

**Radboud University
Nijmegen School of Management**

AACSB – NVAO combined accreditation visit

Report on Programme Assessments

October 2024

Table of Contents

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	9
PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS.....	13
General Findings and Considerations	13
Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes	14
Standard 2 – teaching and learning environment	18
Standard 3 – assessment	28
Standard 4 – achieved learning outcomes	32
Specific Findings and Considerations	35
1. BSc Bedrijfskunde.....	35
2. BSc Economie en Bedrijfseconomie.....	40
3. MSc Business Administration	44
4. MSc Economics.....	47
5. MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel.....	51
Overall Conclusion.....	57
ANNEXES	59
Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programmes	59
Annex 2 – Peer Review Team and Thesis Committee members	61
Annex 3 – Programme of the site visit	63
Annex 4 – Materials reviewed.....	65

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

This document reports on the external assessment of five academic degree programmes at the Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) of Radboud University (RU): BSc Bedrijfskunde (*Business Administration*), BSc Economie en Bedrijfseconomie (*Economics and Business Economics*), MSc Business Administration, MSc Economics, and MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel.

The assessment was undertaken as part of a broader exercise combining the Continuous Improvement Review of NSM by AACSB with the assessment of programme quality according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessments. The Peer Review Team (PRT) performing the external assessment consisted of three AACSB volunteers, an academic expert familiar with the Dutch higher education system, and a student member. The combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation visit took place from 9 until 12 June 2024.

In the run up to the visit, the PRT received extensive and good quality information on RU, NSM and the respective degree programmes under review. The PRT appreciated the open atmosphere in the discussions on site. Throughout the visit and across all programmes, it sensed a positive spirit among the interviewees, as well as a clear commitment to NSM and its programmes. Faculty were passionate about their discipline, the courses they teach and the programmes they relate to. Students and alumni felt part of the university community and were advocating strongly for their programmes.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

The PRT establishes that each programme has a clear profile, which reflects the mission of the school - responsible governance for sustainable societies - and fully aligns with the values of the university. Internal and external stakeholders are committed to the Nijmegen ‘colour’ of NSM and its programmes. Moreover, the school serves the needs of the region and attracts a good number of first generation students. The NSM profile is operationalised in distinctive features for each programme. The intended learning outcomes reflect the programme content, level and orientation and do justice to the respective specialisations. Effective mechanisms are in place to collect input from external stakeholders and to safeguard programme quality and relevance. According to the PRT, the ‘selling points’ of the school and the programmes deserve more attention in the communication towards the outside world. Similarly, the distinctive features of each programme are addressed in the curricula, but can be integrated (more) explicitly in the end qualifications of the programmes. In sum, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.

Standard 2 – teaching and learning environment

The PRT establishes that each programme can rely on a strong teaching and learning environment. This environment is based on school-wide policies and initiatives and reflects the NSM mission, vision and profile. Each programme has a clear organisational and

curriculum structure, and is headed by resourceful coordinators. The individual curricula have been adjusted over time – taking into account the recommendations of the previous panel – and are coherent and feasible. The courses and their learning goals contribute to achieving the learning outcomes. Student admission is transparent and student performance is monitored, which results in adequate study progress and success rates. Support services meet the educational and personal needs of the students. Highly qualified, didactically skilled and motivated teaching staff deliver research-based education in an international classroom setting. The school offers extensive professionalisation opportunities for staff and commits to an inclusive, safe, inspiring and engaging work and learning environment. The five programmes under review each made a specific choice with regard to their language of instruction. The PRT endorses the respective choices and their motivations as they do justice to the profile of the university and the school. It also subscribes to the English titles of those programmes where English is a/the language of instruction. As a point for attention, the programme portfolio in both departments requires further action at the level of specialisations: as part of the (envisaged) curriculum revision each programme (specialisation) deserves its own position in the higher education landscape with a unique rationale, selling proposition, set of learning outcomes and curriculum. In sum, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 2, teaching-learning environment.

Standard 3 – assessment

The PRT establishes that in each programme, assessment is an integral part of the quality culture as well as an important pillar to ensure that students demonstrate the learning goals and achieve the end qualifications. Safeguarding the assessment quality is in the capable hands of the respective Examining Boards, whose members are competent and execute their tasks independently from the school management. As part of the external review, a thesis committee looked into the quality of the bachelor and (post-initial) master thesis evaluations and established that all programmes have an adequate thesis assessment system in place. Endorsing these findings, the PRT noticed that each programme reacted comprehensively to the concerns of the previous panel and that the new provisions stand the ‘proof of the pudding’. The PRT advises the school to appoint a truly external member in the respective Examining Boards, encourages all – not just most - assessors to provide insightful feedback, and calls upon Examining Boards to pay systematic attention in their sample review to theses with a low pass score. In sum, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 3, assessment.

Standard 4 – achieved learning outcomes

The PRT establishes that students graduating from each of the five programmes effectively acquire all intended learning outcomes. In theses with relevant and often original topics students demonstrate that they have a solid grasp of the subject matter. Alumni see their education at NSM as a stepping stone for further studies and/or a successful career in the Netherlands and beyond: bachelor students seamlessly transition to relevant master programmes within the school or elsewhere in the Netherlands, while master students quickly find employment at the proper level and in a relevant domain after graduation. The PRT suggests the school, the departments and the programmes to collect information on the

professional whereabouts of their alumni more systematically and per specialisation. In sum, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.

Overall appreciation

Based on the information provided and the discussions during the site visit, the PRT considers that all programmes meet the quality requirements on each of the four standards set by NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all programmes, as well as on the way each degree programme under review fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

Given that its overall assessment of the degree programmes is positive, the PRT issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of each programme submitted for accreditation by the Nijmegen School of Management at the Radboud University:

- BSc Bedrijfskunde
- BSc Economie en Bedrijfseconomie
- MSc Business Administration
- MSc Economics
- MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel

The chair and the secretary of the PRT hereby declare that all PRT members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

On behalf of the Peer Review Team,

Timo Korkeamäki
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Date: 11 October 2024

INTRODUCTION

From 9 to 12 June 2024, a combined AACSB-NVAO assessment visit was held at the Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) of Radboud University (RU). Organised in line with the AACSB-NVAO Agreement of Cooperation, the visit combines the review of programme quality according to the NVAO framework with a Continuous Improvement Review of NSM by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

This report presents the assessment of five bachelor and (post-initial) master programmes at NSM. The administrative data on these programmes are presented in Annex 1.

Panel composition

The assessment was performed by a so-called Peer Review Team (PRT), a panel consisting of three AACSB volunteers, an expert on Dutch higher education and a student member. The team that visited NSM and issued judgements on all standards and programmes, consisted of:

- Timo Korkeamäki, Dean International Business School, Aalto University, Finland, chair
- Philip Vergauwen, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management, Belgium
- Rudy Martens, Emeritus Professor University of Antwerp, Belgium
- Kathryn Graddy, Dean Brandeis International Business School, USA
- Thimo van Luijn, Maastricht University, student-member

The PRT was accompanied by Mark Delmartino, an NVAO-certified secretary who also liaised between the panel and NSM. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. The NVAO approved the panel in March 2024. Annex 2 contains a short description of the team members.

Preparation

In the run-up to the combined visit, NSM produced a Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) report addressing the issues covered by the AACSB standards for business schools that already hold AACSB recognition. It also prepared two volumes of programme-specific materials: one volume of self-evaluation reports according to the NVAO assessment framework and one document containing annexes on the respective programmes. The NSM accreditation team also provided university- or school-wide policy documents and materials, as well as programme-specific information in a dedicated digital base room. The materials which the PRT studied in the framework of this combined accreditation visit are listed in Annex 4. The PRT wants to express its gratitude towards the NSM accreditation team who has been instrumental in ensuring a good and timely information flow between the school and the panel.

Prior to the visit, the accreditation team at NSM was in contact with the PRT, the panel secretary and the AACSB accreditation manager to work out the programme of the sessions and agree on the materials to be made available. Moreover, PRT members have held several internal meetings to prepare for the visit. On 30 April 2024, the AACSB office in Amsterdam

organised a briefing session for the PRT. During this so-called pre-visit call, the specific character of the combined accreditation visit was presented to the panel members, as well as the particular perspectives of the AACSB continuous improvement review and the NVAO programme assessment. The Dutch higher education expert, the student member and the secretary exchanged impressions on the self-evaluation reports during two online meetings. Moreover, this group and the PRT chair held a final preparatory meeting on 3 June to identify the key issues to be addressed during the site visit from both AACSB and NVAO perspective. This meeting also served as Open Consultation Hour: two faculty signed up for this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel.

Site visit

The programme of the site visit was established and fine-tuned between NSM, the PRT chair and the secretary. The visit was held from Sunday 9 June until Wednesday 12 June 2024. On Sunday afternoon, the PRT had an internal discussion. At this meeting, panel members discussed the key issues they wanted to raise with the different stakeholders during the respective sessions. In order to fit all components that are customary in AACSB and NVAO reviews, the site visit schedule was very tight: nonetheless, all sessions were held in plenary. At the end of the site visit, the PRT presented the key findings from both AACSB and NVAO perspective to the management of NSM, to programme representatives, and to the executive board of RU. An overview of the site visit programme is provided in Annex 3. The School and the PRT agreed to hold a Development Dialogue after the site visit, in September 2024.

Assessment framework

NSM consists of five departments: Business Administration, Economics and Business Economics, Political Science, Public Administration, and Geography, Spatial Planning and Environment. In the framework of this joint accreditation visit, AACSB examined the strategy and policies on education, research and impact of the School, as well as their application and implementation on the programmes in Business Administration, Economics and Business Economics, the Radboud Management academy (RMA) and the doctoral programme in Management Sciences. Similarly, the underlying report covers the external assessment of five degree programmes that are organised through the departments of Business Administration, Economics and Business Economics, and the Radboud Management academy.

In order to establish the quality of each programme, the PRT has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. Given that Radboud University successfully completed the institutional audit and NSM holds accreditation for all degree programmes under review, the PRT was guided by the framework for limited programme assessments that focuses on the quality achieved. Programmes must demonstrate that their educational practices meet four standards: (1) intended learning outcomes, (2) teaching-learning environment, (3) assessment, and (4) achieved learning outcomes. For each programme, the panel has given a substantiated judgement per standard on a three-point scale: meets the standard, partially meets the standard or does not meet the standard. The PRT subsequently recommended a final conclusion regarding each programme on a three-point

scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative. This weighted and substantiated appreciation serves as advice towards NVAO when taking a decision on the re-accreditation of the respective programmes.

Thesis committee

The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes has been tested among others by examining a representative sample of mostly 15 theses for each degree programme. In order to make a valid selection of theses, NSM provided per programme an overview of the theses that had been submitted and accepted in the academic year 2022-2023. In the case of the post-initial MSc Bedrijfskunde, the thesis overview also included the academic year 2021-2022. The thesis score was the key determining factor in the selection. Before starting the individual selection of thesis samples, the committee secretary calculated the total number of theses accepted per programme and the number and percentage of theses that received a low (between 5.5 and 6.9), average (between 7.0 and 7.9), high (between 8.0 and 8.9) and excellent score (at least 9.0). The committee chair and the secretary then made a selection of the theses to be reviewed ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories. In order to have all scoring categories properly represented in the sample, the ratio of the lowest graded and highest graded theses was rounded up. The selection also took into account the existence (or not) of programme tracks / specialisations / dual degrees, the academic year in which the thesis was submitted, and looked for a possibly wide range of thesis supervisors. Details on the selection process per programme are provided in the section on specific findings. Annex 4 includes a breakdown of the thesis selection per programme variant and specialisation.

Such thesis review is not part of the AACSB accreditation exercise and was therefore outsourced to a thesis committee of eight academic experts:

- Philip Vergauwen, chair
- Dirk Buyens, Vlerick Business School
- Henk Kievit, Nyenrode Business Universiteit
- Anna Minasyan, Groningen University
- Anita van Gils, Maastricht University
- Marinus Verhagen, Tilburg University
- Celeste Wilderom, University of Twente
- Yilong Xu, Utrecht University

Short CV's of the thesis committee members are provided in Annex 2. The chair of the thesis committee is also the Dutch higher education expert of the Peer Review Team. The panel secretary supported the work of the thesis committee. The committee members received a briefing note on their tasks and participated in an online briefing session. Well before the site visit, the thesis committee members reviewed and reported on the quality of the theses as well as on the quality of the thesis assessment. On the basis of their feedback, the panel secretary drafted a report on the findings and considerations of the thesis committee, both in general terms and for each programme individually. This report was reviewed by the experts and validated by the thesis committee chair. The PRT verified the programme-specific findings

and considerations during the interviews on site and eventually issued a judgement per programme on the quality of the thesis (standard 4) and the thesis assessment (standard 3).

Report

This report covers the external assessment of five programmes, undertaken in the framework of the combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation visit. It will be submitted by NSM to NVAO as part of the accreditation process of its degree programmes. The next chapter constitutes the core of the report and is organised as follows: in the first section, the panel's general findings and considerations that apply across all programmes are presented per NVAO standard; the second section contains the specific findings per programme, and includes the considerations and judgements of the PRT on each programme individually.

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it among the PRT for review and feedback. The comments of the panel members were incorporated in a pre-final version, which was validated by the chair. The final draft was sent to NSM for a check on factual errors. The feedback from the institution was discussed in the panel who modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was sent to NSM on 11 October 2024.

PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

General Findings and Considerations

Organisation

The Nijmegen School of Management (NSM) is one of seven faculties that make up Radboud University (RU). The university was founded in 1923 and is now an internationally oriented public research university with strong roots in the region. NSM was established in 1988 and is located in the Elinor Ostrom Building, which offers purpose-built facilities, as well as a state-of-the-art work and learning environment. At the time of the site visit, the school counted around 500 academic and support staff and 5000 students. In line with the scope of the university, NSM has a strong focus on serving the region around Nijmegen. Almost half of the student population consists of first-generation students.

The School is managed by the Faculty Board: the dean, two vice-deans and a managing director. The dean is responsible for the general management of the Faculty and – with support from the vice-deans - for all research and teaching. The managing director is in charge of operational management and the support staff. The Faculty Joint Assembly - elected representatives of staff and students - discuss and approve the budget and policies of the Faculty. The NSM Education Institute oversees the organisation, coordination and quality control of education, while research takes place in the Institute for Management Research. The NSM Educational Centre supports students and staff. Since the previous accreditation visit, a Director of Internationalisation and Strategic Engagement was appointed to grow the School's reputation and partnerships globally.

All academic staff are affiliated to one of five departments, in which research and teaching capacity is integrated: Business Administration; Economics and Business Economics; Geography, Planning and Environment; Political Science; and Public Administration. Each department is organised in disciplinary units. Researchers from different departments and units collaborate in interdisciplinary research Hotspots. The five degree programmes under review each have a programme coordinator who ensures that the education provided meets the quality standards. Given the scope of both AACSB and NVAO exercises, the PRT mainly spoke to representatives of the faculty management and of the Business Administration and Economics and Business Economics departments.

Over the past few years, the School has experienced some volatility in its leadership. The Managing director and the Dean stepped down in the academic year 2022-2023. An Interim Dean took over until the appointment of a new permanent Dean, who started in March 2024, i.e. three months before the site visit. Furthermore, NSM is facing some financial challenges: following a rapid growth in staffing and funding between 2020 and 2023, a cost increase in combination with a funding shortfall has resulted in losses, entailing among others a hiring freeze. The PRT was informed during the site visit that the new Dean and Managing Director

are leading the way in the development of a new strategy for the school to regain financial stability by 2027.

Recommendations of previous accreditation panel

During the previous accreditation visit in 2019, the then panel made several general and programme-specific recommendations. Suggestions included among others that in addition to the existing provisions at course level, more attention should be given to evaluation and improvement thereof at programme level. Moreover the feedback in thesis assessments could be enhanced. These recommendations, as well as the actions taken accordingly, are addressed in the self-evaluation report. The current PRT notes that the school and the programmes have been diligent and serious in addressing these recommendations: the adjustments were set in motion shortly after the previous visit, and hence do not constitute ad hoc initiatives that were taken in light of the present review.

Moreover, the PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that these recommendations, in combination with other developments that were implemented following internal surveys, have led to a considerable – and still ongoing - adjustment of the respective programmes. According to the PRT, NSM is now having tighter control over the structure and organisation of education, and also the quality of education in the programmes has increased. The specific developments and adjustments are discussed in relation to the relevant standards and programmes in this advisory report.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

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

Profile

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the mission of NSM is clear and specific. According to the longread of its catchline mission statement – responsible governance for sustainable societies – NSM contributes to making societies more sustainable and resilient by focusing on systems of responsible governance and organisation through research, education and engagement. It enables students, organisations, societal actors and governments to play their part in the collective and organised pursuit of a better world. The PRT noticed that the NSM mission resonates nicely with the overall university mission - a healthy, free world with equal opportunities for all.

NSM understands management as a broad concept referring to the collective and organised pursuit of a better world. It addresses management challenges and solutions with the goal to contribute to long-term economic, societal and ecological value creation. The PRT acknowledges that this vision on management aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The PRT noticed, moreover, that the mission of the school is operationalised in its disciplines, research and teaching, which contribute to developing:

- sustainable economies that are co-created and given meaning in the development of corporate responsibility by inclusive organisations with a shared mission, focused on justice and sustainability;
- resilient societies, meaning sustainable democracies, inclusive and equitable institutions, and safe societies;
- a sustainable living environment through climate change mitigation and adaptation, restoring biodiversity, and preventing pollution.

The three focus areas – social economy, resilient society and sustainable environment - are studied from fundamental analytical as well as intervention perspectives. These perspectives, in turn, are based on three interconnected dimensions of responsible governance: politics/democracy, government/administration, and management/organisation. The PRT understands that the programmes under review connect mainly the latter two dimensions with the three focus areas.

The educational vision of the school is interwoven with its mission. It upholds the values of the university's pursuit to create meaningful impact, where academic excellence meets societal needs, fostering a healthier equitable world for all. According to its vision, NSM aims to shape learners into informed critical academic professionals who are equipped for responsible leadership. The PRT learned during the visit that this vision is operationalised in the teaching practices, which emphasise personal engagement, high-quality instruction and on-site learning. In concrete terms, this has led in recent years to the recruitment of additional staff, and thus to smaller class sizes and more student supervision. Moreover, after the COVID lockdowns, the school invested in on-site learning through its 'sticky campus' initiative: by creating hubs of collaboration and interaction on site, NSM wants to convince students to return to campus and thereby develop their social skills and social bonding. In addition, the PRT noticed the efforts of the school to create an inclusive, safe and collegial work and study environment. These efforts are not limited to strategic objectives and principles, but are effectively translated in policy and initiatives, such as a revised HR policy, the development of a social safety policy for students and staff, or the establishment of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee.

Furthermore, the PRT established that the mission and vision are also very much present in the respective degree programmes under review. Each programme is firmly rooted in research, aligns with national and global standards, and advocates for the school's mission of responsible governance. In this regard, the PRT noticed that each programme provides both a strong disciplinary backbone and enables learners to apply and combine different theoretical lenses and thus develop interdisciplinary perspectives. As will be elaborated in more detail in the programme-specific section, the distinctive features of each programme – how they stand out among similar programmes in the Netherlands – emphasise the multiple theoretical and methodological perspectives in teaching, an active engagement to education, and the ambition to have students/graduates create meaningful impact.

Finally, the PRT gathered throughout the discussions on site that the mission and vision of the School are broadly shared among all stakeholders – faculty management, teaching and service staff, students and alumni. In fact, several students and alumni informed the panel that it were the distinctive features that attracted / convinced them to eventually enrol at NSM. Students and alumni consider it a value added that degree programmes at the Business Administration and Economics and Business Economics departments of NSM address the imperative of reconciling economic considerations with societal and ecological value creation. Moreover, they appreciate being equipped with the knowledge and skills to have impact as both critical academic professionals and responsible leaders.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT has studied the end qualifications of each degree programme. While specific findings will be reported in the latter part of this report, the respective intended learning outcomes follow a similar structure in terms of their formulation. For each programme, the end qualifications are organised around statements in five areas: theory, research, application, communication and (self-) reflection. These areas are similar to the Dublin descriptors. In addition, the learning outcomes refer to the aim of the study programme and to the focus/ content of their respective specialisations.

In all cases, the PRT established that the formulation of the intended learning outcomes aligns with the envisaged level (6 for bachelor, 7 for master programmes) described in the European (and Dutch) Qualification framework. Moreover, all end qualifications mirror the requirements of the national Domain Specific Reference Frameworks for Business or Economics. Since the previous accreditation, however, these frameworks are no longer in use.

Furthermore, the PRT noticed that all degree programmes are aligned with the Subject Benchmark Statement for Business & Management or Economics, as set by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the UK. According to these statements, a bachelor graduate should demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding of a range of organisations, the wider business environment and communities in which they operate, and their governance and management. A master programme should provide a broad, analytical and integrated study of business and management/economics, covering a complex range of organisations and their interdependencies.

In sum, the PRT found that each degree programme features a set of intended learning outcomes that reflect adequately the content, level and orientation of the programme. It also welcomes the specific attention in the end qualifications to the respective specialisations.

While each programme definitely fulfils the basic requirements in terms of learning outcomes, the PRT was surprised to notice that none of the degree programmes refer in their intended learning outcomes to the specific profile of the university and the school or to the distinctive features of the programme. Given that all degree programmes are in the process of / envisage a curriculum revision that will incorporate the school's mission and vision even stronger, the

PRT suggests making the programmes' distinctive features also visible in the respective end qualifications.

Safeguarding programme relevance

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that NSM can rely on an extensive system of internal and external instruments to advise, monitor and evaluate the quality and relevance of its degree programmes. These initiatives have been further enhanced in recent years. In addition to ad hoc consultations via townhall meetings with departments, support staff, alumni, partners, and topical meetings with the Faculty Joint Assembly, the school established both an International Advisory Board and departmental Advisory Councils who each meet twice a year. The Radboud Management academy also features a dedicated Advisory Board. These ad hoc and structural meetings with internal and external stakeholders serve to gain different perspectives on envisaged changes and to ensure the continuing relevance of the educational offer. The composition of these bodies is relevant as they contain a variety of professionals who together encompass the different domains covered by the departments and school.

The PRT met several external stakeholders of both international and departmental advisory bodies. These representatives are committed to the school and to the distinctive features of the respective programmes. They emphasised the importance of NSM as provider of Business Administration and Economics and Business Economics programmes with a specific 'Radboud flavour' that stems from the institutional mission and educational vision. The advisory board members take their role seriously. Since their establishment, the advisory boards have regularly provided input on the plans of the school, the departments and the programmes. The PRT learned that the ongoing and envisaged curriculum revisions have been / will be tabled at these meetings. Moreover, several alumni and Advisory Board members 'tell the story of NSM' in different geographies. In this way, the school's mission and strategic principles are gradually being communicated beyond the Nijmegen campus.

The PRT welcomes the efforts of the school to ask input from external stakeholders in monitoring and safeguarding the quality and relevance of its degree programmes. The discussions on site have convinced the panel that the current provisions are strong and effectively contribute to the continuous development of programme quality. Moreover, the PRT thinks highly of the commitment of the individual advisory board members towards the school, the departments and the programmes.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the PRT considers that all five programmes under review have a clear profile, which reflects the mission and vision of the school and fully aligns with the values of the university. NSM has a strong organisational culture based on its responsibility/sustainability-oriented mission. The panel thinks highly of the way this school-wide profile is translated in distinctive features of the respective programmes.

Similarly, the PRT is impressed by the commitment of all internal and external stakeholders to the Nijmegen ‘colour’ of NSM and its programmes: staff and students share the values of the school and endorse the distinctive features of the programmes; alumni and advisory board members are true ambassadors of the university and the school. Moreover, the PRT commends the school for the way in which it serves the needs of the region by attracting a good number of first generation students.

The PRT establishes that each degree programme features a set of intended learning outcomes that reflect the content, level and orientation of the programme and does justice to the respective specialisations.

The PRT welcomes the efforts of the school to collect systematically the input of external stakeholders in order to monitor and safeguard the quality and relevance of its degree programmes. The current provisions are strong and effectively contribute to the continuous development of programme quality.

These considerations apply to all programmes and constitute a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on this standard for each programme.

If anything, the PRT thinks that the ‘selling points’ of the school and its programmes deserve more attention in the communications towards the outside world, notably to potential students. Similarly, the distinctive features of each programme are addressed in the curricula, but can be integrated (more) explicitly in the end qualifications of the programmes.

Standard 2 – teaching and learning environment

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

Curriculum

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that NSM provides a teaching and learning environment with many common elements that apply to all degree programmes offered by the respective departments. At NSM, educational policies are managed at school level: the Vice-dean of Education, the Director of Education and the Head of the Education Centre work together with Heads of Department and Departmental programme coordinators to ensure a coherent and smooth strategic and operational management. The programme coordinators organise the content, teaching methods, learning experiences, and end qualifications of the respective programmes. In all programmes, the curriculum management process follows the plan-do-check-act Deming cycle and is driven by internal and external input, which ensures the involvement of different stakeholders. The (analysis of this) information allows to (re)design programmes to meet current and international standards. The discussions on site have demonstrated according to the PRT that the educational policies and the curriculum management process reflect the mission, vision

and profile of the school, and are well embedded in the organisation of the school, the departments and the programmes. Moreover, the PRT was impressed by the capacity and the commitment of the programme coordinators.

Across the school, the academic year consists of two semesters, each subdivided into two periods of seven or eight teaching weeks, and subsequent examination weeks. A semester usually consists of five courses of 6 EC each, two per block and one spanning the entire semester. The PRT noticed that all degree programmes are firmly rooted in the research undertaken in the departmental units and the hotspots, and align with national and global standards for Business Administration and Economics education. The bachelor programmes provide a disciplinary backbone based on a solid knowledge of the relevant domain. The master programmes enable learners to apply and combine different theoretical lenses and thus develop interdisciplinary perspectives. In all programmes, the curriculum explicitly advocates the school's mission of responsible governance. According to the PRT, the common curriculum structure, its research-based character and the specific attention to the NSM 'flavour' are strong points in each programme, as will be described more extensively in the programme-specific section of this report.

The PRT noticed that each programme pays good attention to linking the learning goals at course level to the learning outcomes at programme level. In addition to a matrix that connects the courses to the end qualifications, course coordinators every year compile a course dossier that provides information on the learning outcomes, course activities and assessment methods. In compliance with the AACSB requirement regarding Assurance of Learning, every dossier contains direct measures (assessment forms and related test matrices) and indirect measures (student evaluations) to demonstrate that the various competencies (learning goals and end qualifications) are addressed and achieved. The PRT welcomes the efforts of the programmes to monitor and ensure that the courses effectively contribute to - and comprehensively cover - the programme learning outcomes.

Further to its consideration on the previous standard, the PRT established that the distinctive features of each programme are operationalised in the respective curricula. It encourages the programmes to go a step further and include these selling points more explicitly in the course learning goals. According to the PRT, this endeavour could be part of the current and envisaged programme curricula revisions.

During the visit, the PRT got increasingly convinced that the efforts of the school to continuously improve the quality and consistency of its programmes is more than a slogan, but is effectively implemented on a day-to-day basis by committed staff and students. Since the previous accreditation, the communication in the Business Administration department between the bachelor course coordinators and the programme coordinator was strengthened by organising regular workshops on the impact of Artificial Intelligence, on the learning lines and end qualifications, and on gaining teaching efficiency. The master programme coordinator is now organising bi-monthly meetings with all specialisation coordinators, and has regular meetings with the thesis coordinators. At the Department of Economics and Business

Economics, the process of programme renewal has led to a stronger involvement of teachers from all levels providing a more diverse perspective, and to a better communication amongst teachers. Moreover, the information in the course manuals was aligned to promote uniformity and ease of access for students, staff and administrators.

While specific details on the individual programmes will be reported in the latter section of this report, the PRT found that it was not always clear how the four initial degree programmes were structured in terms of specialisations. It is obvious according to the panel that each department offers both a bachelor and a master programme that pertain to its core domain. However, the rationale for the current programme specialisations portfolio was less clear. For instance, the PRT wondered why both bachelor programmes were offering a Business Economics specialisation, how these specialisations differed and how it affected enrolment in follow-up master programmes. Similarly, the PRT was surprised that both master programmes offered an International Business specialisation. Furthermore, the master programme in Economics featured an Accounting & Control specialisation, which usually attracts a student body with a Business Administration background.

During the visit, the PRT discussed in several sessions this issue of programme portfolio management. The panel was informed that the current specialisations reflect the substantive domains of the departmental units: both the Business Administration and Economics and Business Economics departments have a section on Business Economics and the latter department has a dedicated unit on Accounting & Control. Currently, all programmes are under revision and it is highly likely that the current structure of specialisations and tracks will be changed. For instance, as of 2024-2025, the bachelor Business Administration will offer only one Dutch-language (Bedrijfskunde) and one English-language (International Business Administration) specialisation, with opportunities for specific in-depth learning through minors. At the time of the site visit, the structure of the bachelor Economics and Business Economics was under review with the aim to implement a revised curriculum as of 2025-2026. The PRT was informed that the review addressed among others the Business Economics component. Moreover, the bachelor curricula would be structured in such a way that students from both programmes could switch after one year.

A revision of the master programmes is also on the agenda. It is currently being discussed and will be implemented after the roll-out of the bachelor programmes. At the time of the site visit, the two master programmes were looking at the respective specialisations and at their connection with the revised bachelor programmes. Moreover, there are plans to create new specialisations or minors that are based on the interdisciplinary research outcomes of the hotspots. The PRT welcomes the new curriculum plans of the four initial degree programmes and encourages the faculty and the programme management to continue focusing on the overall portfolio of programme specialisations.

Language of instruction

The five programmes under review have each made a specific choice with regard to their language of instruction: the post-initial master is taught entirely in Dutch, the two master

programmes are in English, and the two bachelor programmes are offered in both Dutch and English. Where English is a/the language of instruction, the programmes (also) have an English title. Each programme provided a comprehensive motivation in the self-evaluation report when English is a/the language of instruction. During the visit, moreover, the PRT discussed this motivation with management, staff and students.

In so far as the master programmes are concerned, NSM has deliberately chosen to conduct both programmes in English because this aligns with the demands of the field of Business Administration/Economics for several reasons: first, English proficiency is indispensable for graduates embarking on professional journeys in both the private and public sectors of business and economics; second, English is the primary language of research in the economics and business community, enabling students to engage with and become integral members of this global network; third, it equips students to become globally aware citizens and employable professionals, who can provide a valuable contribution on the international stage. Moreover, the choice for English as language of instruction reflects the school's distinct take on economics and business administration: the international / global perspective and the focus on grand societal challenges are fundamental to the programmes and prepare students to confront global issues, such as climate change, at the intersection of business, economics and society. The PRT endorses the motivation of the master programmes in Business Administration and Economics to use English as language of instruction. It also thinks that the English names of the programmes are appropriate.

Both bachelor programmes offer several specialisations. From the outset, students can either opt for a Dutch track (Bedrijfskunde, Economie en Bedrijfseconomie) or an English track (International Business Administration / Economics and Business Economics). By doing so, the school caters for the diverse needs and requirements of its (potential) student body and of the labour market. Both the university and the school attract many first generation students from the region who find the transition from secondary school to the university quite challenging. These students often prefer – at least at the start of their programmes – to study in their mother tongue. Moreover, several public and private organisations and companies on the domestic market operate in Dutch and require their staff to be proficient in Dutch. Nonetheless, all bachelor students acquire a sufficient command of the English language in the second and third year because it is the primary language in the Business/Economics community, it is crucial for accessing high-quality educational and scientific resources, it prepares them for a master programme where the language of instruction is mostly English, and it allows them eventually to pursue a career in an international environment. The English-language tracks are distinctly international in profile and curriculum substance. By attracting in this way a number of international students, the learning environment in class becomes international and intercultural. The PRT endorses the motivation of the bachelor programmes in Business Administration and Economics and Business Economics to use both English and Dutch as language of instruction. This particular approach does justice to the profile of the university and its embeddedness in the region, to the requirements of the labour market, and to the professional and academic outlook of the business and economics domains.

The discussions on site, moreover, have demonstrated that the university and the School have proper policies and structures in place, such as Radboud in'to Languages or the Radboud Writing Lab, to ensure that both students and staff live up to the language requirements of the programmes. Moreover, students spoke highly of the English language skills of the staff, while the PRT also noticed that several international staff were proficient in Dutch.

Learning environment

The PRT noticed that all programmes can rely on a strong learning environment, whose key features are common to all departments and programmes of the school and reflect the mission and vision of the school. NSM believes that personal interaction and a vibrant academic community are crucial in developing learners into professionals who responsibly contribute to society. This belief is operationalised through teaching practices that emphasise personal engagement and high-quality instruction. Acknowledging that the learning environment was up-to-standard at the time of the previous accreditation, the PRT welcomes the many new initiatives and investments in this regard after the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022).

Over the past years, NSM has recruited additional faculty to minimise the reliance on external staff, which in turn has enhanced the continuity of the programmes, and led to smaller group sizes and increased supervision. In this way, the school and the programmes also responded adequately to the recommendation of the previous accreditation panel with regard to the recruitment of additional staff members for the Economics programmes.

Furthermore, the PRT learned that the school has invested in on-site learning to ensure that the learning spaces are not just sites of academic endeavour but also hubs of collaboration and interaction. These investments are part of the school's 'sticky campus' approach to convince students to study on campus after the lockdowns. In addition, the technological facilities created during the lockdown have led to new forms of teaching practice, of personalised learning, and of collaborations with partners around the world. In these developments, the school applies the 'pedagogy first' approach: it adopts ICT when technology serves – instead of dictates - the pedagogical goals. The teaching staff informed the PRT that the school's Teaching Information Point provides good support in using current and emerging technologies in their teaching practices. Students from their side confirmed that in terms of personalised learning, the new forms of technology allow them to do away more easily with possible deficiencies in prior knowledge or skills. Further to what was written in the self-evaluation report, the PRT establishes that these developments contribute to a more inclusive learning environment.

The PRT noticed that NSM goes at lengths to support its students throughout their entire study period in Nijmegen. Acknowledging that student services were adequate in the past, the panel understands that the school and the programmes now pay much more attention to student guidance and counselling. This increased attention found its origin in a nation-wide call for more capacity in student guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the university developed an Improvement Agenda for Educational Support and NSM has invested

in learning support, almost doubling its advising services. In line with the school's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) objectives, NSM now features a comprehensive and robust process that identifies, intervenes and provides ongoing support for all students. For instance, study advisors monitor the study progress of all bachelor and master students, with particular attention to first-year students and international students from outside the EU. Moreover, every first-year student is matched with a mentor, who serves as a point of contact to academic advisors and identifies learners who may need additional support. This mentoring programme is embedded in the first-semester course Academic Skills with the course teacher assuming the role of mentor. Students who need additional support benefit from personalised intervention and get tailored support. Furthermore, the school set up a buddy programme where students pair with a senior student to make them feel at home. In the Peer Mentoring Project a small group of students from the same study programme meet at least every month with a senior student mentor to get to know each other, discuss the study programme and exchange information on study skills. During the visit, students emphasised that the current offer is comprehensive, of good quality, and effectively used: in this regard, the enhanced offer and the increased capacity do meet an urgent need. Hence, it does not come as a surprise that in student evaluations and alumni surveys, guidance and counselling services at RU/NSM get increasingly high scores.

Notwithstanding increased attention to the academic and professional skills in the respective programme curricula, the panel noticed that students continue to give relatively low scores on the programmes' connection to professional practice. The PRT gathered from the discussions on site that this concern is currently being addressed in three ways: by the further development and staffing of the extra-curricular career services, by the envisaged inclusion (as of September 2024) of a personal and professional development (PPD) initiative in all bachelor curricula, and by dedicating explicit attention to the professional field in course sessions and assignments. Students will be guided in their self-discovery as individuals and professionals, while PPD assignments in regular courses will enhance their personal and professional identity. The PRT very much welcomes these initiatives.

Recruitment and admission

The PRT gathered from the written materials that NSM organises different types of events to recruit students. While traditionally these events focused on transferring information on the curriculum and the study programme, this approach switched to virtual experiences and online communications during the COVID-19 pandemic: shorter interactive Q&A sessions, mini-lectures, and presentations study domain and the NSM community. After the lockdowns, several of these interactive formats were kept, leading to a hybrid range of recruitment strategies combining in-person events and virtual tools. In addition to the Bachelor Experience Days, the Master Open Days and Master Speed Dating, the university and the school also organise tailored events for secondary school pupils, including a tour around the campus and mini-lecturers that fit the profile of the pupils. Given that at the time of the site visit, the Dutch Government did no longer allow to actively recruit international students abroad, the school focuses its efforts on engaging with those international students who have been accepted and are currently enrolled.

The PRT noticed that each programme has set very clear admission requirements and procedures, which are stipulated in the respective Education and Examination Regulations and are displayed in a transparent way on the school's admissions website. The bachelor programmes are open to all students with a Dutch secondary school diploma and a sufficient level of mathematics, or an international equivalent. Students enrolling on English-language tracks should demonstrate a sufficient level of English. The master programmes are open to students with a relevant bachelor degree from Nijmegen or other universities in the Netherlands and beyond. Students who do not meet the criteria can enrol via a pre-master trajectory that offers core courses of the bachelor programme. During the site visit, master students who had not studied at NSM before indicated to the PRT that they felt sufficiently qualified when entering the programme. This also applied to students who had followed the pre-master trajectory after their professional bachelor study.

Student intake, progression and completion

With regard to student intake, the PRT gathered from the detailed materials that the total number of students in the five degree programmes has remained more or less at an equal level since the previous accreditation. Similarly, international students consistently represent about 10% of the intake. While the tendency in these figures differs slightly per programme, the panel established that overall, NSM attracts a diverse student population, both nationally and internationally: data at university level show that around 45% of the intake consists of first-generation students (i.e. students whose parents did not study at university). Moreover, master programmes increasingly attract students (40% in Business Administration and 20% in Economics) who entered the programme after the pre-master trajectory. The international student body consists of many different nationalities. According to the PRT, this diverse nature of the student body is indeed an asset to the academic offer of the school.

The School keeps track of student performance in different ways. At the start of the programmes, tests are taken to check the level of writing skills and maths. Students who do not perform well on these tests are invited to attend remedial courses. Study advisors organise meetings with groups of international students to engage with each other and the programmes. Throughout the study period, students accumulating delay in gaining credits are contacted by the study advisor. Bachelor students should obtain at least 42 EC during year one in order to pass the Binding Study Advice: on average 75% of the Business Administration students and 70% of the Economics and Business Economics students proceed to the second year. Of those students, roughly one third finishes the programme within the nominal duration of three years, while around 70% does so in four years. The PRT noticed that the success rate for the two master programmes is also similar: about half of the master students finish in one year and 80% does so in two years. According to the PRT, these figures are very reasonable for each of the four bachelor and master programmes under review. Following the discussion with students of all four programmes, the panel is convinced that the respective curricula are feasible and that the student support and guidance mechanisms are effectively working.

Furthermore, the panel was informed that the completion rate of the post-initial master programme is lower than expected: (only) two thirds of the enrolled students eventually graduate the programme. During the discussions on site, the representatives of the Radboud Management academy indicated to the PRT that they also track progress and are currently looking for ways to enhance the completion rate, for instance by streamlining and strengthening the master thesis trajectory. Students and alumni from this programme confirmed that – apart from unexpected developments in the students' professional or private situation – the major obstacle to completing the programme is indeed the thesis trajectory.

Staff

The PRT gathered from the written information and the staff overviews that each programme can build on a good number of qualified staff. Over the years, the staff population is getting increasingly balanced in terms of gender across all levels. Currently, about one third of the full professors is female.

The PRT noticed that NSM pays considerable attention to teaching quality and pedagogical strategies. Hence, in addition to their domain expertise, teaching staff also have appropriate didactic skills. The school requires all teaching staff to have or obtain a university teaching qualification (UTQ). Currently the UTQ consists of trajectory with educational activities, observations by supervisors, coaching, community meetings, assignments and a development-focused conversation. Several teachers at NSM also have or pursue a senior university teaching qualification (SUTQ), that focuses on curriculum development and educational leadership. The panel noticed that the share of SUTQ-certified staff is quite big in comparison to other faculties and universities in the Netherlands. The third step in teacher professionalisation is the Educational Leadership Programme: organised jointly with Utrecht University, this small-scale and selective initiative guides teachers on large-scale educational projects at department or faculty level, preparing them for a role as educational or programme director. In all sessions, students described the teaching staff as knowledgeable, didactically skilled, enthusiast and approachable. Based on its own experiences talking to teaching staff on site, the PRT relates very much to this appreciation.

NSM is also very active in training service team staff. The PRT learned that the school is currently implementing the Towards Professional Services programme, where service staff is trained in such a way that they are closely connected to education and research in the school. The motto "enabling others" expresses the purpose of the programme: all projects are aimed at improving the professionalism of the support staff, as well as their effectiveness in enabling students and teaching staff to pursue their tasks as learners and educators. During the visit, students praised both the services and the individual staff providing these services. The discussion with representatives of these services teams demonstrated according to the PRT that the school's attention to service staff professionalisation is very effective. Every representative was highly skilled, very motivated and closely connected to the teaching and research activities of the school and its departments and programmes.

Furthermore, the PRT was informed that NSM is taking several initiatives to create an inclusive workplace where all feel safe and inspired. Policies at both university and school level address different aspects of workplace improvement, such as social safety, performance management, staff development, and professionalisation of services. An NSM Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee was established as anchor point for a healthy and inclusive people-centred work and study climate at the school. The panel spoke to the ambitious DEI co-chairs who are (pro)active at school level and liaise with the DEI university council. Moreover, several staff indicated during the site visit that an inclusive and safe work environment is high on the agenda of the new Dean. The panel commends the school for its commitment and active engagement towards a safe and inspiring work environment.

Facilities

Although a re-accreditation exercise mainly pays attention to programme-specific facilities, the PRT wants to emphasise that the School is housed in a nice and functional building. During the visit, the PRT was shown around the Elinor Ostrom Building. It has state-of-the-art educational facilities and is laid out in such a way that students and staff can meet constantly and in an open way. It therefore comes as no surprise that students and staff indicated that the building contributes to an inspiring, inclusive and collegial work and study environment.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the PRT considers that all five programmes under review can rely on a strong teaching and learning environment. This appreciation does not only apply to the individual programmes, but also extends to the policies and initiatives at school level that have allowed the departments and the programmes to grow. The panel appreciates, moreover, that the corner stones of this learning environment clearly reflect the mission, vision and profile of the school.

Each programme has a clear organisational and curriculum structure, headed by resourceful programme coordinators. The individual curricula are coherent and feasible. The courses and their learning goals invariably contribute to achieving the learning outcomes. Student admission is transparent and student performance is monitored, which in turn ensures that study progress and success rates are adequate. Across all programmes, coordinators and staff are committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of their courses and programmes. According to the PRT, there is a clear quality culture among all stakeholders in the school, departments and programmes.

The five programmes under review have each made a specific choice with regard to their language of instruction. The PRT endorses the respective choices and their motivations as they do justice to the profile of the university and the school. It also subscribes to the English titles of those programmes where English is a/the language of instruction.

The learning environment in all five programmes reflects the mission and educational vision of the school. The PRT thinks highly of the initiatives taken during and right after the

COVID-19 pandemic to maintain and enhance personal engagement and academic community building among students and staff. In this regard, the priority attention to – and the additional resources for - student guidance are worth mentioning. The PRT commends the support services and their staff for the excellent work they have been/are doing to meet the educational and personal needs of the students.

Each programme can rely on a good number of highly qualified, didactically skilled and motivated teaching staff who invariably deliver research-based education in an often international classroom setting. According to the PRT, the teaching practices reflect the educational vision of the school, while the quality and motivation of the staff are at least in part due to the professionalisation efforts of the school, as well as to its initiatives towards an inclusive, safe and inspiring work environment. With regard to the latter, the Elinor Ostrom Building also contributes to the engaging learning environment.

These considerations apply to all programmes and constitute a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on this standard for each programme.

As points for attention, the PRT thinks that the programme portfolio in both departments requires further action, notably at the level of specialisations. The current portfolio is in parts unclear as different programmes offering specialisations with the same name yet with students acquiring different sets of learning outcomes. The discussions on site have clarified the current situation and programme representatives have set out interesting plans with regard to the (future) revision of the four initial degree programmes. The panel encourages the School and the departments to use the curriculum revisions to better reflect the differences between the Business Administration and Economics programme specialisations and to optimise the transition from bachelor to master within and across departments. In this way, each programme (specialisation) should have its own unique rationale with specific end qualifications and curriculum learning goals, which as such deserves to be ‘set in the market’ of the Dutch and international higher education landscape.

Furthermore, the PRT established that the distinctive features of each programme are operationalised in the respective curricula. It encourages all five programmes to use the curriculum revisions to go a step further and include these selling points more explicitly in the course learning goals.

Finally, the PRT sees room for a stronger connection of the initial degree programmes with the professional world. It welcomes the envisaged curricular and extra-curricular initiatives in this regard and encourages the programmes to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the enhanced Career Services and the new Personal and Professional Development activities.

Standard 3 – assessment

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

System of assessment

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that all five programmes adopt a similar approach to the assessment of their courses. In order to ensure the constructive alignment between programme learning outcomes, course learning goals and assessment, each course coordinator produces a course dossier. The PRT has looked at several course dossiers and found these to be fit for purpose. An important strength in these dossiers is the use of test matrices that directly relate aspects of assessment, such as exam questions, to end qualifications and course learning goals.

Moreover, each programme coordinator has the overview at curriculum level and monitors that - taking all courses together – all programme learning outcomes are effectively addressed and tested. The PRT established, based on the overview tables in the self-evaluation report appendices, that each programme features a broad variety of both formative and summative assessment methods and that in most courses, students are assessed at more than one point. Formative assessments include individual or group projects with presentations, assignments, quizzes, or active participation in education. Examples of summative assessments are essay exams, multiple choice exams, individual or group papers, and reflection reports. The assessment of assignments is based on clearly formulated criteria, which are announced to students well in advance. After the test, students are informed on how their result is based on the assessment criteria. Students confirmed during the visit that assessment is indeed organised in a transparent way.

The PRT was informed that at the time of the site visit, different stakeholders at school level are drafting a comprehensive and transparent assessment policy, which will be rolled out as of September 2024. This policy ensures compliance with national legislation, regulations and accreditation frameworks, such as NVAO and AACSB. It will also constitute the basis for the interplay between programme management, Examining Boards, course coordinators and teaching staff.

Assuring quality of assessment

While programme and course coordinators take care of the design and production of assessments, it is the Examining Board which safeguards the assessment quality. Every department at NSM has its own Examining Board, which operates more or less in a similar way. During the site visit, the PRT spoke to representatives of the Business Administration and the Economics Examining Boards.

The Business Administration Examining Board safeguards the quality of the bachelor, master and post-initial master programmes in Business Administration/Bedrijfskunde. It consists of a chair, five members each representing one department unit, and an external member. The Economics Examining Board looks after the quality of the bachelor and master programmes

in Economics (and Business Economics) and has five members: a chair, three members representing the department, and an external member. Both Examining Boards feature a functional secretary, advisory members and secretarial support. The PRT gathered from the discussion that both Boards and their respective secretaries have extensive expertise as well as the capacity to fulfil the broad range of tasks assigned to them by Law. Further to what was mentioned in the previous standard on staff, also Examining Board members have been offered tailored professionalisation opportunities to fulfil their quality assurance tasks. The interviewees indicated moreover that they get sufficient autonomy from the school and the departments to execute their safeguarding tasks in an independent way.

During the visit, the PRT focused on one specific task of the Examining Boards: monitoring and evaluating the quality of courses and theses. In this regard, it discussed the outcomes of the thesis committee (see next paragraph) and related these findings on thesis quality and thesis assessment to the annual quality reviews by the Examining Boards. Every year, each Board reviews a selection of bachelor and master courses to ensure that the quality of the exams aligns with the learning goals, as well as a sample of bachelor and master theses. The PRT learned from the latest annual reports for instance that the Business Administration Examining Board reviewed six courses and four theses in 2022-2023, while the Examining Board Economics decided in that academic year not to review courses but to do an extensive review of 16 bachelor theses with a low pass score. In both cases the annual reports provided a clear rationale for the specific review choices. The PRT welcomes the freedom of the Examining Boards to organise their activities as they see fit.

In so far as thesis review is concerned, the PRT noticed that the outcomes of the Examining Board reviews coincided with the findings of the thesis committee: both bachelor and master theses tend to be scored appropriately, and while many assessors do provide relevant feedback on the thesis evaluation form, there are also cases where this motivation cannot be linked to the scores. During the visit, the PRT commended the thesis review work of the Economics Examining Board because it focused in particular on thesis quality at the pass/fail divide. With such practice, it does not come as a surprise according to the PRT that the thesis committee did not have a single doubt about the final scores of the bachelor and master theses in Economics (and Business Economics). Hence, it would be good if the Business Administration Examining Board included in its yearly review sample a few theses per programme with a neat pass score.

Furthermore, the PRT discussed the composition of the Examining Boards. Every Board has an external member. However, this member is not very external but belongs to another NSM department. While the PRT welcomes the presence of such member in the Board, it suggests to also add another - more external - member who is not linked directly to the school, for instance an assessment expert from the central education services.

Thesis assessment

As part of this external assessment, a thesis committee looked for every programme at the quality of the theses and their assessment. This exercise was outsourced to a thesis committee of eight academic experts, including the PRT member focusing on programme accreditation. The thesis committee established that overall NSM has an adequate thesis assessment system in place. The committee members noticed that for each individual programme the thesis trajectory is clearly outlined. Each programme is using a dedicated thesis evaluation form, which is completed by two assessors, the thesis supervisor and a second reader.

The PRT endorses this overall appreciation, which is all the more important given that the previous accreditation panel issued a concern on this point for all five programmes. The PRT gathered from the self-evaluation report that every programme has taken this point very seriously. As a result, both the thesis trajectory and the thesis assessment forms have been revised with the support of the Examining Boards and new and detailed assessment rubrics were implemented since the academic year 2021-2022. The PRT has looked at the new rubrics for every programme and found these to be relevant and comprehensive. The review by the thesis committee concerned theses and assessments that had been produced according to the new provisions. The committee's findings therefore confirm that each programme has done a good job in revising the thesis evaluation process and instruments.

Across all programmes the thesis committee reported that the 'paperwork' is on order: the accreditation team at NSM - with the support of the respective programme representatives - managed to identify and make available the selected theses and their evaluation forms quite rapidly. Where needed, clarifications were provided swiftly.

In addition to establishing that thesis evaluation forms were available, the thesis committee noticed that theses tend to get adequate scores, i.e. an overall mark that does justice to the quality of the thesis. This finding is valid for all programmes under review. Prior to the review exercise, it was agreed that experts would flag cases where the thesis score differed (at least) one point from their own appreciation. All in all, the committee agreed to 88% of the thesis scores: in 67 out of 76 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: "Do you agree to the score given by the assessors?" This means that across programmes and assessors, there is a common understanding of what constitutes a sufficient, good and excellent thesis.

Furthermore, the thesis committee reported that 72% of these forms had been completed in an informative way: in 55 out of 76 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: "Based on the evaluation form, is the assessment of the thesis clear and insightful?" This means that the score (and possibly sub-scores per criterion) is properly motivated in the evaluation form. An insightful form is one where the assessors motivate why a thesis deserves a certain overall grade or scores better on some criteria than on others.

As a point for attention, the thesis committee indicated that there is quite some diversity in the way individual assessors - and programmes - complete the evaluation form. This diversity is

visible in three ways: whether or not assessors motivate the (sub)scores with written and insightful feedback; whether or not the evaluation forms provide one common assessment or two separate appreciations from the respective assessors; and in the latter case, whether or not the second reviewer only confirms the findings of the supervisor or provides a proper motivation for his/her own individual appreciation. In several programmes assessors each issued an individual score but without motivating - when their respective scores differed - why they had settled for a given final score. In fact, thesis experts often tended to agree to the lower score (usually given by the co-reader) but did not grasp the higher final score when it was not motivated. This applied even more so in those cases where the supervisor could 'override' the score of the second reader without motivation. Details of the committee's appreciations are mentioned in the respective sections per programme.

The PRT endorses the overall positive findings of the thesis committee and connects this to another concern of the previous accreditation panel, that some assessment forms were not very clear or fully completed, in particular by the second examiner. The PRT notices that programmes have also taken this point very seriously. The thesis assessment forms have been improved – with the support of the NSM Educational Centre - and now feature subsections for feedback and recommendations. Moreover, bachelor and master thesis coordinators have been encouraging assessors to provide feedback on the assessment criteria and the overall score. Further to the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT acknowledges that not every team of assessors has lived up to the expectations of producing a truly insightful evaluation form. However, the individual reviews and the overall picture of the 'thesis evaluation situation' at NSM are rather positive. Furthermore, in comparison to the outcomes of the thesis review during the previous accreditation round, it is clear that thesis evaluation has received proper attention at NSM over the past few years.

The PRT also subscribes to the thesis committee's finding that most programmes could do with some more systematic attention to feedback in the evaluation forms, notably but not exclusively in underpinning the common final score.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the PRT considers that all five programmes have adequate provisions and instruments at hand for student assessment. This appreciation does not only apply to the system of assessment, but also relates to the assessment methods, the thesis evaluation and the safeguarding of assessment quality.

Across all programmes, the PRT established that assessment is an integral part of the quality culture among staff and their efforts to continuously improve the quality of the courses and the programmes. Moreover, assessment at NSM constitutes an important pillar to ensure that students can demonstrate the learning goals and eventually achieve the end qualifications.

The PRT considers that safeguarding the assessment quality is in capable hands with the respective Examining Boards. The members are competent and as a Board they have the necessary autonomy to execute their quality assurance tasks independently.

Furthermore the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee, which established that overall, NSM has an adequate thesis assessment system in place. All thesis evaluation forms provide for a quantitative and qualitative underpinning of the scoring criteria. Because all programmes are using such thesis evaluation form and in a qualified majority of cases these forms are not only completed properly but also in an insightful way, it is fair to state that thesis assessment is an integral part of student assessment and receives the attention it deserves. In this regard, the PRT considers that all programmes have reacted swiftly and comprehensively to the concerns of the previous accreditation panel with regard to thesis evaluation. The PRT is satisfied to notice that the improvements are not only described on paper, but are effectively implemented: the outcomes of the thesis committee demonstrate that the new provisions clearly stand the ‘proof of the pudding’.

These considerations apply to all programmes and constitute a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on this standard for each programme.

In addition to all positive findings, the PRT recommends the management to appoint a ‘real’ external member in the Examining Boards, possibly someone with specific assessment expertise, while maintaining the current good practice of including a staff member on the Board from a fellow department.

As points for attention and reflection, the PRT invites NSM to consider creating one Examining Board for the entire school, accumulating the expertise of the different boards and their respective members. Moreover, it suggests the Examining Boards to pay systematic attention in their annual sample review to theses with a low pass score. Finally, it invites the thesis coordinators to continue convincing - and the Examining Boards to control by sample – that all, not most assessors, complete the thesis evaluation form in an insightful way.

Standard 4 – achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

There are two ways to determine whether the intended learning outcomes are effectively achieved: through a quality control of the final projects and by examining the career paths of graduates after completing the programme. The PRT considered both aspects when assessing the achieved learning outcomes of the five programmes at NSM.

Thesis quality

As part of this external assessment, a thesis committee looked at a representative sample of 76 theses covering all five programmes. Taking into account possible programme specialisations and dual degrees, the main selection criterion per programme was the final score: overall, experts reviewed 21 theses (28%) with a low score, 35 theses (46%) with an average score, 16

theses (21%) with a high score, and 4 theses (5%) with an excellent score. Individual figures per programme are provided in the programme specific section.

The committee members looked into the quality of the theses in order to find out whether students demonstrate through the thesis that they achieve the exit qualifications of their respective programmes. The committee reported that 97% of the theses reviewed across all programmes fulfilled at least the minimum criteria one would expect of a final product of academic orientation at bachelor or (post-experience) master level. In 74 out of 76 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: “Is the thesis of sufficient quality to pass?” The PRT endorses this finding, which constitutes a strong basis to consider that the thesis quality is up to par in all programmes.

In sum, theses indicate to what extent students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Having established that almost all theses studied by the thesis committee were of acceptable quality, it is fair to state according to the PRT that the intended learning outcomes of the respective programmes are eventually achieved at the end of the curriculum.

Graduate performance

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the Business Administration and Economics departments of NSM have a clear overall view of the subsequent careers of their graduated bachelor and (post-initial) master students.

At the level of the bachelor programmes, all graduates are invited to complete an exit survey which informs among others about their future (study) plans. Data from the 2022-2023 survey show that most bachelor graduates intend to continue studying: only 14% of the BA graduates and 3% of the EBE graduates indicated that they would enter the labour market directly. The PRT was informed that some of those students who look for a job after their bachelor diploma still pursue a master degree at a later stage in their career.

The survey data also demonstrated that about half of the bachelor graduates who directly move on to a master programme decide to do so at another university: this is the case for 42% of the Business Administration students and 58% of the Economics students. The main reason for this choice is that the preferred study domain is not available at NSM or the Radboud University. These findings were confirmed by the student groups the PRT spoke to on site. It turns out that the broad and complementary programme offer at the universities of Tilburg and Rotterdam is particularly attractive for NSM bachelor graduates.

At the level of the master programmes, data on graduate performance is available as part of the National Alumni Survey and the Radboud Alumni Survey. The PRT noticed that these data are not very specific but seem to indicate that Business Administration and Economics graduates tend to find a job easily, work in the domain of their studies and are usually employed at a level that reflects their diploma. The accreditation team indicated that currently there is no specific data available on graduate performance at the level of specialisations. The general survey findings were confirmed by the alumni and the advisory board members

during the visit. They spoke highly about the university, the school and the programmes and emphasised that their education at NSM has been a stepping stone for a successful career. Advisory board members from their side indicated that an education at NSM effectively prepares students for a rewarding professional career.

Considerations

Based on the above-mentioned findings, the PRT considers that students graduating from each of the five programmes effectively acquire all intended learning outcomes. It bases this assessment on the results of the thesis review, the discussions with alumni and advisory board members, and the available survey data.

The outcome of the thesis review is highly positive: the PRT established that 97% of all theses in the sample met the basic quality standards of a final project of academic orientation at bachelor or (post-initial) master level. Across programmes, students have acquired a significant level of expertise and demonstrate through the theses with relevant and often original topics that they have a solid grasp of the subject matter. Hence, the PRT considers that the desired academic level is being achieved in all programmes and commends the school and the departments for this level of accomplishment.

During the site visit, alumni persuaded the PRT that their education at NSM has been a stepping stone for further studies and/or a successful career in the Netherlands and beyond: bachelor students seamlessly transition to relevant master programmes within the school or elsewhere in the Netherlands, while master students quickly find suitable – i.e. at the proper level and in a relevant domain - employment after graduation. These claims are corroborated by survey outcomes and statements of advisory board members.

These considerations apply to all programmes and constitute a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on this standard for each programme.

If anything, the PRT found that in most cases specific information on the professional whereabouts of alumni was missing. Hence, it encourages the faculty, the departments and the programmes to collect such data more systematically and per specialisation.

Specific Findings and Considerations

In the previous section, the PRT established that all five degree programmes submitted for external assessment meet each of the four standards of the NVAO evaluation framework: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes. This section addresses the PRT's programme-specific findings, considerations and recommendations. While the general findings and considerations on the four standards apply to each programme, the PRT also noticed particular developments in each programme, and identified specific strengths and some individual points for attention. The following programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the dedicated self-evaluation and student reports, on the findings from the thesis review per programme, and on the discussions on site with management, staff and students.

1. BSc Bedrijfskunde

The Bachelor Business Administration (BSc BA) is a three-year full-time programme taught in Dutch and English. Right from the start, students opt for one of four specialisations: Bedrijfskunde, Business Administration, Bedrijfseconomie, or International Business Administration. At the time of the site visit, the programme was about to roll-out a major curriculum revision per 1 September 2024. New students will enter either the Dutch-language Bedrijfskunde or the English-language International Business Administration programme track.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on the mission, vision and values of the university and the school, on their connection with the rationale of each degree programme, on the relevance of the end qualifications, and on the structural attention to developments in the respective professional domains are all valid for this programme.

The BSc BA targets students with an interest in managing businesses and organisations. It equips them with disciplinary knowledge and insight in the field of business administration, and with the skills to conduct scientific research and intervention plans to address societal challenges. During the programme, students gain an understanding of theories and research methods and learn how to use, reflect on, and communicate them by acting as responsible academics. Compared to similar programmes in the Netherlands, the BSc BA in Nijmegen stands out for its focus on creating responsible organisations for sustainable societies by generating economic, ecological, and societal values.

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that this specific profile is not a mere paper construct, but effectively implemented in the programme objectives and curriculum. In fact, the PRT noticed that the programme clearly delivers on the four distinguishing features mentioned in the self-evaluation report: (1) the programme has a strong disciplinary focus yet offers different theoretical and methodological perspectives; (2)

the integrative business administration content of the programme looks at organisations as interdependent entities who are not only profit generating but also social systems; (3) its didactic focus on a personal approach to education and small-scale teaching offers students opportunities to interact with their peers and instructors; and (4) as part of the global orientation of the curriculum, students can undertake a research internship and a study period abroad. The PRT welcomes such distinctive profile and appreciates the operationalisation of these features in the programme.

Currently, the intended learning outcomes only contain a reference to social and integral business administration and to intervention methodology. While it considers that the end qualifications are adequate in terms of content, level and orientation for a generalist bachelor programme in Business Administration, the PRT suggests to embed the specific distinguishing features of the profile more explicitly in the learning outcomes of the BSc BA programme.

Teaching-learning environment

The PRT's general findings on the teaching-learning environment at NSM are also valid for this programme's curriculum, didactics, students, staff and facilities.

The curriculum of the three-year BSc BA programme is set up in an identical way for all four specialisations. In the first year students follow similar courses, while the specific track content is taught in year two. The third year features a flexibility window for minors, electives, internships and/or study period abroad and culminates in a track-specific bachelor thesis. According to the PRT, the curriculum is coherent and fit-for-purpose: it offers a good mixture of domain content, research methods, academic skills and project work. Apart from the third-year flexibility window, students can only choose one elective course. Several courses such as International Business Ethics, Responsible Organisation Projects, Intervention Methodology and System Theory address explicitly the programme's distinctive profile.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel. In fact, the recommendation to have more evaluations of the entire curriculum has led the programme to first do a comprehensive evaluation, and second to use the results of this evaluation to prepare a curriculum revision that will be rolled out in 2024-2025. Although currently it is only a paper exercise, the PRT is confident that the revised curriculum will be at least equally coherent and fit-for-purpose as the current programme. Moreover, the new curriculum featuring two distinct specialisations constitutes a step forward, according to the PRT, in creating a consistent programme portfolio at school level. Finally, the PRT appreciates that the new curriculum continues to reflect the mission of both RU and NSM to address regional demands and serve a diverse student body.

Apart from the suggestions of NVAO and AACSB panels, the programme also took into account the findings from student and alumni queries on how students can deploy in their career what they have learned during their study. This has led first to a project and then to a set of skills and learning lines, which will be implemented in the new curriculum. Programme representatives, moreover, highlighted during the visit that individual teaching staff pay

specific attention in courses and assignments to the future labour market of students. In addition, the school created a Career Service policy and increased the capacity of the Career Service. According to the PRT, these initiatives are relevant attempts to do away with alumni survey findings that the programme is not sufficiently preparing students for a professional career.

Assessment

The PRT's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examining Boards are valid for this programme.

As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at assessment materials pertaining to a representative sample of 15 BSc BA theses. The review showed that assessors use an appropriate bachelor thesis evaluation form: according to the thesis experts, the ten criteria are varied, relevant and described in detail in an accompanying rubrics document featuring four categories: insufficient, sufficient, good, and very good. Moreover, the form invites assessors to score (I-S-G-VG) each criterion and motivate their appreciation in writing. Both supervisor and co-reader complete a separate form and propose a final grade, based on their criterion appreciations. The calculation of the final grade is explained on the form. In order to pass, students should get sufficient marks on nine criteria; the tenth criterion on the student's (sufficient or insufficient) attitude and contribution to the group process is only taken into account for scores (well) beyond the pass/fail divide.

The thesis committee reported that it agreed to almost all final grades and that a qualified majority of evaluation forms were completed in an insightful way. They found it a particular strength of the programme that the rubrics were effectively used to evaluate the student's work. Moreover several supervisors and second readers provided excellent qualitative feedback. When the assessors arrived at a different final score, a transparent motivation was provided to underpin the common final grade. In those (many) cases where the scores matched the motivated appreciations, the committee members found that the completed evaluation form constituted a proper application of the good-quality assessment rubrics document. However, not all assessors were equally extensive in providing feedback. In those cases where the feedback was limited, the evaluation form proves to be rather meagre and loses much of its relevance.

As points for attention, the committee members indicated that not all thesis evaluations followed the regular BSc BA thesis assessment format. In fact, several theses were assessed according to the format for bachelor theses in economics, which has different criteria, rubrics, feedback opportunities and grade calculations. The PRT raised this issue on site and was informed that the new curriculum would no longer allow for different assessment formats within one programme.

Secondly, the committee members found that in two cases there was a discrepancy between the thesis quality, the criterion appreciations, the final score and the feedback. Both cases concerned a thesis on the pass/fail divide. It seems that the assessors in one case were caught

in between providing befitting feedback comments (which altogether suggest that the thesis might fail) and the formal requirements stipulating that for a thesis to pass all criteria should be scored sufficient. In the other case assessors judged that all criteria were at least sufficient, but did not provide any feedback and arrived at a marginally positive score. Because assessors seemed to share similar reservations on the thesis quality, the committee members were surprised that such borderline cases were not spotted during the assessment process, through the assessment procedures and/or by the quality assurance provisions. The PRT therefore advises the programme to look into the grade calculation system, clarify more explicitly the boundaries between pass and fail, and insist that assessors provide insightful arguments on their appreciation of the different criteria in case of a weaker thesis. Moreover, and in line with its suggestion in the general section, the PRT invites the Examining Board to systematically include theses on the pass/fail divide in its annual review sample.

Achieved learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance at NSM are valid for this BSc BA programme.

The BSc BA programme culminates in a bachelor thesis of 12 EC. As part of this external review, a thesis committee reviewed the quality of 15 BSc BA theses. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 299 students who graduated in the academic year 2022-2023. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (38% - 44% - 16% - 2%) in the sample, the experts reviewed 6 low quality, 6 average quality, 2 high quality and 1 excellent thesis that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers. The sample included theses from all four specialisations.

Overall, the thesis experts found that 13 theses clearly met the requirements of a final product at bachelor level and of academic orientation. They found it a particular strength that most theses were clearly structured and well written and included all main thesis components: clear problem statement, research question, review of theory and/or theoretical concepts, methodology, empirical analysis and conclusion. Moreover, they appreciated that students covered relevant themes, such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Artificial Intelligence or social media influencers. The theses contained adequate academic literature and sound methodological choices that were applied in research practice and carried out diligently in most cases. Overall, the thesis committee members were impressed with the research and methodological skills of the students, who in their theses definitely demonstrated that they qualify for a study at master level.

The thesis committee reviewed six theses with a low pass score. The committee noticed that when theses turn out to be on the weaker side, students often chose 'exotic' or very specific topics on which they lack basic knowledge that was not part of the curriculum. In those cases, students display less critical attitude in the theoretical framework and the discussion, and focus mainly on the limitations of the study. While four theses were clearly on the upper side of the pass/fail divide, the committee had some doubts as to whether the other two theses should have passed. Acknowledging that the assessors had similar doubts on the thesis

quality, the committee members were eventually more concerned about the (absence of) feedback underpinning the criteria and the final grades.

Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT established that the overall quality of the BSc BA theses is definitely adequate and that students demonstrate through their bachelor thesis that they have achieved all end qualifications.

Considerations

The PRT's general considerations on the four standards are valid for this BSc BA programme. In so far as the programme's specific characteristics are concerned, the PRT considers that the programme has a distinctive profile whose features are operationalised in a coherent and fit-for-purpose curriculum.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel as well as the outcomes of internal surveys. These developments have led to a revised curriculum that is about to be implemented. The new curriculum continues to reflect the mission of both RU and NSM, is addressing regional demands and serving a diverse student body, and will eventually enhance the school's programme portfolio.

Furthermore, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that BSc BA assessors use an appropriate bachelor thesis evaluation form which is often completed in an insightful way, and that BSc BA students demonstrate in their bachelor thesis to have achieved all end qualifications.

The combination of general and specific considerations constitutes a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on all four standards. As specific points of attention for the BSc BA programme, the PRT suggests:

- the programme team to embed the specific distinguishing features of the profile more explicitly in the learning outcomes of the programme;
- the bachelor thesis coordinator to clarify the boundaries between pass and fail and insist that assessors provide insightful arguments in case of a weaker thesis;
- the Examining Board to systematically include theses on the pass/fail divide in its annual review sample.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the Bachelor Business Administration meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO evaluation framework for limited programme assessment. This appreciation is based on its general findings and considerations across all NSM programmes, as well as on the way this BSc BA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

2. BSc Economie en Bedrijfseconomie

The Bachelor Economics and Business Economics (BSc EBE) is a three-year full-time programme taught in Dutch and English. Students enrol on the Economie en Bedrijfseconomie or the Economics and Business Economics track, and specialise as of year two in Business Economics, Financial Economics, International Economics and Business, or International Economics and Policy.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on the mission, vision and values of the university and the school, on their connection with the rationale of each degree programme, on the relevance of the end qualifications, and on the structural attention to developments in the respective professional domains are all valid for this programme.

The BSc EBE programme is rooted in the mainstream repertoire of economic theories and methods, while students also draw, in an integrative way, from related theories and methods in psychology, sociology, and political science. The programme is research-driven, adheres to international standards, and focuses on creating meaningful impact in both the corporate and public sectors. EBE students are encouraged to explore themes such as societal and environmental sustainability, which in turn reflects the programme's commitment to responsible governance and sustainable societies.

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the specific profile of the BSc EBE is not a mere paper construct, but effectively implemented in the programme objectives and curriculum. The PRT learned during the discussions that internal stakeholders refer to their specific profile as Economics+: students are trained in economics 'and something more' – real world perspectives, wicked problems, another lens than a purely economic one, adding insights from other disciplines to the economics toolkit. According to the PRT, this Economics+ label is relevant. The PRT noticed that the programme clearly delivers on the distinguishing features mentioned in the self-evaluation report: (1) in terms of societal impact, the programme interrelates economic theory and methods with global challenges, and critically reflects on these interrelations; (2) throughout the tracks and specialisations students are exposed to multiple disciplinary and methodological perspectives; (3) as part of the global orientation of the curriculum, students can undertake a research internship and a study period abroad; (4) its didactic focus on active engagement, personal approach and small-scale teaching offers students opportunities to interact with their peers and instructors. The PRT welcomes such distinctive profile and appreciates the operationalisation of these features in the programme.

Further to its general findings, the PRT establishes that the end qualifications are adequate in terms of content, level and orientation for a generalist bachelor programme in Economics and Business Economics. The intended learning outcomes, however, do not reflect those elements that make the BSc EBE at Nijmegen stand out among similar programmes. Hence, the PRT suggests to embed the specific distinguishing features of the profile more explicitly in the

learning outcomes of the BSc EBE programme. The Economics+ label also deserves more visibility in both internal programme documentation and external communication.

Teaching-learning environment

The PRT's general findings on the teaching-learning environment at NSM are also valid for this programme's curriculum, didactics, students, staff and facilities.

The curriculum of the three-year BSc EBE programme is set up in an identical way for all four specialisations. In the first year students in the Dutch- and English-language tracks follow similar courses, while the specialist content is taught as of year two. The third year features a flexibility window for minors, electives, internships and/or study period abroad and culminates in a track-specific bachelor thesis. According to the PRT, the curriculum is coherent and fit-for-purpose: it offers a good mixture of domain content, research methods, academic skills and project work. Courses such as the first-year International Business Ethics or the third-year Topics address explicitly the programme's distinctive profile. Moreover, students can apply for a Sustainability Certificate when they reflect on the Sustainability Development Goals in their bachelor thesis and obtain 21 EC via elective courses on SDGs (of which 6 EC at another faculty).

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel. In fact, the recommendation to recruit more assistant professors in the department has led to an increase in professorial staff from 18 to 28, while the number of associated teachers went down. As a result, students now are much more exposed to academic staff combining research and teaching. Moreover, the staff increase allowed the programme to maintain and even enhance its small-scale teaching approach at a time when student numbers were growing.

Furthermore, the programme took into account the findings and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and surveys. This input has led to a number of adjustments and will eventually result in a major curriculum renewal, to be rolled out in September 2025. Over the past few years, the programme has taken several initiatives on how students can deploy in their career what they have learned during their study. This has led first to a personal and professional development learning line. In addition, the programme increased its collaboration with the Economische Studenten Vereniging and the NSM Career Service. According to the PRT, these initiatives are relevant attempts to do away with alumni survey findings that the programme is not sufficiently preparing students for a professional career.

Although the curriculum renewal is still under construction, the PRT understands from the discussions with programme management and staff that the envisaged curriculum will be at least equally coherent and fit-for-purpose as the current programme. The PRT welcomes the contacts of the EBE programme team with their Business Administration colleagues, whose revised curriculum will start in September 2024. Moreover, the PRT is confident that the new EBE curriculum will contribute to a consistent programme portfolio at school level. Finally,

the PRT appreciates that the new curriculum continues to reflect the mission of both RU and NSM in addressing regional demands and serving a diverse student body.

Assessment

The PRT's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examining Boards are valid for this programme.

As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at assessment materials pertaining to a representative sample of 15 BSc EBE theses. The review showed that the bachelor thesis assessment document is comprehensive and relevant. It is built around five bachelor thesis learning objectives and includes 12 criteria. Each criterion has clear rubrics indicating what is Insufficient, Sufficient, Fair, Good and Excellent. Every criterion and learning objective has its own weight within the overall grade. The assessment document is shared with students before. In order to pass, students should obtain a Sufficient score on each learning objective. Both supervisor and co-reader complete a separate form. Moreover, three additional criteria focus on the thesis process and are completed only by the supervisor. The evaluation form to be completed is available as online document and contains a section for feedback.

The thesis committee reported that it agreed to a qualified majority of final grades. The thesis experts found the many assessment criteria and their link to the learning objectives a particular strength of the programme. Moreover, several supervisors and second readers provided useful qualitative feedback in the evaluation forms. When the assessors arrived at a different final score, sometimes a transparent motivation was provided to underpin the common final grade. The committee members found that a fully completed evaluation form constituted a proper application of the high-quality assessment rubrics document.

As point for attention, the committee members indicated that not all assessors were equally extensive in providing feedback. In fact, only half of the evaluation forms contained insightful comments. In those cases where feedback was limited, the evaluation form proved to be rather meagre and lost much of its relevance. This was certainly the case when supervisor and co-reader arrived at a different final score and did not motivate the common final grade or when there was a 'clear override' with the supervisor imposing the final score. In those few cases where the thesis committee did not agree to the final score, the experts tended to agree with one of the assessors but did not find a motivation in the evaluation form as to why the assessors eventually settled for a different score. The PRT raised this issue on site and advised the programme team to look into the 'clear override' system and to ensure that assessors provide feedback in all evaluation forms.

Achieved learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance at NSM are valid for this BSc EBE programme.

The BSc EBE programme culminates in a bachelor thesis of 12 EC. As part of this external review, a thesis committee reviewed the quality of 15 BSc EBE theses. The thesis selection

was based on a list featuring 126 students who graduated in the academic year 2022-2023. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (24% - 45% - 27% - 4%) in the sample, the experts reviewed 4 low quality, 6 average quality, 4 high quality and 1 excellent thesis that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers. The sample contained theses from four programme specialisations and included one final project produced in the framework of a dual degree programme.

The thesis experts found that all 15 theses clearly met the requirements of a final product at bachelor level and of academic orientation. They were particularly satisfied with the quality of the theses and reported that many students were able to write good academic papers with solid quantitative methods. Students went through the complete research cycle and included conceptualization, empirical execution and interpretation and discussion of the results as well as recommendations for further research. Some even conducted a full experiment. The students demonstrated in their bachelor thesis that they can develop a hypothesis derived from the literature, motivate their choices of research methods, collect data from primary and secondary sources, and analyse and interpret the data and discuss the findings and their relevance.

As a point for attention, the committee members indicated that not all students managed to write quality abstracts and introductions. Moreover, in several cases the tables in the theses were rather poor. According to the thesis committee, these are elements the supervisor could address during the thesis trajectory.

Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT established that the overall quality of the BSc EBE theses is good and that students demonstrate through their bachelor thesis that they have achieved all end qualifications.

Considerations

The PRT's general considerations on the four standards are valid for this BSc EBE programme. In so far as the programme's specific characteristics are concerned, the PRT considers that the programme has a distinctive profile whose features are operationalised in a coherent and fit-for-purpose curriculum.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of both the previous accreditation panel and internal and external stakeholders. This input has led to a number of relevant programme adjustments and will eventually culminate in a major curriculum renewal. The new curriculum will continue to reflect the mission of both RU and NSM, address regional demands, serve a diverse student body, and enhance the school's programme portfolio.

Furthermore, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the assessment grid underlying the thesis evaluation form is comprehensive and fit-for-purpose, and that BSc EBE students demonstrate in their bachelor thesis to have achieved all end qualifications.

The combination of general and specific considerations constitutes a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on all four standards. As specific points of attention for the BSc EBE programme, the PRT suggests:

- the programme team to embed the specific distinguishing features of the profile, including the economics+ concept, more explicitly in the learning outcomes of the BSc EBE programme;
- the thesis coordinator to insist with assessors that final grades should be motivated in case there is a difference in final scores;
- thesis assessors to provide feedback in all evaluation forms.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the Bachelor Economics and Business Economics meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO evaluation framework for limited programme assessment. This appreciation is based on its general findings and considerations across all NSM programmes, as well as on the way this BSc EBE programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

3. MSc Business Administration

The Master Business Administration (MSc BA) is a one-year full-time programme taught in English. Students enrol in one of eight specialisations: Strategic Management; Organisational Design & Development; Marketing; Strategic Human Resources Leadership; Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Management; International Business; Innovation and Entrepreneurship; or Business Analysis and Modelling.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on the mission, vision and values of the university and the school, on their connection with the rationale of each degree programme, on the relevance of the end qualifications, and on the structural attention to developments in the respective professional domains are all valid for this programme.

The MSc BA programme provides students with academic and practical knowledge, diverse theoretical perspectives and skills to design and implement organisational strategies and structures with the aim to create social, ecological, and economic value. The underlying idea is that students need more than analytical business skills to understand and thrive in today's global business environment. Because the world needs graduates who can shape society responsibly and sustainably, the MSc BA programme aims to deliver competent business administration graduates who conduct scientific research, are well-educated professionals, act and think responsibly, and advise and facilitate organisations to become more responsible in contributing to a sustainable society. This focus on responsible governance for sustainable societies makes the MSc BA in Nijmegen stand out from similar programmes.

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the specific profile of the MSc BA is not a mere paper construct, but is effectively implemented in the objectives of the respective specialisations and the curriculum. In fact, the PRT noticed that the programme clearly delivers on the distinguishing features mentioned in the self-evaluation report: societal impact, multiple perspectives, and active engagement.

Further to its general findings, the PRT establishes that the end qualifications of the MSc BA are adequate in terms of content, level and orientation. The five learning outcomes on theory, research, application, reflection and communication are formulated in such a way that they apply equally to all specialisations. Moreover, the PRT appreciates that the learning outcomes also refer to the programme's distinctive features.

Teaching-learning environment

The PRT's general findings on the teaching-learning environment at NSM are also valid for this programme's curriculum, didactics, students, staff and facilities.

The curriculum of the one-year MSc BA is set up in a very similar way across the different specialisations: students usually follow five or six specialist courses (30-36 EC), one or two electives (6-12 EC), and produce a master thesis (18 EC). According to the PRT, each curriculum is coherent and fit-for-purpose.

The PRT was informed that about half of the MSc BA students enter the programme after a pre-master programme. In this way the programme aligns with the mission of the university and the school as it addresses regional demands and serves a diverse student body.

Moreover, students in certain specialisations can pursue a dual degree with partner universities across Europe. The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that these study programmes are well prepared and provide value added for the students involved. Some initiatives are still very young, while the thesis review included final projects from more long-standing cooperations.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel. In fact, the recommendation to have more evaluations of the entire curriculum has led to a better (evaluation of the) alignment of courses and a more holistic review of the entire programme. This review and the input of internal and external stakeholders have brought about adjustments within and across courses, as well as plans for a more comprehensive curriculum reform.

In terms of adjustments, the PRT was informed that new courses have been designed and course contents have been renewed with a view to address contemporary challenges and to prepare students for the job market. The curriculum revision is part of a school-wide screening of master programmes and will entail a reorganisation of specialisations. In view of the available in-house expertise, Responsible Digitalisation is likely to become a new MSc BA specialisation. The PRT welcomes these developments and advises the programme to

decide on its specialisations in concertation with the MSc Economics programme and possibly other NSM departments. Further to its general considerations, the PRT sees room for an MSc BA programme with (a limited number of) specialisations that are positioned on the higher education market with their own rationale, distinctive features and learning outcomes.

Assessment

The PRT's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examining Boards are valid for this programme.

As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at assessment materials pertaining to a representative sample of 16 MSc BA theses. The review showed that the evaluation form is comprehensive and relevant. It contains 10 criteria with clear rubrics indicating per criterion what is Insufficient, Sufficient, Good, Very Good and Excellent. Every criterion has its own weight within the overall grade. In order to pass, students should score sufficient on each criterion. Both supervisor and co-reader complete a separate form.

The thesis committee reported that it agreed to almost all final grades and found that almost all evaluation forms had been completed in an insightful way. They appreciated the well-structured evaluation form with its clear rubrics and ample space to provide feedback, which is effectively used by supervisors and second readers. Moreover, the feedback provided was such that students could learn from it. Hence, the PRT subscribes to the message from the thesis committee that coordinators, supervisors and co-readers should be congratulated for their work, and encouraged to continue their great job.

Achieved learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance at NSM are valid for this MSc BA programme.

The MSc BA programme culminates in a master thesis of 18 EC. As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at the quality of 16 MSc BA theses. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 311 students who graduated in the academic year 2022-2023. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (37% - 47% - 14% - 2%) in the sample, the experts reviewed 5 low quality, 8 average quality, 2 high quality and 1 excellent thesis that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers. The sample contained theses from nine specialisations, and included two final projects produced in the framework of dual degree programmes.

The thesis experts found that all 15 theses clearly met the requirements of a final product at master level and of academic orientation. In general theses were well written, with students often focusing on creative topics covering societal issues. The theses had sufficient academic quality and fulfilled the requirements of innovation. There was attention to theory development and managerial implications, and students used a diversity of research methods.

As points for attention, the thesis experts mentioned that the research question was often descriptive, with less focus on the why question or the search for underlying mechanisms. In case students chose a qualitative method, they sometimes neglected the context during the analysis and cases were hardly compared with each other. According to the thesis committee, these are elements the supervisor could address during the thesis trajectory.

Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT established that the overall quality of the MSc BA theses is good and that students demonstrate through their master thesis that they have achieved all end qualifications.

Considerations

The PRT's general considerations on the four standards are valid for this MSc BA programme. In so far as the programme's specific characteristics are concerned, the PRT considers that the programme has a distinctive profile whose features are operationalised in a coherent and fit-for-purpose curriculum for each specialisation.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of both the previous accreditation panel and internal and external stakeholders. This input has led to a number of relevant programme adjustments and will eventually culminate in a major curriculum renewal.

Furthermore, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the evaluation form is comprehensive and relevant, that assessors underpin their scores with insightful information, and that MSc BA students demonstrate in their master thesis to have achieved all end qualifications.

The combination of general and specific considerations constitutes a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on all four standards. As a specific point of attention for the MSc BA programme, the PRT suggests to adjust – as part of the school-wide master programme revision – the current specialisations towards a specific set of (in part trans-departmental) specialisations with their own rationale, distinctive features and learning outcomes.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the Master Business Administration meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO evaluation framework for limited programme assessment. This appreciation is based on its general findings and considerations across all NSM programmes, as well as on the way this MSc BA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

4. MSc Economics

The Master in Economics is a one-year full-time programme taught in English. Students enrol in one of seven specialisations: Accounting & Control; Corporate Finance & Control;

Financial Economics; Economics, Behaviour & Policy; International Business; International Economics & Development; or International Political Economy.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on the mission, vision and values of the university and the school, on their connection with the rationale of each degree programme, on the relevance of the end qualifications, and on the structural attention to developments in the respective professional domains are all valid for this programme.

The MSc Economics programme fosters an integrative approach to economic analysis by providing students with foundational economic theories and methodologies, as well as insights from various academic domains, such as psychology, sociology and political science. The programme goes beyond the conventional confines of economics and also explores the dynamics of consumer behaviour, corporate strategies and governmental decision-making. In this way, MSc Economics students learn to dissect complex socio-economic challenges, contemporary societal issues and business dilemmas.

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the specific programme profile is not a mere paper construct, but is effectively implemented in the objectives of the respective specialisations and the curriculum. In fact, the PRT noticed that the programme clearly delivers on the distinguishing features mentioned in the self-evaluation report: societal impact, inclusive offer for learners, and active engagement.

Moreover, the PRT learned during the discussions that internal stakeholders refer to their specific profile as Economics+: students are trained in economics 'and something more' – real world perspectives, wicked problems, another lens than a purely economic one, adding insights from other disciplines to the economics toolkit. According to the PRT, this Economics+ label is relevant and makes the programme stand out. However, it also requires more visibility in external communication and in internal programme documentation.

Further to its general findings, the PRT establishes that the end qualifications of the MSc Economics are adequate in terms of content, level and orientation. The five learning outcomes on theory, research, application, reflection and communication are formulated in such a way that they apply equally to all specialisations. Although there is some attention in the end qualifications to the elements that make the MSc Economics stand out among similar programmes, the PRT suggests to embed the specific distinguishing features, including the economics+ concept, more explicitly in the learning outcomes of the programme.

Teaching-learning environment

The PRT's general findings on the teaching-learning environment at NSM are also valid for this programme's curriculum, didactics, students, staff and facilities.

The curriculum of the one-year MSc Economics is set up in a very similar way across the different specialisations: students usually follow six specialist courses (36 EC), one methods

course (6 EC), and produce a master thesis (18 EC). Most specialisations consist entirely of compulsory courses. According to the PRT, each curriculum is coherent and fit-for-purpose.

In line with its distinctive feature, the programme targets a broad student body that includes bachelor graduates whose academic background does not qualify for direct admission. The PRT was informed that about 30% of the MSc Economics students enter the programme after a pre-master. In this way the programme aligns with the mission of the university and the school, addressing regional demands and serving a diverse student body.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel. In fact, the recommendation to recruit more assistant professors in the department has led to an increase in professorial staff from 18 to 28. As a result, students now are much more exposed to academic staff combining research and teaching. Moreover, the staff increase allowed the programme to maintain and even enhance its small-scale teaching approach at a time when student numbers were growing.

Furthermore, the programme took into account the findings and suggestions from internal and external stakeholders and surveys, which has led to a number of concrete course adjustments in the respective curricula and a broader alignment of the master programme with the strategy of the school. One example is the new course Societal Challenges in Economics, which is taught in all specialisations and addresses the economic perspective on Sustainable Development Goals and Digital Transformation. Similarly, the Accounting & Control specialisation was updated in 2023-2024 to reflect recent developments in the domain and increase its attractiveness. The PRT welcomes these curriculum innovations, which all contribute to a higher quality programme. In the long run, however, the PRT also sees room for further improvement, notably with regard to the envisaged curriculum revision that is part of a school-wide screening of master programmes. The PRT advises the programme to decide on its specialisations in concertation with the MSc Business Administration programme and possibly other NSM departments. Further to its general considerations, the PRT sees room for an MSc Economics programme with (a limited number of) specialisations that are positioned on the higher education market with their own rationale, distinctive features and learning outcomes. This certainly applies to the Accounting & Control specialisation and its (envisaged) curriculum that would also prepare graduates for a post-graduate programme and career as Register Controller or Register Accountant.

Assessment

The PRT's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examining Boards are valid for this programme.

As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at assessment materials pertaining to a representative sample of 15 MSc Economics theses. The review showed that the master thesis assessment document is comprehensive and relevant. It is built around five master thesis learning objectives and includes 12 criteria. Each criterion has clear rubrics indicating what is Insufficient, Sufficient, Fair, Good and Excellent. Every criterion and learning

objective has its own weight within the overall grade. In order to pass, students should score sufficient on each learning objective. The assessment document is shared with students before. Both supervisor and co-reader complete a separate form. Moreover, four additional assessment criteria focus on the thesis process and are completed only by the supervisor. The evaluation form is available as online document and contains a section for feedback.

The thesis committee reported that it agreed to almost all final grades. They found the many assessment criteria, their link to the learning objectives and the clear rubrics a particular strength of the programme. If anything, they found that some of the grades in the upper scoring ranges were a bit too high.

As point for attention, the committee members indicated that not all assessors were equally extensive in providing feedback. In fact, only half of the evaluation forms contained insightful feedback. In those cases where the feedback was limited, the evaluation form proved to be rather meagre and lost much of its relevance. The PRT raised this issue on site and advised the programme team to ensure that assessors provide feedback in all evaluation forms.

Achieved learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance at NSM are valid for this MSc Economics programme.

The programme culminates in a master thesis of 18 EC. As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at the quality of 15 MSc Economics theses. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 112 students who graduated in the academic year 2022-2023. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (25% - 42% - 29% - 4%) in the sample, the experts reviewed 3 low quality, 7 average quality, 4 high quality and 1 excellent thesis that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers. The sample included theses from seven specialisations.

The thesis experts found that all 15 theses clearly met the requirements of a final product at master level and of academic orientation. In general theses covered relevant and interesting topics. The overall quality was average to good. In their work students covered the full research cycle, using theoretical background to derive hypothesis and test the hypothesis based on various empirical methods ranging from panel data econometrics, experimental studies, survey experiments to one qualitative study based on interviews. In general students had an adequate understanding of the methods and also their academic writing was of good quality.

As points for attention, the thesis experts reported that the length of the theses varied a lot, from less than 30 to more than 90 pages. While the structure was clear, the thesis format could be more standardized to fit the academic style of writing economic papers. Moreover, some students demonstrated that they were very good in discussing literature but could have improved on data collection, descriptive analysis and interpretation of results. According to

the thesis committee, these are elements the supervisor could address during the thesis trajectory.

Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT established that the overall quality of the MSc Economics theses is adequate and that students demonstrate through their master thesis that they have achieved all end qualifications.

Considerations

The PRT's general considerations on the four standards are valid for this MSc Economics programme. In so far as the programme's specific characteristics are concerned, the PRT considers that the MSc Economics has a distinctive profile whose features are operationalised in a coherent and fit-for-purpose curriculum for each specialisation.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of both the previous accreditation panel and the internal and external stakeholders. This input has led to a number of relevant adjustments, which enhanced the overall quality of the programme.

Furthermore, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the assessment form is comprehensive and strong, and that students demonstrate in their master thesis that they have achieved the end qualifications.

The combination of general and specific considerations constitutes a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on all four standards. As specific points of attention for the MSc Economics programme, the PRT suggests:

- the programme team to embed the specific distinguishing features, including the economics+ concept, more explicitly in the learning outcomes of the programme;
- the programme team to adjust the current specialisations towards a specific set of (in part trans-departmental) specialisations with their own rationale, distinctive features and learning outcomes;
- the thesis coordinator to ensure that assessors provide feedback in all evaluation forms.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the Master in Economics meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO evaluation framework for limited programme assessment. This appreciation is based on its general findings and considerations across all NSM programmes, as well as on the way this MSc Economics programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

5. MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel

The post-initial Master Bedrijfskunde (post-initial MSc BK) is a part-time programme taught in Dutch. Organised by the Radboud Management academy (RMA), the programme offers academic-level education with practical relevance for professionals in business and (semi)governmental organisations. It targets mid-career professionals who are interested in

business and management, look for a next step in their career and their personal development, and want to combine academic theory with practice that can be applied at work.

The Radboud Management academy plays an important role in the lifelong learning ambitions of the university and the school as it facilitates post-initial and executive education in the domains covered by NSM. The academy shares NSM's mission of responsible governance for sustainable societies, with a key focus on responsible organisations.

Intended learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on the mission, vision and values of the university and the school, on their connection with the rationale of each degree programme, on the relevance of the end qualifications, and on the structural attention to developments in the respective professional domains are all valid for this programme.

The post-initial MSc BK distinguishes itself from other part-time masters by its explicit social systemic perspective on business administration, aiming to understand and intervene in organisations. This perspective puts people and cooperation between people first, without losing sight of the importance of the organisation and society. The programme pays attention to values such as self-fulfilment, security, justice, health and inclusiveness.

The PRT gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the specific programme profile is not a mere paper construct, but is effectively realised in the curriculum. In fact, the PRT noticed that the programme clearly delivers on the distinguishing features mentioned in the self-evaluation report: social systemic focus, scientific and academic embeddedness, and translation of theoretical knowledge in usable professional applications. During the visit, students and alumni emphasised that it is this particular focus that convinced them to pursue a post-initial degree in Nijmegen.

Moreover, the PRT noticed during the discussions that the programme is presented as a post-initial master degree, not an executive education programme. The PRT welcomes this explicit positioning and thinks it does justice to the profile and design of the programme.

Further to its general findings, the PRT establishes that the end qualifications of the part-time MSc BK are adequate in terms of content, level and orientation. Moreover, it appreciates that the learning outcomes also refer to the programme's distinctive features.

Teaching-learning environment

The PRT's general findings on the teaching-learning environment at NSM are also valid for this programme's curriculum, didactics, students, staff and facilities.

The post-initial MSc BK consists of a pre-master curriculum of 24 EC and a part-time curriculum of 60 EC. The pre-master consists of six courses, while the regular programme has six substantive courses (33 EC), a methods course (9 EC) and a master thesis (18 EC). The PRT was informed that all students have to take the pre-master, which focuses on social

systemic academic knowledge and skills. Acknowledging that a pre-master programme may serve a considerable part of the envisaged student population, the PRT did question the relevance of making it compulsory for all applicants. The programme team indicated that it is reviewing this requirement with the aim to increase the flexibility of the pre-master.

In so far as the regular curriculum is concerned, the PRT initially wondered on the basis of the course titles to what extent the specific focus of the programme would be addressed in the curriculum. The discussions with management, staff, students and alumni convinced the PRT that the social systemic perspective is an integral part of the courses. Moreover, the student is always at the heart of the curriculum as participants use their working environment for assignments and conduct research within their own organisation.

Since the previous accreditation, the programme has been adjusted in several ways. An important development was the transition to a blended curriculum, which was initiated in 2022 and rolled out in March 2023. The PRT noticed that the term blended stands for a combination of online education with a range of on-site educational formats. The discussions with students and alumni revealed that they all support the redesign of the courses but that there is some difference of opinion regarding the balance between online and on-site education. The PRT advises the programme team to map the different opinions and use the outcome as a basis for further developments and adjustments.

The PRT was informed that since the previous accreditation, the student numbers have gone down considerably. Notwithstanding the many positive appreciations from graduates, the student intake did not increase again after the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme has undertaken a market research, which indicates that the targeted student profile is still relevant. In addition to introducing the blended education format, the programme is now strengthening its profile and focusing its recruitment efforts regionally rather than nationally. According to the PRT, the programme on offer is of high quality but its distinctive features could be communicated more prominently and more widely.

Furthermore, the PRT welcomes the efforts of the programme to improve the share of students who complete the programme and graduate within three to four years. In fact, several students either take a very long time to graduate or drop out altogether. An important obstacle for those students is the master thesis at the final phase of the programme. In order to tackle the situation, the programme intensified the informal contacts between staff and students during the thesis trajectory. Apart from the thesis supervisor who is in contact with individual students, the programme coordinator is guiding and supervising the progress of the entire cohort and in particular those students who are struggling to finish their thesis. According to the PRT, this initiative demonstrates the importance the programme and the school attach to inclusion and student-centredness.

Assessment

The PRT's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examining Boards are valid for this programme.

As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at assessment materials pertaining to a representative sample of 15 post-initial MSc BK theses. The review showed that the thesis evaluation form is clear and that the ten assessment criteria are varied and relevant. The form invites assessors to score each criterion (Insufficient – Sufficient – Good – Very Good) and motivate their appreciation in writing. Both supervisor and co-reader complete a separate form and propose a final grade, based on their criterion appreciations. The calculation of the final grade is explained on the form. In order to pass, students should get sufficient marks on eight criteria; the other criteria on process and defence are only taken into account for scores well beyond the pass/fail divide.

The thesis committee reported that it agreed to all final grades and that all evaluation forms were completed in an insightful way. They found the evaluation form to be a particular strength of the programme because it was clear, transparent and above all effectively used to assess – and comment on - the student's work. Moreover, the thesis experts noticed consistency in the appreciations, scores and comments of the assessors, which in turn demonstrates that there is a common understanding of what constitutes a sufficient or a good quality thesis.

As a point for attention, the thesis experts reported that the second reader tends to be somewhat more critical but that this is not always visible in the final score because co-readers tend to accept the score proposed by the supervisor. The PRT endorses the very positive findings of the thesis committee, as well as the suggestion that both assessors should provide a motivation of the final score.

Achieved learning outcomes

The PRT's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance at NSM are valid for this post-initial MSc BA programme.

The post-initial programme culminates in a master thesis of 18 EC. As part of this external review, a thesis committee looked at the quality of 15 post-initial MSc BK theses. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 73 students who graduated in the academic years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (12% - 58% - 30% - 0%) in the sample, the experts reviewed 3 low quality, 8 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

The thesis experts found that all 15 theses clearly met the requirements of a final product at master level and of academic orientation. In general theses were very well written. They all followed the same structure. It is clear from the theses that students were well guided in their trajectory and that the supervisors had a common idea of how to guide their students. Moreover, the thesis experts noticed that students were very transparent in their thesis on the object of their research, i.e. their own organisation/employer. Students managed very well in taking a distance from their own role in and knowledge of the organisation and positioned

themselves as objective researchers. Their acquaintance with the topic in fact only encouraged them to dig even deeper into the subject matter.

The PRT very much welcomes the outcome of the thesis review because it demonstrates that the programme successfully addressed the finding of the previous accreditation panel that the academic level of the theses should be improved.

The thesis committee being very positive about the quality of the theses, the experts found it difficult to point to particular weaknesses. As points for attention, they observed that the applied theory and its results sometimes lacked relevance. Several students only paid limited attention to the motivation of their samples and to the way the conclusions can be generalised based on the sample findings. Moreover, the recommendations section sometimes contained fairly standard or obvious advice. According to the thesis committee, these are elements the supervisors could address during the thesis trajectory.

Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee, the PRT established that the overall quality of the post-initial MSc BK theses is strong and that students demonstrate through their master thesis that they have achieved all end qualifications.

Considerations

The PRT's general considerations on the four standards are valid for this post-initial MSc BA programme. In so far as the programme's specific characteristics are concerned, the PRT considers that the post-initial MSc BK has a distinctive profile whose features are operationalised in a coherent and fit-for-purpose curriculum.

The PRT thinks highly of the positioning of the programme as a post-initial degree, its specific focus and the enthusiasm and engagement this generates among students and staff.

The PRT acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to address the suggestions of the previous accreditation panel and to continuously look for programme adjustments and improvements. Such improvement is definitely visible in the thesis review: the programme now has a comprehensive thesis evaluation form, the assessors underpin their scores with insightful information, and the master theses are of a decent academic quality level. In this regard, the PRT endorses the outcome of the thesis review that the post-initial MSc BK students demonstrate in their master thesis that they have achieved the end qualifications.

The combination of general and specific considerations constitutes a good basis for the PRT to conclude positively on all four standards. As specific points of attention for the post-initial MSc BK programme, the PRT suggests:

- communicating the programme's distinctive features (even) more widely and prominently;
- reconsidering the obligation for all students to participate in the pre-master programme;
- ensuring that the blended form of education delivery retains sufficient elements of in-person contact.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the post-initial Master Bedrijfskunde meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO evaluation framework for limited programme assessment. This appreciation is based on its general findings and considerations across all NSM programmes, as well as on the way this post-initial MSc BA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way.

Overall Conclusion

The PRT has established that all five degree programmes under review meet all four NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes. As a result:

- the PRT's overall assessment of the quality of the bachelor programme *Bedrijfskunde (Business Administration)* is **positive**.
- the PRT's overall assessment of the quality of the bachelor programme *Economie en Bedrijfseconomie (Economics and Business Economics)* is **positive**.
- the PRT's overall assessment of the quality of the master programme *Business Administration* is **positive**.
- the PRT's overall assessment of the quality of the master programme *Economics* is **positive**.
- the PRT's overall assessment of the quality of the post-initial master programme *Bedrijfskunde* is **positive**.

Development points

Given its overall positive conclusion, the PRT does not issue any strong or binding recommendations. However, the materials and discussions revealed a number of areas where it sees room for improvement. The PRT advises the school and its departments:

- to promote the 'selling points' of the school and its programmes in the communications towards the outside world, notably to potential students;
- to integrate the distinctive features of each programme (more) explicitly in their end qualifications and the course learning goals;
- to reflect on and adjust the programme portfolio at the level of specialisations;
- to connect the initial degree programmes more strongly with the professional world;
- to appoint a 'real' external member in the Examining Boards;
- to pay attention in the annual sample review to theses with a low pass score;
- to convince all assessors to complete thesis evaluation forms in an insightful way;
- to insist that the final thesis score is motivated when individual scores differ;
- to keep track of the professional whereabouts of alumni.

At individual programme level, the PRT encourages:

- the BSc BA thesis coordinator to clarify the boundaries between pass and fail;
- the BSc EBE and MSc Economics teams to give the economics+ concept more visibility;
- the post-initial MSc BK to reconsider the obligation for all students to participate in the pre-master programme;
- the post-initial MSc BK to retain sufficient elements of in-person contact in the blended form of education delivery.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programmes

Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution:	Radboud University Nijmegen School of Management
Status of the institution:	publicly funded
Result of the institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive
Contact person NSM:	Elise van Casteren (elise.vancasteren@ru.nl)

Administrative data on the programmes

Bedrijfskunde (Business Administration)

CROHO:	50645
Level:	bachelor
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	180
Location:	Nijmegen
Mode of study:	full-time
Language:	Dutch and English
Specialisations:	Bedrijfskunde (NL) Business Administration (EN) International Business Administration (EN) Business Economics (NL)

Economie en Bedrijfseconomie (Economics and Business Economics)

CROHO:	50950
Level:	bachelor
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	180
Location:	Nijmegen
Mode of study:	full-time
Language:	Dutch and English
Specialisations:	Business Economics Financial Economics International Economics and Business International Economics and Policy

Business Administration

CROHO:	60644
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	60
Location:	Nijmegen
Mode of study:	Full-time
Language:	English
Specialisations:	Strategic Management Organisational Design & Development Marketing Strategic Human Resources Leadership Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Management International Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Business Analysis and Modelling

Economics

CROHO:	66401
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	60
Location:	Nijmegen
Mode of study:	full-time
Language:	English
Specialisations:	Accounting & Control Corporate Finance & Control Financial Economics Economics, Behaviour & Policy International Business International Economics & Development International Political Economy

Bedrijfskunde post-initieel

CROHO:	75104
Level:	master
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	60 EC
Location:	Nijmegen
Mode of study:	part-time
Language:	Dutch
Specialisations:	none

Annex 2 – Peer Review Team and Thesis Committee members

Peer Review Team

Timo Korkeamäki, PRT chair

Timo is Dean of Aalto University School of Business in Finland. Before he was professor of Finance, Head of Department and Dean of Research at Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki. Professor Korkeamäki has extensive accreditation experience with AACSB and through this involvement familiar with Dutch higher education institutions.

Philip Vergauwen, NVAO member of the PRT

Philip is professor at and former Dean of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Before, he was Dean of the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University. Professor Vergauwen has extensive accreditation experience, on both sides of the table, with AACSB, EFMD and NVAO.

Rudy Martens, AACSB member of the PRT

Rudy was full professor of Management and Strategy at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. He was Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Antwerp and Head of the Management Department before retiring in September 2021. Professor Martens has extensive experience as chair and member of Peer Review Teams on behalf of AACSB, EPAS-EFMD and VLIR-NVAO.

Kathryn Graddy, AACSB member of the PRT

Kathryn is a professor of Economics and Dean of the International Business School at Brandeis University, USA. Before joining Brandeis, Professor Graddy has worked extensively in the UK (London Business School, Oxford University). Her research interests include the economics of art, culture, and industrial organisation.

Thimo van Luijn, student-member of the PRT

Thimo is a final year student of the Bachelor International Business (major Finance) at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) at Maastricht University. He is Student Ambassador of SBE, as well as member of the Student Council and the Education Programme Committee.

Thesis Committee

Philip Vergauwen, chair

Being familiar with the Dutch higher education system, Philip functioned as linking pin between the Peer Review Team and the thesis committee. As chair of the thesis committee, he supervised the sample selection, quality controlled the individual thesis reviews that required a second opinion, and validated the thesis committee report.

Dirk Buyens, Vlerick Business School

Dirk is professor in Human Resource Management at the Vlerick Business School, Belgium. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed post-initial Bedrijfskunde theses.

Henk Kievit, Nyenrode University

Henk is professor in Entrepreneurship and Ecosystems at Nyenrode Business University. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed bachelor and master theses in Business Administration.

Anna Minasyan, Groningen University

Anna is associate professor in Economics at the University of Groningen. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed bachelor and master theses in Economics and Business Economics.

Anita van Gils, Maastricht University

Anita is professor in Family Business and Strategic Entrepreneurship at Maastricht University. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed bachelor and master theses in Business Administration.

Marinus Verhagen, Tilburg University

Marinus is senior lecturer at the Human Resource Studies department of Tilburg University. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed bachelor and master theses in Business Administration.

Celeste Wilderom, University of Twente

Celeste is professor in Change Management & Organisational Behaviour at the University of Twente. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed post-initial Bedrijfskunde theses.

Yilong Xu, Utrecht University

Yilong is assistant professor of Finance at the Utrecht School of Economics. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed bachelor and master theses in Economics and Business Economics.

Both the thesis committee and the peer review team were assisted by **Mark Delmartino**, MDM Consultancy bv, Antwerpen – Belgium. As freelance secretary, Mark has worked with NVAO panels since 2006. He is certified by NVAO and has broad experience in supporting combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation panels in the Netherlands.

All members of the peer review team and the thesis committee, as well as the secretary have signed the NVAO independence form.

Annex 3 – Programme of the site visit

Sunday 9 June 2024

Location: Hotel Manna

- 16.30h Internal meeting Peer Review Team
- 19.00h Dinner with representatives Nijmegen School of Management

Monday 10 June 2024

Location: Elinor Ostrom building, Ulbo de Sitter Room

- 08.30h Arrival PRT
- 09.00h Meeting with Executive Board Radboud University
- 09.45h Strategic Management, Resource Management & Previous Concerns
- 11.15h Faculty Management
- 12.15h Research, Engagement & Impact
- 13.00h Lunch
- 13.45h Guided tour through NSM building
- 14.10h Meeting with the Rector (Executive Board RU)
- 14.30h Management Business Administration programmes
- 15.15h Learners Business Administration programmes
- 16.00h Faculty Business Administration programmes
- 17.00h Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives
- 18.00h Guided tour RU campus
- 18.30h Alumni of NSM programmes (at Huize Heyendaal)
- 19.00h Informal dinner with Alumni, International Advisory Board and Corporate representatives (at Huize Heyendaal)

Tuesday 11 June 2024

Location: Elinor Ostrom Building, Ulbo de Sitter Room

- 08.45h Arrival PRT
- 09.00h Management Economics and Business Economics programmes
- 09.45h Learners Economics and Business Economics programmes
- 10.30h Faculty Economics and Business Economics programmes
- 11.30h Assurance of Learning
- 12.15h Examination Boards
- 13.00h Lunch
- 14.00h Management Executive Education
- 14.45h Learners post-initial MSc Bedrijfskunde programme
- 15.15h Faculty post-initial MSc Bedrijfskunde programme
- 16.00h Professional Staff
- 16.45h Wrap-up with accreditation team NSM
- 18.00h Dinner and Internal meeting Peer Review Team (at hotel Manna)

Wednesday 12 June 2024

09.00h	Internal meeting Peer Review Team (at hotel Manna)
11.00h	Feedback to NSM Management (at Elinor Ostrom building)
11.30h	Feedback to Programme Management
12.00h	Lunch
13.00h	Feedback to Executive Board (at Berchmanianum building)
13.30h	End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available with the accreditation team at NSM.

Annex 4 – Materials reviewed

Documents prepared for the AACSB-NVAO combined visit:

- AACSB Continuous Improvement Review Report NSM, November 2023.
 - Overview
 - Strategic Management and Innovation
 - Learner Success
 - Thought Leadership, Engagement, and Societal Impact
- NVAO Self-evaluation report NSM programmes, April 2024.
 - Administrative data
 - Programme description
 - Distinguishing features
 - Assessment
 - Follow-up recommendations and developments since previous accreditation
 - SWOT-analysis
- Appendices to NVAO Self-evaluation report NSM programmes, April 2024
 - End qualifications
 - End qualifications' matrix
 - Curriculum
 - Faculty list
 - Enrolment and progression
 - Assessment table
 - NSE results
 - Elective courses
 - Learners' chapter

In the run-up to the site visit, NSM provided clarifications in writing on programme-specific issues following the panel's review of the programme self-evaluations and learners' chapters.

Furthermore, the PRT had access to school-wide and programme-specific materials in a dedicated digital base-room set up by NSM. Before and during the visit, the PRT looked among others at the following documents:

- Radboud University Strategy
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan
- Annual Reports NSM 2020 - 2023
- Presentation NSM – pre-visit AACSB-NVAO, 25 March 2024
- Presentation NSM – site visit AACSB-NVAO, 10 June 2024
- Overview and minutes International Advisory Board NSM
- Radboud Management academy Strategy
- Assurance of Learning
- Career Service and Alumni
- Memo ChatGPT and Education at NSM
- Education and Examination Regulations (for each programme)
- Annual reports Examining Boards

- Annual reports Programme Committees
- Internship regulations MSc BA and MSc EBE
- Thesis grading rubrics (for each programme)
- Course guides pre-master programmes
- Course dossiers BSc Business Administration
- Course dossiers BSc Economics and Business Economics
- Course dossiers MSc Business Administration
- Course dossiers MSc Economics
- Course dossiers MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel
- Business Administration Curriculum Revision Committee report
- Concept structure BSc Economics and Business Economics 2025-2026

For each programme the thesis committee reviewed a representative sample of 15 theses and their evaluation. During the visit, the PRT verified that the sample contained at least one thesis per specialisation and dual degree variant. A list of the selected theses per programme is available with the accreditation team at NSM.

Programme	Theses	Variants	Specialisations
BSc Business Administration	15	full-time	Bedrijfskunde (7); Business Administration (3); International Business Administration (2); Bedrijfseconomie (3)
BSc Economics and Business Economics	15	full-time (14) dual degree (1)	Bedrijfseconomie (6), Financiële Economie (4); International Economics and Business (3); International Economics and Policy (2)
MSc Business Administration	16	full-time (14) dual degree (2)	Strategic Management (3); Organisational Design & Development (2); Marketing (2); Strategic Human Resources Leadership (2); Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Management (1); International Business (1); Innovation and Entrepreneurship (2); Business Analysis and Modelling (1); European Master System Dynamics (1)
MSc Economics	15	full-time	Accounting & Control (3); Corporate Finance & Control (3); Financial Economics (3); Economics, Behaviour & Policy (2); International Business (1); International Economics & Development (1); International Political Economy (2)
MSc Bedrijfskunde post-initieel	15	part-time	not applicable