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BSc International Business Administration

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Advisory report of the assessment of the existing programme  
Site visit: 12 – 14 November 2024

## Colophon

### Institution and programme

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam  
Amsterdam  
Institutional Audit: yes

Programme: BSc International Business Administration  
Site: Amsterdam  
Mode: fulltime  
ISAT-number: 50952

### Assessment panel

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## Summary

From 12 to 14 November 2024 an assessment panel of AeQui visited the School of Business and Economics (SBE) at VU Amsterdam to perform a quality assessment of eight degree programmes in Business Administration. 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 Bachelor of Science (BSc) in International Business Administration (IBA) according to the NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. The panel's overall judgement is **positive**.

### Intended learning outcomes

The BSc IBA is a three-year full-time 180 EC programme offered in English. The IBA programme has a clear and distinctive profile, features proper learning outcomes, and is well connected to the professional field. Its profile and learning goals are very much in line with the mission and educational vision of the university and the school. The programme offers an international learning experience, covering traditional management disciplines that are tailored to the international context. The international and cross-cultural profile of the IBA programme is not only elaborated on paper, but exists in the reality of a diverse student and staff body and effectively permeates the course contents and the student experiences. The formulation of the intended learning outcomes is adequate and reflects the domain, the level and the orientation of the programme. Both the international and the professional component are explicitly incorporated in the learning objectives of the IBA programme. The programme involves the professional field in different ways, thereby enhancing the learning experience of its students and maintaining the relevance of its profile and (learning) objectives. The newly re-established Advisory Board and the contacts with alumni ensure a structural connection to the world of work. The panel concludes that the BSc IBA **meets** this standard.

### Teaching-learning environment

The bachelor IBA 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 endorses the decision of the school to offer the programme in English, and approves of its English-language title. Since the previous accreditation, the programme team revised the curriculum involving all relevant stakeholders. The first three semesters consist of mandatory foundational courses that are relevant for any international business professional; in the fourth semester students participate among others in electives to establish their individual interests; in the third year, IBA students first go on exchange, and then focus on a disciplinary specialisation in two courses and the thesis. The new curriculum reflects even better than before the programme profile and objective, and underlines the unique features of the IBA programme at VU. Moreover, the course objectives in the revised curriculum are clearly aligned with the programme learning outcomes. Since the previous accreditation, the intake has increased by a third to about 450 students in September 2024, while more than 40% of the students and 50% of the teaching staff are non-Dutch. The IBA programme has an elaborate didactic concept, which reflects the educational vision of both VU and SBE and benefits its international dimension. Moreover, the teaching staff is well qualified to apply these educational principles to the substance of their

courses, the different teaching formats and the diverse group of students. In mixed classroom settings, for instance, teachers build upon differences to enrich the learning experience of both Dutch and international students. Notwithstanding its size, the IBA programme has a positive vibe: the programme management created a community of students with different nationalities, backgrounds and interests who are taught and supported by an equally diverse, competent and enthusiastic staff team. The panel concludes that the BSc IBA **meets** this standard.

#### Student assessment

The bachelor IBA 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 university and the school, while the IBA assessment plan safeguards that course learning goals are assessed adequately and cover the programme objectives. Course and thesis assessments have undergone several changes since the previous accreditation round, and these adjustments are for the better. The Examination Board has the capacity and competency to assume a variety of assessment tasks, and assures the assessment quality of the bachelor IBA. The IBA thesis review demonstrated that in terms of assessment, the evaluation form is relevant, and the scoring is appropriate. The new online thesis trajectory platform is likely to facilitate a more consistent motivation of the thesis scores. The panel concludes that the BSc IBA **meets** this standard.

#### Achieved learning outcomes

Students who graduate from the bachelor IBA have effectively acquired all intended learning outcomes. In the IBA thesis (12 EC), students do a systematic literature review or empirical research on a topic of personal interest in the chosen specialisation and with an international focus. The selected and reviewed IBA theses meet the quality expectations for a final project of academic orientation at bachelor level. Upon graduation, moreover, IBA graduates enter a relevant follow-up master programme and find suitable employment right after. In many cases, the job content and/or employer reflect the international profile of the IBA programme. The panel concludes that the BSc IBA **meets** this standard.

#### Recommendations

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

- enhance the role of the Advisory Board re programme objectives and curriculum relevance;
- give students more breathing space in the programme structure to acquire the competencies of an international business professional;
- use the new thesis trajectory as a tool to avoid further study delay and thus enhance the student success rate after four years;
- disseminate the results of educational innovations and experiments across the school;
- strengthen the connection in the thesis evaluation form between individual criteria scores and the overall thesis result;
- tighten the cooperation with the study association.

All standards of the NVAO framework have been positively assessed. On this basis, the panel provides a [positive recommendation](#) regarding the accreditation of the BSc International Business Administration.

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

Eric Dooms  
Chair

Mark Delmartino  
Secretary

## Introduction

### Institution

Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam is a university with nine faculties. Since its foundation in 1880, VU Amsterdam has stood for scientific and value-driven education, research, and knowledge transfer. Its education and research are closely linked and have a strong social orientation. All education is provided on one campus in the heart of the Zuidas Knowledge District.

The School of Business and Economics (SBE) is one of VU's faculties and offers five BSc, ten MSc, and 15 postgraduate programmes in economics and business administration. Since its establishment in 1948, SBE has evolved into a school with over 9,000 students and over 500 academic and non-academic staff members.

The school is governed by the SBE faculty board under the leadership of the dean. The academic staff is divided in departments; each head of department assigns the teaching, research, and administrative tasks. SBE has a well-established system of quality assurance of teaching and assessment, which is based on the VU Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning and to which all programmes adhere. SBE has three examination boards: one governing all government-funded programmes, one for accredited postgraduate programmes, and one joint board with the University of Amsterdam for the master Entrepreneurship. Since the last accreditation in 2018-2019, the school obtained both AACSB and EQUIS accreditation, which has further improved the quality assurance process.

Each degree programme has a dedicated programme director who is responsible for content, organisation and quality assurance. The director ensures that the curriculum is adjusted to the

intended learning outcomes and that the learning environment meets the quality requirements of SBE. In the bachelor and larger master programmes, a programme coordinator assists the director. Each degree programme has a programme committee comprising of an equal number of students and lecturers, appointed by the SBE faculty board.

### Programme

The Bachelor of Science (BSc) in International Business Administration (IBA) is a three-year full-time 180 EC programme. Notwithstanding its positive result in the previous accreditation, obtaining the judgement 'good' on its teaching and learning environment, the programme initiated several enhancements including a structural revision of the curriculum, which was implemented in 2022-2023.

Over the years, the student intake has increased from 332 (in 2018-2019) to 446 students (in 2024-2025). A considerable number of international students enrol in this English-language programme: during this accreditation period, their share has grown from 24% to 42%. Dutch and non-Dutch students are attracted by the international learning experience of IBA in which the traditional management disciplines are tailored to the international context.

### 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. VU Amsterdam has commissioned AeQui to carry out the assessment. At VU, the cluster assessment features eight bachelor, master and post-experience (executive) master programmes.

In the run-up to the visit, a preparatory meeting was held with representatives of SBE to exchange information and plan the dates and programme of the site visit. In collaboration with the programme, AeQui assembled an independent and knowledgeable panel (see Attachment 1). The panel explicitly oriented itself to the cluster in which this programme is placed. The visit was carried out from 12 until 14 November 2024 according to the programme presented in Attachment 2.

The assessment was conducted based on the Accreditation Framework for Higher Education in the Netherlands. VU Amsterdam has a positive institutional audit decision, and therefore the panel assessed four standards of the framework. 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 BSc IBA programme put at disposition many relevant materials, which served as background information before and during the visit. An overview of these materials is listed in Attach-

ment 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 7 November 2024, and guided the panel's questions during the visit.

An Open Consultation Hour for students, teaching and support staff was organised in connection with the preparatory meeting; eventually, nobody used the opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. At the initiative of VU Amsterdam, a Development Dialogue will take place in Spring 2025. The results of this meeting will 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 school 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 bachelor programme International Business Administration (IBA) aims to prepare students to function in a “VUCA” world - an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Students are educated to think critically and autonomously and acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes. The programme offers an international learning experience, covering traditional management disciplines that are tailored to the international context. The teaching staff is largely international and also a considerable part of the student cohorts is non-Dutch. In mixed classroom settings staff and students create meaningful dialogues, and each IBA student undertakes a cross-cultural experience abroad or in the Netherlands.

The panel gathered from the written materials that the aspirations of the IBA programme are directly derived from the educational vision of both VU and SBE. This vision is formulated along two axes: (1) the behavioural component is firmly embedded in the core values Responsible, Personal and Open of the VU; and (2) the content component consists of the roles Academic, Professional, and Citizen. In addition to these two dimensions, which are underlying all degree programmes at SBE, the programme is guided by the IBA Compass. This Compass translates the mission of the School and consists of four directions – Commit yourself, Create the new, Challenge the ordinary, and Connect to the community. The IBA programme content is based on three Compass elements: People, Business, and International context. The

integration of these Compass elements makes IBA students develop not only knowledge and skills as an academic and a professional, but also a strong cultural sensitivity and self-awareness that is needed to become world citizens.

During the discussions on-site, the panel noticed that the mission and vision of VU and SBE are not mere theoretical constructs on paper, but are effectively underpinning the profile, design and implementation of the IBA programme. Hence, the panel endorses that integrating the academic, professional and citizen roles with the behavioural components responsible, personal and open creates a unique profile for both SBE and for the bachelor students that graduate from the IBA programme. Moreover, the panel found that the IBA Compass is an appealing way to translate the mission of the school in both behavioural and content components for an international programme featuring cross-cultural experiences. Similarly, the specific profile aligns well with the programme’s motto ‘work without borders, think without boundaries’ that comes across strongly in a programme with a clear international focus in terms of contents, students, staff, and experiences. Finally, the panel acknowledges the student/person-centred approach of the IBA profile/programme: as one of the teaching staff clearly pointed out during the discussion, it is not a coincidence that the IBA Compass figure has a human person in the middle of the compass but a confirmation that the IBA programme puts a human being, be it the student or the object of the study, at the centre of its attention.

### **Intended learning outcomes**

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that SBE has developed a single – and according to the panel relevant – framework to guide the formulation of the learning outcomes of its degree programmes. The intended learning outcomes of the bachelor IBA consist of learning goals and learning objectives: the goals refer to what graduates are or have and are set SBE-wide; the objectives refer to what graduates can do or make and are specific to the IBA programme. The panel observed that there is a direct link between the respective goals and objectives, and that both goals and objectives are clustered around five dimensions: academic and research skills, bridging theory and practice, social and professional skills, broadening your horizon, and self-awareness.

The IBA programme features five learning goals and six learning objectives. While their formulation essentially remained the same, the intended learning outcomes have been reorganised in view of the initial AACSB accreditation: the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business is a highly reputed accreditation body whose international quality standard SBE managed to obtain in 2022. The panel has studied the intended learning outcomes and noticed that they are aligned with the Dublin Descriptors, formulated at the appropriate bachelor level and reflect the academic orientation of the programme. Furthermore, the panel acknowledges the distinctive international dimension in the learning objectives of the IBA programme, as well as their attention to the professional component.

### **Professional Field**

The panel noticed that all degree programmes under review adopt a similar yet programme-specific approach in their structural connections

to the professional world. These contacts invariably serve to improve the learning experience of students, to understand the needs of corporations and organisations, and to enhance the quality and relevance of the respective programmes.

The IBA programme has been establishing links to the professional field by means of the programme director and the course coordinators. Their contacts have led to the concrete involvement of companies in several first (Organisation Theory), second (International Strategy) and third-year (Strategic Management) courses, as well as to insights that found their way into new (IBA Lab) or adjusted (Global Sustainability) courses in the curriculum. In addition, the IBA programme obtains useful input from internship supervisors, from staff that is also active in the professional field and from organisations who eventually employ IBA graduates.

Furthermore, the panel was informed that the IBA Advisory Board is back on track: after the COVID-19 period and following the redesign of the curriculum, it was decided to establish a new board. It consists of three members who together offer insight into different perspectives of the IBA programme, and meets twice per year. The panel welcomes the complementarity of the board members, as well as the plans of the programme management to add two more members with equally distinctive profiles to the Advisory Board. The panel sees room for a more precise task description for the Advisory Board, notably with regard to its advisory role in safeguarding the programme objectives and the curriculum relevance. At the time of the site visit, it was not clear to the panel which (type of) advice had already been requested or provided.

Finally, the panel noticed that the school is conducting systematic research among its alumni,

while programme management also keeps track of the professional whereabouts of its graduates. These efforts ensure that there is ample contact between the programme and its alumni, who in turn provide IBA students with a glimpse of their professional future.

### Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel thinks highly of the overarching way in which the mission and educational vision of the university and the school are underpinning the profile and the learning goals of all degree programmes under review. This common approach, which is also visible in the contacts with the professional world, ensures consistency and recognition across programmes. In the specific case of the bachelor IBA, the panel considers that the programme has a clear and distinctive profile, features proper learning outcomes, and is well connected to the professional field.

The panel commends the programme for the IBA Compass, which adds an additional and appealing layer to the IBA profile while maintaining the overarching vision of the school. The panel is convinced that the international and cross-cultural profile of the IBA programme is not only elaborated on paper, but exists in the reality of a diverse student and staff body and effectively permeates the course contents and the student experiences.

The panel endorses the way the intended learning outcomes have been adjusted since the previous visit. Their formulation in both learning goals and learning objectives is adequate and reflects the domain (international business administration), the level (bachelor) and orientation (academic) of the programme. In this regard, the panel applauds both the international and the professional component that are explicitly incorporated in the learning objectives of the IBA programme.

The panel appreciates the different ways in which the IBA programme is involving the professional field. By doing so, it enhances the learning experience of its students and maintains the relevance of its profile and (learning) objectives. According to the panel, the newly re-established Advisory Board and the efforts to keep track of alumni constitute important steps for the programme to ensure a structural connection to the world of work. In this regard, the role of the Advisory Board re programme objectives and curriculum relevance could be enhanced.

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 bachelor International Business Administration is a three-year full-time programme. At the time of the site visit in 2024-2025, the first three semesters consist of mandatory foundational courses that are relevant for any international business professional; in the fourth semester students participate among others in electives to establish their individual interests; in the third year, IBA students first go on exchange (while international students may pursue a minor that meets IBA specific requirements at another Dutch university), and then focus on a disciplinary specialisation in two courses and the thesis. In the IBA thesis (12 EC), students do theoretical and empirical research on a topic of personal interest in the chosen specialisation and with an international focus.

The panel was informed that this curriculum is the result of a major revision, which was implemented in 2022-2023. Following internal and external analysis, a task force was set up and proposed a programme overhaul featuring among others revised course contents, stronger learning lines (academic, citizen, and professional) and a structured thesis trajectory. The changes to both content and structure of the programme were approved by all stakeholders, such as the Faculty Board, the Programme Committee and the Examination Board. The panel gathered from the extensive written materials and the many discussions on site that the revision was well prepared and comprehensive, and that its implementation constitutes a change for the better: the programme design is well

thought out, the courses and learning lines are coherent, and the curriculum now constitutes a good mixture of common (mandatory / foundational) courses and a broad range of (elective) specialisations.

Since the previous accreditation, the programme team has worked hard on the constructive alignment between programme learning outcomes, course learning goals and assessments. The preparations for the initial AACSB accreditation brought along a reorganisation of the intended learning outcomes at programme level, while the curriculum revision entailed changes in the course learning objectives. The curriculum map shows which learning objectives are addressed per course. The curriculum assessment connects the respective courses to the types of assessment. The IBA assessment plan brings together all programme, course and assessment elements, which in turn allows to monitor and evaluate the level of constructive alignment in the programme. Students are informed about this connection / alignment in the course descriptions of their study guides. The materials and discussions demonstrated convincingly, according to the panel, that there is a clear connection between the IBA programme learning outcomes and the IBA course objectives.

The panel gathered from the student chapter and the discussion with IBA students on site that they are overall satisfied with the (revised) curriculum. They like the international dimension, the course contents, the diversity of students and staff, and the opportunity to spend a semester abroad. Moreover, students feel heard

when they raise concerns, notably in and through the Programme Committee, and notice that there is willingness among the management and the staff to change/improve. When they were asked what can be improved, students pointed first and foremost to the programme structure: because the study is divided in blocks, students work in constant survival mode to finish a block of courses, which consist of many group assignments and interim deadlines. Hence, there is hardly any time to digest what they have learned nor to use the recently acquired knowledge in other courses. Moreover, students indicated that the study association is very active but could operate with more support and in closer connection with the programme, the school and the university. Content-wise students appreciated the many different specialisations but found that digital/IT issues could be more interwoven across the programme, and not limited to specific courses in dedicated specialisms. The panel acknowledges the points raised by the students and, having discussed these with staff and programme management, encourages the team to give students more breathing space in the programme structure to acquire the competencies of an international business professional. Moreover, it advises the school to strengthen the ties with the study association.

To conclude, the many efforts of the programme team make the IBA programme stand out among comparable programmes in the Netherlands and beyond. The panel acknowledges the strengths mentioned in the benchmark exercise that the IBA programme at VU offers several courses that are uniquely tailored to the international context, that the third-year specialisation is prepared through electives in the second year, and that students have an international study experience abroad.

### **Language of instruction**

The title of the IBA programme is in English, and so is the programme's language of instruction. The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that this is an explicit and obvious choice in view of the international orientation of the programme and the future professional careers of the graduates. In fact, IBA essentially prepares students to operate in a global business community, in which English is the leading language in both academia and the business world. Moreover, many graduates will enter a master programme, which is often taught in English, and afterwards join an employer with an international workforce. It is therefore very likely that IBA graduates will be working in an environment where English is the default language.

The panel also learned that the programme attracts a considerable number of international students (40%) because it is offered in English. This diversity in turn is critical to deliver on one of the key IBA programme objectives as students encounter people from diverse backgrounds and learn to operate in an international context. Working and learning in diverse teams, moreover, is in line with the university-wide educational model of the 'Mixed Classroom' that builds upon differences to enrich the learning experience for all students. This, in turn, requires a sufficient number of staff with appropriate international and intercultural expertise, as well as good quality language skills. The panel was informed that more than half of the lecturers on the IBA programme is non-Dutch, while it is university-wide policy that lecturers (can follow training to) display English language skills at level C1.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel endorses the English title of the programme, as well as the extensive

motivation that underpins the decision to offer the bachelor IBA in English.

### Didactics

The IBA programme features an elaborated educational concept, consisting of four pillars: (1) *knowledge activation* implies that students develop an ability to reproduce, apply, and synthesise knowledge. This mainly happens through lectures; (2) *community learning* means that interactions are an essential part of the learning experience, hence a focus on on-campus learning, which is organised in the physical classroom (primarily through small-scale teaching) but also beyond (through initiatives of the study advisers, the career centre and the study association); (3) *active-blended learning* reflects the vision of the university to develop online teaching tools with the ambition to combine on-campus teaching with technological opportunities that enhance teaching effectiveness; (4) *mixed classroom* stands for an educational approach that builds upon differences to enrich the learning experience for all students. Moreover, the programme recently developed the IBA4-framework to guide course coordinators in the design, content and delivery of their courses while accounting for four educational developments: Active blended learning, Assessment, Artificial intelligence, and Academic conduct. Prior to the visit, the panel had the impression that the educational concept was rather complex featuring frameworks and pillars at university, faculty and programme level. However, during the discussions on site, the panel understood that the didactic concept is far more than a theoretical construct: in fact, each of these pillars and educational developments stands for several concrete initiatives and (good) practices that are implemented in the day-to-day delivery of the IBA bachelor programme.

During the visit, staff indicated that many of the pillars and developments found their origin in the COVID-19 period and started from the assumption that it should be rewarding for both students and staff to come to campus for study and teaching. Hence, it is VU-wide policy to organise on-site lectures that are not live-streamed and where students can earn bonus points and get useful feedback if they hand in participation assignments. In this way, students are rewarded if they come to class rather than punished for not showing up. In their session with the panel, IBA students mentioned that most of their fellow students appreciate the new initiatives, while some continue to consider any form of obligatory attendance / participation reward as a limitation to their freedom and thus a mere continuation of high-school practice. The panel was impressed by the many initiatives for both staff and students, and welcomes in particular the bottom-up approach, the variety and the positive connotation (reward instead of punishment) of these practices.

### Student admission, intake and success rate

The panel read in the self-evaluation report and the detailed appendix on student data that since the previous accreditation, the yearly intake has increased from 332 (in 2018-2019) to 446 students (in 2024-2025), with one-off peaks of 532 and 520 students in-between. The IBA programme does not operate a selection procedure or a *numerus fixus*. All students holding a Dutch pre-university secondary school (VWO) diploma with mathematics A or B are eligible for admission; international students with an equivalent diploma, proof of sufficient English and proficiency in Mathematics can be admitted, as well. During the same period, the share of students with an international previous education has grown from 24% (2018-2019) to 47% (2023-2024). The panel acknowledges that the growing number of non-Dutch students is a positive

development as it aligns with the international objectives of the programme and allows all students to benefit from the Mixed Classroom concept.

In the first year, students are required to earn at least 48 ECTS in order to obtain a positive Binding Study Advice (BSA). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these requirements were dropped or adjusted downwards in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. According to the student data, the share of students dropping out during the first year is now back at the pre-Corona level, i.e. just under 30%. The panel was informed that there are three main reasons for students to quit the programme in their first year: (1) they get distracted and eventually do not meet the BSA requirements, (2) they realise that this is not their preferred study, or (3) because of personal circumstances.

The IBA programme adopts different measures to ensure that students choose the right study as early as possible. In order to make them aware of the programme and their fit, all incoming students fill out a mandatory Study Choice Check questionnaire during their registration process, which aims to clarify to potential students what is expected from them when they enter the programme. According to the programme team, this check has no significant impact as the result does not affect the study choice/student enrolment. Moreover, as part of the curriculum revision, the programme enhanced its communication efforts aimed at prospective and new students. It provides neutral informative insights - rather than promotional messaging - about what IBA entails, what it means to study an academic programme in the business field, and the importance of having an interest in and familiarity with numbers. In addition, the first year courses are now designed in such a way that students get a feeling of what

they can expect in the rest of the programme. At the time of the site visit, it was too early to tell if the new communication approach was effective. The IBA students the panel spoke to during the visit indicated that the programme is living up to their expectations. Furthermore, the Student Academic Mentor programme (SAM) was set up in 2020-2021 to give first-year students at SBE a good start with their study. The focus is on the grounding and the well-being of students. All first-year students are assigned a mentor and become part of a mentor group led by third-year bachelor or master students, who in turn are supervised and guided by IBA tutors/lecturers. The panel gathered from the discussions that both students and staff/tutors are enthusiastic about SAM as it effectively reaches almost all students during their first year. Nonetheless, it is clear to the panel – and also to the programme team – that the high number of students and their differing levels of motivation and interest, requires ongoing attention.

In terms of success rate, student data indicate that the average study duration remains stable at 42 months: this means that students who pass the BSA tend to finish their three-year study with an average delay of 6 months. Recent information on the success rate of entire cohorts was quite limited and concerned mainly those students who started the programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to these figures, about 29% of the IBA students finish within the nominal duration of three years, while 62% do so in four years. Students indicated to the panel that the individual courses are feasible in their own right, but that the repetitive set-up of the programme in four blocks with many assignments and interim deadlines makes it tough to finish the entire programme within the nominal duration. Moreover, several students delay their studies on purpose because of extracurricular opportunities, such as a board

membership of the study association, a side job, or an internship. Notwithstanding the extra-curricular ambitions of certain students, there is room according to the panel for a higher success rate, notably after four years. Based on the discussions with management, staff and students, the panel is confident that the recently revised bachelor thesis trajectory may increase the share of students who finish the programme in (less than) four years.

### Staff

The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that all teaching is performed by academic staff belonging to one of the SBE Departments. According to the staff overview, the IBA programme features 93 teaching staff, ranging from ten full professors over 41 assistant professors to two researchers. About two thirds of the staff is international, and almost half is female. The faculty members are active in research, hence they can guide students to the current academic research frontiers, help shape their conceptual skills, and prepare them to engage in research. In addition, several lecturers hold positions at SBE and in industry, and are thus well placed to support students in building bridges between science and practice. During the visit the panel established that staff dedicated to the IBA programme has good research credentials.

Furthermore, the panel noticed that staff development is well organised at IBA as it is embedded in policies and documents including 'SBE HRM educational policy', 'SBE BKO policy', and 'SBE Tenure Track procedure'. All academic staff are expected to have English language proficiency at level C1. Permanent staff members can pursue continuing education in specific fields such as active blended learning, mixed classrooms, activating work formats, examinations and assessments. Currently, 75% of the

academic staff involved in IBA holds a university teaching qualification (BKO) and 10 staff obtained also the senior qualification (SKO/LOL). The latter group is particularly active in course innovation, notably with regard to active blended learning in both teaching and assessment. Some staff also participated in the mixed classroom workshop, a training session to teach culturally diverse groups. During the visit, IBA staff gave some very concrete examples of how they are adjusting their teaching practice to serve both large and small groups of students. Students from their side emphasised the expertise, didactic skills and commitment of the staff, as well as their capacity to teach a multinational and multicultural group of students. Taking all these elements together, the panel is convinced that the IBA staff is well qualified to teach a diverse student audience.

Prior to the visit, the panel wondered how a programme of this size can be managed and coordinated. Based on the written materials, it was clear that this is a challenging endeavour that requires ongoing consultation with the Department heads and the course coordinators. The discussions on site have shown that both the programme director and the programme coordinator are experienced and co-operate as a very effective team. The IBA staff indicated to the panel that the IBA management is very supportive and of crucial importance to help teaching staff to navigate across the different frameworks when designing, preparing and delivering the respective courses. Moreover, programme management goes at lengths to create a team spirit among staff who primarily belong to a department, through meetings, regular programme updates, and by improving the onboarding process of new staff. According to the panel, the IBA programme is doing well because the management is good at facilitating the teaching staff to operate as a team.

## Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that the bachelor IBA 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 of the school to offer the programme in English, and approves of its English-language title. According to the panel, the IBA programme is truly international in several respects, not just in terms of language.

The panel thinks highly of the efforts of the programme team to design and implement a curriculum revision involving all relevant stakeholders. The new curriculum reflects even better than before the profile and objective of the programme, and underlines the unique features of the IBA programme at VU. Moreover, the IBA course objectives in the revised curriculum are clearly aligned with the programme learning outcomes.

The panel is impressed by the didactic concept that underlies the programme. Together the different components reflect the educational vision of both VU and SBE and benefit the international dimension of the IBA programme. In addition, the teaching staff is well qualified to apply these educational principles to the

substance of their courses, the different teaching formats and the diverse group of students.

During the site visit, the panel felt a positive vibe among all stakeholders it spoke to. The panel commends the programme management for creating in this programme a community of students with different nationalities, backgrounds and interests who are taught and supported by an equally diverse, competent and enthusiastic staff team.

In addition to these positive considerations, the panel draws attention to four findings on which the programme may want to undertake action: first, to look further into the programme structure in an attempt to give students more breathing space in acquiring the competencies of an international business professional; second, to use the new thesis trajectory as a tool to avoid further study delay and thus enhance the student success rate after four years; third, to tighten the cooperation with the study association; and fourth, to not only facilitate educational innovations and experiments, but also disseminate their results among the programme/SBE staff.

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 gathers from the extensive written materials and the discussions on site that the IBA programme operates an assessment system that complies with the assessment policy and procedures of SBE, which in turn are based on a university-wide policy on assessment quality. The programme has put at disposition both policy documents, the *Manual for Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning – VU Assessment Framework* and the *SBE Policy Plan – Assessment Policy*. Moreover, every degree programme has a dedicated Assessment Plan, which is updated every year and describes the assessment vision, the programme and course objectives, the curriculum map and curriculum assessment, and the forms of testing. Both programme director and examination board use the assessment plan to control the relationship between the programme's intended learning outcomes, the course-level objectives and their assessment.

The panel has looked into the most recent Assessment Plan for the bachelor IBA and established that the elaborate document does justice to both central policies and the specificity of the degree programme, ensuring constructive alignment between goals, objectives and assessment. The panel also noticed that for the IBA programme, assessment is an integral part of learning. This means that in course tutorials, students are prepared for exams by discussing exercises and cases, sharing practice exams and organising Q&A sessions. Moreover, students receive feedback on their essays/assignments, which in turn deepens their understanding and prepares for upcoming assessments. It is pro-

gramme-wide policy that every course includes different forms of assessment and that a substantial part of the grade is based on an individual assessment component. In this regard, the panel was informed that a majority of course assessments feature a group component and that such assignments include safeguards against free-riding and/or individual reflections.

During the visit, the panel discussed on several occasions and with different stakeholders the developments in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its impact on course delivery and assessment. The Examination Board included regulations on the use of (Generative) AI in its Rules and Regulations, which have been further specified by the respective programme directors. Across the school/programmes, these regulations follow the principle that they should instigate awareness and action rather than punishment, and that they should foster autonomous and critical thinking while recognising that AI can also be a support for learning. Hence, all course coordinators address AI in their manuals and choose from a menu of AI usage options for assignments. These options range from AI not being allowed at all to AI being mandatory. Students from their side must sign an Own Work Declaration affirming the authenticity of their deliverables. Both staff and students indicated to the panel that the rules are clear at the level of the individual assessment/course. In addition, programme and SBE management mentioned that the university and the school are working on comprehensive policies, which are likely to affect the contents of the courses, the delivery of education, the organisation of assessment, and eventually the intended learning outcomes of the respective program-

mes. Currently, there is a focus on the acquisition of AI skills, which differs at bachelor and master level. This specific area of attention is very new, and its implementation differs per programme. The panel gathered from the discussion with the two bachelor programme directors that there is a good working relationship with the central level, that they belong to the early adopters, and that the size of their programmes allows them to leverage/pilot new initiatives. In sum, the panel found that the IBA programme is addressing issues of (Generative) AI in a mature and appropriate way. Nonetheless, it is clear to the panel – and the programme – that the developments regarding (Generative) AI require ongoing attention not only in terms of thesis writing and assessment, but also in didactics.

#### **Course assessment**

At the level of individual courses, coordinators select the most appropriate assessment methods for testing the learning goals. They do so in close collaboration with the programme director who ensures that across the programme a variety of assessment methods is used. Each course has its assessment file. This file contains a test blueprint, the exam, resit exam and/or assignments, a model answer plus scoring guide, a test and item analysis, the results of the course evaluation, and a short reflection report by the examiner. Course coordinators are free to tailor the different exam components to the requirements of their course, provided they inform the programme management accordingly. The teaching staff is encouraged to experiment with innovative forms of teaching and testing; in every course, however, the individual student performance should be the decisive factor in the assessment. The panel agrees to the emphasis on individual exam components and the promotion of diversity and innovation in assessment formats. It welcomes the elaboration of

assessment files, which constitutes a good basis for the Examination Board to monitor the quality of assessment per course and disseminate the good practice examples they come across in their reviews.

The panel also noticed that SBE and IBA uphold the four eyes principle in exam design: when constructing the exam, the examiner – who very often is also the course coordinator – takes the course objectives into account and the extent to which these are assessed by the exam. Every course coordinator appoints a co-reader with content knowledge to check the contents of the exam, thus ensuring that all draft exams are reviewed by at least one other member of staff. The panel welcomes this approach.

Furthermore, the panel gathered from the discussions on site that the programme has gone to lengths to implement the recommendations of the previous accreditation panel. In fact, as part of the wider curriculum revision (see standard 2), the programme has introduced more multi-disciplinary elements in the examinations (for instance in integration courses such as Global Sustainability), has raised the level of individualised feedback in group assignments (e.g. through more hands-on and interactive tutorials), and has smoothed the transition from group assignments to the individual bachelor thesis project (e.g. by including individual essays and participation assignments in courses such as Global Supply Chain Management, Managing People, and Ethics). Although they may not necessarily be in a position to compare pre- and post-revision assessments, the current students indicated to the panel that they understand the importance of the different assessment methods and think that the course coordinators are using these wisely.

During the visit, the panel discussed in particular one of the curriculum innovations, the IBA Lab. This lab is offered as an elective course in year 2 and is an experimental space for lecturers to practice with educational innovations and develop guidelines for large-scale implementation across the entire IBA programme. The IBA Lab received university-wide recognition when it reached the final of the VU Innovation Awards in 2023. Students and staff were positive about the opportunities offered by the lab, which has been used among others to assess the behaviour of students on the spot/in class. The panel was informed that in view of the university's vision on assessment and the learnings from the lab, the programme will introduce formative dialogue and in-class competence assessments in due course, and explore also other forms of assessment capturing self-directed learning and student co-creation. The panel welcomes the IBA Lab and similar initiatives as they demonstrate the proactive approach of this large-scale programme to look for innovation in assessment.

### **Assessment of graduation works**

The bachelor thesis is the culmination of the three-year IBA programme. The thesis process is governed by clear rules and procedures, which are explained in an information session to students and in the thesis manual. The bachelor thesis is conceived as a course with learning goals and a detailed assessment grid. An IBA thesis coordinator, who also coordinates the Bedrijfskunde bachelor thesis, oversees the entire process. The panel noticed that the changes to the thesis process have allowed the programme to abolish the so-called 'Red Flag Decision', a go/no go decision prior to the final deadline, which had been questioned by the previous accreditation panel. Moreover, since the academic year 2023-2024, the IBA programme and thesis supervisors/assessors have

been using OnStage for support in guidance and assessment. The panel was informed that notwithstanding some teething problems, the overall experience with this new digital system has been positive. The panel acknowledges that the entire thesis process is well structured and includes a proper manual for students and an instruction for supervisors. Students from their side indicated that the thesis manual is comprehensive and the thesis process clear.

As part of its external assessment, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 IBA bachelor theses, as well as the corresponding completed evaluation forms. The selected theses were submitted in the academic year 2023-2024. The quality of the IBA theses will be addressed under the next standard. In so far as thesis assessment is concerned, the panel noticed that the thesis evaluation form is relevant as it contains a well-developed rubric that allows students to understand the assessors' appraisal of the different thesis components. Moreover, the panel found that the rubrics were being used by both assessors and that the final scores were very much in line with the respective appreciations of the panel members. As points for attention the panel indicated that there is a lot of variation in the written feedback with which assessors (are expected to) motivate their scores. Moreover, it was not entirely clear how the scores on the various criteria lead to a final grade, nor how differences in grading between the assessors lead a joint assessment. Finally, the panel advises the programme to keep tracking the developments regarding (Generative) AI and their impact on the design and production of the bachelor thesis, and take appropriate action accordingly.

During the discussion on-site, the programme team indicated – and alumni confirmed – that students do get extensive and constructive

feedback orally or by e-mail during the thesis trajectory and again after they submitted the final version. Moreover, the new online thesis trajectory platform should facilitate consistent qualitative feedback by the assessors, and allow (external) reviewers like the accreditation panel to also consult the individual assessments from both supervisor and co-assessor. The team indicated that across the different degree programmes or within the IBA specialisations there is no fixed or calculated weighting of the evaluation criteria that automatically lead to a final score. Such decisions are left to the discretion of the programme director and/or the individual assessors. While it understands this argument, the panel nonetheless invites programme directors and Examination Board(s) to check if there are ways to link the sub-scores on evaluation to the overall score on the thesis. This is all the more important as some criteria cover several thesis components.

### **Quality assurance**

The panel gathered from the written materials that different stakeholders are involved in assuring the quality of assessment: there is first and foremost the Examination Board, but also the programme director and individual examiners play a role. The Examination Board supervises the examination process and carries final responsibility for safeguarding the quality control of assessment and examinations. It investigates systematically whether the process of assessment within SBE is carried out according to predefined criteria. These criteria are well established and include the reliability and validity of the tests. In the event that tests are not up to standard, the Examination Board reports to the programme director and the examiner and issues interventions for improvement.

During the site visit, the panel met with representatives of all three Examination Boards. It

gathered from the written materials and the discussion that these Boards – there is one for all publicly funded degrees, one for privately funded programmes, and one joint Board for the joint programme with the University of Amsterdam – fulfil their legal tasks adequately and have relevant expertise regarding assessment, fraud and legal issues. The external member has extensive assessment expertise. It is a conscious decision of SBE to have several programmes supervised by one Examination Board as this leads to greater uniformity, clarity and authority.

Because the entire assessment process is a complex chain of processes, products, procedures, and agreements, the Examination Boards at SBE not only guard the quality of assessment, but also look into assessment policy, assessment plans, assessment construction, and organization. The panel was informed that in 2022-2023, the Examination Board paid extra attention to the reliability and consistency of the thesis assessments. The reason for this was the previously observed inconsistency between thesis forms and the increasing doubts around the authenticity of some theses through the use of outside assistance or AI tools in writing the thesis. This endeavour resulted in recommendations for adjustment of the thesis process and thesis manuals. The discussion with representatives from all three Examination Boards demonstrated according to the panel that the board members are knowledgeable about the different degree programmes they monitor and committed to their quality assurance tasks. Moreover, the panel noticed with satisfaction that the external members are highly valued members of the respective boards because of their assessment expertise.

The Examination Board for publicly funded degree programmes is in charge of assuring the assessment in the IBA programme. The panel noticed from the materials and discussions that

the Examination Board follows-up attentively on any issue that may pop up in the programme. On average the board selects two IBA courses per year for further examination. Programme management is informed about this decision, supports course coordinators in submitting the dossier, and includes the received feedback in course coordinator conversations. According to the panel, the quality assurance of IBA assessment is in competent hands with the Examination Board.

### Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on-site, the panel considers that the bachelor IBA 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 university and the school. The IBA assessment plan, moreover, demonstrates that course learning goals are assessed adequately. This, in turn, ensures that the learning outcomes at programme level are covered.

Course and thesis assessments have undergone several changes since the previous accreditation

round, and these adjustments are for the better, according to the panel. The panel is also positive about the capacity and competency of the Examination Boards, as is demonstrated by the variety of assessment tasks it is assuming. The panel is convinced that the Examination Board for publicly funded degree programmes is very capable of assuring the assessment quality of the BSc IBA programme.

The panel's review of the IBA bachelor theses demonstrated that in terms of assessment, the evaluation form is relevant. Moreover, the panel agreed in almost all cases to the thesis scores. However, not all assessors are making optimum use of the form yet. The panel therefore welcomes the new online thesis trajectory platform, which is likely to facilitate a more consistent motivation of the respective criteria and the overall thesis scores. Given that some criteria cover several thesis components, the panel invites the programme to strengthen the connection between the individual criteria scores and the overall thesis result.

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 achievement of the intended learning outcomes is assessed by the cumulative results of the exams and the thesis. The IBA bachelor thesis is the culmination of the programme and as such assesses most of the learning objectives. As part of its external review, the panel looked at a selection of 15 bachelor theses, which were representative in terms of final scores and programme specialisations. The panel found that the theses covered interesting and actual topics, that they were systematically set up and clearly introduced, and that students demonstrated that they were well positioned in the literature. In sum, the panel was positive on the overall level of the IBA bachelor theses, with many (very) good research projects and only a few that were merely sufficient.

As a point for attention, the panel wondered if all students are introduced in the curriculum to, and equally well prepared for, the three types of theses they can choose from: qualitative research, quantitative research, and systematic literature review. Discussing the latter finding, the programme team indicated that students should have been prepared properly prior to the thesis trajectory as they follow courses in both qualitative and quantitative research. The type

and topic of the thesis is linked to the graduation specialisation they choose. Moreover, the recently revised thesis process foresees 5 to 6 feedback moments where students get feedback on their progress, including their (methodological) research skills.

In sum, the panel found that through the bachelor thesis, IBA students demonstrate that they have reached the (intended) learning goals and objectives.

#### Performance of graduates

The panel gathered from the written materials that the bachelor IBA prepares for various career options, ranging from jobs at consultancy firms, multinationals, or financial institutions to positions in small and medium-sized enterprises. As the vast majority of students decide to proceed right-away to a master degree, only a few students enter the labour market directly.

The panel noticed with satisfaction that the programme keeps track of its alumni, notably through the IBA LinkedIn page. Roughly half of the IBA graduates enter a master programme at VU, while a quarter do so at another Dutch university and another quarter continue abroad. IBA graduates who stay at VU often choose for the broad master programme in Business Administration, or the specialist master programmes in Finance or Marketing. The panel was informed that in principle, all IBA graduates can enrol in any follow-up master programme at SBE/VU, although some master programmes/specialisations do expect some prior knowledge (notably on quantitative skills for Finance or Accounting) that should have been obtained in the bachelor specialisation courses.

In addition to the results of the National Alumni Survey, which is available per master programme and does not cover separately the IBA graduates, the IBA programme organised its own alumni research. The panel was informed that the results of both surveys were similar and complementary: almost 80% of the master students found a job within six months after graduation in both general (traineeships, consulting, management) and disciplinary positions (marketing, business analytics), while IBA alumni end up after their master programme in different jobs and various industries that match the IBA profile. Moreover, the international dimension of the IBA profile is visible in both the location and the description of the job: global management traineeship, international brand management, or international placements in and beyond Europe.

The IBA alumni the panel spoke to during the visit confirmed this point: the IBA programme provided them with international skills, a cross-cultural awareness and the capacity to think globally. As a result, they have been/are working in an international company, a public institution, a non-profit association and a cross-cultural start-up as manager, strategic adviser or business consultant. According to the panel, both

the (few) students and alumni and the (relatively extensive) data demonstrate that upon graduating from the IBA programme, students are well prepared for the next step in their academic career. When they eventually enter the labour market, they often combine their disciplinary master level competencies with the international dimension that stood out during their bachelor programme IBA.

### Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the panel considers that students who graduate from the bachelor IBA have effectively acquired all intended learning outcomes. According to the panel, the selected and reviewed IBA theses meet the quality expectations for a final project of academic orientation at bachelor level. Upon graduation, moreover, IBA graduates enter a relevant follow-up master programme and find suitable employment right after. In many cases, the job content and/or employer reflect the international profile of the IBA programme.

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

## Attachment 1: Assessment panel

**dr. Eric Dooms, chair**

Associate Professor of Strategy-TIAS

**dr. Johanna Vanderstraeten, expert**

Associate professor Entrepreneurship at University of Antwerp, Belgium

**prof.dr. Albert Boonstra, expert**

Professor Information Management, Faculty of Economics & Business at the University of Groningen

**Karen Taselaar, student-member**

Student BSc International Business Administration, University of Twente

The panel was supported by Mark Delmartino MA, 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: NU Building, VU campus, De Boelelaan 1111, Amsterdam

### Tuesday 12 November 2024

- 09.00 Arrival panel and internal meeting
- 10.00 Faculty Board
- 10.45 Programme Management BSc Bedrijfskunde & BSc International Business Administration
- 11.45 Students/Alumni BSc Bedrijfskunde & BSc International Business Administration
- 12.45 Lunch and internal meeting
- 13.30 Lecturers BSc Bedrijfskunde & BSc International Business Administration
- 14.30 Break
- 15.00 Programme Management MSc Digital Business and Innovation
- 15.35 Students/Alumni MSc Digital Business and Innovation
- 16.10 Lecturers MSc Digital Business and Innovation
- 16.40 Internal deliberations
- 17.45 Preliminary feedback programmes day 1
- 18.15 End of day 1

### Wednesday 13 November 2024

- 09.00 Arrival panel and internal meeting
- 09.30 Programme Management MSc Verandermanagement
- 10.05 Students/Alumni MSc Verandermanagement
- 10.40 Lecturers MSc Verandermanagement
- 11.10 Break
- 11.30 Examination Boards all programmes
- 12.30 Lunch and internal meeting
- 13.15 Programme Management MSc Business Administration fulltime
- 13.50 Programme Management MSc Business Administration parttime
- 14.25 Students/Alumni MSc Business Administration parttime
- 15.00 Lecturers MSc Business Administration parttime
- 15.30 Break
- 15.40 Students/Alumni MSc Business Administration fulltime
- 16.15 Lecturers MSc Business Administration fulltime
- 16.45 Internal deliberations
- 17.45 Preliminary feedback programmes day 2
- 19.00 End of day 2

### Thursday 14 November 2024

- 09.00 Arrival panel and internal meeting
- 09.30 Programme Management MSc Transport Supply Chain Management & MSc Entrepreneurship
- 10.30 Students/Alumni MSc Entrepreneurship
- 11.05 Lecturers MSc Entrepreneurship

- 11.35 Break
- 11.55 Students/Alumni MSc Transport & Supply Chain Management
- 12.30 Lecturers MSc Transport & Supply Chain Management
- 13.00 Lunch and internal meeting
- 14.30 Preliminary feedback programmes day 3
- 15.00 Internal deliberations
- 16.30 Plenary feedback all programmes
- 16.30 End of site visit

The names of the participants are available with evaluation agency AeQui.

## Attachment 3: Recommendations from previous assessment

The BSc International Business Administration programme was last assessed in 2018-2019. The overall assessment of this accreditation for the bachelor programme was satisfactory. On Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment the programme received a 'good'. In response to the accreditation assessment, IBA programme management initiated multiple foundational changes to enhance and safeguard the educational quality of the IBA programme. Nonetheless, other developments, including Covid-19, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and changing student behaviours, necessitated additional supportive measures to safeguard educational quality and student progress.

Below we discuss in more detail how the IBA programme enhancements accommodated the accreditation 2018 2019 recommendations.

### **To present scientific knowledge and skills more explicitly in the curriculum, maybe in the form of a separate teaching-learning trajectory.**

The changes address (and go beyond) the recommendation to present scientific knowledge and skills more explicitly in the programme. The IBA redesign for example resulted in disciplinary focus across mandatory courses. Regarding each course, learning objectives were reassessed, articulating a clear distinction between scientific knowledge and skills. For example, the course Business Statistics clearly specifies 'knowledge' and 'skills' objectives. Furthermore, the articulation and implementation of the three learning lines - Academic, Professional, and Citizen – further articulated and aligned knowledge and skills. The first reactions from both students and lecturers on these initiatives are positive.

### **To introduce more multi-disciplinary elements in the examinations.**

With the reviewed curriculum the position of integration course (i.e. 4-week 6 EC course, delivered in periods 3 and 6) has been reaffirmed. Specifically, the preceding disciplinary courses provide input to the integrative (i.e. multidisciplinary) courses, typically to apply learning to navigate international business challenges. For example, the global sustainability course (year 1 period 3) familiarises students with state-of-the-art know-what on sustainability challenges and uses prior learning (e.g. organization theory and business mathematics) to learn students' skills to conduct product life-cost calculations and develop (organizational) recommendations. According to students the course 1.3 Global Sustainability represents a relevant and timely addition. Complementing this multi-disciplinary approach, assessments have become more varied and aligned with course objectives. For example, a typical IBA course encompasses multiple assessment forms, amongst which written exam, case analysis, and participation quizzes.

### **To smoothen the transition from group assignments to the individual bachelor thesis project.**

Changes in the IBA programme relate directly to preparing students for the bachelor thesis project. Across courses the minimum individual grade component is 60%. In addition to group work, individual students are asked to complete written exams (almost all courses), individual essays/reflections (e.g., 2.2 'Managing People: Psychological Foundations'), and partake in (individual) participation assignments (e.g., 1.4 'Global Supply Chain Management' and 3.4 'Ethics', 3.5 Empowering People for Societal Changes). In-class participation assignments substitute mandatory attendance, invoking a shift from sanctioning absence to rewarding attendance. In addition, these assignments provide a week structure,

enhance student engagement, and allow for know-how, know-what, and know-why assessments. Together, the IBA programme encompasses a variety of measures to prepare students for the Bachelor thesis project.

**To raise the level of individual feedback in the case of group assignments.**

Working in (diverse) teams constitutes an important pillar within the IBA programme. It is imperative that students acquire competences enabling them to work effectively in (global) teams comprised of individuals that bring different values and norms. To ensure feedback on written products and behaviours, throughout the programme tutorials have become more 'hands-on' and 'interactive'. Team members are also mandated to participate in team evaluations and discussions (e.g. Feedback Fruits), and group assignments may include an individual component (separately assessed). Courses 1.5 Cross-Cultural Marketing and 2.4 Business Research Method I are examples of courses that use Feedback Fruit to evaluate students' performance in teamwork.

**To align the interpretations of the Red Flag Decision among supervisors and students**

Since the last accreditation the bachelor thesis trajectory has been further improved. Today, the entire bachelor's thesis trajectory encompasses four months (12 EC). Students write their thesis in one of the eleven offered specializations and can choose between a literature review or an empirical research project. The BT coordinator also ensures that the thesis requirements are aligned with program level objectives safeguarding that thesis projects are sufficiently 'international'. In collaboration with the examination board the Red Flag Decision – a go/no go decision prior to the definitive deadline - has been removed. In turn, the BT IBA coordinator has implemented various measures to ensure quality of supervision and assessment, while ensuring that bachelor theses are compliant with the IBA programme objectives. For example, assessment forms have been improved, instructions for students and supervisors have been improved, students are asked to submit a video of their work, and the international nature of the bachelor thesis has been re-emphasised. Taken together, the accreditation recommendations have been adequately addressed with an even-handed appreciation of educational developments, constructive alignment, and study feasibility.

## Attachment 4: Reviewed documents

### Self-evaluation report

BSc International Business Administration, Self-evaluation report NVAO accreditation cluster Business Administration, VU Amsterdam 2024.

- General information
- Intended learning outcomes
- Teaching-learning environment
- Assessment
- Achieved learning outcomes
- Strengths and weaknesses analysis
- Student's paragraph

### Appendices

- Intended Learning Outcomes
- Programme 2023-2024
- Course descriptions / Study guide 2023-2024
- Assessment plan 2023-2024
- Thesis Manual and thesis assessment form 2023-2024
- SBE Assessment policy
- VU Assessment policy
- Teaching and Examination regulations 2023-2024
- Regulations and Guidelines regarding examinations SBE 2023-2024
- Annual report examination board funded programmes SBE 2022-2023
- Overview of academic staff
- Graduates in academic years 2022-2023 & 2023-2024
- Intake, drop out and success rates
- AACSB Memorandum
- IBA redesign 2020 IBA4 Framework 2023
- IBA Learning lines 2023
- IBA exchange minor 2022
- IBA LAB evaluation report 2023
- IBA AI policy 2023
- IBA AI Honesty Declaration
- IBA AI Course coordinator template

### Additional materials

- Cluster bedrijfskunde – curriculumwijzigingen 2024-2025
- Cluster bedrijfskunde – instroom 2024-2025
- Annual Schedule IBA 2024-2025

### Thesis review

A representative sample of 15 graduation works and their assessment forms, selected among students graduating the bachelor programme International Business Administration in 2023-2024. Names and student numbers are available with evaluation agency Aequi.

