individual contributions in group projects. This aligns with the revised ILOs, which emphasise skills and attitude.

# 8. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS CLUSTER 5

## 8.1. Master in Business Administration

### 8.1.1. General data

| Name of programme in RIO | Business Administration |
|---|---|
| ISAT-code | 60644 |
| Domain/sector | Economy |
| Orientation | Academic |
| Level | Master |
| Degree | Master of Science |
| Number of credits | 60 EC |
| Specialisations / Tracks | - Fulltime Master in Management  (MiM)<br>- Parttime Master in Management (pMiM)<br>- Accounting & Financial Management (AFM)<br>- Business Analytics & Management (BAM) |
| Location(s) | Rotterdam |
| Variant(s) | Fulltime and parttime |
| Language(s) | Dutch: Parttime Master in Management<br>English: Fulltime Master in Management, Accounting & Financial Management, and Business Analytics & Management |

### 8.1.2. Introduction

The funded MScBA-programme of RSM consists of four tracks, three fulltime programmes of 60 EC (Master in Management, Accounting & Financial Management and Business Analytics & Management) all taught in English and one part-time Master in Management (pMiM) taught in Dutch (also 60 EC).

At the previous NVAO-accreditation the track pMiM did not exist, this track replaced the previous part-time Master in Business Administration, aimed at students who were more advanced in their careers. RSM has terminated this track. The first cohort of new pMiM track students started in September 2021.
Though the tracks MiM and pMiM share the intended learning outcomes and most of the core courses (pMiM spread over 2 years), the student population is quite different – MiM have pre-experience and a mix of Dutch and international students, while pMiM have Dutch students with work experience. It is worth noting that the student population in the two tracks share similar backgrounds both in diverse academic and professional perspectives.

*Students enrolled:*
MiM had 113 incoming students in 2022-2023, of which 44% were international students and half of the incoming students were female; and 93 new students in 2023-2024 pMiM enrolled 58 new

students in 2022-2023, all Dutch, of which 43% were female students; and 58 new students in 2023-2024.

AFM had 119 incoming students in 2022-2023, 29% international and 41% female students; and 116 new students in 2023-2024.

BAM enrolled 127 new students 2022-2023, 53% international and 36% female students; and 147 new students in 2023-2024.

*Recommendations previous NVAO-accreditation*

| Recommendation 2018 | Status 2024/2025 |
|---|---|
| For the MScBA-programmes the panel of 2018 had a number of recommendations, the most important ones being improvement of the thesis assessment system, the registration of feedback in the Thesis Online Platform and the quality of counselling and feedback among all the thesis coaches and lecturers. | RSM has addressed these concerns in the Interim Programme Assessment 2021 report. RSM has made significant efforts to address the panel's recommendations. To improve thesis assessment, the Thesis Online Platform (TOP) has been further developed in the last years, allowing for clearer documentation of feedback and better differentiation between the input of coaches and co-readers. Regarding curriculum alignment, steps have been taken to integrate ILOs more effectively into core and elective courses, particularly in relation to attitude and business sustainability. Results of the follow up will be addressed under standard 3 (Assessment) of the relevant tracks. |

## 8.1.3.  Intended learning outcomes

> **Standard 1: 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.**
>
> Explanation: The intended learning outcomes demonstrably describe the level of the programme (Associate Degree, Bachelor's, or Master's) as defined in the Dutch Qualifications Framework, as well as its orientation (professional or academic). In addition, they tie in with the regional, national or international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Findings**

The four different tracks of the programme share the majority of the intended learning outcomes. This paragraph will deal with the communality among the tracks, track-specific formulations will be discussed hereafter.

All tracks share ILO1 on knowledge: Demonstrate core knowledge on the interaction between an organisation and its broader environment including stakeholders.

Considering skills, ILO4 is shared among tracks as: Define and execute a complete research project autonomously. Further detailing of this ILO is track-specific, based upon the needs of the particular field. ILO5 is formulated as: Demonstrate responsibility in diverse teams to leverage the advantages of team diversity to bring projects forward. ILO6 covers communication skills among all tracks: Demonstrate effective communication skills with different stakeholders. In the case of AFM different stakeholders have been detailed as: managers, regulators, external stakeholders and society.

Regarding attitude the tracks share ILO7: Demonstrate critical reflection of your ethical responsibility. The tracks MiM and pMim have added: in managerial decision-making and problem-solving. The tracks AFM and BAM have added: as well as your influence, abilities, and limitations to instil these ethical values on others.

These shared ILOs reflect the Dublin Descriptors and EQF concerning the master level according to the panel members. The subtle additions of the shared ILOs for the separate tracks cover the needs and expectations of the specific fields.

*Academic orientation*
The panel found that the ILOs clearly show the academic orientation of this master's programme, including all tracks.  Research-related knowledge and skills are reflected in various competencies. Not only do the ILOs show that theoretical knowledge and understanding are important, but they also make it clear that students need to be able to independently design, execute, and report on scientific research related to their field. The track specific requirements of the applicable ILO reflect the research tradition in the specific field. The panel finds this well-formulated and appropriate for the final level of the programme.

Considering the field of study and the curriculum content (see standard 2), the panel concludes that the Master of Science degree is appropriate for the Business Administration programme. It further notes that equivalent programmes confer the same degree.

**Tracks: Master in Management Fulltime and Master in Management Part-time**
The MSc Master in Management track provides academically trained students (who have not yet studied management) with a comprehensive overview of the field of business administration.

The part-time Master in Management track additionally aims to enrich students' (working) experience with academically grounded management knowledge and skills to make positive impact.

Knowledge-based ILO2 is formulated for both tracks as: Demonstrate knowledge on internal (work) processes and functions. Skills-based ILO3 is formulated for these tracks as: Generate a sustainable and coherent approach to solving ill-defined business problems which have no standard solution and understand the managerial implications.

According to the panel members both these ILOs cater for the expectations of the professional field. They align with the international standard of Master in Management programmes.

*Alignment with mission RSM : be a force for positive change in the world.*
The alignment has been improved over the past few years, resulting in a clear representation of the mission, across all ILOs, especially in the ILOs (3 and 7), as well as in the curriculum where SDG's have been implemented in the course learning outcomes throughout the curriculum.

### Track: Accounting & Financial Management
This track educates and develops the next generation of accounting and financial management professionals who can blend financial expertise with modern business partnership to navigate and address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The intended learning outcomes 2 and 3 of the AFM track have been adjusted as:
ILO2: Demonstrate knowledge on economic and behavioural theory, analytical methods and core models of accounting and financial management.
ILO3: Generate a sustainable and coherent approach to solving complex accounting and financial management problems using qualitative and quantitative methods and understand the managerial implications.

According to the panel members both these ILOs cater for the expectations of the professional field. They align with the international standard of AFM-programmes.

*Alignment with mission RSM : be a force for positive change in the world.*
The alignment has been improved over the past few years, resulting in a clear representation of the mission, across all ILOs, especially in the ILOs (3 and 7), as well as in the curriculum where SDG's have been implemented in the course learning outcomes. And a new course "Integrated Measurement and Reporting" has been added as organisations are facing demands to collect, use and disclose more and broader information on their environmental, social and governance policies, risks and impact.

### Track: Business Analytics & Management (BAM)
The track of Business Analytics & Management caters for the need for more young professionals versed in business analytics to be able to answer questions on advanced analytics (what will happen, what should happen?) in addition to business domain knowledge in various disciplines.

BAM has consulted practitioners at the start of the programme in 2019 in order to identify what would be needed to include in the Intended Learning Outcomes to educate a competent Business Analyst. The points retrieved were: a deep understanding of the business problem, an eye for the problem context, hands-on knowledge of advanced analytics, interpersonal skills, project management skills, communication skills and high ethical standards. Feedback from the professional field indicates that these are still valid elements, also according to the panel members.

The track-specific ILOs 2 and 3 have been adjusted as:
ILO2: Demonstrate knowledge on analytical methods and core models of marketing, finance, operations, information systems and accounting.
ILO3: Generate an effective and coherent approach to solving ill-defined business problems which have no standard solutions and understand the managerial implications given the trade-off between appropriateness for the problem and practicality.

According to the panel members both these ILOs cater for the expectations of the professional field. They align with the international standard of Business Analytics & Management programmes.

*Alignment with mission RSM : be a force for positive change in the world.*
The alignment has been improved over the past few years, resulting in a clear representation of the mission, across all ILOs, especially in the ILOs (3, 4 and 7), as well as in the curriculum where SDG's have been implemented in the course learning outcomes.
The track formulates its goal as: to empower graduates to be responsible leaders driving positive change in a sustainable digital economy.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

In sum, the panel concludes that the tracks MIM, pMIM, AFM and BAM have formulated ILOs that represent the academic master's level and meet international standards. The ILOs are aligned with both the academic and professional fields and are up to date. Additionally, the ILOs align with RSM's ambition to develop students to become a force for positive change in the world.

These positive findings lead the panel to conclude that standard 1 is met.

## 8.1.4.  Teaching-learning environment

**Standard 2: The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.**

<u>Explanation</u>: The intended learning outcomes have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. The diversity of the students admitted is taken into account in this respect. The teachers have sufficient expertise in terms of both subject matter and teaching methods to teach the curriculum, and provide appropriate guidance. The teaching-learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the design of their own learning process (student-centred approach). If the programme is taught in a language other than Dutch, the programme must justify its choice. This also applies if the programme bears a foreign language name. The teaching staff must have a sufficient command of the language in which they are teaching. Services and facilities are not assessed, unless they have been set up specifically for the programme concerned.

**Findings**

The curricula of the four tracks will be discussed hereafter, the common denominator in the programme is the displayed ambition to cater for individual student needs to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. For instance, in the parttime track courses are organised in a way that enables working students to physically attend, while the preparation for classes is done independently so students can combine studies with their day jobs.
The electives in tracks enable student to create their own profile and specialisation.
The relatively small size (around 100 incoming students per track, pMiM 60) enables the tracks to form closeknit learning communities that thrive on personal contact between students and with faculty. The curricula of the tracks stimulate growth towards personal autonomy of students.

*International dimension*
Today the international dimension is ubiquitous, as almost all companies and industries are influenced by international forces. As a result, internationalisation is integrated across the entire programme rather than confined to specific courses. It involves the integration of international, intercultural and global aspects in both the curriculum's content and in elements such as learning outcomes and assessment activities. Students in an international classroom benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives from peers of varied cultural and national backgrounds, enhancing their critical thinking and grasp of global complexities. This environment promotes intercultural competence.

For the Dutch-taught Master in Management parttime (pMiM) track the international dimension is strengthened by the use of cases, assignments and examples that are related to multinational companies. This creates a platform for parttime students with various professional and academic backgrounds to learn new insights and techniques, while additionally preparing them for international careers if so desired. For these students the track has created the possibility for international exchange study.

*Teaching team*
The programme has created a teaching team that is fit for purpose, representing all functional domains of Business Administration. The programme is facing challenges to attract new cutting-edge lecturers due to fierce commercial competition, yet is creative in offering non-financial incentives. The panel members found the teaching teams of the different tracks highly knowledgeable and qualified to lecture their topics. Didactical qualifications will be discussed under the separate tracks.

**Tracks: Master in Management Fulltime and Master in Management Parttime**
Both tracks lead to the same ILOs and offer the same curriculum and courses with the same learning goals and assessment types. In both programmes the student journey always includes three components to a varying degree: (1) studying and learning about the content within a functional domain in business administration, (2)applying that knowledge to a wicked problem in practice and on the other hand recognizing and appreciating the complexity and multiplicity of business challenges, interacting with multiple stakeholders and working together in diverse teams in a result-oriented way, and (3) developing students analytical skills in abstracting and identifying relevant concepts. During the year(s) the emphasis shifts from knowledge acquisition and more guided problem solving to more independent problem formulation, project design and problem solving in more complex situations.

Students are able to add their own specialisation to the track by the topic they chose for their master's thesis and students bring the specialisation of their previous academic training.

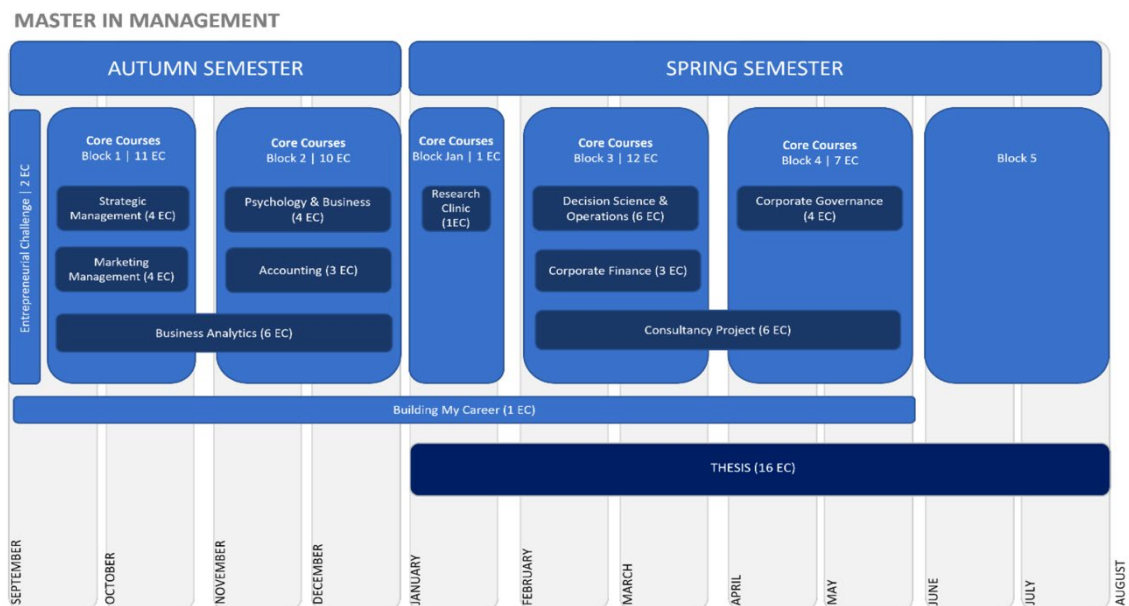Schematic outlines of the curricula of MiM and pMiM are below:



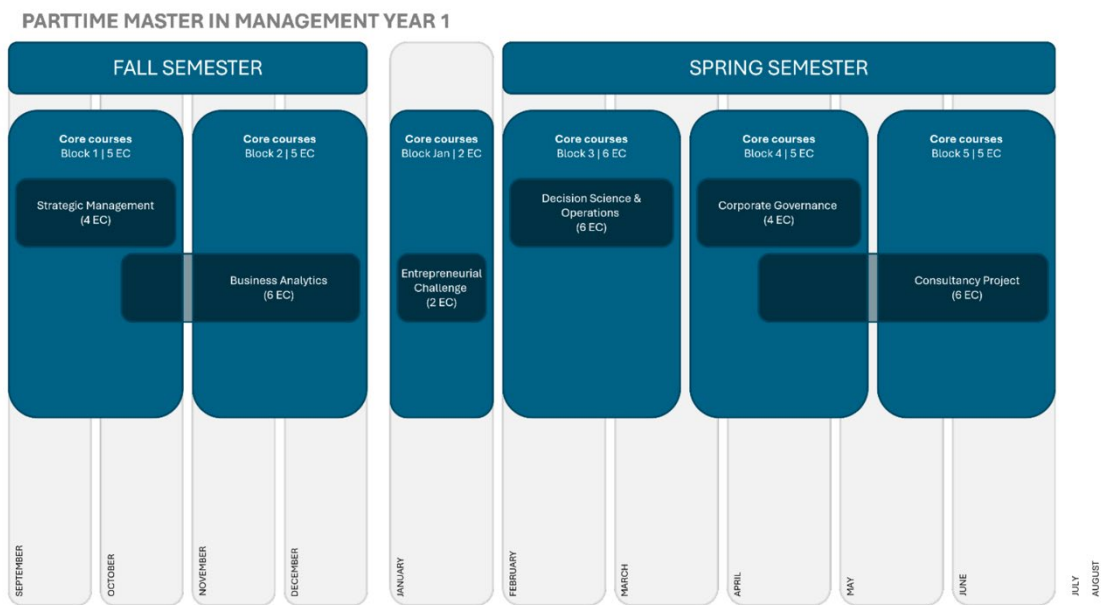*Figure 3: Overview of the MSc MiM programme curriculum*

*Figure 4A: overview of MSc-BA pMiM programme curriculum year 1*
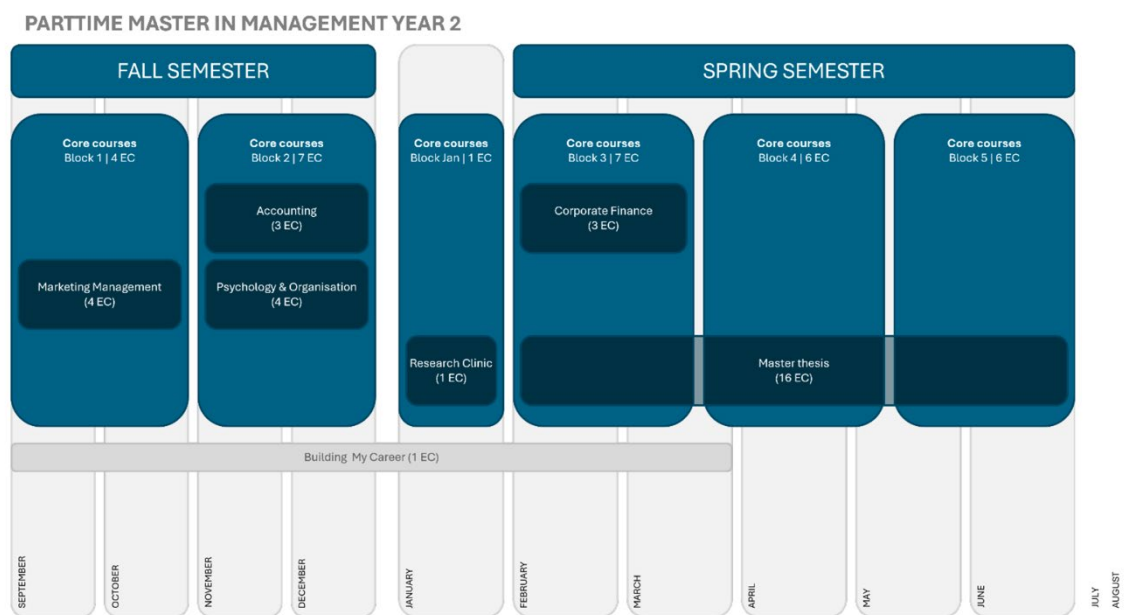


*Figure 4B: Overview of MSc-BA pMiM programme curriculum year 2*

The programme provided the panel an overview how the core courses cover the ILOs in the curriculum. The core courses cover the intended learning outcomes from 6 times for ILO4 to 12 times for ILO3. The panel members deemed the Course Learning Outcomes appropriately leading up to the Intended Learning Outcomes.
The curriculum of the programmes convinces the panel the intended learning outcomes are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced and appropriate way.

*Master's thesis*
The master's thesis, concluded with an oral defence, synthesises the qualifications and competencies that students have gained in the other parts of the programme.

Due to the recent start of the pMiM track the experience with thesis writing graduates is still limited. The MiM-track has identified a rather high workload for students and staff in the second semester and has retrieved suitable thesis topics in all functional domains of Business Administration formulated and supervised by specialist academic staff from the respective academic departments to distribute among students.

*Teaching team*
The faculty of MiM consists of 15 lecturers, 13 of which are BKO qualified[23], and 1 lecturer has participated in the course Educational Leadership that adds to the BKO curriculum subjects like finance, change management and accreditation. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The faculty of pMiM consists of 15 lecturers, 9 of which are BKO qualified, two have the SKO qualification and 3 more have participated in the course Educational Leadership that adds to the BKO subjects finance, change management and accreditation.

Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills. The panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present.

**Track: Accounting & Financial Management**

*Curriculum*
AFM has built the track around six core courses: International Financial Reporting, Financial Decision Making and Control, Reporting, Analysis and Valuation and Analytics in Accounting and Financial Management. The last two core courses are skills related: Presentation and Social skills and AFM Research skills.

Considering electives, AFM has constructed "elective tracks" that combine three coherent electives. This enables students to specialise in auditing, controllership or financial advisory.

To visualise the curriculum, see the illustration hereinafter:

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[23] 4 exemptions based upon senior assessment expertise

ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

| AUTUMN SEMESTER | | SPRING SEMESTER | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Core Courses** Block 1 \| 11 EC | **Core Courses** Block 2 \| 10 EC | **Core Course** Block Jan \| 4 EC | **Elective** Block 3 \| 6 EC | **Elective** Block 4 \| 6 EC | **Elective** Block 5 \| 6 EC |
| Financial Information and Decision Making (5 EC) | Reporting, Analysis & Valuation (5 EC) | AFM Research skills (4 EC) | 1 Master Programme Elective (MPE)/ 1 Master Free Elective (MFE) | 1 Master Programme Elective (MPE)/ 1 Master Free Elective (MFE) | 1 Master Programme Elective (MPE)/ 1 Master Free Elective (MFE) |
| International Financial Reporting (5 EC) | Analytics in Accounting and Financial Management (5 EC) | | | | |
| Presentation and Social Skills (1 EC) | | | | | |
| Your Future Career (1 EC) | | | | | |
| THESIS PREPARATIONS | | THESIS (16 EC) | | | |

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST
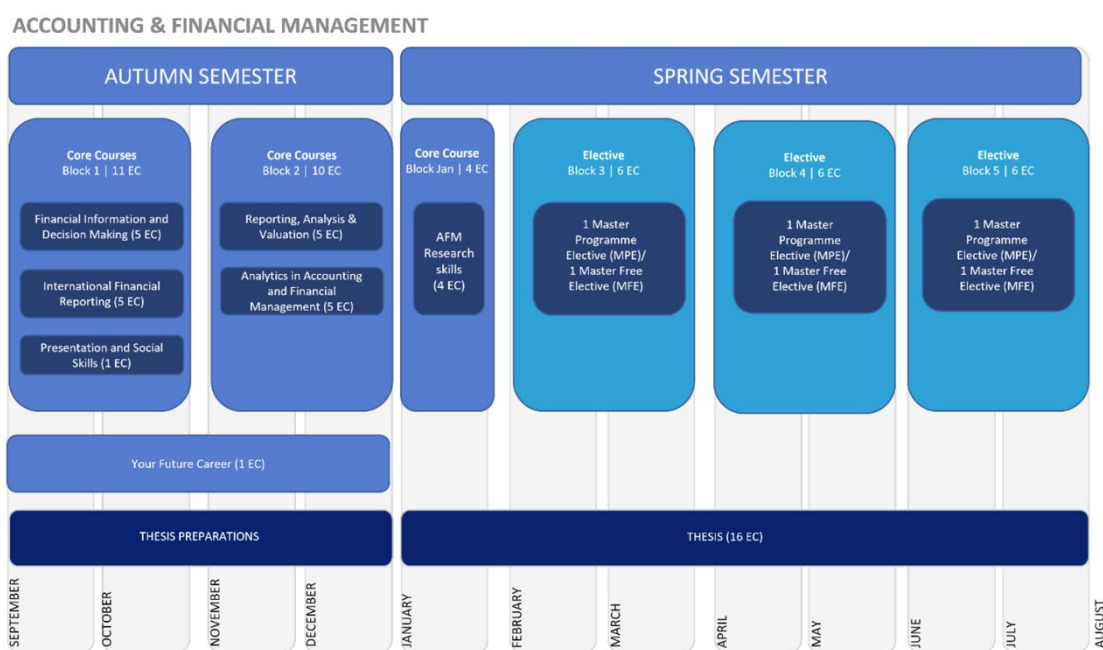
*Figure 5: Overview of MSc AFM programme curriculum*

The ILOs of the AFM track are visibly connected to the core courses (and electives), the coverage of each of the 7 ILOs varies from 2 times (execute complex research project) to 6 times for all other ILOs. The curriculum of the programmes supports that the intended learning outcomes are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced and appropriate way.

*Master's thesis*
The master's thesis, concluded with an oral defence, synthesises the qualifications and competencies that students have gained in the other parts of the programme.

*Teaching team*
The faculty of AFM consists of 14 lecturers, 9 of which are BKO qualified, and 1 team member has participated in the course Educational Leadership that adds to the BKO subjects finance, change management and accreditation. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills.

**Track: Business Analytics & Management**
The ILOs are adequately represented in the structure of the curriculum. The core courses of BAM are Advanced Statistics and Programming, Data Management and Ethics, Causal Inference & Experimentation, Management Science, Machine Learning & Learning Algorithms and a simulation project the Business Analytics Workshop.

The BAM track also entails four elective core courses, to enable students to identify their own specialisation.

The BAM track is continuously challenged to make hard choices what still fits in 60EC. Staff and teaching team are balancing between the workload for students and faculty alike and the demands of this fast-moving field of expertise.

The track is implementing a new core course in Python programming for next year, since the professional field has expressed that need. Also, two new electives are being developed on platform analytics and one on text mining of publicly available data.

*Master's thesis*
The master's thesis forms the synthesis of the qualifications and competences that students have gained in the other parts of the programme. Together with the oral defence it forms evidence of the achieved learning outcomes. An extra requirement of the BAM thesis is that students must focus on their application of an advanced analytics technique (diagnostic, predictive, prescriptive) to improve a certain business decision.

Though an internship is not mandatory, approximately 70% of the BAM students graduate with a thesis-based internship.

The curriculum of the programme supports that the intended learning outcomes are represented in the course learning objectives in a balanced and appropriate way.
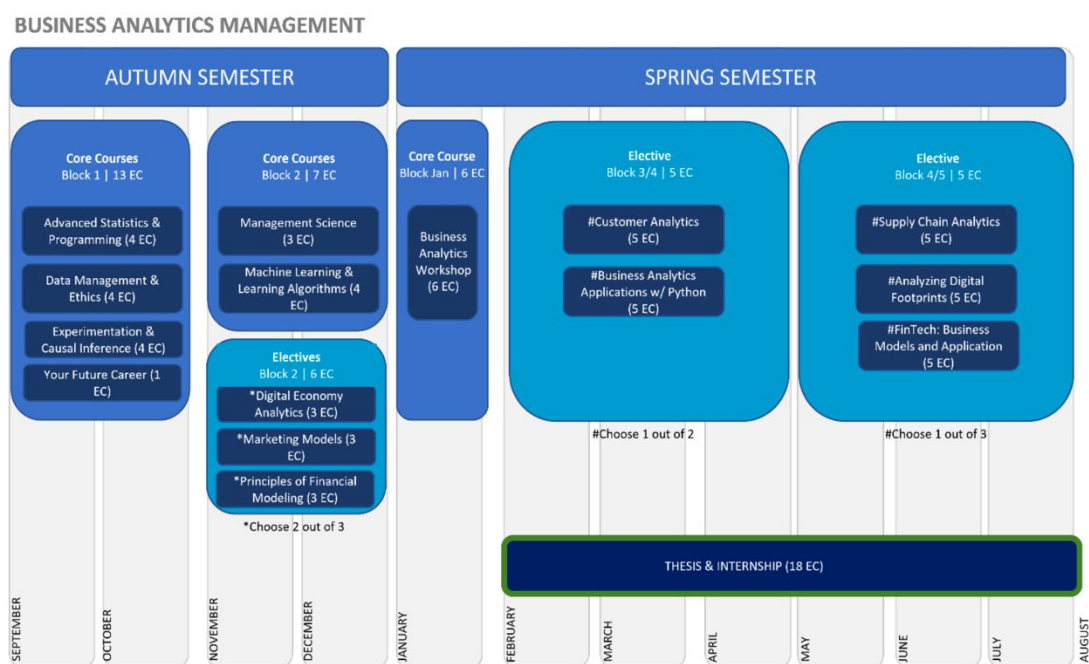


*Figure 6:: Overview of MSc BAM programme curriculum*

*Teaching team*
The faculty of BAM consists of 18 lecturers, 16 of which are BKO qualified, one has the SKO qualification, and 1 team member participated in the course Educational Leadership that adds to the BKO subjects finance, change management and accreditation. RSM requires that teachers have a C1 level proficiency in English. Interviews with faculty and students also confirmed that teachers possess adequate command of the English language.

The panel concludes that a team of dedicated and qualified lecturers is present. Based on the documents (overview of teaching staff) and conversations, the panel determines that the

lecturers are qualified to deliver the programme, both in terms of content and pedagogical-didactic skills.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The teaching-learning environment of the MiM-track is judged positively by the panel members. The different academic backgrounds of students are beneficial for achieving the ILOs as they add pultiple perspectives on wicked problems.
This is equaly valid for the parttime pMiM track that adds the daily workplace experience of students to the communal learning process.

The AFM-track has an effective teaching-learning environment that prepares students effectively for the demands of today's professional environment. Especially the ethical components stand out for the panel members, aligning with the motto of RSM "be a force of positive change".

The BAM track has a highly ambitious character, reflected by staff and students alike. The rich and up to date curriculum is relevant and represents the ILOs.

The panel is convinced the programme, including all tracks, meets the requirements of this standard 2.

## 8.1.5. Student assessment

> **Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.**
> Explanation: The student assessments are valid, reliable and sufficiently independent. The requirements are transparent to the students. The quality of interim and final examinations is sufficiently safeguarded and meets the statutory quality standards. The tests support the students' own learning processes.

**Findings**

*Assessment system*
The principles of the assessment system are based on RSM's educational vision and the resulting Assessment Policy from November 2023. This policy outlines the guidelines for conducting assessments. The panel noticed that these principles are clear and contribute to an effective assessment process. They include adequate standards for valid, reliable, and transparent assessments, criteria for developing the Program Assessment Plan and Course Assessment Plans, principles for evaluating individual student performance, the appointment of examiners, and procedures for handling suspected fraud and plagiarism. The panel confirms that the assessment policy enables the programme and its tracks to evaluate students in accordance with legal requirements.
The different tracks use a wide variety of assessment types, summatively and in many cases also formatively that support the learning process of the students. Students of the tracks have confirmed to the panel members they experience the assessment as fair and transparent.

*Thesis assessment*
The programme uses an extensive assessment rubric based upon objective criteria, which supports the reliability, validity and transparency of the assessment. The oral defence confirms the achievement of the ILOs and safeguards the academic integrity of the thesis.

*Examination Board (see Chapter 4, General findings)*
The panel is positive about the actions of the Examination Board. Conversations reveal an active Examination Board that adequately ensures and safeguards the quality of assessments. The Examination Board is consulted in educational and assessment developments at RSM, conducts its own reviews, appoints examiners based on criteria, and organises calibration sessions.

*Thesis assessment check*
An assessment check (Thesis Monitor) of a selection of top, middle, and bottom submitted and graded theses is performed by the respective academic departments each academic year to provide insight about the quality of grading. The panel views this positively and encourages the programme to continue these efforts.


**Track: Master in Management Fulltime**

*System of assessment*
The assessment matrix of MiM shows that all ILOs are assessed multiple times, both summatively and formatively. The more attitude related ILOs have a higher percentage of formative assessment.
Assessment of the knowledge component takes place mostly through exams; team and leadership skills are trained, and students reflect on those based on their teamwork, including reflections and supervision. Analytical and problem-solving skills that are closely related to structuring complex or wicked problems from practice are assessed by academic and company coaches after an intensive coaching trajectory.

The panel members deem the assessment system and its execution appropriately valid, reliable, independent and transparent.

RSM participates in the Thesis Monitor, sampling stratified examples and checking the quality of the thesis assessment as well as the thesis itself. The results of last years' check largely aligned with the judgement of the MiM-assessors.

**Track: Master in Management Parttime**

*System of assessment*
The assessment matrix of pMiM shows that all ILOs are assessed multiple times, pMiM relies heavily on written exams, essays research projects and case assignments. The amount of formalised formative assessment is limited.
Many courses finish with a written exam to assess students' understanding of key management theories and frameworks. Additionally, courses adopt essays, research project and case assignments to assess the degree to which students have mastered the application of the content discussed in study materials and in class. To facilitate the students' learning experience in class, many courses rely on quizzes and other short in-class assignments that are generally formative in nature.

*Thesis assessment*
The track uses an extensive assessment rubric based upon rather objective criteria, which supports the reliability, validity and transparency of the assessment.

RSM participates in the Thesis Monitor, sampling stratified examples and checking the quality of the thesis assessment as well as the thesis itself. The results of last years' check largely aligned with the judgement of the pMiM-assessors.

The panel members deem the assessment system and its execution appropriately valid, reliable, independent and transparent.

**Track: Accounting & Financial Management**

*System of assessment*
The assessment matrix of AFM shows that all ILOs are assessed multiple times in a summative way. ILO4 (complete research project) is assessed mainly in the thesis project. The amount of formalised formative assessment is limited.
The core courses are assessed with written exams to lay the foundation of domain specific knowledge of financial decision making, financial reporting and financial analysis.
The provided assessment matrix and curriculum map ensure the coherence, consistency and effectiveness of the curriculum achieving the ILOs.
The panel members deem the assessment system and its execution appropriately valid, reliable, independent and transparent.

*Thesis assessment*
The track uses an extensive assessment rubric based upon criteria, which supports the reliability, validity and transparency of the assessment.

RSM participates in the Thesis Monitor, sampling stratified examples and checking the quality of the thesis assessment as well as the thesis itself. The results of last years' check completely aligned with the judgement of the AFM-assessors.

**Track: Business Analytics & Management**

*System of assessment*
The assessment matrix of the BAM track illustrates a variety of types of assessment, both formative and summative. The majority of assignments are mini analytics projects; case discussion and adaptive assessment by quizzes are also in place. All ILOs are assessed multiple times. The amount of feedback moments is high which enables the students to implement the feedback loop in their next assignment. Students are supporting the assessment types and alignment with a 4.2 out of 5.
The panel members deem the assessment system and its execution appropriately valid, reliable, independent and transparent.

*Thesis assessment*
The track uses an extensive assessment rubric based upon rather objective criteria, which supports the reliability, validity and transparency of the assessment. Specific for this track is that students must focus on their application on an advanced-analytics technique (diagnostic, predictive or prescriptive) to improve a certain decision.

RSM participates in the Thesis Monitor, sampling stratified examples and checking the quality of the thesis assessment as well as the thesis itself. The results of last years' check largely aligned with the judgement of the BAM-assessors.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that the assessment system is correctly designed.

Based on the findings, the panel concludes that the system leads to valid, reliable, and transparent assessments. Students learn from their assessments and are generally satisfied. The information provided to students regarding the assessments is adequate.

The panel encourages the current development towards more formative assessments to further support the learning process of the students. Some tracks are more active in redesigning the assessment practice towards assessment as learning (e.g. BAM), others are currently relying upon more traditional types of assessment. Active intervision with other assessors in RSM would be beneficial for all tracks to use their experience with additional or alternative types of assessment.

The panel deems the requirements of the standard 3 met by the programme, including all tracks.

## 8.1.6. Achieved learning outcomes

> **Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.**
> Explanation: The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is demonstrated by the results of tests, the final projects, and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in postgraduate programmes.

**Findings**

Graduates of all four tracks have no issue to be employed or make the next step in their career. Alumni told the panel they felt well prepared for the demands of the professional context and employers supported these observations. Both groups expressed satisfaction with the level of the programme.

Panel members studied the theses (15 of each track of the last two years) and the assessment by the assessors of the programme. The panel members would like to share the observation that in some particular cases, the excessive length of the thesis makes the academic integrity of the writing vulnerable to the use of AI.
Considering the assessment of the thesis, in quite a few cases the co-assessor seems to follow the first reader in his/her appreciation of the work and does not add extra reasoning of the final grade.

**Track: Master in Management Fulltime**
In one case the panel members deemed a thesis not up to par. The excessive length of the thesis did not reflect the quality of the work. All other theses were meeting the bar of the panel, providing ample evidence of achieving the ILOs.

**Track: Master in Management Parttime**
The panel members judged the theses of pMiM meet expectations. The very diverse professional background of the student population causes an extremely wide variety of thesis topics. For panel members it was sometimes hard to see the link between the field of study and the topic of the thesis.

**Track: Accounting & Financial Management**
In some cases, correlation seemed to be confused with causality. Panel members noticed that some more research support in design and methodology would be beneficial to the academic quality of the thesis. Although no thesis was deemed insufficient, the grading of the panel members would have been below the grades issued by the AFM-assessors.

**Track: Business Analytics & Management**
The theses of BAM are up to standard widely varying in style and sometimes perceived as quite long by the panel members, notwithstanding the page limit of 35 pages that the track applies. A shift towards applying more focus and condensed reporting could be beneficial to the workload of assessors and diminish the vulnerability for the use of Generative AI.

**Conclusion**

Judgement: Meets the standard

The panel concludes that students achieve the intended learning outcomes at the master's level. Overall, the quality of the research indicates the Msc-level is achieved.
With one exception the panel members shared the positive judgement of the examiners, which leads to a positive overall judgement. The programme provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved all learning outcomes. Alumni and the professional field are satisfied with the level of the graduates. According to the panel, the final products are

appropriate for Msc BA and contribute to the further development of the research and/or professional field of business administration.

Points for attention are for separate tracks the bandwidth of suitable topics considering the domain, additional research support concerning research design & methodology and vulnerability for inappropriate use of GenAI.
These remarks do not affect the overall judgement of the panel members is distinctly positive for all tracks.

The panel rates standard 4 as "meets the standard".

### 8.1.7. Overall conclusion

Based on the assessment of the four standards, the panel determines that all four tracks of the programme meet the required quality standards. The programme structure, learning environment, and assessment system are appropriately designed to achieve the ILOs, which is supported by the judgements concerning the theses and the experience of the workfield..

The final evaluation judges the programme as "positive".

### 8.1.8. Recommendations

- The assessment design is supportive for the learning process of the students. Concerning the current shift towards more formative assessment active intervision with other assessors in RSM would be beneficial for all tracks.

- In several cases the second reader of the thesis does not add remarks or independently worded reasoning for the final grade. Make sure the thesis assessment is properly executed by four eyes and encourage the second reader to give ample feedback.

## ANNEX I          Overview of judgements

|  | Standard 1 | Standard 2 | Standard 3 | Standard 4 | Overall |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B Bedrijfskunde** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **B International Business Administration** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc International MBA (FTMBA)** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Executive MBA** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Global Executive MBA** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Corporate Communication** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc International Management** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Supply Chain Management** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Business Information Management** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Finance & Investments** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Marketing Management** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Management of Innovation:** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| - *Medical Business Innovation* | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Strategic Management** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Strategic Entrepreneurship** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc Global Business & Sustainability** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc People, Organisations & Change** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| **MSc in Business Administration:** | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| - Master in Management Fulltime | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| - Master in Management Parttime | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| - Accounting & Financial Management | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |
| - Business Analytics & Management | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Meets the standard | Positive |

## ANNEX II          Programma of site-visit

**Schedule site visit Rotterdam School of Management, 22 – 24 January 2025**

**Day 1 – 22 Januari 2025**

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| 10:00 – 12:00 | Internal discussion panel |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Meeting **executive board RSM** (strategy / portfolio / leadership) |
| 14:15 – 14:30 | Break |
| 14:30 – 15:45 | Meeting executive director **Quality & Innovation** and cluster leads (quality / innovation / student support) |
| 15:45 – 16:00 | Break |
| 16:00 – 17:15 | Meeting **examination board** |
| 17:15 – 17:30 | Walk to Q-Lounge |
| 17.30 – 18.30 | Meeting with **alumni and employers** (per cluster one table) |

**Day 2 – 23 Januari 2025**

| Time | Activity | |
|---|---|---|
| 08:30 – 09:30 | Internal discussion panel | |
| 09.30 – 10: 30 | Meeting Academic Directors – Cluster 1 (**BA | IBA**) | |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break | |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | Meeting with students – Cluster 1 | |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Break | |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Meeting with teaching staff – Cluster 1 | |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 15:00 | Meeting Academic Directors – Cluster 2 (**MBA | EMBA | GEMBA | MCC | IM/CEMS**) | Meeting Academic Directors – Cluster 3 (**SCM | BIM | FI | MM | MI**) |
| 15:00 – 15:15 | Break | |
| 15:15 – 16:15 | Meeting with students – Cluster 2 | Meeting with students – Cluster 3 |
| 16:15 – 16:30 | Break | |
| 16:30 – 17:30 | Meeting with teaching staff – Cluster 2 | Meeting with teaching staff – Cluster 3 |
| 17:30 – 18:00 | Internal discussion panel | |

**Day 3 – 24 Januari 2025**

| Time | Activity | |
|---|---|---|
| 08:30 – 09:30 | Internal discussion panel | |
| 09:30 – 10:30 | Meeting Academic Directors – Cluster 4 (**SM \| SE \| GBS \| POC**) | Meeting Academic Directors – Cluster 5 (**MSc BA incl. all tracks**) |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break | |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | Meeting with students – Cluster 4 | Meeting with students – Cluster 5 |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Break | |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Meeting with teaching staff – Cluster 4 | Meeting with teaching staff – Cluster 5 |
| 13:00 – 15:30 | Lunch / Internal discussion panel | |
| 15:30 – 16:30 | Final meeting with executive board RSM / Pending issues | |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | Internal discussion panel | |
| 17:00 – 17:30 | Plenary feedback session | |

For privacy reasons, the names are not included in this report. The names of auditees are known to the secretary of the audit panel.

**Working methods**

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

An 'open consultation session' was organised via email. The panel verified that the possibility to consult the panel was publicly communicated to all parties involved in the school community in a correct and timely manner. Previous to the site visit the panel received two emails of a colleague lecturer and a student respectively, both complimenting the programmes they were involved in.

*Auditing process*
The following procedure was adopted. The panel studied the documents regarding the programmes (see Annex Documents reviewed) and a number of theses. The panel co-ordinators organised input from the auditors and theses reviewers and distributed the preliminary findings among the panel members prior to the audit. A preparatory meeting of the panel was held before the site visit took place at the institute, on 22-24 January 2025. The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

A first version of the assessment report was drafted by the secretary and circulated among the members of the panel for review and comments. The final draft was subsequently forwarded to the institute to correct factual inaccuracies. The panel finalised the report on April 24th 2025.

**Assessment rules**
According to the NVAO assessment rules a standard meets, partially meets or does not meet the score. Hobéon applied the decision rules, as listed in the "Assessment Framework for higher education accreditation system Netherlands, September 2018.

*Final conclusion*

**Positive:** The programme meets all the standards.

**Conditionally positive**: The programme meets standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel (see Additional assessment rules regarding conditions).

**Negative:** In the following situations:
- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

## ANNEX III          List of documents examined

**List of documents examined**

- Continuous Improvement Report RSM
- Self Assessment Report per programme
- RSM Assessment Policy
- RSM Education Strategy
- RSM GenAI Guidance in Education
- RSM Master Thesis Manual
- Bachelor Project Manuals
  - Course Manual BSc Project Analytics Decision Makers
  - Description of BP assignments
- End Level Assessment MBA Programmes
- Examination Board RSM – Annual Reports
- Teaching and Examination Regulations per programme
- Curriculum Map per programme
- Assessment Matrix per programme
- Access to a base room with additional documentation
- Lists of graduates of the two latest cohorts

**Thesis review**

Prior to the visit, the panel reviewed the final products of students. Following NVAO regulations, the panel reviewed 15 theses per programme, including their evaluations. There were a few exceptions.

- For the Strategic Management (60066) and Strategic Entrepreneurship (60455) programmes, 10 theses were assessed for each. Both programmes are organised within the same academic department and share substantial content overlap. The key distinction lies in their focus: Strategic Management typically concentrates on larger corporations, while Strategic Entrepreneurship is more oriented towards small or newly established businesses.
- For the MBA programmes (Executive MBA 75045, Global Executive MBA 75046, International MBA 75047), 10 theses per programme were reviewed. These programmes also share substantial content overlap, with the primary differences being driven by the seniority of the students in their professional careers.
- For the Master of Business Administration (60644), the panel reviewed a total of 32 theses. The programme consists of four tracks: fulltime Master in Management, parttime Master in Management, Accounting & Financial Management, and Business Analytics & Management. The panel examined 8 theses for each track.
- The Management of Innovation programme introduced the Medical Business Innovation (MBI) track in the academic year 2022-2023. This track is very small in scale. Out of the 15 theses reviewed by the panel, 2 were from the MBI track.

In reviewing the theses, dissertation reviewers (thesis assessors) were engaged. These are experts who were willing to review a number of theses in a specific economic / management field and provide the panel with input on the students' final level. The volume of theses to be assessed was so substantial that it was not feasible for the core panel to review all of them independently. The core panel incorporates the findings of the dissertation reviewers into their evaluation, as was also the case during the AACSB-NVAO assessments in 2019.

For privacy reasons, the names of these graduates and their student numbers are not included in this report. The names of the graduates, their student number, as well as the titles of the final products, are known to the secretary of the audit panel.

## ANNEX IV          Composition of the audit panel

These programmes belong to the accreditation group below.

| Name accreditation group: | WO Economie en Bedrijfskunde/AACSB groep 1 |
|---|---|

Succinct resumes of participating panel members:

| Name (core panel) | Succinct CVs |
|---|---|
| Prof. dr. Mr. H.J.L.M. (Eric) van de Luijtgaarden (chair) | Professor (lector) and Endowed Professor Preventive Law at Zuyd University of Applied Science and Maastricht University. Consultant higher education. |
| Prof. dr. H. (Manda) Broekhuis (member) | Vice Dean of Education and member of the faculty board of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), University of Groningen |
| Prof. dr. M.H.P. (Mirella) Kleijnen (member) | Vice Dean of Education of the School of Business and Economics, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and professor Customer Experience Management |
| Prof. dr. F.A.M. (Filip) Van den Bossche (member) | Vice Dean of Education and Students of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) van de KU Leuven |
| Prof. dr. C.P.M. (Celeste) Wilderom (member) | Professor Change Management & Organisational Behavior, (international) Business Administration, Management and Social Sciences, University of Twente (recent emeritus) |
| Prof. dr. J.W.B. (Jaap) Bos (member) | Professor Banking & Finance, Department of Finance, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University |
| Dr. F.J. (Frans) Prins (member) | Associate professor for Education as well as for Educational Advice & Training, Utrecht University |
| L. (Levi) Verschuren (student member) | Student at Tilburg University |
| T. (Thomas) van Neerrijnen (student member) | Student at Tilburg University |
| **Members (thesis reviewers)** | |
| Dr. C. (Christian) Bartelheimer | Assistant Professor Faculteit Economics and Business (Paderborn University, Germany |
| D. (Diogo) Cotta | Assistant Professor in Supply Chain Management, School of Business and Economics-Maastricht University and Senior Researcher Brightlands Institute for Supply Chain Innovation |
| Dr. H. (Harsh) Dod | Adjunct Professor, Department of Management, IE Business School (Spain) |
| Prof. dr. J.O.G. (James) Thewissen | Associate Professor (tenured) of Corporate Finance at KU Leuven and Vice Dean of External Corporate Relations and Communication at the Louvain School of Management |
| Dr. J.M. (José) Martín-Flores | Assistant Professor of Finance (tenure-track), CUNEF, Spain |
| Prof. dr. K. (Koen) Inghelbrecht | Professor of Finance at the Department of Economics, Gent University |
| Prof. dr. H.J. (Rian) Drogendijk | Professor of International Business, Chair of Internationlisation Strategy, University of Groningen |
| Prof. dr. M. (Michael) Koetter | Professor of Financial Economics at the University of Magdeburg, a Vice President at the Halle Institute for Economic Research (IWH) and head of the Financial Markets department. |
| Prof. dr. J. (Jan) Riezebos | Full Professor Educational Innovation & Academic Lead Teaching Academy Groningen, University of Groningen |
| Prof. dr. E. (Ed) Peelen | Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business and Endowed Professor Content Marketing at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sicences, University of Amsterdam |
| Dr. I.E. de Hooge | Associate professor Marketing and Consumer Behaviour, Wageningen University |
| Prof. dr. N. (Nadine) Roijakkers | Professor Open Innovation, Open Universiteit |
| Prof. dr. Y. (Yves) De Rongé | Professor Accounting & Control, Université Catholique de Louvain |
| Dr. C. (Chris) Coleridge | Professor in Management Practice, Cambridge Judge Business School |

| co-ordinators/certified secretaries | D.P.M. (Daniëlle) de Koning MSc<br>V. (Vladimir) Bartelds MBA<br>I.A.M. (Inge) van der Hoorn MSc |
|---|---|

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

On January 20th, 2025 the NVAO endorsed the composition of the panel to assess all programmes that are part of the accreditation group *WO Economie en Bedrijfskunde/AACSB groep 1* of Erasmus University Rotterdam (PA-2055).