

Master of Business Administration

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (WUAS)

*Report of Standards 1 -11 of the extensive programme assessment*

*Reference number: 009837*

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## 1. Executive Summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Wittenborg University. The programme has been assessed according to the NVAO Assessment Framework<sup>1</sup>.

### **Intended learning outcomes**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 1”.

The qualification objectives of the MBA programme are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group of qualified and work experienced students who want to use the Master qualification to achieve the next level of their careers. The panel assesses the objectives of the programme to be clear and valid. The programme’s outcomes embrace academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of the individual student’s personality. According to the panel the intended learning outcomes form a comprehensive and compact set of competencies. They fit the professional orientation of the programme and correspond to the level of a professional Master. The international environment at WUAS clearly promotes the achievement of intercultural skills.

The different specialisations such as International Management, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Finance, Hospitality & Service Management, Health & Social Care, Sport Business Management, Clean technology Management, Smart Industry, and Education offer a broad choice and allow students to deepen their knowledge in a respective professional field.

The MBA programme takes the requirements of the national Dutch qualification framework into account. The panel appreciates the fact that the qualification objectives of the MBA were formulated in collaboration with the professional field. The panel formed the view that WUAS is in a productive exchange with business and industry representatives. The intended learning outcomes take into account the current developments and needs of the professional field and therefore promote the students’ employability. The panel appreciates that the intended learning outcomes are periodically evaluated by utilising instruments such as surveys and interviews, and by involving the expertise from the professional field.

The panel appreciates that WUAS has expanded its already existing values of "internationalization" and "diversity" by adding "ethics and social responsibility". In its view, these values are reflected in the course of study. Considering that the values of "ethics and social responsibility" have been newly implemented, the panel suggests that these aspects could be defined more clearly and transparently in the individual module descriptions of the programme.

### **Curriculum; orientation**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 2”.

The qualification objectives of the programme are explained and convincingly presented by WUAS in relation to the target group of international students from countries all over the world. Matching this target group, the broad qualification profile with its various specialisation possibilities is reasonable.

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<sup>1</sup> Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, September 2018 (extensive framework), NVAO

The panel has indicated that the curricula contain sufficient elements to ensure that students acquire the necessary academic skills by the end of the programme. The academic skills are indicated as learning objectives and are proved in the students' final thesis. The panel appreciates the "project weeks" which are linked to the final project. The programme ensures that students acquire methodological competences and are empowered to conduct academic work on Master's level.

In addition, the panel formed the view that the curriculum also provides sufficient insight into the professional field.

The MBA programme's design appropriately takes the international outlook into account by including various international aspects such as teaching in English, international staff members and international textbooks. The international environment at WUAS promotes students' international and intercultural competencies.

### **Curriculum; content**

The programme receives the assessment "meets the generic quality on standard 3".

The curriculum adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the MBA programme. The contents of the modules are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. The panel considers the curriculum to meet the programme final qualifications and programme outcomes. The modules in the curriculum cover both knowledge and competencies of generic business administration or business management areas and of the specialisations. The wide selection of nine specialisations enables students to acquire additional competencies and skills in the area of their choice besides the general Business Administration modules.

The contents of the MBA programme consider the students' prior professional experience and refer to it. Furthermore, the panel assesses research methods and techniques to be adequately covered in the curriculum.

Theoretical questions are, where possible, explained by means of practical examples. There is also evidence that the programme qualifies for interdisciplinary thinking. Ethical implications are communicated. The project weeks require the students to think interdisciplinary because the projects adopt a more global approach to the corresponding topic.

In the view of the panel WUAS prepares the students adequately for the task of the Final Project via the academic supervisors, the project weeks and a Research Methods module. The four different forms enable the students to choose a Project type according to their individual interest and further career/study plans.

The panel considers the curriculum coherence up to standard. It endorses the English title for the programme and English as the language of instruction.

### **Curriculum; learning environment**

The programme receives the assessment "meets the generic quality on standard 4".

The panel appreciates the flexibility in the programme. Students are allowed to start in the programme at different moments in time. The programme structure supports the smooth implementation of the curriculum and allows the student to enter the programme 6 times a year due to the flexibility of the block system. This system and the broad choice of specialisations enable the students to design their own learning process.

The programme consists of modules and assigns credit points per module on the basis of the necessary student workload. When reviewing the workload, WUAS also takes evaluation findings into account, including student feedback and the programme's success rate. During the interview rounds the panel was convinced that the workload review takes the results of the evaluation into account. However, since the information provided by students on their workload in the modules offered in the first semester varied considerably, the panel suggests that WUAS should monitor the workload more closely in order to achieve a balanced workload.

The panel is positive about the content of the curriculum. The courses in the curriculum are up to standard and have been adequately tailored to the programme profile. The curriculum is well-balanced in terms of academic and professional skills.

The panel also welcomes the integration of the academic skills into the courses. Furthermore, the panel appreciates the strong international and intercultural character of the programme. The international orientation of the programme in terms of content but also in terms of targeted student body and staff composition result in an environment that adds value to the programme in terms of intercultural skills. Due to the international target group and teaching staff and the strong international orientation of the programme and WUAS in general, the panel considers the implementation of the MBA programme in English language to be justified.

### **Intake**

The programme receives the assessment "meets the generic quality on standard 5".

The admission requirements are defined and comprehensible. The Dutch requirements have been considered. That is also the case for the European requirements (MBA Guidelines) like the aspired job experience of the students after the first academic degree of 3 years at WUAS (certified proof of this experience must be shown at the time of the admission). The panel regards the entry requirements for applicants to be up to standard.

The admission requirements also consider adequately the required language proficiency level of English. WUAS ensures that all enrolled students are able to successfully complete the study programme (courses, additional literature, utilisation of counselling services and extracurricular activities). The panel also considers the admission procedures to be solid and reliable

### **Staff**

The programme receives the assessment "meets the generic quality on standard 6".

The panel is positive about the qualifications of the teaching staff and their English language proficiency. This was confirmed by their CVs and during the interviews with the teaching staff. The panel notes the staff is able to relate lectures to the professional practice. The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. Furthermore, the practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the aim of the programme to integrate theory and practice.

The faculty members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the modules towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of teaching staff in the programme take place regularly. During the on-site visit, the panel was also able to convince itself that an active interaction takes place.

The panel welcomes the high proportion PhD-qualified staff of 70 %, being involved as teachers in the programme. The panel assesses the number of staff involved in the programme to be sufficient. Since the majority of the teachers are "freelancers" and "teachers from the United Kingdom", the experts advise to think about the consequences of the ongoing Brexit.

### **Facilities**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 7”.

WUAS provided a virtual tour through the University's facilities. In addition, the chair visited WUAS in the context of another accreditation procedure. According to the chair and the other panel members, the number and size of teaching rooms and the equipment of all learning facilities are in line with the needs described for the programme and allow for a growth in student number without compromising study quality. Free access to a Wi-Fi network is available for students. All rooms and entrances are equipped for people with disabilities and can be reached barrier-free.

The library provides access to necessary literature as well as digital media. This also applies to electronic media and various databases. The library is open during the lecture period as well as during the lecture-free period. The needs of the students are taken into account. This was confirmed by the students during the interviews.

### **Tutoring**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 8”.

The panel considers that students at WUAS receive high-quality tutoring and information services. The panel highly appreciates the range of services offered and the individualised approach of these services. This tutoring system is up to standard and meets students' needs.

### **Quality assurance**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 9”.

The panel considers that WUAS has developed a comprehensive quality assurance system that involves all relevant stakeholders.

Based on the documents submitted and the interviews, the panel was convinced that WUAS is doing excellent work in the field of quality assurance and further development. In accordance with WUAS' quality assurance system, stakeholders such as students, staff, alumni and the professional field are involved in the quality assurance of the programme, which allows an objective assessment.

WUAS considers the evaluation results and the analysis on student workload, success rate, and graduate employment. Faculty members and students participate in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures. Responsibilities are clearly defined. Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated to the students and provide input for the quality development process.

### **Student assessment**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 10”.

Before the virtual review the panel was presented with assessment examples from different modules and concluded that the assessment system is overall adequate and effective to evaluate the achievement of the modules learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level.

The exams are characterised by a wide variety of different test formats like (Open/Closed book Examination, Individual Paper, Group Case Study Project, Completion of Research Proposal for the Final Project etc.). This mix of formats offers a good combination and variety to adequately check the achievement of the learning goals.

### **Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme receives the assessment “meets the generic quality on standard 11”.

Prior to the digital review, the panel received examples of the final theses/ final projects and concluded that the overall evaluation system is appropriate and effective. The requirements are in accordance with the desired Master qualification level. The panel considers the assessment critical and fair. The grading is considered adequate and the quality of the English language is good. The panel agreed with the final grades of the examples.

The panel welcomes the fact that a standard form with defined criteria and benchmarks is used to evaluate the final projects and to give students a feedback (see Annex 3 as an example). This offers the students a transparent and fair assessment. However, the panel formed the view that in addition to this formal assessment, a more individualised approach regarding the concrete topic of the final project would be helpful for students. Therefore, the panel recommends, in addition to the existing formalised assessment, to give the students an individual feedback with regard to the topic of their final project.

On the basis of its own random sampling and the comments of the students, the panel was able to determine that the assessment of the final papers is reliable and transparent. The panel is positive about the position, composition, responsibilities and activities of the Graduation & Examination Board. In the panel's view, the Board ensures the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Procedure

A contract for the extensive programme accreditation (standard 1-11 of the NVAO Extensive Accreditation Framework) of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) was made between FIBAA and the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences on 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2020.

FIBAA appointed a review panel. The University agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

**Prof. Dr. Joël Branson (Chair)**

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium)  
Professor of Accounting and Auditing  
Dean Faculty of Social Sciences & Solvay Business School

**Prof. Dr. Sabine Haller**

Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin (Germany)  
Professor of Marketing and Service Management

**Dr. Julian J. Rossig**

KPMG AG Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft (Frankfurt a.M.) (Germany)  
Senior Manager Strategy (Prokura)

**Stefania Cacciatore**

Westfälische Wilhelms Universität, Münster (Germany)  
Student: Master of Science in Business Administration (Major in Management and minor in Marketing)

Daniel Günther (secretary) was responsible for respectively the process coordination and the drafting of the panel members' report.

This composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO (Annex 1). All the panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel members studied the programme documents (Annex 4). Their first impressions were sent to the secretary in order to outline these remarks within the accreditation framework and to identify the points to be clarified during the discussions with the University representatives.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the German federal government (contact and travel restrictions), the assessment was carried out in a digital format using the Adobe Connect conferencing tool. The online conference took place on 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2020 (Annex 2).

The panel has based its assessment on the standards and criteria (1-11) described in the NVAO Extensive Accreditation Framework (September 2018). It formulated its preliminary assessment per theme and standard immediately after the online conference. It is based

on the findings during the discussions with the University representatives, and the assessment of the programme documents.

## **2.2. Advisory report**

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report, while the current chapter is the introduction.

The third chapter gives a description of the programme including its position within the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences and within the higher education system of the Netherlands.

The panel presents its assessments in the fourth chapter. For each standard the panel presents an outline of its findings, considerations and a conclusion.

The outline of the findings are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the digital visit. The panel's considerations are the panel's subjective evaluations regarding these findings and the importance of each. The considerations presented by the panel logically lead to a concluding assessment.

The panel concludes the report with a table containing an overview of its assessments per standard.

The report was completed on 20 November 2020. The University's response to any factual inaccuracies in the report was received on 1 December 2020 and has been taken into account when finalising the report on 15 December 2020.

### 3. Programme

#### 3.1 General characteristics

Institution	: Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
Programme	: Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Type of study programme	: Master programme
Mode of study	: full-time and part-time
Specialisations	: International Management Entrepreneurship & Innovation Finance Hospitality & Service Management Health & Social Care Sports Business Management Clean Technology Management Smart Industry Education
CROHO	: 70150
Number of ECTS points assigned	: 90 ECTS points
Projected study time	: 1.5 (fulltime) - 2 years (part-time) <sup>2</sup>
Initial start of the programme	: 2014

#### 3.2 Institution

The Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (WUAS) was established as an educational institute in 1987, initially called Wittenborg College. In 1996, it received its degree-awarding powers, being appointed a Hogeschool by the Dutch Ministry of Education. WUAS is a privately funded (not for profit) institution for higher education that operates fully in English language.

WUAS is based in the Dutch town of Apeldoorn and currently offers Bachelor and Master programmes to around 1000 students per year (as of 2019) from the Netherlands and around the world. It has also campuses in Amsterdam and Vienna, Austria. WUAS counts its student numbers based on all those registered during a calendar year, and on average 800 students are studying at any one time during the year. Its size and international (micro) environment contribute to a dynamic and continuously developing institute that aims to bring a global outlook to a local region.

In 2015, WUAS opened a study location in Amsterdam. This location is specifically aimed at offering the bachelor's specialisation in Entrepreneurship & Small Business (a double degree with the University of Brighton (UK)), and three of the MBA specialisations (International Management, Finance, and Entrepreneurship & Innovation). Currently Amsterdam has around 100 students (70 bachelor's and 30 master's) and WUAS aims to grow the location to approximately 150-200 students in the future. In 2017 WUAS opened a small study location in Vienna, Austria, within a location that is shared with a local college. The project allows WUAS bachelor's students from the Netherlands to have a study experience in Austria, within the same programme, focused primarily on

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<sup>2</sup> The MBA is also offered to students who wish to study part-time in 2 years. This will mean that instead of following 2 modules per block, only 1 module will be taken, and project weeks and research methods will be spread across a whole year. The editing time allowed for the final project will also be extended across 1 year.

hospitality. In 2020, this exchange programme, where students study WUAS' curriculum, will move its exchange programme to a new partner, a full Austrian state-accredited hospitality and tourism college. The MBA is not offered in Austria.

In October 2019, WUAS opened a study location in Munich, Germany, together with a local business college. The New European College (NEC) is expected to grow to around 150 students. The MBA will be fully offered in Munich after the Minister of Education gives permission for Transnational Education.

WUAS has had close contacts with the University of Brighton (UoB) in the UK for many years. In 2009, this relationship was formalised through an institutional memorandum of cooperation aimed at helping WUAS grow and develop its international programmes. Since 2011, WUAS and UoB have started to develop and offer several jointly taught master's and bachelor's degrees, in the areas of International Hospitality, Event Management, Tourism, and Sport Business Management. With the experience it gained from working closely with UoB on master's programmes, WUAS developed its own MBA programme with nine specialisations.

The benefits of working closely with a large public UK university such as UoB are multiple, including learning about quality systems, having access to a more complete online literature with scientific databases and research libraries, developing research projects or PhD pathways for staff, and having access to a large number of professors and teaching staff, who can be employed on joint or WUAS-only programmes

Recently, discussions with the UoB board have been held to outline the future development of the "University of Brighton Netherlands Campus" at Wittenborg, in light of the Brexit.

All WUAS programmes will be focused on management in each specific field, on the basis of its key values of "internationalization", "diversity" and "ethics". These key values of the University and its programmes are the three pillars upon which WUAS focuses its strategy and builds its quality system.

The main characteristic of WUAS is its international profile. WUAS' student body reflects over 90 different nationalities and the staff body of Master programmes over 25 nationalities (as of July 2020). The WUAS programme management (currently eight members of the Education Board) contains eight different nationalities.

### **3.3 Programme**

The MBA programme is aimed at providing international and local students with the skills and competencies to fulfill management positions in the field of business administration, both in the public and private sector. These positions can include management or policy-making positions in large organisations, as well as positions of management in small to medium-sized companies. The aim of the programme is that students are able to critically analyse and evaluate various developments within an organisation so that they can form, create and develop policies, visions and aims, and solutions within that organisation. They should be in a position to analyse the strategic processes and vision of a company or organisation and using this analysis to apply and implement tools to innovate, optimise and (re-)structure these processes using an integral approach. From an international perspective, the students should learn to analyse the environment and adapt their behaviour and role according to the macro and micro environments they find themselves in. The following specialisation possibilities are offered:

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- International Management,
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation,
- Finance,
- Hospitality & Service Management,
- Health & Social Care,
- Sport Business Management,
- Clean technology Management,
- Smart Industry,
- Education

The MBA runs with a carousel intake – it consists of 6 entry points a year with each semester offered twice. Students can enter Semester 1 in any of the six blocks, and graduate six times during the year. As of March 2020, WUAS has in total 36 graduates from the MBA programme. The following figure shows the MBA stats in academic years:

**Total (MBA 2014-2015)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drop-out	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Study in progress	0	0	0	0	3	4	4

**Total (MBA 2015-2016)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	6	0	0	4	0	1	11
Graduated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drop-out	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Study in progress	10	10	10	14	13	13	13

**Total (MBA 2016-2017)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	5	4	1	3	2	4	19
Graduated	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Drop-out	1	1	0	1	1	1	5
Study in progress	17	19	20	22	23	25	25

**Total (MBA 2017-2018)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	5	7	10	11	7	8	48
Graduated	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Drop-out	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Study in progress	30	36	46	56	63	69	69

**Total (MBA 2018-2019)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	10	7	9	6	5	4	41
Graduated	0	0	2	1	1	4	8
Drop-out	1	4	2	1	1	2	11
Study in progress	78	81	86	90	93	91	91

**Total (MBA 2019-2020)**

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7	Total
Started	18	12	4	4	7	5	50
Graduated	5	1	9	7	8	6	36
Drop-out	1	2	0	1	0	0	4
Study in progress	103	112	107	103	102	101	101

## 4. Assessment

This chapter presents the evaluation of the eleven standards by the panel. For all standards the panel presents (1) a brief outline of its findings based on the programme documents, (2) the considerations the panel has taken into account during the interviews with WUAS representatives and (3) the conclusion of the panel per standard.

### 4.1 – Intended learning outcomes

**Standard 1** *The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.*

#### **Findings**

From the start WUAS has maintained its values of internationalisation and diversity in its programmes and has now included ethics and social responsibility as a third important value. The final qualifications and the programme outcomes of the master programmes have since been updated with inclusion of ethical considerations as a fundamental value.

The programme objectives of the MBA were developed on the basis of benchmarking similar programmes in the Netherlands, the UK, and other European Higher Education Institutions. WUAS conducted internal market research in order to evaluate the international business administration sector. The outcome of this research and the constant and ongoing exchange with the professional field, regularly held communication with the Advisory Board<sup>3</sup>, the Academic Advisory Panel and other representatives of the professional field, confirm that there is a significant need for employees who have further developed their all-round business knowledge and understanding, rather than only specific and often technical knowledge. The MBA programme shall ensure that graduates will build upon the skills, knowledge and competencies they achieved during employment, and that they develop their knowledge, analytical skills and leadership qualities, as well as critical perception skills required of master graduates.

The MBA programme is aimed at providing graduates with the skills and competencies to fulfil business and management positions both in the public and private sector. These positions can include management or policy-making positions in large organisations, as well as positions of management in small to medium-sized companies. An aim is that students are able to critically analyse and evaluate various developments within an organisation so that they can form, create and develop policies, visions and aims and solutions within that organisation. They should be able to analyse the strategic processes and vision of a company or organisation and using this analysis to apply and implement tools to innovate, optimise and (re-)structure these processes. From an international perspective, students shall learn to analyse the cultural environment and adapt their behaviour and role to the situation.

Therefore, at a starting position, at a tactical level, graduates should be able to manage and lead complex business operations in an international context, for instance in areas of finance, marketing, operations and supply chain management, information services

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<sup>3</sup> Advisory Board (a foundation in its own right), that assists in creating an advisory body of representatives from Education and Industry who can advise WUAS on the development of a programme, or its business models.

management and organisation behaviour. At a strategic level however, MBA graduates will need leadership, vision, creativity, and innovation combined with solid research and analytical competencies.

The MBA programme has 5 core over-all MBA final qualifications:

- Understanding (Body of Knowledge);
- Adoption (Strategic Management Roles);
- Communication (Skills);
- Conduct (Research);
- Continuously development of personal skills (Lifelong learning and Leadership).

The MBA programme has been designed to meet these fundamental two levels of objectives (tactical level and strategic level), with the clear progression from semester 1 to semester 2 in which modules reflect a more research-based, critical analysis approach.

The MBA programme allows students to choose modules from one out of nine specialisations (International Management, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Finance, Hospitality & Service Management, Health & Social Care, Sport Business Management, Clean technology Management, Smart Industry, Education) and to complete their final project in that field, depending on their knowledge of a particular field of interest.

In the second semester, students are required to complete three project weeks which are linked to the final project. The objectives of the project weeks are aimed at helping students integrate their knowledge and learned skills of the different subjects, in a way that will be expected within their professional domain. The relationship of the final project with the first semester and second semester was improved by having a thread of research methodology throughout the programme and linking the project weeks to preparation of the final project.

The Professional Profile and the Domain Competencies<sup>4</sup> of the programme are developed with regular input from industry. WUAS assesses that employability of its MBA graduates as a key to the programme's continuing success. By developing the professional profile and the domain competencies in the MBA, WUAS can further strengthen this aspect.

Any degree programme at WUAS has two main goals: firstly, it is to provide appropriate and adequate higher education that will grow and nurture the talents of its students, secondly, it is to prepare its graduates as well as possible for a future career or improve their position and current career status. Therefore, the programme of study needs to lead to qualifications that will be useful for the graduates within their place of work.

Originally, the Final Qualifications of WUAS business administration programmes were developed from existing benchmarked business programmes, and from the experiences of English language Master programmes at other Universities in the Netherlands, and similar programmes in the UK. Business networks in Europe and abroad were consulted as to the types of function and employment possibilities graduates would have. This has resulted in the Professional Profile.

During the past year, the Professional Profile of the MBA programme, and therefore the Final Qualifications have been reviewed again in discussions with the work field, both in the Netherlands and abroad. This was done through the relationship and business

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<sup>4</sup> For 14 years, since 2006 WUAS has developed and maintained its Domain Competency Description (Domain Specific Requirements) for its Business Administration programmes, these have been updated and improved and expanded to include Master programmes.

network of WUAS, through consultations and interviews, and also through questionnaires and surveys. Job market analysis continues to be done by establishing facts regarding employment opportunities from a national and international perspective, by means of work placement opportunities, discussions with employers, alumni tracking and research, such as that of the local and provincial government, the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Associations.

All levels of the organisation are involved in collecting information about the prospects for its graduates in the workplace. WUAS states that since 2012 it has become an important part of the economic community in Apeldoorn and the region and is often involved in discussions about the economic developments of the region. This brings staff and often students into regular contact with examples of possible future employers, organisations, companies and businesses.

Another example is that the CEO of WUAS has for the past three years been a member of the jury for the Apeldoorn Business Awards. This has led to her visiting numerous companies in the Apeldoorn region, many large corporate organisations, and also many start-ups, family companies and small to medium-sized enterprises. The jury has reviewed the companies from a diverse range of aspects, including operations management, process management, human resource management, employability planning, and sustainable growth. The information gained from all these company visits has been a valuable addition to the ability of WUAS to review its programme and qualifications. Another important contribution is from faculty members who are also working in the corresponding professional fields.

All programmes at WUAS, including the MBA programme are aimed at international and local students who aspire to work within an international context in the fields of management and administration, either in business or non-commercial organisations. Students entering the programme will have a feel for an intercultural and multi-lingual learning environment. At WUAS students are always encouraged to develop their skills and competencies within an international environment and with an internationalisation (globalisation) prospective. It is WUAS' aim that graduates from its programmes can operate within an international environment, or - mindful of the international network economy - use their international orientation gained from the programme to excel within their home environment.

In 2008 the Dutch NVAO published a document called The Higher Education Qualifications Framework in the Netherlands, a presentation for compatibility with the framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. This document showed the relationship (in 2008) between the Netherlands' qualification framework within the binary system and the European Qualifications Framework. Special attention was paid to the difference between a University of Applied Science and a Research University.

In the development of its MBA, WUAS has made use of its experiences in offering programmes and modules with both a more practical approach as is traditionally seen at Dutch Universities of Applied Science (HBO) and programmes and modules that have a more academic, research-based methodology. Taking into account both the Dublin Descriptors and the NVAO guidelines the MBA and its Final Qualifications benefit from:

- A programme that is in line with the second cycle Dublin Descriptors;
- a 90 European Credit programme, over 1.5 years (full-time);
- modules that reflect both a practical and a research-based methodology;
- a core team of lecturers who have both academic and practical experience, supported by teachers from practice where suitable;

## **Considerations**

The qualification objectives of the MBA programme are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group of qualified and work experienced students who want to use the Master qualification to achieve the next level of their careers. The panel assesses the objectives of the programme to be clear and valid. The programme's outcomes embrace academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of the individual student's personality. According to the panel the intended learning outcomes form a comprehensive and compact set of competencies. They fit the professional orientation of the programme and correspond to the level of a professional Master. The international environment at WUAS clearly promotes the achievement of intercultural skills.

The different specialisations such as International Management, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Finance, Hospitality & Service Management, Health & Social Care, Sport Business Management, Clean technology Management, Smart Industry, and Education offer a broad choice and allow students to deepen their knowledge in a respective professional field.

The MBA programme takes the requirements of the national Dutch qualification framework into account. The panel appreciates the fact that the qualification objectives of the MBA were formulated in collaboration with the professional field. The panel formed the view that WUAS is in a productive exchange with business and industry representatives. The intended learning outcomes consider the current developments and needs of the professional field and therefore promote the students' employability. The panel appreciates that the intended learning outcomes are periodically evaluated by utilising instruments such as surveys and interviews, and by involving the expertise from the professional field.

The panel appreciates that WUAS has expanded its already existing values of "internationalization" and "diversity" by adding "ethics and social responsibility". In its view, these values are reflected in the course of study. Taking into account that the values of "ethics and social responsibility" have been newly implemented, the panel suggests that these aspects could be defined more clearly and transparently in the individual module descriptions of the programme.

## **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.2 – Curriculum; orientation**

<b>Standard 2</b> <i>The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.</i>
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## **Findings**

The curriculum of the MBA is oriented towards an international mix of students from the Netherlands and around the world, who have at least 3 years of work experience in a position where they have been involved in the (junior) management of human resources,

products or services. The programme is designed in such a way that students are asked to reflect on their work experience.

The curriculum reflects the applied sciences nature of WUAS' overall orientation. The content of modules is updated on a regular basis from both an academic and a professional context. This is achieved through the collaborative teaching of the modules, with all MBA modules being evenly co-taught between at least two lecturers, and through the input from WUAS' industry and business partners. In general, one of the lecturers also represents an industry partner.

At the end of the studies, students are required to produce a significant final project or dissertation based on internationally-recognised academic standards and with the focus on applied research.

In line with the all-round domain specific qualification and competence goals of a Netherlands HBO degree, WUAS' MBA graduates will gain the following skills:

- ability to work independently;
- ability to develop or generate new ideas and communicate these and be proactive;
- ability to think ahead and actively change processes to improve them;
- develop an analytical capability based on experience;
- quickly ascertain the effect of change within organisations;
- ability to quickly prioritise;
- ability to quickly gain an overview of an organisation;
- ability to understand complex situations;
- a broad understanding of business as well as a deeper understanding of work field specific issues (specialist); good written and spoken presentation skills;
- ability to work in autonomous teams;
- a good understanding of the social-economic environment ability to socialise with fellow graduates and academics;
- ability to take worthwhile decisions both long-term and short-term based on available facts and existing situations.

Furthermore, MBA graduates,

- have the ability to lead people and motivate teams;
- have the ability to communicate conclusions;
- are flexible and can cope with uncertain situations;
- show creativeness and innovation through the ability to introduce new thoughts alongside normal theory;
- show social competence, through self-reflection, cultural adaptability, and openness to other ways of thinking.

All WUAS' programmes are internationally orientated, and although a mix of international students and international teachers does not automatically produce an international curriculum, it has a clear influence, and is clearly dependent on the definition of an international curriculum and the perspective it is seen from.

The international character of the programme is strengthened by employees who have an international background, both in terms of work experience and educational qualifications. Furthermore, all course materials and textbooks are in English language and are chosen with an international focus for all modules (avoiding, when possible, materials too focused on the UK or the USA, by selecting global and/or European editions). It is WUAS' aim that graduates can both operate within any international environment, and use the

international focus gained from the programme to excel within their home environment. Many international students return home or go to a third country to work after graduation. Those who stay, find jobs under the term 'knowledge migrants', often in international companies in the Netherlands. In addition, the programme is described, credited (ECTS points) and documented in a manner that conforms to European higher education standards, and the degree is accompanied with a clear Diploma/Degree Supplement conforming to European standards.

Intercultural reflection is stimulated throughout modules such as Globalisation, Society & Culture and The World Economy, and in the group work of project weeks. During the programme, workshops are given that focus on communication and incorporate intercultural competencies and skills.

### **Considerations**

The qualification objectives of the programme are explained and convincingly presented by WUAS in relation to the target group of international students from countries all over the world. Matching this target group the broad qualification profile with its various specialisation possibilities is reasonable.

The panel has indicated that the curricula contain sufficient elements to ensure that students acquire the necessary academic skills by the end of the programme. The academic skills are indicated as learning objectives and are proved in the students' final thesis. The panel appreciates the "project weeks" which are linked to the final project. The programme ensures that students acquire methodological competences and are empowered to conduct academic work on Master's level.

In addition, the panel formed the view that the curriculum also provides sufficient insight into the professional field.

The MBA programme's design appropriately takes the international outlook into account by including various international aspects such as teaching in English, international staff members and international textbooks. The international environment at WUAS promotes students' international and intercultural competencies.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.3 – Curriculum; content**

**Standard 3** *The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

### **Findings**

After a period of continuing development between 2015-2018, the current MBA programme includes:

- three semesters (full-time);

- nine core MBA modules including Research Methodology that spans all semesters;
- three specialisation modules (elected specialisation);
- three themed project weeks based on specialisation, linked to the Final Project;
- various guest lectures and company excursions;
- a Final Project / Graduation Assignment.

The first semester will provide students with 6 core MBA modules (Management Accounting & Finance, Marketing Management, Human Resource Management, Operations Management, International Management Information Management) all offered and taught in the same format, using the concept of reflective learning as a tool. WUAS offers students room to use their work experience in the classroom. The first semester modules are all examined through closed or open book examinations.

MBA 9 Core Modules	Semester
Management Accounting & Finance	1
Marketing Management	
Human Resource Management	
Operations Management	
International Management	
Information Management	
Research Methods (Final Project)	2
Business Statistics	
Strategic Management	

The second semester will provide students with 3 core modules (Research Methods (Final Project), Business Statistics, Strategic Management). Students being able to take choose their electives, from currently nine different specialisations (International Management, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Finance, Hospitality & Service Management, Health & Social Care, Sports Business Management, Clean Technology Management, Smart Industry, Education).

## International Management:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Globalisation, Society & Culture	36	5	MO44
6 / 2 (2)	International Corporate Sustainability	36	5	SM42
6 / 2 (1)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	International Consultancy	36	5	MO45
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See PartB)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Entrepreneurship & Innovation:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship	36	5	EN43
6 / 2 (2)	International Corporate Sustainability	36	5	SM42
6 / 2 (1)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	Venture Capital & Private Equity	36	5	FIN45
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See PartB)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Finance:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Corporate Finance	36	5	FIN42
6 / 2 (1)	Financial & Monetary Economics	36	5	FIN43
6 / 2 (2)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	Venture Capital & Private Equity	36	5	FIN45
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part8)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Hospitality & Service Management:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Critical Perspectives in Hospitality Management	36	5	HM41
6 / 2 (2)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
6 / 2 (1)	Hospitality Operational Excellence	36	5	HM40
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	International Hospitality Development	36	5	HM42
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part8)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Health & Social Care:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Advancing Professional Decision Making	36	5	HC41
6 / 2 (2)	Enabling Leadership In Health Care	36	5	HC42
6 / 2 (1)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	Strategy Health Care Management	36	5	HC44
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part8)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Sports Business Management:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Sports in the Global Marketplace	36	5	SP42
6 / 2 (2)	Ethical and Social Responsibility: Theory and Application	36	5	MO46
6 / 2 (1)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management (in Sports Business)	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	Critical Perspectives in Sports & Leisure	36	5	SP41
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>65 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part8)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>25 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

### Clean Technology Management:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	(FP)	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Smart Grids	36	5	TEC41
6 / 2 (2)	Industrial Marketing	36	5	MA41
6 / 2 (1)	Renewable Energy: Solar, Wind, Hydro	36	5	TEC42
7 / 3 (1)	Zero-Energy Buildings and Energy Transition	36	5	TEC43
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks)		5	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>60 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester / Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part 8)	Final Project	N/A	30	GA41
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>30 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

### Smart Industry:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	(FP)	GA41
5 / 1 (1)	Artificial Intelligence in Business	36	5	TEC48
6 / 2 (2)	Industrial Marketing	36	5	MA41
6 / 2 (1)	Contemporary Issues in Smart Manufacturing Operations	36	5	TEC49
7 / 3 (1)	Cyber Security in Integrated Autonomous Business Operations	36	5	TEC50
7 / 3 (1)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks)		5	PW41
<b>Total Year 1</b>			<b>60 Credits</b>	
Year 2 (1 Semester / Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks – See Part 8)	Final Project	N/A	30	GA41
<b>Total Year 2</b>			<b>30 Credits</b>	
<b>Total Credits MBA</b>			<b>90 Credits</b>	

## Education:

Year 1, Semester 2				
5 / 1 (2)	Research Methods (Final Project)	27	5	GA41
5 / 1 (4)	Critical Perspectives in Education	36	5	ED41
6 / 2 (4)	Leadership and Management in Education	36	5	ED42
6 / 2 (2)	Business Statistics	36	5	GA42
7 / 3 (4)	Strategic Management	36	5	SM41
7 / 3 (2)	Change Management: New teaching & Learning Approach	36	5	ED44
Semester 2 (1 & 2)	Project Module (3 Project Weeks, linked to Final Project)	60	5 out of 30	PW41
Total Year 1			65 Credits	
Year 2 (1 Semester /Term)				
3 Blocks (18 weeks - See Part8)	Final Project	N/A	25 out of 30	GA43
Total Year 2			25 Credits	
Total Credits MBA			90 Credits	

The modules in the second semester will use a more holistic, global approach, with an increase in interdisciplinary thinking and a more research-based learning. Second semester modules are all assessed through group projects and individual assignments (papers).

The third semester is essentially devoted to the Final Project / Graduation Assignment which is linked, where possible, to a company or organisation.

The coherence of the programme is achieved through the vertical build-up of knowledge, competencies and experience throughout three semesters, the first two of which have a balanced portfolio of modules that allow students to complete a semester successfully at whichever block they start the programme. The third semester entails the students bringing together all they have learnt into an individual all-encompassing final project, focused on their chosen specialisation.

Students choose their MBA programme (specialisation) at entry. However, all MBA students can still opt to choose another specialisation at the start of the second semester. If students complete all the modules of a specialisation and graduate in that area, then the specialisation is noted on the awarded degree. If a student chooses to pick modules from different specialisations, or switches during the programme, then no specialisation is mentioned on the award, and the MBA is awarded without specialisation.

The title and the degree of the programme is Master of Business Administration. The qualification title MBA implies that the degree is a professional Master, that the students have prior work experience, and that the programme is taught by lecturers who have both academic and industry experience. The academic level of Master implies that a student has completed a Final Project, demonstrating both forms of rigorous academic research and professional modes of problem-solving.

In the modules, the link between theory and practice is enforced through the use of reflective discussion questions, case studies, and in the writing of papers and assignments. Students are frequently asked to reflect on what they have learnt and are learning through contemplating past work experience or current work in the light of the presented theories, conceptual models and professional approaches.

During the project weeks, students are brought into contact with organisations that have set them a problem-solving consulting task and will visit the companies to review their task. Students will be encouraged to link their Final Project to research with or for a company or organisation, so that it can bring value to that organisation. Students will be involved with that company or organisation in a way that will benefit both the organisation and the student's employability. The Final Project is the ultimate test in which theory and practice is integrated.

Within the MBA programme, the Semester 1 modules include functional management subjects. However, during this semester, WUAS stimulates a cross-functional orientation through cases and discussions about how a module's subject-matter can contribute to the overall performance of an organisation and where cooperation between the various functional areas can be supportive to this. The Semester 2 modules, by their very nature, open up various interdisciplinary perspectives. In particular, the modules of Corporate Sustainability, Strategic Management and Business Statistics are geared at connecting concepts and data of different kinds enabling an interdisciplinary understanding of corporate issues. Other subjects such as Globalisation, Society and Culture, Entrepreneurship and Innovation present views of corporate and entrepreneurial activity which go beyond the boundaries of the traditional professional divisions. The 3 Project Weeks in Semester 2 are specially designed to promote interdisciplinary thinking as the consulting assignments given to students by the organisations involved require a broad problem-solving, analytical approach, ushering in experience and knowledge from a range of business administration areas, and using a combined approach to offer plausible solutions and strategies.

Social behaviour, ethics and conduct play an important role in the life of a student at WUAS. The Education and Examination Guide (EEG) contains a Student Charter, outlining what the institute expects of its students and what students can expect of the institute. With so many different nationalities, cultures and religions present within the organisation, social behaviour, ethics and conduct become important factors inside and outside the classroom. EEG also contains a Code of Behaviour, as a result of discussions with the student representatives. WUAS encourages its lecturers to include aspects of ethics and society, where possible, into their modules.

Throughout the MBA modules, ethics, one of WUAS pillars is included, for example, in Marketing Management, ethics is discussed in terms of company values and social marketing. In the Globalization module, issues such as inequality, poverty and responsibilities of companies in their international chains are discussed. Different ethical approaches are discussed in Corporate Sustainability.

An approach for the final project is being devised, encompassing for example, lectures on research methodologies, academic skills training, development of a problem definition, development of the research plan, literature study, field work, analysis of results / statistics, writing the final report, etc. In Semester 1, students are already given the first introduction lessons in the subject of Research Methods (linked to the Final Project module). This basis will assist them in developing their research techniques required for writing essays as part of modules and later in Semester 2 for the Project Weeks. In the modules that require students to carry out research, this is clearly linked to the Aims and

Objectives of the module. In Semester 2 students are prepared for their Final Project with a further 27 hours of Research Methods, in which they develop their Final Project research plan.

After extensive student feedback, academic supervisors for the final project are now already allocated at the start of the programme in semester 1, in order that students are better prepared in the choices they make. All modules have defined Aims and Objectives. The Aims and Objectives of modules are continuously revised under the Quality System, using the PDCA approach, where content, delivery methods as well as compulsory and recommended literature are reviewed and improved where necessary.

### ***Considerations***

The curriculum adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the MBA programme. The contents of the modules are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. The panel considers the curriculum to meet the programme final qualifications and programme outcomes. The modules in the curriculum cover both knowledge and competencies of generic business administration or business management areas and of the specialisations. The wide selection of nine specialisations enables students to acquire additional competencies and skills in the area of their choice besides the general Business Administration modules.

The contents of the MBA programme taking into account the students' prior professional experience and refer to it. Furthermore, the panel assesses research methods and techniques to be adequately covered in the curriculum.

Theoretical questions are, where possible, explained by means of practical examples. There is also evidence that the programme qualifies for interdisciplinary thinking. Ethical implications are communicated. The project weeks require the students to think interdisciplinary because the projects adopt a more global approach to the corresponding topic.

In the view of the panel WUAS prepares the students adequately for the task of the Final Project via the academic supervisors, the project weeks and a Research Methods module. The four different forms enable the students to choose a Project type according to their individual interest and further career/study plans.

The panel considers the curriculum coherence up to standard. It endorses the English title for the programme and English as the language of instruction.

### ***Conclusion***

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

#### 4.4 – Curriculum; learning environment

**Standard 4** *The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

##### **Findings**

The MBA is a 90 credit point (CP), 1.5-year modular Master's programme, with the credits divided evenly over the 3 semesters (30 credits per semester fulltime, 15 credits part-time). Each module is described in a detailed module guide.

The structure of the MBA follows WUAS' concept of building a programme in semesters to lead students to their final project or dissertation, which reflects the Core Final Qualifications and the Programme Outcomes. The MBA programme follows the modular block system used at WUAS. Under normal circumstances, students take two modules (2 x 5 CP) per six-week block. The provision of modules within blocks is especially beneficial for students who wish to study the programme in a part-time mode as they can spread their study load over 2 or more years, however also full-time students can concentrate on one or two subjects at once, whilst the project weeks, which are spread throughout the year, allow students to take a more integral approach to their learning. Incoming students can start at the beginning of each of the blocks in the first year that is six times per year. By far the most students are expected to start at the beginning of the first or second half of the first year. All modules are offered twice a year to enable students to start with the first semester in the second half-year. Students must complete the first semester before being allowed to take modules of the second semester.

All components of the programme are modular and each module, with the exception of the final project, has a comparable study-load, equating to 5 CPs, which equates to 140 learning hours per module. Classes will only be attended by Master of Business Administration students and there will not be mixed classes with students from other programmes. The number of hours of face-to-face education is about 18 hours per week in the first two semesters. In the third semester, the number of these hours is much less, on account of the different type of learning activities.

The programme's content, the learning environment and the final projects reflect the mission, vision and values of WUAS: Internationalisation, Diversity and Ethics.

Internationalisation has been and continues to be WUAS' main and driving characteristic. WUAS is a small university, and the international constellation of its students and staff has a fundamental impact on its functioning, the content of its programmes, learning materials, the discussions and debates, its teaching methods (ranging from the traditional to the modern), on its ethics, and its ability to absorb intercultural differences and allow its students and staff to flourish and achieve. WUAS is a 100% English language speaking institute, and internationalisation is at its heart. WUAS maintains a Code of Conduct of Language which is part of the legally binding contract with students and contained in the EEG. It states that WUAS guarantees to teach only in English, but to also voluntarily offer Dutch as a foreign language to its international students to enable them to better feel at home and operate in the country.

##### **Considerations**

The panel appreciates the flexibility in the programme. Students are allowed to start in the programme at different moments in time. The programme structure supports the smooth

implementation of the curriculum and allows the student to enter the programme 6 times a year due to the flexibility of the block system. This system and the broad choice of specialisations enable the students to design their own learning process.

The programme consists of modules and assigns credit points per module on the basis of the necessary student workload. When reviewing the workload, WUAS also takes evaluation findings into account, including student feedback and the programme's success rate. During the interview rounds the panel was convinced that the workload review takes the results of the evaluation into account. However, since the information provided by students on their workload in the modules offered in the first semester varied considerably, the panel suggests that the University should monitor the workload more closely in order to achieve a balanced workload.

The panel is positive about the content of the curriculum. The courses in the curriculum are up to standard and have been adequately tailored to the programme profile. The curriculum is well-balanced in terms of academic and professional skills.

The panel also welcomes the integration of the academic skills into the courses. Furthermore the panel appreciates the strong international and intercultural character of the programme. The international orientation of the program (content, targeted composition of students and staff) creates an environment that gives the program added value in terms of intercultural skills. Due to the international target group and teaching staff and the strong international orientation of the programme and WUAS in general, the panel considers the implementation of the MBA programme in English language to be justified.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.5 – Intake**

<b>Standard 5</b> <i>The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i>
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### **Findings**

The target for the total number of students in the MBA programme is around 150 at any one time.

The admission requirements for entry into programmes are stated on the WUAS website. The admissions requirements are also stated in the Education and Examination Guide (EEG), and defined in the Graduation & Examination Regulations. The applicants are being screened vigorously on their motivation, curriculum vitae and their future ambitions.

The admission requirements for the MBA are as follows:

- A Bachelor degree or equivalent recognised qualification. Applicants are requested to provide an academic reference from their previous education institute. They must have completed a Bachelor's (honours / with a dissertation) in a business administration or management field.

- A minimum of 3 years professional experience (managing people, processes or products). Applicants are requested to provide a reference from a company or organisation where they have worked.
- Applicants from outside the EU must have passed IELTS at level 6.5. Equivalents in TOEFL are also accepted, and EU students with the appropriate secondary school qualifications (listed by the NC) will have reached a level of English in line with this score. Exceptions to this are native speakers from countries where English is the official language, and they have successfully completed their last educational qualifications from an institute where the language of instruction is English. The level of English is always confirmed through a conversation either in person or on the telephone. WUAS offers an English preparation programme for students with an IELTS score of 5.5 or 6 if required. All students are interviewed at the initial stage of their application.

### **Considerations**

The admission requirements are defined and comprehensible. The Dutch requirements have been taken into account. This is also the case for the European requirements (MBA Guidelines) like the aspired job experience of the students after the first academic degree of 3 years at WUAS (certified proof of this experience must be shown at the time of the admission). The panel regards the entry requirements for applicants to be up to standard.

The admission requirements also consider adequately the required language proficiency level of English. WUAS ensures that all enrolled students are able to successfully complete the study programme (courses, additional literature, utilisation of counselling services and extracurricular activities). The panel also considers the admission procedures to be solid and reliable.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.6 – Staff**

**Standard 6** *The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.*

### **Findings**

WUAS has a core team of educators who have permanent contracts. They also have key roles in the management of the programmes, the schools, student support or in areas such as research, external relations, or staff development. WUAS has laid down its personnel policies. Until now WUAS has employed staff both on the basis of direct employment and on the basis of freelancer.

The staff lecturing in the programme is international, lecturers coming from a range of countries such as United Kingdom, Germany, India and Austria. Some teaching staff members have full-time appointments, but around half in the MBA programme are appointed on part-time basis. A good proportion of 45 % of teachers have positions in the professional field next to their teaching position and in addition, professionals are invited to give guest lectures.

The process of advertising for staff and hiring staff is managed directly by the head of school and operationally carried out by the HRM department that carries out verification procedures. All teaching staff on WUAS programmes must first be approved and appointed by the Graduation & Examination Board. WUAS supports its entire employed staff in their possible further academic development, through time for research, funding for publications, and agreements on support and possible joint supervision of faculty in a PhD programme.

According to WUAS the teachers are qualified for the subjects they teach and overall, about 40 % of all WUAS teaching staff hold PhD qualifications. In the MBA, about 70 % of teaching staff are PhD-qualified. The teaching staff is involved in the programme design and development. The modules are mostly taught by two teachers, the module leader and the co-teacher. They discuss the module contents.

From the lecturers' CVs it can be seen that a number of the core lecturers have years of experience in corporations and/or government organisations. Also all teachers of guest lectures have experience in business, organisations and industry. All staff handbooks, guides and regulations are incorporated into the Academic & Operations Guide.

### ***Considerations***

The panel is positive about the qualifications of the teaching staff and their English language proficiency. This was confirmed by their CVs and during the interviews with the teaching staff. The panel notes the staff is able to relate lectures to the professional practice. The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. Furthermore, the practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the aim of the programme to integrate theory and practice.

The faculty members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the modules towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of teaching staff in the programme take place regularly. During the on-site visit, the panel was also able to convince itself that an active interaction takes place.

The panel welcomes the high proportion PhD-qualified staff of 70 %, being involved as teachers in the programme. The panel assesses the number of staff involved in the programme to be sufficient. Since the majority of the teachers are "freelancers" and "teachers from the United Kingdom", the experts advise to think about the consequences of the ongoing Brexit.

### ***Conclusion***

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## 4.7 – Facilities

**Standard 7** *The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.*

### **Findings**

WUAS moved into its new location in Apeldoorn in 2010 at the Aventus Building.

The facilities in the Aventus Building are state-owned and, therefore, adhere to all government educational requirements. WUAS rents the accommodation from Aventus College. WUAS has recently renewed its rental agreement, and Aventus and the local government have a long-term commitment to providing WUAS with facilities.

Within Aventus, WUAS enjoys the same access as all the departments in the college, to all facilities such as restaurants, canteen, copy and print services, etc. The Aventus location provides both large and smaller teaching rooms that are fully equipped with projectors, sounds systems, whiteboards and internet access. All areas in Aventus are also covered by Eduroam, and WUAS maintains its own Eduroam WiFi network, with its students logging in using the same credentials as they do everywhere else. All areas have disabled access.

In 2014, it became clear that with the expansion of its programmes and an increase in the number of its students, WUAS would require expansion of location. For this reason WUAS bought and renovated the Spoorstraat building which was opened in September 2015. It contains 4 fully equipped teaching rooms, of which the upstairs facility can be expanded into a large seminar hall or examination hall. All examinations are held at the Spoorstraat building.

The Spoorstraat building also houses the library and book lending facility which was specifically developed as part of the renovation. All spaces at the Spoorstraat location have internet access points and the location has full Eduroam availability. The network is joined to that of Aventus and managed by the Aventus IT department. The following Internet services are provided for all students:

- Cloud-based email and office applications (Office365, SharePoint, MS Project)
- Downloadable Office365 software for all students
- Cloud-based timetable platform (Scientia)
- Cloud-based student administration & results platform (Osiris)
- Anti-plagiarism / reference assistance software (Turnitin)
- Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) to support all modules

IT support is available through online contact as well as at the Front Desks. The online contact will respond to staff and students during daytime hours on any day during the week, and in urgent cases at the weekend.

Not being a University town, Apeldoorn itself has no local University library. However, WUAS students can access University libraries if they are available in their home cities.

In Apeldoorn, where most MBA students are currently situated, WUAS has created its own library at the Spoorstraat location. The library currently contains over 4,000 books and has a yearly investment budget of around 15,000 euros. WUAS stocks copies of all recommended reading from all its modules and all reading/library books recommended by lecturers. The library is open on regular days and times throughout the week, and is

staffed by a volunteer and a member of staff responsible for the book management. All books are indexed in a database and a book loan system is in place. Books are regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

WUAS has eliminated the need for its students to purchase books for their studies. For this purpose, the University has a book lending system. For each module the books for all students are in stock. The Library contains all recommended books from master's modules. WUAS has also significantly expanded its online library resources with access for all students and staff to many research journal databases, so that it is no longer reliant on its partner in the UK, in case of changes in the partnership because of Brexit.

Since 2018, WUAS has also secured (full text) access for all its students and staff to EBSCO online databases for the sectors Economics, Business, Hospitality, Tourism and Education, as well as access to Wiley and Springer journal databases. Access is provided through Wittenborg Online.

Students are provided documentation of access to a range of open source and Open Learn online journals and documents through a portal page on the Moodle and the student resources page on SharePoint. On Wittenborg Online, a collection of relevant papers is maintained by the programme management for students to access and download.

### **Considerations**

WUAS provided a virtual tour through the University's facilities. In addition, the chair visited WUAS in the context of another accreditation procedure. According to the chair and the other panel members, the number and size of teaching rooms and the equipment of all learning facilities are in line with the needs described for the programme and allow for a growth in student number without compromising study quality. Free access to a Wi-Fi network is available for students. All rooms and entrances are equipped for people with disabilities and can be reached barrier-free.

The library provides access to necessary literature as well as digital media. This also applies to electronic media and various databases. The library is open during the lecture period as well as during the lecture-free period. The needs of the students are taken into account. This was confirmed by the students during the interviews.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.8 – Tutoring**

**Standard 8** *The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.*

### **Findings**

WUAS has two types of student-tutor support systems, one for academic issues and one for non-academic issues. The school has an open door policy, which means that students find all staff easily accessible during office hours. Also Wittenborg Online and the email

system make it easy for students to contact the staff members regarding any issue. WUAS is also small enough to allow students to have easy and direct contact with management if they wish.

All students are allocated a “Process Tutor”, who is called a Study Advisor at Master’s level. This person is responsible for monitoring a student’s progress and ensuring a student’s well-being through coaching and support. The study advisor is also involved with the student’s teaching programme, either through the language programme or through personal development programme. Tutors and study advisors can have contact with students on a weekly basis, and also through regular online contact and emails.

Once students have initially defined their area of research for their Final Project (Dissertation/Graduation Project), students are allocated a personal Academic Supervisor who is responsible for helping students prepare for their Final Project module, including their graduation assignment. The Academic Supervisor is responsible for monitoring progress, advising on writing and research and preparing for the production and submission of the final project.

The Front Desk at WUAS assists students with many of the issues that affect them outside their study, such as accommodation, healthcare appointments, etc. It is also responsible for coordinating library and book store management, as well as providing support to teachers and guest lecturers.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that students at WUAS receive high-quality tutoring and information services. The panel highly appreciates the range of services offered and the individualised approach of these services. This tutoring system is up to standard and meets students’ needs.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.9 – Quality assurance**

**Standard 9** *The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.*

### **Findings**

In line with the WUAS quality assurance system, stakeholders, such as students, staff, alumni and the professional field are involved in the quality assurance of the programme. The departments and people responsible for Quality Management are defined, and are linked to the organisation structure and with regard to the development and maintenance of the programme. Students and staff are asked to complete written questionnaires on a regular basis to present their views on the programme quality.

Student evaluation of the programme continues to be carried out at different levels and at various times during their studies, formally at module level and at programme level, as well as informally through staff-to-student contact.

Throughout the programme, students are asked to complete a module evaluation form for every module they follow. For students, this will be at the end of every module. Presently, the module evaluations are completed on paper (a digital evaluation is planned). The completed module evaluation forms are analysed and the results are prepared for easy-reading, and made available soon after processing for teachers, the education board and management. The procedure is described in the PDCA of module evaluation.

Twice a year, after completing three education blocks, students are invited to their bi-annual appraisal interview, carried out by their process tutor. During this interview, students and the process tutor update the Study Agreement, a process started during the admissions process.

Since 2013, the role of the Student Union has been replaced by the role of the Student Representatives with regard to formal feedback of the study programme and its teachers. Student representatives, representing the MBA programme, meet regularly with programme management to discuss the programme quality.

At the time students leave WUAS, either as graduates, or in other circumstances, an exit-interview is held, whenever possible. The evaluation results of this are fed back into the organisation.

Further informal feedback is collected during informal moments between students and staff as well as through social media. This feedback is always registered for further processing. This is mainly done through WUAS Students & Staff (Closed) Facebook, LinkedIn, Google, and Twitter pages. Feedback is also collected at internal conference/workshop days which are meant for the whole institution.

Whilst students evaluate modules, the programme and the delivery, teaching staff are also involved in this process, receiving the students' evaluation directly and using this to also reflect on their own delivery, the content and the structure of their modules, and the programme. All staff members go through a periodic appraisal interview and the results of this are stored in the staff dossier, and discussed by management. At the appraisal interview, staff is required to give feedback on the organisation, the programmes, their teaching, the modules they teach, the students and management.

The formal evaluations for teaching staff are carried out by the head of the programme. During the appraisal interview, and afterwards, the staff member is informed of feedback. Teaching staff use the performance review & planning form to prepare their appraisals, and their written comments are used to draw up improvement plans, lists of adaptations and suggestions for improvement of both their delivery and the content and organisation of their modules within the teaching programme. In addition to this performance, development talks are conducted with the teachers on a regular basis during every teaching block, in case of any major negative feedback from students. In such cases, teachers concerned are required to develop and submit an improvement plan.

WUAS involves all stakeholders in the Quality System, from an active involvement in the PDCA system for products and processes within the organisation, to active involvement in the evaluation of programme development, and the accreditation peer review auditing process. In addition, employers are often involved in evaluation at the work placement stage of the programme, being asked to evaluate if the students who work for them have enough knowledge and competency to participate in the employment process in their organisation. Further the Programme management meets with the WUAS Advisory Board, to be advised on trends in industry. As a small organisation, in higher education terms, the advisory body at WUAS is embodied in the Stichting Wittenborg Advisory Board (a

foundation in its own right), that assists in creating an advisory body of representatives from Education and Industry who can advise WUAS on the development of a programme, or its business models.

Improvement measures which may be the outcome of evaluations or consultations are documented and are acted upon. For this programme, the Programme Committee on which sit teachers and students, has been set up. The Programme Committee studies student and staff evaluations and advises programme management on quality improvement measures to be taken.

## **Considerations**

The panel considers that WUAS has developed a comprehensive quality assurance system that involves all relevant stakeholders.

Based on the documents submitted and the interviews, the panel was convinced that WUAS is doing excellent work in the field of quality assurance and further development. In accordance with WUAS' quality assurance system, stakeholders such as students, staff, alumni and the professional field are involved in the quality assurance of the programme, which allows an objective assessment.

WUAS takes into account the evaluation results and the analysis on student workload, success rate, and graduate employment. Faculty members and students participate in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures. Responsibilities are clearly defined. Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated to the students and provide input for the quality development process.

## **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

### **4.10 – Student assessment**

<b>Standard 10</b> <i>The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.</i>
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## **Findings**

At WUAS, an executive, independent Graduation & Examination Board (GEB) oversees the operations, quality and methods of examinations. Two members, including the Chair of the GEB are independent external members.

All modules in the MBA programme have an examination or assessment clearly defined in the module guide, which is based on the generic assessment information provided in the Education & Examination Guide that highlights the differences between Semester 1 and Semester 2 type module assessment and what it aims to achieve.

An Education Board ensures that there is a balance of different types of examinations across the programme, testing the aims and objectives of a module in a way that is conducive to learning and at a level in line with the academic requirements of an applied sciences MBA programme.

Semester 1 of the MBA contains 6 modules that are assessed through formal examination, either as a three-hour closed book or a three-hour open book examination. The type of examination used per module (e.g. open-book, closed-book examinations or reports and presentations) is set by the Education Board, in consultation with the teaching staff and fixed in the module guide. Examinations are spread regularly throughout the curriculum.

Examinations are prepared by the module lecturers, and submitted to the Examination Manager of the programme, who reviews the format, weight and relevance of the

examination and ensures that it is related to the module aims and objectives and hence the final qualifications, to which the programme is mapped.

Each module in the MBA has at least 2 co-teachers, and both are involved with the writing and maintaining of the examinations and assessments. In cases where the module is offered on both Dutch sites – Apeldoorn and Amsterdam, up to four teachers could be involved. The Module Leader is ultimately responsible for setting the examination / assessment criteria.

Semester 2 of the MBA contains 6 modules (3 core and 3 elective specialisation modules). These are assessed through individual papers and group work projects. Each module has two assessment components – an individual academic paper, and a project report that is submitted by a small group of students. The scope of the individual papers and the project assignment are clearly defined and described in the module guide for each individual module, developed by the academic staff in cooperation with the Education Board, and approved by the Graduation and Examination Board. All module guides are fixed in advance of the academic year and submission times and dates follow a clear structure outlined in the Education & Examination Guide (EEG) and the specific module guide.

During Semester 2, students also complete three project weeks in teams. These are generally directly related to a business case with a company, and results are presented in a project week report and presentation. Clear guidelines for assessment exist, within a defined module guide, and are provided to students.

For all written examinations, WUAS has created an examination bank, a secure area that is only accessible by a small and highly trusted group of staff members. Teaching staff are contracted to maintain and keep updated, (at least) four different exams for their modules as all module are offered twice a year in the MBA. The above allows the exam administration team who manages the examinations to choose a different exam for primary and retake examinations, and one spare.

All examinations are held in the set exam weeks at each teaching block. The exam weeks are spread evenly throughout the year. Re-take examinations are held in two blocks at the ends of the winter and summer semesters. Deadlines for the submission of reports and projects are also set in the exam weeks, except for the reports for project weeks, which are usually set at the end of the project week in question. All papers (and the final project) are uploaded through Anti-plagiarism / reference assistance software (Turnitin).

Examination weeks in Semester 1 are facilitated by the exam administration team together with a team of external invigilators (having no other contact with students), who supervise the examinations and maintain the practical examination rules students are required to adhere to. WUAS employs a team of between five and eight examination invigilators, who are at the University eight weeks a year. The external invigilators are especially important to ensure that students are not making copies of examinations that can be used later for revision or exam preparation.

In 2017, WUAS education team has employed an external junior researcher specialised in education, on a project basis, to specifically look at the quality and balance of all examinations and assessments conducted at the institute. The report resulted in the development of a General Assessment Policy described in the EEG and further development of the institute's Graduation & Examination Regulations which can also be found in the EEG. In 2018-2019 the same evaluation process of the student assessment system is being carried out. Furthermore, the Graduation & Examination board randomly

(systemically) picks examinations and papers of students to review the assessment, as well as the structure of the assessment.

In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 measures, WUAS introduced moderation for all its online submissions of reports and papers. Moderation is a process of ensuring consistency of standards and fairness across a range of assessments within a programme. It allows for assessors to discuss and reach agreement in a transparent, valid and consistent manner. Moderation is concerned with providing fair assessments (quality assurance) and with adjusting outcomes of an assessment where necessary to ensure fairness in marking (quality control). This is not regarded as double (second) marking; the moderator acts as a reviewer of the standard and consistency of marking against explicit assessment criteria.

WUAS notes that although attendance cannot influence the mark, WUAS has a strict attendance requirement for all lessons at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Students cannot take an examination or submit a paper with a module attendance rate under 75% (i.e. they can miss only 2 of the 8 taught blocks in any taught module).

Also, due to COVID-19 moderation of all submitted papers has been introduced and WUAS is reviewing the procedures for the moderation process with a view to keeping this post-COVID-19.

### **Considerations**

Before the virtual review the panel was presented with assessment examples from different modules and came to the conclusion that the assessment system is overall adequate and effective to evaluate the achievement of the modules learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level.

The exams are characterised by a wide variety of different test formats like (Open/Closed book Examination, Individual Paper, Group Case Study Project, Completion of Research Proposal for the Final Project etc.). This mix of formats offers a good combination and variety to adequately check the achievement of the learning goals.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

## **4.11 – Achieved learning outcomes**

<b>Standard 11</b> <i>The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.</i>
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### **Findings**

As has been described previously, through the assessment at module level the students develop a body of knowledge, understanding and experience which demonstrates the achieved learning outcomes within the programme, and leads to the graduation part of the programme (Semester 3) which will demonstrate that the overall intended learning outcomes of the MBA have been achieved.

In order to graduate, WUAS' MBA students are required to write individual final projects that challenge them to use research methodology that complies with the level of a Master's at a University of Applied Sciences. In Semester 3, which can be extended with an optional work experience / placement period (important for international students), students carry out the Final Project that they started to prepare during the Research Methods module, offered in Semesters 1 & 2. The Final Project can take four forms. MBA students have a choice between a business plan, a consultancy project, a multimedia project and a traditional dissertation. The final project has been carefully structured, and students are given a clear timetable of submission based around the block system.

The Final Project is always an individual piece of work, required to comply with internationally recognised standards of academic writing. The project is intended to be a culmination of the students' work in the programme, reflecting on what they have learned, using various different methods to research and explore an area of business or management within their chosen field (specialisation). WUAS requires students to use the "Harvard Method" of referencing and reporting.

Each student is allocated an Academic Supervisor from Semester 2. In contrast to the student's process tutor (who works with the student from the start of the programme), the academic supervisor focuses on guiding the student through their final project. The academic supervisor is also first marker of the final project and all final projects are marked by an external second marker. Both first and second markers adhere to the same assessment criteria, which are mapped to the Final Qualifications. Each Final Project is also approved by the Graduation & Examination Board after which the students are allowed to defend their Final project during an oral defence.

All students are expected to allow their Final Projects to be made available (anonymised) online for future students and this is done so through the online learning system Moodle.

On the recommendations (conditions) of the NVAO auditing panel in 2015, WUAS improved the alignment and connection of the Final Project through Research Methods, and also the Project Weeks in Semester 2. In accordance with the conditions of the panel WUAS redefined the Final Qualifications, grouping them into 5 distinct qualification groups, which were benchmarked against other institutes, such as Rotterdam School of Management.

Since WUAS has been accepted into the AACSB accreditation process, WUAS has started to develop a new (additional) method of evaluating its programmes, based on the concept of Assurance of Learning (AOL), which is an important part of the AACSB accreditation. WUAS has appointed an AOL Manager from its team, who will ensure that the process is complimentary to the NVAO (and FIBAA) approaches to reviewing the achieved learning outcomes.

### ***Considerations***

Prior to the digital review, the panel received examples of the final theses/ final projects and concluded that the overall evaluation system is appropriate and effective. The requirements are in accordance with the desired Master qualification level. The panel considers the assessment critical and fair. The grading is considered adequate and the quality of the English language is good. The panel agreed with the final grades of the examples.

The panel welcomes the fact that a standard form with defined criteria and benchmarks is used to evaluate the final projects and to give students a feedback (see Annex 3 as an

example). This offers the students a transparent and fair assessment. However, the panel formed the view that in addition to this formal assessment, a more individualised approach regarding the concrete topic of the final project would be helpful for students. Therefore the panel recommends, in addition to the existing formalised assessment, to give the students an individual feedback with regard to the topic of their final project.

On the basis of its own random sampling and the comments of the students, the panel was able to determine that the assessment of the final papers is reliable and transparent. The panel is positive about the position, composition, responsibilities and activities of the Graduation & Examination Board. In the panel's view, the Board ensures the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme.

### **Conclusion**

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess this standard to be satisfactory.

### **General conclusion**

Given the findings and considerations, the panel concludes that Standard 1 to 11 of the NVAO extensive framework are assessed as satisfactory.

### **Recommendations**

Standard 1: Considering that the values of "ethics and social responsibility" have been newly implemented, the panel suggests that these aspects could be defined more clearly and transparently in the individual module descriptions of the programme.

Standard 4: Since the information provided by students on their workload in the modules offered in the first semester varied considerably, the panel suggests that WUAS should monitor the workload more closely in order to achieve a balanced workload.

Standard 6: Since the majority of the teachers are "freelancers" and "teachers from the United Kingdom", the experts advise to think about the consequences of the ongoing Brexit.

Standard 11: The panel formed the view that in addition to this formal assessment, a more individualised approach regarding the concrete topic of the final project would be helpful for students. Therefore, the panel recommends, in addition to the existing formalised assessment, to give the students an individual feedback with regard to the topic of their final project.

## 5. Overview

Standard	Assessment
1. The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.	Satisfactory
2. The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.	Satisfactory
3. The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.	Satisfactory
4. The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.	Satisfactory
5. The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.	Satisfactory
6. The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.	Satisfactory
7. The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.	Satisfactory
8. The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.	Satisfactory
9. The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.	Satisfactory
10. The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.	Satisfactory
11. The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.	Satisfactory

Final conclusion
Positive: The programme meets all standards

## Annex 1 – Panel

Name panel (incl. titels)	Brief description of the panel member (e.g. current position; 1-3 sentences)
Prof. Dr. Joël Branson	<p>Prof. Branson is Professor of Accounting and Auditing at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium).</p> <p>Prof. Branson is also certified public accountant for Grant Thornton Bedrijfsrevisoren and member of several committees within the Belgian Auditors Institute (IBR).</p> <p>Since 2009, Prof. Branson is dean of the faculty of Social Sciences and Solvay Business School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.</p>
Prof. Dr. Sabine Haller	Prof. Haller is Professor (for Marketing, Trade Marketing, Marketing Management, Product, Price and Distribution Policy, communication policy/consumer behaviour) at Berlin School of Economics and Law since October 1997.
Dr. Julian J. Rossig	Dr. Rossig is Senior Manager at KPMG AG WPG   Global Strategy Group, with long term professional experience in different management positions (incl. personnel responsibility) and deep insights into different industries, sectors and markets.
Stefania Cacciatore	Ms. Cacciatore is student at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, Germany, in the programme Master of Science in Business Administration with major in Management and minor in Marketing.

### Secretary / coordinator:

Name	Certified?	Email address
Mr Daniel Günther, Programme Manager FIBAA	yes	_____

## Annex 2 – Schedule

# Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences

(WUAS)

- Extensive Programme Re-Accreditation (NVAO) Master of Business Administration (MBA)

virtual-visit on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020



For online participation during all panel sessions, please find the link to the virtual meeting room here: <https://fibaa.adobeconnect.com/wuas/>

Day: September 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	
16:00 - 17:00	<b>Technical test with the panel</b>  Internal panel deliberation

Day: September 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2020	
Until 8:15	<b>Technical test</b>  <i>With the panel and the university of applied sciences</i>
8:30 – 9:00	<b>Reception / Introduction</b> <i>Short presentation (approx. 15 mins) of the recent development and progress of the Master of Business Administration programme and how the study programme fits into the overall structure and strategy of WUAS; possibly including a following short discussion.</i>
9:00 – 9:45	<b>Internal panel deliberation</b> - preparatory discussion and insight of given materials in the 'Accreditation Portal' (teaching and learning materials, examinations, results, all relevant appendices).  Printed copies of Education and Examination Guide will be provided along with printed copies of Module Guides. WUAS can provide printed copies of any other document as needed.

9:45 – 10:45	<p><b>Panel interview with the programme management</b> (no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i>  Goals and position of the programme in regard to labour and educational market, curriculum (structure and content, employability), examination frequency and organisation, teaching and learning, support of students, programme administration</p> <p><i>As this group can also discuss the administration of the programme, the following topics maybe also included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support of students</li> <li>- programme organisation</li> <li>- career consulting</li> <li>- alumni activities</li> <li>- quality management, evaluation</li> </ul>
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:45	<p><b>Panel interview with lecturers</b></p> <p><i>Main topics:</i>  Support of students, teaching content, didactics/methods, involvement in decision making, staff education and qualification, internal cooperation and exchange/commutation</p>
11:45 – 12:45	<p><i>Internal panel deliberation</i>  (Lunch/Snack)</p>
12:45 – 13:30	<p><b>Panel interview with students and graduates</b>  (one interview with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i>  Study structure, study process, study content, consultation and support for students, examination organization, potentially internships, terms abroad, field trips, working conditions, administration support, workload, involvement in decision making, evaluations)</p>
13:30 – 13:45	Break
13:45 – 14:15	<p><b>Virtual tour through the facilities</b>  ( seminar rooms, computer cluster, library etc.)</p>
14:15 – 14:45	Internal panel deliberation
14:45 – 15:15	<p>Online meeting with Advisory Board/ Professional Field</p> <p><b>(Supporting appendix provided to panels: Appendix 201P – The Professional Profile)</b></p>

15:15 – 16:45	<b>Internal panel deliberation</b>
16:45 – 17:15	<b>Final review / feedback</b> from the panel
17:15 – 18:00	<b>Development dialogue</b> regarding the further improvement of the study programme
Approximately 18:00	<i>End of online conference</i>

## Annex 3 – Example: Assessment Criteria and Feedback

Assessment Criteria and Feedback Business Plan 2016/17 (Please highlight appropriate criteria)A1:G10

Graduation Assignment / Final Project



Name of the Student: ..... nt Number: ..... Tutor (first marker): ..... Second Marker:

Criteria/Grade	Design and conceptualisation of project	Intellectual engagement, knowledge and understanding	Methodology and research methods (Industry, Market, Operations)	Analysis and Evaluation (Recommendations)	Structure, organisation and presentation	Feasibility and Implementation Plan (Marketing Plan, Operations Plan, Financial Plan)
0 – 54% Unsatisfactory - inadequate (Fail)	Unsatisfactory and inadequate research design and conceptualisation, very weak / very limited engagement with theory. Unsatisfactory and inadequate attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are insufficiently grounded in the wider literature. Design and conceptualization of the research demonstrates a very poor level of understanding within the confines of the project's aims and objectives and in relation to the expectations for the level	Unsatisfactory and inadequate understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Inadequate recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an unsatisfactory grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Significant inaccuracies and / or misunderstandings evident. Inadequate identification of gaps in knowledge.	Inadequate justification for and explanation of methods adopted with insufficient links made to the literature review and research questions. Very weak / unsatisfactory recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/ findings of the research are purely descriptive demonstrating inadequate understanding of reflexivity in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted. Analysis of the research outcomes / findings is inadequate within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Inadequate conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to an unsatisfactory level within the context of the outcomes / findings. Inadequate recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.	Very poor standard of organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Very poor standard of written and/or visual communication. Very poor compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Some serious grammatical errors and omissions in the references / bibliography.	The business plan is infeasible, it is impossible to implement. Unsatisfactory presentation and understanding of marketing plan, operations and product development plan and financial analysis. No actual data (primary or secondary) from the industry has been used. Significant inaccuracies and / or misunderstandings evident. The business plan cannot be executed or implemented.
55 – 64% Adequate to sound	Adequate to sound research design and conceptualisation, which engages with theory. Standard to limited attempt to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are grounded in the wider literature to an adequate / sound level. Design and conceptualization of the research demonstrates an adequate to sound critical approach within the confines of the project's aims and	Adequate to sound understanding of and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Some contextualisation and recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature but heavy reliance on a limited number of sources providing a standard grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Standard identification of gaps in knowledge.	A standard justification for and explanation of methods adopted with links made to the literature review and research questions. Standard recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Some but limited evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes / findings of the research demonstrating some understanding of reflexivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes / findings are discussed to a standard level within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Sound conclusions and/or recommendations discussed to a standard	Suitable organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Sound written and/or visual communication and product development plan and financial analysis. Standard compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, bibliography). Some minor grammatical errors and omissions in the	Adequate feasibility of business plan, it should be possible to implement. A standard presentation and understanding of marketing plan, operations and product development plan and financial analysis. Overall the business plan should be suitable for implementation without too many issues.

85-74% Good to very good	Good to very good research design and conceptualisation, with potential to expand, redefine and/or contribute to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are grounded in the wider literature to a good to very good level and have generally been achieved to a good to very good standard. Design and conceptualization of the research is at times ambitious with good evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project's aims and objectives.	Good to very good engagement with theory, frameworks and debates. Clear and at times insightful recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing a very good grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Good to very good identification of gaps in knowledge.	Good to very good justification for methods adopted, with clearly discussed and explained in the context of the literature review and research questions. Good to very good recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Good to very good quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of outcomes/findings of the research, demonstrating very good level of reflexivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings are discussed to a very good level within the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to a good to very good level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Good to very good, informed recognition of limitations and areas for further enquiry.	Good to very good organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Good to very good quality written and/or visual communication. Good to very good compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, grammatical errors and omissions in the related references/bibliography).	Good to very good feasibility of business plan, the presentation and understanding of marketing plan, operations and product development plan and financial analysis. Overall the business plan is very suitable for implementation without any issues.
75 - 84% Excellent	An excellent research design and conceptualization, which expands, redefines and/or contributes to existing knowledge/practice to a very high level. Aims and objectives are critically grounded in the wider literature and have been achieved to an excellent level. Design and conceptualization of the research is ambitious with excellent evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project's aims and objectives.	In depth understanding and engagement with theory, frameworks and debates in a convincing narrative form. Excellent recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an excellent grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Excellent identification of gaps in knowledge.	Excellent justification for methods adopted, clearly and critically discussed and explained in the context of the literature review and research questions. Methods adopted are appropriate for the research recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	High to very high quality critical analysis, synthesis, evaluation and appraisal of the outcomes/findings of the research demonstrating an excellent level of reflexivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings are convincingly discussed in the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to an excellent level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Excellent.	Excellent organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Excellent written and/or visual communication. Excellent compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, grammatical errors and omissions in the related references/bibliography).	Excellent feasibility of business plan, the plan can be implemented. An excellent presentation and understanding of marketing plan, operations and product development plan and financial analysis. Overall the business plan is excellent for implementation.
85-100% Outstanding	Outstanding research design and conceptualization, which clearly expands, redefines and/or contributes to existing knowledge/practice. Aims and objectives are critically grounded in the wider literature and have been achieved to an exceptional level. Design and conceptualization of the research is extremely coherent, ambitious and original with outstanding evidence of a critical approach within the confines of the project's aims and objectives.	Exceptional critical engagement with theory, frameworks and debates in a stimulating and rigorous narrative form. Exceptional recognition of seminal works, chronology and contested aspects of the wider literature, providing an outstanding grounding for the aims, objectives, research approach and methods of the study. Outstanding understanding of the gaps in knowledge.	Outstanding justification for methods adopted, clear and critically explained demonstrating a sophisticated very high quality level of analysis in the context of the literature review and research questions. Methods adopted are appropriate for the research recognition of limitations, potential bias and ethical issues.	Outstanding critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the outcomes/findings of the research, demonstrating an exceptional level of reflexivity when drawing on appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Research outcomes/findings have been critically and comprehensively discussed in the context of the original aims and objectives of the project. Conclusions and/or recommendations are discussed to an exceptional level within the context of the outcomes/findings. Outstanding recognition	Exceptional organisation, structure and presentation of the project. Outstanding written and/or visual communication with exceptional narrative style and structure. Exemplary compliance and adherence to established protocols for academic writing (e.g. Harvard referencing, grammatical errors and omissions in the related references/bibliography) No / few	Exceptional feasibility of business plan, the plan can be implemented. Every detail has been worked out. An outstanding presentation and understanding of marketing plan, operations and product development plan and financial analysis. Overall the business plan is outstanding and would be able to get investors on board without hesitation.

## *Annex 4 – Documents*

### **Examples of Examination & Assessment**

- Semester 1:

Written examination – Information Management  
Written examination – Human Resource Management  
Written examination – Operations Management  
Written examination – Management Accounting & Finance  
Written examination – Information Management  
Written examination – International Management  
Written examination – MBA Marketing Management

- Semester 2:

Written examination – Entrepreneurship  
Written examination – Business Statistics  
Written examination – Consultancy  
Written examination – Strategic Management  
Written examination – Innovation, Creativity & Entrepreneurship

### **MBA Final Projects & Assessments**

- Life Satisfaction among Women Entrepreneurs (
  - Towards a phase model of sustainability for the banking sector
  - Financial incentives and how it can affect employee performance in a Nigerian bank
  - Workforce trust in management
  - Business Process Performance: A study of the influence of contextual factors on billing process performance in the shipping industry
- FinTech: A threat or an opportunity? A perspective on the impact of FinTech on transaction cost of retail banks
- The integration of sustainability into project Management practices through Cradle-To-Cradle design framework
- Restaurant Service Quality from the Perspective of Generation Z
- The Potential Substitution of Employees Artificial Intelligence in Hotel Service Encounter: A Millennial Perspective
- Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the Computational Sustainability of Transport Systems
- Corporate Social Responsibility of the Hotel Business in developing countries – The case of Vietnam
- The relationship between age, nationality and gender with millennial's consumer buying behavior triggered by hunger marketing on intangible goods and services
- SME Innovation in Developing Countries: The Effect of Managerial Capability (Decision Making Styles) in the Nigeria Context
- Restaurant Service Quality from the Perspective of Generation Z
- The Potential Substitution of Employees Artificial Intelligence in Hotel Service Encounter: A Millennial Perspective

### **Programme related information/ Institute related documents:**

#### **Overview of 'Programme Specific' Appendices**

##### **Content (Programme Specific)**

FIBAA Approval Report & Decision MBA 2014  
Initial NVAO Decision & Report with Conditions  
MBA 2015  
WUAS Report to meet NVAO Conditions MBA  
2016  
Final NVAO Approval MBA 2016  
NVAO Standards: Review & Approval of Standards  
10 & 11 MBA 2019

FIBAA Approval Report & Decision MBA  
 September 2019  
 Self-Assessment FIBAA MBA Accreditation 2019  
 Self-Assessment NVAO MBM Accreditation 2020  
 NVAO Approval Report MBM June 2020  
 Self-Assessment NVAO MBA Accreditation 2020  
 NVAO Report for MBA & BBA TNE Munich March  
 2020  
 The Professional Profile (Business Manager &  
 Administrator, Master)  
 The MBA Programme Final Qualifications  
 Professional Profile versus Final Qualifications  
 (MBA)  
 MBA Programme Final Qualifications in relationship  
 with the Dublin Descriptors  
 MBA Programme Final Qualifications versus  
 WUAS Domain Competencies  
 MBA Programme Final Qualifications versus Aims  
 and Objectives of Modules  
 MBA Detailed Aims and Objectives of Modules  
 versus Programme Final Qualifications  
 Dublin Descriptors versus HBO and WO profiles  
 from the NVAO  
 Content (Programme Specific)  
 The MBA Programme Curriculum + Pre-master  
 MBA Programme EEG - Education and  
 Examination Guide  
 Balance and Vertical and Horizontal Cohesion of  
 the MBA Programme  
 MBA Programme Module Guides (Descriptors)  
 MBA - Example Module Handbook  
 MBA Module Handbooks for Semester 1 Core  
 Modules  
 Teaching & Learning Methods (Master)  
 The Modular Construction of the MBA Programme  
 Didactic Approach MBA  
 Work Placement Handbook for Master Students  
 The professions – Alumni Examples of Positions  
 and Sectors / Alumni Overview  
 Example Work Placement Companies and  
 Organisations of WUAS Students  
 An Example of a (Team) Project Week (Master)  
 Internationality of Student Body - Master  
 Programme  
 Internationality and Diversity of Staff Body - Master  
 Programme  
 Statistical Charts of Cohort Development – MBA  
 (as an example)  
**Final Project & Assessment**

## **Overview of 'Institute Specific' Appendices (G)**

### **WUAS Organisation**

Current Programme Fact Sheet  
 The Development of 5 Schools  
 WUAS Basic Organisation Chart  
 WUAS Year Reports  
 WUAS Full Financial Year Reports  
 Statistical Charts of Student Registrations  
 WUAS

Strategic Plan  
 WUAS AACSB Eligibility Application  
 Code of Conduct of Language at WUAS  
 WUAS Advisory Board and Advisory Bodies  
 The Graduation and Examination Board  
 Graduation & Examination Board Reports  
 Academic Advisory Panel  
 Student & Staff Representation Overview  
 Governance and Representation WUAS 2019  
 Admission and Selection Procedures  
 The Admissions Process  
 Transparency of Admissions Decisions and  
 Success Rates to all Stakeholders  
 Examples of Admission Study Agreement &  
 Tutoring Study Agreement  
**Education Development**  
 The Education Board  
 Education Board Meeting Minutes  
 Programme Development Process  
 Review of 'ethics' as cross-disciplinary content  
 in the curriculum  
 Introduction to the WUAS Quality System  
 Quality Handbook Complete in PDF  
 Report into the Quality of the Examination  
 System at WUAS  
 Quality System Audit Report 2019  
 Example of Module Evaluation System  
 Plagiarism Detection Software at WUAS  
 Content (Institute Specific)  
 Academic & Operations Guide  
 Role and Responsibilities of Head of School  
 The Role of the VP Academic Affairs  
 The Role of the Director of Education  
 The Role of the Head of Research  
 Overall Staffing Figures at WUAS 2019  
 All WUAS Teaching Staff Overview  
 Overview of Teaching Staff Master Programmes  
 Study Advisor Handbook Master Programmes  
 2018-19  
 Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning  
 in HE  
**Internationalisation**  
 Internationality of Student Body (Institute)  
 Internationality of Staff Body (Institute)  
 Current Academic Partnerships and  
 Memberships  
 2nd Foreign Language Modules offered at  
 WUAS  
 Overview of Internationalisation at Wittenborg  
 University  
 Strategy Policy Internationalisation  
 ECA Accreditation Report Internationalisation  
 Access to VLE & Online Literature, Journals and  
 E-Books at WUAS  
 Programme Literature Examples  
 Overview of On-Site Library Resources  
 Developing the Research Centre at WUAS  
 Examples of Research & Student Involvement  
 Examples of Peer Reviewed Publications

WUAS Lecturers 2014-2019  
Examples of Partnership Agreements  
Memorandum of Cooperation with NEC and  
Annexes  
Reports on Quality at Munich Campus  
Examples of Marketing Products