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Master of Arts in Management

Maastricht University

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing programme
28 January 2025

Colophon

Institution and programme

Maastricht University
Maastricht
Institutional Audit: yes

Programme: Master of Arts in Management
Level and orientation: wo-master
Site: Maastricht & locations of partner institutions
Mode: full-time and part-time
ISAT-number: 75147

Assessment panel

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Summary

On 28 January 2025 an assessment panel of AeQui visited Maastricht University (UM) to perform a quality assessment of two degree programmes offered by the School of Business and Economics (SBE), Maastricht School of Management (MSM). This external assessment is part of a broader cluster evaluation of wo-bedrijfskunde programmes in the Netherlands. The underlying document reports on the panel assessment of the Master of Arts in Management (MM) according to the NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. The panel's overall judgement is [positive](#).

Further to MSM's request for a name change from Master of Arts in Management to Master in Management, the panel endorses the motivation and finds the name change logical. Hence, [the panel agrees to the proposed name change](#).

Intended learning outcomes

Since its founding in 1952, MSM is dedicated to global management education and international development with a focus on emerging economies. Between 2018 and 2022, MSM and UM explored and eventually completed a merger, integrating MSM into UM's School of Business and Economics (SBE). Established in 2019, the Master in Management programme at MSM offers a comprehensive foundation in general management principles for bachelor or master graduates with a variety of national, cultural and educational backgrounds, but with little to no work experience. As a pre-experience post-initial programme, MM integrates research-based knowledge across functional areas of management with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach. In addition to the fulltime one-year 60 EC variant in Maastricht, MSM offers since May 2023 a parttime two-year variant at a partner location in Kuwait. The MM programme has a distinctive profile that is in line with the history, scope and ambitions of MSM and effectively attracts a niche group of students. The strength of the programme lies in its combination of disciplinary knowledge, personal development, intercultural collaboration, and integration of 'modern' themes such as sustainability, digitalisation and innovation. Moreover, its international focus stands out as a major

proposition. Notwithstanding the previous panel's request for a more specific rewrite, the MM programme is still adopting the broadly formulated 'old' learning outcomes. The current panel has looked at the envisaged 'new' learning outcomes for 2025-2026 and finds these to be comprehensive and formulated in line with the domain (management), orientation (academic) and level (master) of the programme. It also establishes that there is a clear link between the new learning outcomes and the respective learning goals at course level. Furthermore, the MSM Advisory Board is an important instrument to advise on the relevance of programme objectives and learning outcomes. The panel concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The MM programme has a strong teaching and learning environment featuring a coherent curriculum, a befitting didactic concept, a diverse student audience and well-qualified teaching staff. The panel endorses the decision to offer the programme in English, and approves of its English-language title. The panel thinks highly of the alignment between the different components of the programme, which all seem to fit like bits of a jigsaw puzzle that fall into place. Qualified and enthusiastic staff, state-of-the-art facilities, extensive and highly appreciated

student services, befitting admission requirements, high success rates, specific teaching approaches, a well-thought out curriculum structure, and extensive quality assurance provisions to safeguard the quality of the courses across variants and locations: all elements fit well within the bigger picture / profile of the programme. Moreover, the combination of curriculum components allows students to reach the end qualifications as stipulated in both the old/current and the new/envisaged learning outcomes. The panel concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Student assessment

The MM programme can rely on a robust system of assessment. Both course and thesis assessments are embedded in well-established policies and frameworks at the level of the school(s) and the university, while the curriculum map and the assessment files safeguard that course learning goals are assessed adequately and cover the programme learning outcomes. Course assessment is carefully designed, varied, and well aligned with the learning objectives. In addition, the transparent information on assessment ensures that students are adequately and fairly assessed throughout their study. The panel thinks highly of the quality assurance system for assessment, which is comprehensive and effective, and commends the Executive Education Chamber of the Board of Examiners and the SBE Assessment Committee for their expertise and commitment. The thesis review has demonstrated that the evaluation form is relevant but elaborate and thus cumbersome for assessors to complete in an insightful way, hence the panel's support for an envisaged adjustment of the assessment form. The panel concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

Students who graduate from the MM programme have acquired all intended learning outcomes. The selected and reviewed MM theses meet the quality expectations for a final project of academic orientation at master level. The panel commends MSM for building and maintaining an alumni network, which students are making good use of and are eager to join after their studies. MSM goes at lengths to monitor the professional whereabouts of its alumni. These data show convincingly that MM graduates are well prepared for the national and international labour market and find suitable employment that is in line with the level and domain of their studies. The panel concludes that the programme **meets** this standard.

Recommendations

With an eye on the future, the panel offers the following points for development:

- perform a final check on the exact formulation of the new intended learning outcomes of the MM programme before they are rolled out in September 2025;
- monitor in the thesis preparation phase whether student competencies are aligned with the chosen thesis topic/research approach;
- organise workshops for thesis supervisors enabling them to provide tailored research / methodological support to their respective students;
- review the thesis evaluation form, finding a balance between the (number of) assessment criteria and feedback opportunities;
- monitor the consistency in thesis evaluation between (critical) feedback and (generous) scoring;
- act in a swifter way than before on the recommendations that will come out of the underlying accreditation report.

All standards of the NVAO framework have been positively assessed. On this basis, the panel provides a [positive recommendation](#) regarding the accreditation of the Master of Arts in Management programme.

On behalf of the entire site visit panel,
Utrecht, April 2025

Eric Dooms
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Introduction

Institution

Maastricht University (UM) was established in 1976. It currently features six faculties, 22000 students and 5000 staff. UM is known for its innovative education model, international character and transdisciplinary approach to research and education.

The School of Business and Economics (SBE) has a broad scope with areas of expertise in economics, international business, management, public policy, governance and sustainability. Its education approach is challenge-driven, innovative, collaborative and inclusive.

Since its founding in 1952, MSM is dedicated to global management education and international development with a focus on emerging economies. In 2018, MSM and UM started exploring a merger in order to combine MSM's expertise in global management education with UM's academic and research capabilities. In September 2022, the merger was formally completed with a full integration of MSM into SBE. The inclusion of MSM's executive education portfolio, including the two degree programmes under review, increased not only the portfolio of SBE, but also the collaboration between faculty and students of both institutions. SBE now has two complementary institutes offering executive education: the globally oriented MSM, and UMIO focusing on the Dutch and western European market.

The director of MSM reports to the Dean of SBE. MSM degree programmes are managed by Academic Programme Coordinators who report to the Director of Academics, who in turn reports to the MSM Management Team. Programme quality assurance is supported and coordinated by SBE's Policy Development and Quality

Assurance (PDQA) cluster and is part of the Assurance of Learning cycle.

MSM has built an extensive partner network around the globe. These institutions have a long experience in providing management education and give international students the opportunity to attend classes partially in Maastricht and partially at the partner locations. Teaching and assessment in the degree programmes take place under the responsibility and control of SBE/MSM. Partner institutions assist in student recruitment and provide local facilities and student/educational support.

Programme

The Master of Arts in Management (MM) programme offers a comprehensive foundation in general management principles for students with a bachelor or master degree, but with little to no work experience. Students enrol with a variety of national, cultural and educational backgrounds. They share an interest in managing sustainable organisations within a complex, global context. As pre-experience post-initial programme MM integrates research-based knowledge across key functional areas of management with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach.

The MM programme is available as a full-time variant in Maastricht and as a part-time variant delivered partially in Maastricht and partially at MSM's partner institution HRD Global in Kuwait. An online version of the MM programme is currently under development, but is not part of this accreditation.

The MM programme is relatively young: it was initially – and conditionally – accredited in 2019. In 2021 the initial accreditation panel

established that the three conditions were met: (i) strengthening the research component, (ii) harmonizing the level of difficulty across courses, and (iii) ensuring that courses are assessed at the appropriate level. Hence, NVAO conferred (unconditional) accreditation on the MM programme.

Assessment

The external assessment of this programme is part of a wider wo-Bedrijfskunde cluster visit involving 20 degree programmes at eight higher education institutions in the Netherlands. Maastricht University has commissioned AeQui to carry out the assessment of the two degree programmes offered by MSM in this cluster.

In the run-up to the visit, a preparatory meeting was held with representatives of SBE/MSM to exchange information and plan the dates and programme of the site visit. In collaboration with the programmes, AeQui assembled an independent and knowledgeable panel (see Attachment 1). The panel explicitly oriented itself to the cluster in which the programme is placed. The visit was carried out on 28 January 2025 according to the programme presented in Attachment 2.

The assessment was conducted based on the Accreditation Framework for Higher Education in the Netherlands. UM has a positive institutional audit decision, and therefore the panel assessed four standards of the framework. Furthermore, the panel was asked to validate the request for a name change of the Master of Arts in Management programme, which MSM / SBE / UM is applying for with NVAO. During the

previous accreditation round, the then panel made recommendations for further development. The actions taken in response by the programme are listed in Attachment 3. The panel has integrated this follow-up into its considerations for the current assessment.

The host produced and collected a lot of materials on the programme, including a self-evaluation report, and made this available to the panel in an online 'base room'. An overview of the materials is listed in Attachment 4. In the run-up to the site visit, the panel studied the programme's self-evaluation report and reviewed a sample of 15 theses. Their first impressions on the report and the thesis (evaluations) formed the basis for discussion during an online preparatory meeting on 24 January 2025, and guided its questions during the visit.

An Open Consultation Hour for students, teaching and support staff was organised in connection with the preparatory meeting; eventually, nobody signed up to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. At the initiative of MSM/SBE, a Development Dialogue took place at the end of the site visit. The results of this meeting did not affect the assessment presented in this report.

The panel conducted the assessment independently. At the end of the visit, the chair informed the programme and institutional representatives about the panel findings, considerations and conclusions. A draft version of the underlying report was sent to the programme, whose response was incorporated into this final version of the report.

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.

Findings

Profile

The Master of Arts in Management (MM) is a one-year 60 EC programme taught in English and offered in a full-time and a part-time variant. The latter entails that students follow the programme partially at MSM in Maastricht and partially at HRD Global in Kuwait. Across these formats, the programme targets a global audience. Students come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, such as engineering, health sciences, economics, social sciences, and the humanities. Student cohorts are highly international and include participation from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. They share an interest in managing organisations within a complex global context.

The MM is positioned as a post-initial, generalist management programme at master level and provides its diverse audience with foundational and cross-cutting management skills relevant for working in contemporary organisations. It integrates research-based knowledge across key functional areas of management with a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach. The curriculum covers the major management domains, while also offering space for personal development, intercultural collaboration, and the integration of themes such as sustainability, digitalisation and innovation. Its international focus is not only reflected in the student and staff composition, but also in the emphasis on global perspectives and responsible management.

The panel gathered from the written materials that the profile of the MM programme is

tailored to the ambitions of a specific student audience. While there are publicly funded academic master programmes in management for Dutch and non-Dutch students who continue their studies right after their bachelor degree, MSM is targeting a niche of international, young potentials with various educational backgrounds that envisage a management position in the near future. During the visit, students, staff and management provided useful clarifications on the specific MM profile at MSM and how it differs from 'regular' degree programmes in the SBE portfolio. Moreover, the sessions on site were useful for the panel to understand how the MM programme at MSM differs from the other (MBA) programme under review. While the panel eventually grasped the specificity of the MM profile, it advises MSM/SBE to indicate this more explicitly in its communication to (potential) students and external stakeholders (such as accreditation panels). In this regard, SBE and MSM may want to distinguish more clearly between the publicly and privately funded programmes, emphasising their respective strengths and distinctive characteristics.

Name change

As part of its external assessment, the panel was asked to judge about the proposed name change from Master of Arts in Management to Master in Management. The change only pertains to the title of the programme and does not bring content-specific curriculum changes.

The panel was informed that the current name encompasses the degree issued upon successful completion of the programme. Based on UM standards, the official programme name on the diploma is Master of Arts in Management, with

an additional reference to the degree, which is Master of Arts. Consequently, the degree is listed twice on the diploma. In the day-to-day life of the programme, however, the programme is called Master in Management. Hence, the request to change the name of the programme to Master in Management, which will provide for both students and potential employers an objective image of the content of the programme.

The proposed name Master in Management ensures international recognition. The content of the programme, the educational format, the language of instruction and the learning objectives remain unchanged. Since graduates can continue their professional career both in the Netherlands and abroad, the proposed title and degree of the programme are also in English.

Finally, the proposed name change does not impact on its classification in the Central Register of Higher Education Programmes (CROHO): the renamed Master in Management programme stays in the CROHO section 'Economics'.

The panel has reviewed the request for a name change. It endorses the motivation provided in the letter and notices that the programme content is comparable to other Master in Management degrees. Hence, a name change seems logical. Following its initial deliberations and the discussion on site, the panel agrees to the proposed name change.

Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the MM programme are aligned with the Dublin Descriptors, which define the expected learning achievements for master degrees in the European Higher Education Area. Based on these generic descriptors, overall programme learning outcomes have been developed, as well as

specific learning goals for each course in the MM programme.

The panel gathered from the written materials that the five programme learning outcomes – one per Dublin Descriptor – apply equally to all variants and locations. Whether students follow the programme in Maastricht, at a partner institution, or – in the future – online, they work towards the same outcomes and are assessed by the same standards. Preparing for the site visit, the panel noticed that the learning outcomes are formulated at a generic level, are applicable to multiple programmes and are not specifically connected to the intentions and ambitions of the MM programme. While this approach provides flexibility, the lack of specificity makes it difficult to clearly reflect the unique content and skills that the MM programme aims to develop. This, in turn, can lead to a less recognizable profile for graduates and weaker alignment with labour market needs. During the visit, the programme management acknowledged this impression and emphasised that both the distinction between the programmes and the specific profile of the MM programme are accounted for – and very visible – in the (learning goals of the) respective curriculum components/courses.

Furthermore, the panel noticed that the previous accreditation panel had come to similar findings requesting the programme to reformulate the MM learning outcomes in a more precise way. The panel was informed that following the integration of MSM into UM/SBE, the MM programme learning goals were being aligned with those of SBE, among others through the Assurance of Learning process by an audit panel. The audit panel results contributed to the alignment process, which at the time of the site visit was about to be finalised. During the visit, the programme management indicated that the new MM learning outcomes are in an advanced

stage of completion and should take effect as of September 2025. The new set of 16 intended learning outcomes will align with the matrix of four SBE and four MSM goals.

The envisaged learning outcomes were not part of the programme materials. Given its own observations on the current learning outcomes, the recommendation of the previous panel, and the near-completed status of the new learning goals, the panel requested – and obtained shortly after the site visit – a final draft version of the new learning outcomes, as well as their connection to the learning goals of the respective course components. The panel noticed that the new set of learning outcomes is comprehensive and clearly connects with the learning goals per course. It endorses the programme approach to have a limited set of learning goals per course, and to connect each of these goals to a particular programme learning outcome. Looking at for instance the learning goals for the research methods course and the thesis in the MM programme, the panel noticed that these learning goals are specific and indicate precisely what is expected of MM students in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude, and product delivery. In addition, the panel suggested to perform a final check on the exact formulation of the intended learning outcomes before they are rolled out in the academic year 2025-2026. It did so because some formulations seemed either a bit artificial or overly ambitious, and because the attention to research in course learning goals was not yet that visible in the programme learning outcomes.

Professional Field

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the professional field plays an important role in the design and the delivery of the MM programme. In fact, professional field representatives and companies

are not only involved as guest lecturers or as hosts for company visits, but also in specific courses such as the Group Company Project (real-life case provided by a company in the Maastricht region), the Supply Chain Management course (in-company group assignment) or the thesis (real-life company cases and data).

Furthermore, MSM has an Advisory Board featuring external professionals with diverse backgrounds. This board advises the MM programme on strategic developments, labour market trends, and curriculum innovation. Its role includes commenting on the relevance and clarity of the intended learning outcomes.

MSM also maintains close contact with its alumni, many of whom have entered management roles in various sectors around the world. Alumni are occasionally involved in guest lectures, in mentoring, or as contacts for company projects. Their feedback contributes to the programme's alignment with the field.

The panel acknowledges the comprehensive way in which the professional field is involved in the MM programme. In this regard, the efforts of MSM to keep track – and make good use – of its alumni are impressive. Students indicated during the visit that they appreciate the opportunities the programme offers to start building a professional network of companies, individuals and alumni. Moreover, the panel welcomes the work of the MSM Advisory Board in monitoring and advising on the programme objectives and learning outcomes.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the MM programme has a distinctive profile that is in line with the history, scope and ambitions of MSM and effectively attracts a niche group of students. Following the

discussions on site, the panel thought the programme was attractive in its combination of disciplinary knowledge, personal development, intercultural collaboration, and integration of 'modern' themes such as sustainability, digitalisation and innovation. Moreover, the international focus of the MM programme - through students, staff and course perspective - stands out as a major proposition.

Further to the request for a name change from Master of Arts in Management to Master in Management, the panel endorses the motivation provided in the letter and finds the name change logical. Hence, the panel agrees to the proposed name change.

At the time of the site visit, the MM programme was still adopting the broadly formulated 'old' learning outcomes that were already applicable at the time of the previous accreditation, notwithstanding the then panel's request for a more specific rewrite. The current panel looked at the envisaged 'new' learning outcomes for 2025-2026 and found these to be comprehensive and formulated in line with the domain (management), orientation (academic) and level (master) of the programme. Moreover, the panel established that there is a clear link between the new learning outcomes and the respective learning goals at course level.

The panel welcomes the comprehensive way in which individuals, companies and alumni are involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of

the MM programme. It commends MSM for building and maintaining an alumni network, which students are making good use of and are eager to join after their studies. Moreover, the MSM Advisory Board is an important instrument to advise in a systematic way on the relevance of programme objectives and learning outcomes.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel advises MSM/SBE to emphasise in its external communication the respective strengths and distinctive characteristics of the MM and MBA programmes, as well as their position within the broader portfolio of SBE programmes. Moreover, the programme team may want to perform a final check on the exact formulation of the new intended learning outcomes of the MM programme before they are rolled out in September 2025. Acknowledging the institutional changes and endorsing the quality of the (envisaged) outcome, the panel does wonder why it took such a long time to address the recommendation of the previous panel regarding the learning outcomes. It therefore invites the programme team to decide/take action in a swifter way on the recommendations that will come out of the underlying accreditation report.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme **meets** this standard.

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.

Findings

Programme

The Master in Management is a programme of 60 EC. It consists of twelve core courses (36 EC), three application subject courses (9 EC) and a master thesis (15 EC). The full-time variant runs over 12 months, divided in four terms. Each term combines core and applied courses; the thesis is spread over the last two periods. Students in the part-time variant follow the same courses, which are spread over a period of two years. Four out of fifteen courses are taught in Maastricht, three other courses are taught by the MSM course coordinators on location, while another eight courses are taught in Kuwait by teaching staff connected to the partner institution under the supervision of MSM course coordinators.

The core courses introduce students to fundamental areas of management, such as Economics, Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management. Each course builds on basic theoretical insights and develops these into a more advanced understanding of managerial decision-making and organisational dynamics. The core also includes a course on Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which introduces students to entrepreneurial thinking and the development of business plans.

The three application subject courses are practice-oriented. The Personal Development Portfolio is spread over the entire year and emphasizes personal and career growth, as well as networking. In the Group Company Project, students work in teams on a real case from a

regional business partner, focusing on a sustainability or digital innovation challenge. The project integrates knowledge from previous courses and applies this in a collaborative setting. In the Supply Chain Management course, students do in-company group work as part of the course assessment.

The third component, the master thesis, takes the form of an individual research project. Students define a relevant research problem, conduct a literature review, collect and analyse data, and formulate conclusions. This academic capstone is presented in an academic research paper and allows students to delve deeply into a management topic of their choice, demonstrating their ability to conduct academic research and contribute insights to the field of management. Each student is assigned a supervisor, who guides them through the process, provides feedback on the proposal and drafts, and ensures that the work meets academic standards. In addition to the core course on research methods, students can take specific non-credited workshops to refresh the specific methodological skills they need for their thesis research. While the thesis is academic in nature, many students choose topics that are inspired by current developments in the business world or by their personal career interests. The panel found that overall, the rationale for the master thesis component befitted the MM programme.

The panel was informed that irrespective of the variant, each core course is designed, delivered and assessed in the same way. In order to ensure quality across the different courses and variants, MSM appointed an Academic Course

Coordinator as responsible for the design, delivery, assessment and improvement of each course. These coordinators consult with teaching staff implementing the course in the different variants and locations, monitor assessment outcomes, and hold final responsibility for grade validation. The panel appreciates that MSM has taken extensive measures to safeguard the quality across courses, variants and locations.

Overlooking the curriculum, the panel found that the courses and their learning goals are connected to the learning outcomes at programme level. In this way the MM curriculum allows students to achieve the end qualifications. Further to its findings under standard 1, the panel welcomes the programme's approach to formulate a limited set of learning goals per course, and to connect each learning goal to a particular programme learning outcome.

The panel gathered that the programme orientation is explicitly post-initial and academic in nature. The curriculum is grounded in theoretical models and concepts from the management sciences and draws from disciplines such as economics, business administration, organisational behaviour and strategy. At the same time, the MM integrates applied learning activities, including business projects and case-based teaching, to ensure that students are able to connect theory to practice. This approach reflects MSM's wider educational philosophy, which seeks to combine academic rigour with real-world relevance.

The discussions on site have strengthened the panel's initial impression from the materials that the curriculum looks fitting for this type of programme and is in line with MM's profile as academic, generalist management programme offering a broad disciplinary introduction to key

areas of management. In this way, it bridges the gap between a disciplinary bachelor education and a professional career in management, particularly in organisations that engage with global, transitional or emerging markets. MM students the panel spoke to confirmed that this is exactly what was announced, what they came for, and what is happening in the day-to-day reality of the programme.

Language of instruction

Right from the start of the programme, the Master in Management was taught in English and had an English title. The panel was informed that this decision reflected – and still reflects – the international scope of the programme, the diverse composition of the student body, and the professional orientation towards global management roles. English is the common language among students and staff, and it is the primary language of communication in all programme materials, assessments and classroom interaction.

The choice for English was/is also aligned with UM's internationalisation strategy and with the profile of MSM, which has a longstanding focus on development, emerging markets and international cooperation. The choice for an English-language programme enables to attract students from outside the Netherlands and to prepare graduates for careers in international environments.

The panel was informed that MSM requires all teaching staff to have a sufficient command of English to teach effectively in this language. All staff are fluent in English, and several are native speakers. New teaching staff are expected to demonstrate English proficiency at CEFR level C1. If needed, staff is supported to further develop their language skills. This policy ensures that the quality of instruction is maintained

across the board. Students indicated to the panel that they thought the level of English instruction was good, and that they appreciate the highly international (and intercultural) dimension of the programme, as well as the multinational and multicultural composition of the student cohorts.

The panel noticed that the decision to offer the MM programme in English was very effective: over the years, the programme has been attracting an increasingly diverse student audience, most of whom are non-Dutch. This diversity in turn has allowed the programme to make good use of the International Classroom, thereby enriching the learning experience of all (Dutch and non-Dutch) students and enhancing the overall academic quality and relevance of the programme.

The written materials and the discussions on site have convinced the panel that the decision to use English as a language of instruction in the MM programme is motivated properly at the levels of the university, the school(s) and the programme. Moreover, the international and intercultural dimensions are embedded in its profile and vision, and substantiated in the day-to-day delivery of the MM contents, the didactic principles, and the composition of the student cohorts. According to the panel, the MM programme is truly international – and intercultural – in several respects, not just in terms of language.

Learning environment

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the programme objectives are reflected in the educational environment. Hence, the different curriculum components include various teaching formats, interactive pedagogy and structured reflection on personal development. The full-time program-

me variant is intensive and offers an immersive experience. Courses are mostly delivered in compact, four-week modules, with one or two courses running in parallel. In the part-time variant, the content and delivery mode of the individual courses is identical to the full-time variant. However, the contact hours for all courses on location are scheduled consecutively and within one week. Students travel to MSM for one study period of four to five weeks in which they attend four courses. This modular structure in both variants enables students to focus intensively on specific topics and allows for a clear sequencing of content. The course set-up ensures that students receive timely feedback and that progress is monitored throughout the study period. Moreover, the programme structure is such that it provides a balanced progression from knowledge acquisition to application and independent research. The integration of academic and practical elements is facilitated by the sequencing of modules and the scaffolding of learning outcomes across the curriculum.

The problem-based learning system, which is typical of UM, emphasises active learning, and particularly the contextual, constructive, collaborative and self-directed nature of learning. The panel noticed that MSM follows this learning approach in different ways:

- *Contextual learning* is visible in different ‘alternative’ teaching methods, such as case studies, simulations and company projects;
- *Constructive learning* encourages the students to construct their own knowledge through written assignments, guest speakers, company visits and the thesis.
- *Collaborative learning* is embedded in group work activities throughout all courses where students develop essential soft skills.
- *Self-directed learning* is promoted through group work, written assignments, and the master thesis.

The variety in cultural, national and disciplinary backgrounds of the MM student cohorts allows the programme to make optimum use of the International Classroom. This didactic principle aligns very much with the scope of the MM programme as the diverse student cohort learns to be open to different (management) perspectives, reflect on international issues and cooperate and communicate in respect to international contexts, which is crucial for working in the global business environment.

Furthermore, the panel noticed that MSM places great emphasis on ensuring an optimal student-faculty contact. Small classes with groups of around 30 students are the basis for a student-centred approach. Face-to-face teaching includes 24 teaching hours and two consultation hours per 3 EC course. This provides students with the opportunity to receive additional guidance and support where needed.

Students indicated to the panel that they appreciate the overall educational approach of the programme: the curriculum structure with short intensive blocks allows to focus on one or two domains, while the variety in teaching approaches keeps all students focused on the programme and does justice to the different learning styles of the individual participants. Moreover, students value the international and intercultural dimension of the programme and the associated educational principle of the international classroom. According to the panel, the didactical approach adopted by MM befits both the profile of the programme and the type of student audience.

The panel read in the materials and heard from the students on site that the MM programme offers excellent guidance to students. The programme supports students throughout the entire academic year. Each student is assigned an

academic mentor who serves as the main point of contact for academic matters. In addition, students receive guidance from the thesis coordinator, module coordinators and the academic programme coordinator. At the start of the year, MM provides onboarding support through a comprehensive introduction week, during which students are introduced to the academic expectations, digital tools, support services, and each other. Early contact with teaching staff, thesis coordinators and student advisors is part of this onboarding process. Students also have access to the facilities of MSM and, through the integration with UM, to a broad range of university services. The central services include student wellbeing and inclusion, psychological counselling, disability services and support for students facing academic or personal difficulties. Teaching takes place in a wing of the SBE building on the Tapijnkazerne campus in Maastricht, which is within walking distance of other university buildings, SBE Tongersestraat location, and student housing. Students have access to the research databases of the university as well as to digital literature, which is valued and used in particular during the thesis phase. During the visit, students and alumni emphasised that the MM programme team was really looking after them. The many international students and alumni thereby indicated that the programme made great efforts to make them feel welcome and included, a mission they succeed(ed) in.

Student admission, intake and success rate

The MM is open to students from a broad range of academic backgrounds: applicants can hold any completed bachelor (or master) degree from a recognised university, regardless of discipline, and should demonstrate a good command of English. The curriculum is crafted to ensure success across topics without previous knowledge of (specific domains of) management. Applicants though must complete four

online levelling courses in Accounting, Business Finance, Microeconomics, and Quantitative Research Methods, as well as a Write & Cite module on academic conventions and referencing skills before the start of the programme, unless they have a GMAT score of 600 or higher. These entry conditions help ensure that students are ready to engage with the curriculum. Further to the discussions on site, the panel found the admission requirements to be appropriate for, and in alignment with, the profile of the MM programme.

On average a student cohort on the full-time variant consists of 30 students. Every cohort has a different composition but is invariably very international with students from many different countries and continents. Most students are in their mid-twenties and see the MM programme as a launchpad for an international career. The diversity in backgrounds enriches classroom discussions and supports peer learning.

The panel noticed in the table with completion rates that almost all MM students who enrol effectively complete the programme: since the launch of the programme in September 2019, only 5 (out of about 150) students dropped out. The success rates are also very positive: between 75% and 100% of students graduate in the nominal duration of 12 months.

Staff

The MM is taught by a core group of academic staff affiliated with MSM and UM, supplemented by guest lecturers and professionals from the field. The panel gathered from the extensive staff involvement list (79 entries) that all teaching staff hold at least a master degree, and most have a PhD. Moreover, staff members have academic expertise in their subject areas and relevant experience in international education. MSM teaching staff are involved in both

teaching and research. Research activities are embedded in the Global Development and Emerging Markets research theme of SBE. This ensures that the content of the programme is informed by current academic developments and that staff remain connected to broader disciplinary debates. Several faculty members also have professional backgrounds or participate in consulting work in areas such as strategy, innovation and development cooperation. This contributes to the applied orientation of the programme and enables staff to bring practice to the classroom.

The small scale of the MM programme allows for frequent and informal interaction between students and staff. Supervision of group work and the thesis process is intensive, and staff are generally accessible outside class hours. Students the panel spoke to during the visit repeated what is indicated also in teaching evaluations, that they appreciate both the approachability and the expertise of faculty. The panel established based on the CV's provided in the staff list that the faculty involved in the MM programme have adequate research credentials, disciplinary know-how, and didactic skills. Moreover, the discussions on site revealed that these teaching staff are enthusiastic and committed to the programme and the MM students.

Furthermore, the panel learned that MSM operates with a distinctive staffing model that enriches the educational experience of its students. While MSM maintains its own payroll for academic staff, it also collaborates with faculty from SBE and engages external professionals for teaching roles. Notwithstanding its own approach, MSM teaching staff are expected to hold the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) or pursue it upon appointment. Since the integration of MSM, staff development is supported through professionalisation activities offered by

the SBE Learning Academy and the university-wide EDLAB, including workshops on assessment design, academic integrity, and the use of AI in education. External lecturers are required to meet institutional quality standards before taking on teaching or supervision duties. Thesis supervisors complete mandatory training sessions on supervision practices and thesis assessment before being assigned as assessors. The combined system of role-based responsibility, standardised tools, and targeted training contributes to a structured and professional quality culture in MSM and the MM programme. The panel appreciates both the quality expectations towards MSM teaching staff and supervisors, and the opportunities offered to these staff for continuous professional development. The latter point was also a recommendation of the previous accreditation report. In line with this recommendation, the current panel endorses the efforts of the MSM management to continue increasing the professional quality of the MSM teaching staff.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the MM programme has a strong teaching-learning environment featuring a coherent curriculum, a befitting didactic concept, a diverse student audience and well-qualified teaching staff. The panel moreover endorses the decision to offer the programme in English and approves of its English-language title. According to the panel, the MM programme is truly international in several respects, not just in terms of language.

The panel considers that the curriculum befits an academic, generalist management programme that bridges the gap between a disciplinary bachelor education and a professional career in management. It established furthermore that the curriculum allows students to

reach the end qualifications as stipulated in both the old/current and the new/envisaged learning outcomes. The panel thinks highly of the quality assurance provisions taken by MSM to safeguard the quality of the courses across variants and locations.

The panel appreciates the didactic concept that underlies the programme: problem-based learning, the international classroom and the contextual, constructive, collaborative and self-directed nature of learning are no theoretical constructs on paper but are effectively implemented in the day-to-day reality of the MM programme.

The panel thinks highly of the student-centred approach of MSM and its MM programme: student guidance, support and services at both school and university level make MM students feel welcome and at home in Maastricht.

According to the panel, the MM programme has clear and very effective admission requirements, which reflect the profile of the programme and lead to the enrolment of diverse student cohorts, in line with the targets and expectations of the programme. Moreover, almost all students manage to complete the programme successfully and this mostly within the nominal duration of the programme.

The teaching staff involved in the MM programme has adequate research credentials, disciplinary know-how, and didactic skills. The panel noticed that staff are also enthusiastic and committed to the programme and the MM students. Moreover, the panel commends the attention of MSM and SBE to staff professionalisation, which in turn contributes to an academic environment in which education is valued. The panel also appreciates that SBE/MSM staff take adjunct faculty/external lecturers 'under their

wings' to ensure that courses are delivered in the best possible quality traditions of the school(s) and the university.

In sum, the panel thinks highly of the alignment between the different components of the programme, which all seem to fit like bits of a jigsaw puzzle that fall into place. Staff, facilities, services, admission requirements, success rate, teaching approaches, curriculum structure, ... all elements fit well within the bigger picture / profile of the programme. All (teaching) staff are

well aware of the audience they cater for and have a coherent understanding of the programme profile. According to the panel, this is an accomplishment for which the school, the management and the staff should be commended.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme **meets** this standard.

Student assessment

Standard 3: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

Assessment system

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the MM programme operates an assessment system that is grounded in the UM's assessment framework and informed by the principles of constructive alignment, transparency, and quality assurance.

Assessment at MSM is governed by the Education and Examination Regulations (EER), which are updated annually and include provisions on assessment formats, resits, fraud prevention, grading scales and student rights. The EER ensures that assessment is fair, consistent and in accordance with national legislation.

Examiners are appointed by the Board of Examiners and meet the formal requirements set by UM. All examiners use standardised templates for rubrics, grading forms and feedback. For each course, an assessment plan is submitted in advance and reviewed by the programme coordinator and Board of Examiners. This plan specifies the assessment components, weightings, criteria, and procedures for marking and moderation.

The panel was informed that the assessment system was strengthened following the integration of MSM in the university and SBE. While MSM has maintained some of its own procedures, alignment with SBE policy has improved standardisation and comparability. The Assurance of Assessment (AoA) cycle further supports the systematic monitoring of assessment quality at course level.

The panel noticed that there is a strong connection between the intended learning outcomes of the MM programme, the course learning goals and the assessment structure. Each course consists of five learning goals, which are connected on a one-on-one basis to the five learning outcomes, which in turn are linked to the five Dublin Descriptors. The panel established that this connection is made visible and concrete in the MM curriculum map. Further to its findings and considerations on standard 1, the panel is confident that the assessment structure will be adjusted to the envisaged learning outcomes and course learning goals that will become operational as of September 2025.

All assignments, both individual and group work, are assessed by means of detailed assessment rubrics. These rubrics ensure that each criterion is directly linked to one of the ILOs. This also applies to exams for which model answers are crafted and linked to the relevant learning outcomes. The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that such systematic approach to constructive alignment ensures a consistent evaluation process and allows to accurately track and measure student progress over time. It also allows educators to pinpoint specific areas where students excel or need improvement in relation to the respective learning outcomes.

The use of assessment rubrics exists already for a long time. However, the previous panel noticed that not all rubrics were implemented in a consistent way. Hence, the rubrics are now revised and discussed regularly among staff. Moreover, the academic course coordinators hold meetings with the staff teaching in their course on both content and assessment. They

systematically check the assessment grades before they are released to students. The current panel gathered from the discussions that good progress has been made in so far as grading consistency is concerned.

Overall, the panel found that the assessment system is well structured and based on university-wide policies and principles. The evaluation criteria are applied across the programme to promote alignment and fairness in assessments. Moreover, there are clear expectations and standards to help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement.

Course assessment

Each component of the MM curriculum has a corresponding assessment strategy. The modular structure of the programme allows for focused and varied assessment within each course, whereby assessment usually takes place at the end of the module. Across the curriculum, students are assessed through a mix of individual and group assignments, written exams, essays, presentations, practical reports, and the master thesis. In general, every course combines individual and group-based tasks, written and oral components, and formative and summative assessments. For each MM course, at least 70% of the final grade is based on individual assessment, mostly written assignments, reflective journals and in some cases written exams. The remaining percentage is used for group work including case study assignments and presentations. To ensure fairness, group assessments include peer evaluation components. Students are asked to assess their own and their peers' contributions, and these evaluations are used to adjust individual grades where necessary. This approach encourages accountability and supports the development of teamworking skills.

In line with university policy, assessment criteria are defined in advance, shared with students, and used consistently across evaluators. The course syllabi provide students with a clear description and information about the different assessment components within a course. The assessment criteria and rubrics are also included in the course syllabus and explained in class. After their assessment, students receive timely feedback, typically within two weeks after submission or examination. On completing a course, students evaluate both the education and the assessment provisions, which are then reviewed annually and may lead to course/exam adjustment.

Overall, the panel found course assessment to be valid, reliable and transparent. The evaluation process is both consistent across the curriculum components and systematically documented in course syllabi to students. Students indicated to the panel that the assessment provisions in the MM programme are indeed transparent and communicated well in advance.

Assessment of graduation works

The master thesis constitutes the culmination of the MM programme. Thesis assessment is conducted by the supervisor and a second reader, who independently complete an identical assessment form. Both use a standardised assessment form featuring different criteria – introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion and conclusion, defence. The thesis is defended in an oral presentation, which is part of the assessment.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 MM master theses, as well as the corresponding completed evaluation forms. The selected theses were submitted in the academic years 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024. The quality of

the MM theses will be addressed under the next standard. In so far as thesis assessment is concerned, the panel noticed that the evaluation form is detailed and well structured. The form contains a total of 26 criteria, which are aligned with the learning goals of the course and are clustered around the five programme learning outcomes / Dublin descriptors. Each criterion gets an appreciation – ranging from very poor to excellent – while both assessors are expected to provide additional comments on each criterion. The criteria rubrics are elaborate. The thesis defence (oral presentation) is part of the assessment. The excel format of the evaluation form allows for an automatic calculation of the sub-scores, the overall score and the common final grade. This calculation is based on the weight of each learning outcome/Dublin descriptor; the final grade is the average of the two assessors' scores.

In so far as the completed assessment forms are concerned, the panel noticed that in general assessors provide additional feedback on several but not necessarily all criteria, and in some cases input from the second assessor is missing or superficial. Moreover, the panel found in several cases that the feedback in the comment boxes was more critical than the score for that criterion. Tending to agree with the criticism, the panel found several theses to be rather generously scored.

The panel understands that thesis assessment is set-up in line with provisions that are common to all courses. Nonetheless, the panel wondered why the master thesis should also assess the learning skills of the student, i.e. the learning outcome connected to the Dublin Descriptor 5, and this for 10% of the total score. Moreover, the thesis assessment criterion which focuses on the literature used and the learning goal of the thesis course (identify relevant theoretical,

empirical and methodological literature) do not seem to pertain to the programme learning outcome (reflection on learning and professional development) they are supposed to reflect. Furthermore, the panel found the assessment form very detailed (26 criteria, each with a feedback box) and thus rather cumbersome to complete giving an individual appreciation as well as a written motivation. The discussion with representatives of the Board of Examiners and the Assessment Committee showed that they are aware of these issues. The set-up of the learning outcomes and course learning goals will change as of September 2025, while the programme is considering an adjustment of the thesis assessment form. Panel, programme and quality assurance bodies agreed that an 'ideal' evaluation form would consist of fewer criteria that are complemented systematically with insightful feedback. Such form would do justice to the efforts of the students without increasing the workload of the assessors.

Quality assurance

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the quality of assessment is safeguarded by the Board of Examiners (BoE). Since the integration of MSM in the university and in SBE, a Chamber within the SBE Board of Examiners has been established to safeguard the quality of all post-initial programmes offered by SBE, including the MM programme under review. This Executive Education chamber consists of four experienced faculty members, one of whom is affiliated externally, and a senior secretary who coordinates the activities and advises the board. The Chamber collaborates closely with the Board of Examiners of SBE, discussing and agreeing on policies and guidelines.

The panel noticed that the Chamber fulfils all regular tasks of a Board of Examiners, and does

so with expertise, commitment and the necessary independence. The Chamber among others appoints examiners and provides them with guidance on their responsibilities, prevents and detects fraud and plagiarism, and verifies whether students achieve the programme learning outcomes. The panel was informed that given the global composition of the MM student body, the Chamber handles relatively more plagiarism cases (than the SBE Board of Examiners) as the concept of plagiarism is understood differently in several parts of the world. In all instances, however, the Chamber applies and maintains the same 'Dutch' interpretation as any other Board of Examiners does for all other students at Maastricht University. Similarly, while MM students are informed about the grading culture and the cum-laude requirements in the Netherlands / at UM, the Chamber is called upon relatively often to handle course results and cum-laude requests from students who were used to a different grading system.

One of the key instruments for quality assurance is the annual assessment review. Course coordinators are required to submit an assessment file that includes the exam or assignment, answer models, grading criteria, a sample of marked work, and an evaluation report. The BoE reviews these files to verify consistency and fairness and provides feedback to instructors.

The Board of Examiners also plays a role in training and supporting teaching staff. New examiners are briefed on procedures and expectations. Regular workshops are held on assessment design, feedback, and fraud prevention. In cases of student complaints or grade appeals, the BoE acts as the decision-making body and ensures that procedures are followed correctly.

The Chamber collaborates closely with the SBE Assessment Committee to ensure that a robust

quality assurance process is in place through the Assurance of Assessment cycle. The panel gathered from the discussions that the SBE-wide Assessment Committee plays an important role as auditor and as the body of expertise that has a helicopter view of all SBE programmes, including the MSM programmes. In addition, each programme goes through an internal quality assurance process (Assurance of Learning, AoL) every three years that is organised by the Policy Development and Quality Assurance Office and the SBE Learning Academy. This process also includes a review of course and thesis assessment samples.

The panel gathered from the discussion with representatives of the Chamber and the Assessment Committee that the quality assessment in the MM programme is safeguarded in a meticulous and knowledgeable way. The BoE reports annually to the Faculty Board and participates in institutional quality assurance cycles. Its independent role and clear mandate provide a solid basis for the integrity of the assessment process.

In addition to the Board of Examiners/Assessment Committee, the academic course coordinator / appointed course examiner plays an important role in safeguarding the quality of the course and its assessment. In order to ensure quality across the different courses, MSM appoints an Academic Course Coordinator as responsible for the design, delivery, assessment and improvement of each course. These coordinators consult with teaching staff, monitor assessment outcomes, and hold final responsibility for grade validation. Moreover, for each course, an SBE examiner is responsible to safeguard that students meet the programme requirements and that for instance cases of academic misconduct are reported to the Chamber / Board of Examiners. According to the panel, this approach works well and instils confidence

in the assessment system. It also demonstrates that the programme took the recommendation of the previous accreditation report seriously.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the MM programme can rely on a robust system of assessment. This appreciation is based first and foremost on the fact that both course and thesis assessments are embedded in well-established policies and frameworks at the level of the school(s) and the university. The curriculum map and the assessment files, moreover, demonstrate that course learning goals are assessed adequately, which in turn ensures that the different learning outcomes at programme level are covered.

Furthermore, the panel establishes that course assessment is carefully designed, varied, and well aligned with the learning objectives. In addition, the transparent information on assessment ensures that students are adequately and fairly assessed throughout the curriculum.

The panel thinks highly of the quality assurance system for assessment, which is comprehensive and effective. The different players have their own roles, which are well defined and complementary. Together, they ensure that assessment practices are regularly reviewed, aligned with

institutional policy, and continuously improved based on feedback and reflection. In this regard, the panel commends the Executive Education Chamber of the Board of Examiners and the SBE Assessment Committee for their expertise and commitment. The panel is convinced that the assessment quality of the MM programme is in competent hands with the Chamber and the Committee.

The panel's review of the MM theses demonstrated that in terms of assessment, the evaluation form is relevant but elaborate and thus cumbersome for assessors to complete in an ideal way. The panel understood that there are plans to adjust the assessment form, an intention it fully supports. In this review process, the programme may want to consider if the learning skills descriptor/learning outcome (DD5) should remain part of the form. Moreover, the panel advises the programme to monitor the completed thesis evaluation forms as some theses received rather critical (and in the eyes of the panel, appropriate) feedback comments but were scored rather generously. Notwithstanding these points for attention, the panel is satisfied that the overall thesis assessment process is executed in a sound and professional way.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme **meets** this standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

There are two ways to establish whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved: by reviewing the quality of the graduation projects and by looking at the professional whereabouts of the alumni after their graduation. The panel has looked at both elements when assessing the quality of the programme.

Quality of graduation projects

The Master in Management concludes with a final thesis, an individual academic research project that serves as the capstone of the programme. The panel was informed that in 2023, the size of the thesis was increased from 12 to 15 EC to allow for more substantive research work and better alignment with the intended learning outcomes. The thesis process begins in the third term with the Research Methods module. This course introduces students to research design, literature review strategies, and both qualitative and quantitative methods. It supports students in preparing a thesis proposal and understanding the academic expectations for the final project. Upon approval of the research proposal, a supervisor is assigned who provides individual guidance throughout the writing process, including feedback on structure, literature use, and data analysis.

As part of its external review, the panel studied a representative sample of 15 master theses, which were submitted and successfully completed in the academic years 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024. The sample was representative for the final thesis scores. As the part-time programme variant only started in May 2023, the thesis list only contained students who

enrolled on the fulltime variant. The panel found that in all but one case, the theses fulfilled at least the minimum quality requirements of a final master product of academic orientation. The thesis which the panel judged to be of doubtful quality had obtained a low pass score from the MM assessors.

In several other cases, though, the thesis quality was good and the topics societally relevant. Students mainly followed the same structure in their thesis and invariably covered in their research the full empirical cycle. Several students adopted quantitative methodologies, for which they used adequate statistical methods.

As points for attention the panel noted that in the theses with a lower pass score, the theory and the hypotheses were not always properly developed, and/or the literature was quite general, and/or the qualitative methodology seemed less rigorous. The overall picture which emerges is one where students enter the programme with very different backgrounds, also in terms of academic research skills. Students with an understanding of quantitative research methods tend to look for a thesis topic in which they can adopt and demonstrate successfully their familiarity with these methods. Some of the students with a more limited background in academic research skills, however, do not seem to fully catch up with their deficiencies, notwithstanding the research methods course and the thesis supervision.

The current panel noticed that the former accreditation report showed some concern regarding the consistency in the academic rigour of the theses. To counter this concern, the MM

programme organised more workshops to assist students in their research, as well as regular discussions among teaching staff and thesis supervisors to develop a common perspective on the thesis. The panel thinks that these efforts have led to an improvement of the thesis quality. Nonetheless, there is room for further enhancement. Hence, the panel suggests the programme to look into the preparation phase of the thesis and to monitor whether students' competencies are sufficiently developed and aligned for the chosen thesis topic/research approach. Moreover, the programme may want to organise thesis supervision training to ensure that supervisors can provide tailored support to the individual MM students.

Notwithstanding these points of attention and recommendations, the panel found that MM students demonstrate through their thesis that they achieve all intended learning outcomes.

Performance of graduates

The MM programme prepares students for early-career positions in management and related fields. Given the post-initial nature of the programme, most students enter/return to the labour market directly after graduation. MSM tracks alumni outcomes through graduate surveys, LinkedIn analysis and informal feedback from alumni and employers.

The panel gathered from data on recent cohorts that MM graduates find employment across a wide range of sectors and roles, including consulting, technology, manufacturing, and education. Graduates often start in entry-level or junior management roles and progress to more senior positions within a few years. Employers include multinational corporations, international NGOs, SMEs, and public-sector organisations. Alumni are employed in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, reflecting the global

reach of the programme. About a quarter of the MM graduates stayed in the Netherlands upon graduation and found employment in Dutch companies or start-ups. The panel acknowledges that such variety of career paths align with the profile and scope of the programme and its international and intercultural dimension.

The alumni the panel spoke to during the site visit confirmed what colleagues had reported in the student chapter, i.e. that the MM programme helped them to develop transferable skills such as communication, intercultural collaboration, analytical thinking and problem-solving. The international classroom, the applied projects and the thesis all contributed to building confidence and competencies that are valued in the labour market.

In sum, the panel welcomes the attentive follow-up of MM graduates. The programme provides quantitative data, such as average grades and alumni career trajectories, which offer a starting point for assessing outcomes. Alumni data illustrates some level of programme impact on career progression and post-education positions. Moreover, the attempt to monitor alumni positions demonstrates an interest by MSM in understanding the long-term value of the MM programme. The inclusion of performance metrics indicates that efforts are made to measure student success after graduation.

The data gathered show that MM graduates are able to function in different environments, obtain jobs in a broad range of positions and sectors, have good job perspectives, and build a career within and beyond the Netherlands. The panel is therefore convinced that students who graduate the MM programme possess all end level qualifications.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that students who graduate from the MM programme have effectively acquired all intended learning outcomes. According to the panel, the selected and reviewed MM theses meet the quality expectations for a final project of academic orientation at master level.

Moreover, MSM goes at lengths to monitor the professional whereabouts of its graduates. These data show convincingly that MM graduates are well prepared for the labour market and find suitable employment that is in line with the level and domain of their studies. Alumni praise the study period in Maastricht for developing

their transferable skills which are highly in demand on the labour market.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel sees room for enhancing the preparation phase of the master thesis. In fact, MM students could be monitored whether their competencies are sufficiently developed and aligned for the chosen thesis topic/research approach. Given the highly diverse backgrounds of MM students, thesis supervisors could be trained to provide tailored research / methodological support to facilitate the thesis process of their respective students.

Taking these considerations into account, the panel assesses that the programme **meets** this standard.

Attachment 1: assessment panel

Eric Dooms, chair

Chair, Associate Professor of Strategy at TIAS; experienced in international programmes and accreditation procedures.

Hans van Ees

Emeritus professor at University of Groningen; expert in corporate governance with extensive academic and advisory experience.

Jochen Bergs

Assistant professor at Hasselt University; expert in patient safety, healthcare innovation and educational assessment.

Faye Bellis, student-member

Student of BSc International Business Administration at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam since 2022.

The panel was supported by Mark Delmartino, certified secretary.

All panel members and the secretary have completed and signed a statement of independence and impartiality, and these have been submitted to NVAO

Attachment 2: site visit programme

Location: Tapijnkazerne 11, Maastricht

Tuesday 28 January 2025

- 09.00 Arrival, welcome and internal panel meeting
- 10.00 Session with Programme Management and MSM Education Board
- 10.45 Session with MSM Partner Representatives
- 11.30 Session with MM and MBA students
- 12.00 Session with MM and MBA alumni
- 12.30 Session with Board of Examiners & Assessment Committee
- 13.00 Lunch and Internal panel session
- 14.00 Session with MSM Teaching staff
- 15.00 Internal panel session
- 15.15 Concluding session Programme Management
- 15.45 Internal panel session
- 16.45 Plenary Feedback
- 17.15 Development Dialogue
- 18.00 End of site visit

Attachment 3: Recommendations from previous assessment

The previous committee requested the learning goals of the MM be written more precisely. Following the integration into Maastricht University, the MM programme (and MBA) are undergoing programme alignment, bringing the learning goals in line with those of SBE. Additionally, during the Assurance of Learning process the audit panel has reviewed the learning goals of both the MBA and MM programme. The findings are expected end of September 2024 and will be incorporated in the programme alignment. This process will be completed by September 2025.

The previous panel mentioned that the MBA curriculum, which is designed to provide students both with an academic and professional learning experience, potentially leaves students underprepared for the thesis. In order to improve support to the students, a series of workshops have been organised for them (see section 4.5.5). The workshops are available for all students, not only those located in Maastricht. Furthermore, the panel suggested developing the MBA specialisations offered in the programme. Since the last accreditation, the MBA programme has already expanded the number of expertise tracks (electives of 12 ECTS credits) that it offers. However, we are also looking to develop further specialisations of 18 ECTS credits, building on the current expertise tracks. Areas of interest for development are Healthcare, Digital Innovation and Sustainable Food Systems.

As for the MM programme, the panel emphasized continuous improvement of the Marketing Management curriculum in terms of academic content. The current development of the Flex learning environment has been a further opportunity to ensure an improvement in the course's curriculum.

This leads to the panel's recommendation to make greater use of digital platforms for both the MBA and MM programmes. This has been implemented in Canvas, where all course information, assignments, support activities and self-assessments have been added to provide further support to the students' learning. The learning environment, which we refer to as Flex, centralise all course information in one place, regardless of whether students are studying online or face-to-face, to ensure consistency in learning as well as a more personalised approach.

The Flex learning environment is currently available for all MBA programme variants and is now being created for the MM programme. The MM programme will move to Flex in September 2025.

Finally, the panel requested that we consider ways to improve educational expertise in the development of the programme and staff. Following the move to the UM, MSM has made great use of the training opportunities available within SBE. All teaching staff have been engaged in obtaining the UTQ. As mentioned above, the UM provides a range of educational workshops that are available to MSM faculty members. Moreover, we work closely with SBE's Learning Academy, particularly regarding the development and implementation of thesis supervisor trainings (for more information see section 4.6).

The former panel was satisfied with the use of rubrics in all course assessments but was concerned with that for some of the assignments reviewed the application was inconsistent. In order to deal with these inconsistencies, the rubrics are regularly revised and discussed amongst faculty. Moreover, in order to

avoid inconsistencies in application, academic course coordinators (ACC's) discuss courses and assessments with all faculty members teaching in their courses. Finally, the ACC's check the assessment grades before they are released to students. It should be noted that the ACC has the final decision on grades.

The former panel showed some concern regarding the consistency in the academic rigour of the thesis. As already mentioned, more workshops have been organised to assist students in their research journey. Furthermore, regular discussions with faculty members on the thesis help to develop a common perspective on the thesis. More specifically, a new evaluation form has been developed to provide more feedback in the rubric and examiners are now required to provide written feedback on the forms. Finally, regarding the business plan, a working group has been set up to review the assessment criteria in the rubric.

Attachment 4: reviewed documents

Self-evaluation report

Master of Business Administration and Master of Arts in Management. NVAO Self-evaluation report, Maastricht University - School of Business and Economics - Maastricht School of Management, November 2024.

Maastricht University put at disposition of the panel an extensive 'base room' with materials pertaining to the two degree programmes under review. Apart from the self-evaluation report, the panel looked at following (sets of) documents:

- SBE Strategy
- Curriculum Map & Description
- Course Syllabi
- Programme SWOT analysis
- Follow-up previous accreditation
- SBE Matrix structure
- List of MSM Partner Institutions
- Name Change MM
- Programme set-up MSM MBA & MSM MM
- Composition of teaching staff and CV's
- Academic course coordinators
- University Teaching Qualification
- International Classroom
- Class of 2024 Yearbook video
- UM Vision on Assessment / SBE Assessment Policy
- Education and Examination Regulations 2023-2024 and 2024-2025
- SBE Board of Examiners chamber structure 2025
- Annual report Board of Examiners – Executive Education 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024
- Assurance of Learning
- Teaching and Grading Guidelines
- Thesis Guide MBA/MM and Thesis Evaluation Form
- Completion Rates & Cum Laude Rates
- Success rates per course MM and MBA programme

After the visit, and upon explicit request of the panel, the programmes provided additional information:

- MM and MBA learning goals
- Learning goals Expertise tracks / Specialisations MBA

Thesis review

A representative sample of 15 master theses and their assessment forms, selected among students graduating the Master of Arts in Management in 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024. Names and student numbers are available with evaluation agency AeQui.

