



ASSESSMENT REPORT

Extensive programme assessment

HBO Master

International Communication Management

Full time / Part time

The Hague University of Applied Sciences

**De kracht van
kennis.**

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Extensive programme assessment

HBO Master

International Communication Management

Full time / Part time

The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Croho registration: 70016

Hobéon Certificering BV

Dated

25 April 2016

Audit panel

Drs. W.G. van Raaijen

Prof. dr. A.M. Cotton

Ms. S. Yarwood

Ms. A. Naesen

Secretary/co-ordinator

I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc

CONTENTS

1.	GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA	1
2.	SUMMARY	3
3.	INTRODUCTION	7
4.	JUDGEMENT PER STANDARD	9
4.1	Intended learning outcomes	9
4.2	Curriculum	11
4.3	Staff	19
4.4	Services and facilities	21
4.5	Quality assurance	23
4.6	Assessment	25
4.7	Learning outcomes achieved	27
5.	OVERALL CONCLUSION	29
6.	RECOMMENDATIONS	31
APPENDIX I	Overview of judgements	33
APPENDIX II	The course's learning objectives	35
APPENDIX III	Overview of the programme	37
APPENDIX IV	Programme of site-visit	39
APPENDIX V	Documents examined	43
APPENDIX VI	Composition of the audit panel	45

1. GENERAL AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

General data

Institution

Name	The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Academy of Masters and Professional Courses
Status	Non-government funded
Outcomes of Institutional Quality Assessment	N.A.

Programme

Name of programme in Central Register of Higher Professional Education (CROHO)	Master International Communication Management (MICM)
ISAT-code CROHO	70016
Orientation and level	Post initial hbo-master
Number of credits	60
Mode of study	Fulltime / Part-time
Specialisations	N.A.
Location(s)	Johanna Westerdijkplein 109, The Hague
Special Quality Feature	N.A.
Instruction Language	English

Date site-visit	21 January 2016
Contact person (name and e- mail address)	Mr. J. Goldiamond Course manager j.goldiamond@hhs.nl Mrs. I. van der Wal Coördinator i.m.v.vanderwal@hhs.nl Mrs. P. Dijcks Senior Advisor Quality & Accreditation p.g.h.dijcks@hhs.nl

Quantitative data of the programme **hbo Master International Communication Management**, fulltime and part-time¹

Source: M&PC Academy archives and data
Date: December 2015

Number of incoming students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fulltime	31	12	15	18	14	23
Part-time	7	2	11	9	6	12
Output (percentage) per cohort after 1 year		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fulltime		84%	92%	47%	83%	93%
Part-time		57%	N/A ²	0%	67%	N/A
Output (percentage) per cohort after max. 3 years (total graduated)		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Fulltime		100%	100%	87%	94%	93%
Part-time		86%	N/A	50%	89%	N/A
Faculty (number + fte)				Number	Fte	
	<i>Regular faculty</i>			8	1,3	
Faculty qualifications (number)				Bachelor	Master	PhD.
				-	3	5
Teacher – student ratio	1.3 : 35 = 1 : 27					
Contact hours (number) ³				1 st year	2 nd year	
Full time				12	N/A	
Part time				6	6	

¹ Source: *Basisgegevens opleidingsbeoordeling 'Indicatoren en definities', Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie, 11 september 2012*

² No part-time cohort scheduled to graduate that year.

2. SUMMARY

The Master International Communication Management (MICM) is a 60 EC professional master programme, offered by The Hague University of Applied Sciences. It holds a fulltime (one year) and a part-time track (two years). The MICM programme is conducted entirely in English and educates students to become communication professionals at a strategic level in an international environment. Students learn how to look at communication issues from a broad managerial perspective, impacting C-level decisions.

Intended learning outcomes

The MICM programme has closely aligned its six programme competencies with the professional qualifications identified by Logeion. All six programme competencies are elaborated into three learning outcomes. This set of competencies and learning outcomes has been validated by the MICM Advisory Board. The panel considers the competences and learning outcomes appropriate for the MICM programme.

The intended international features of the MICM programme have been made explicit in some of the competencies and learning outcomes. The same applies to research. The intended learning outcomes enable students to broaden or deepen their (communication) professional competencies and take them to the strategic level.

The mission statement – and the programme as a whole – definitely reflects the international profile of THUAS and of MICM in particular. However, on paper the mission statement and profile of the MICM programme could be made more explicit by better describing the means of the international and managerial dimensions as well as the holistic approach of the programme.

The panel considers Standard 1 to be 'satisfactory'.

Curriculum

The MICM programme competencies and learning outcomes are reflected in the competencies and learning outcomes per module, thus ensuring that both full time and part time students master all of the intended learning outcomes along the way. The curriculum consists of nine modules. Seven of these modules are linked to specific communication management related areas. The other two modules comprise research & methodology and the writing of the final thesis. The research and methodology module it is not a 'stand-alone' module; it also focuses on communication as a study field. The panel established that the modules altogether cover the broad spectrum of communication management.

Except for the level of education and two years of work experience in any professional field, the MICM programme does not have any other admission requirements. The various backgrounds of the incoming students certainly add an extra dimension to the classroom discussions. However, the panel would suggest reconsidering the entry requirements regarding (the level of) work experience to secure the cohesion of each cohort. The panel considers the TOEFL or IELTS tests an adequate instrument for establishing students' level of English, although the panel would suggest to raise the minimum score and to make the oral intake interview compulsory.

The college year is divided into five periods. Each period covers two modules. The assignments in the MICM programme follow a pattern of increasing complexity. The last period is completely devoted to the thesis. Part-time students handle one module every period. The first week of each period is dedicated to the Professional Skills workshops. These workshops are positioned in such a way, that they contribute to the subsequent weeks of that period in which the acquired knowledge and skills can be applied.

The MICM programme builds upon three broad orientations: the professional practice, research and internationalism. The panel established that each of these orientations is integrated in all of the modules.

The curriculum is kept up-to-date through the input and feedback of the Advisory Board, the input of guest speakers and company visits, and by the lecturers who also have other relevant employments and research projects at other institutions or private companies/organisations. The panel established that the lecturers use topical real life cases to enrich the literature, which is up-to-date and relevant to the field of communication management. The practical orientation of the MICM programme is secured by the (real life) assignments.

The variety of lectures and skill training, the well-balanced workload and the peer-to-peer weekend fit the didactical vision of MICM and contribute to obtaining the intended learning outcomes. The panel believes that the blending of fulltime and part-time students in the classroom is an attractive and challenging concept, which seems to be beneficially for both students and lecturers.

Internationalism and research

The international dimension of the MICM programme is reflected in the student population, the composition of the teaching staff, the guest lecturers, the literature, the assignments and real life cases, as well as the thesis topics.

The MICM programme incorporates research activities. Not only do students learn about the theory of research methods, they also have to write a research paper at the end of every module and conduct research for their thesis during the final stage of the programme.

The panel considers Standards 2, 3 and 4 to be 'good' and 5 to be 'satisfactory'.

Staff

The panel is positive about the highly qualified faculty, all of them holding at least a Master's degree, many of whom are PhD. The practical experience of the lecturers is in line with the applied character of a professional master programme. Adjunct faculty use their professional experiences to enrich the classes. The panel considers the broad work field experiences and the extensive research activities of the faculty as a true strength of the course. The students are very positive about the so-called classroom experience.

The peer feedback on classroom performance, the calibration sessions and the opportunities for training and development are good in accordance with higher education standards.

The panel considers Standard 6 to be 'good'.

Services and facilities

From a tour on the premises the panel concludes that the school buildings meet the standards for classrooms and facilities required for higher professional education. The panel believes that the physical environment sufficiently contributes to students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

At the beginning of their studies students receive a useful introduction to studying in the MICM programme and living in the The Hague area. Furthermore, the site visit made it clear that the students are timely informed on the content of the courses, have regular individual meetings with the course manager and can always ask the lecturers for help.

The panel rates Standard 7 and 8 as 'good'.

Quality assurance

Because of the small number of students the MICM quality assurance cycle focusses on qualitative data instead of quantitative data. All stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance system, by means of student questionnaires, discussions and meetings, the Programme Council and the Advisory Board. The panel would suggest to intensify the involvement of alumni.

Apart from these institutional instruments, management and faculty are easy to approach and are open to students' feedback. Improvement measures appear to be implemented, however, the panel would suggest the reporting on and monitoring of the implemented measures be formalized to keep a trace of changes. The panel was pleased to hear that the management is working on this.

The panel's judgement on Standard 9 reads 'satisfactory'.

Assessment

The criteria for each assessment are derived from the learning outcomes of the corresponding course. Lecturers have to write a testing plan that incorporates all of the course level learning outcomes as stated in the course outline. The testing plans are submitted to the course manager and another qualified examiner for a check on completeness and correctness. The panel reviewed several course outlines and completed tests and labelled them up to mark.

The testing formats in use are research papers, case studies and the Master thesis. These formats and the content they deal with clearly reflect professional practice, research and internationalism.

The Academy of Masters and Professional Courses has one academy-wide Examination Board. It consists of three members and a secretary. The chair of the Examination Board has affiliation with the MICM programme. The panel looked into some minutes of their meetings and established that relevant issues are being discussed.

The Examination Board monitors the quality of assessments, by means of the test coordinator. Although the Board is functioning properly, the panel would recommend that both the course manager as well as the Examination Board keep an eye on the independent position and functioning of the Examination Board, as this is more of an issue in a small programme such as MICM.

The panel considers Standard 10 to be 'satisfactory'.

Learning outcomes achieved

The panel reviewed the theses of fifteen students (full time and part time). In general, it is positive about their quality. The overall quality of the reviewed theses is corresponding an applied master level. Some of them addressed the research question more in-depth than others and the panel assessed one thesis as insufficient. However, in general the theses demonstrated that the graduates are all well-prepared for adequate positions in the professional field. The work field representatives as well as the alumni also judged positively on the MICM programme and the quality of its graduates.

The panel judgement on Standard 11 reads 'satisfactory'.

Overall conclusion:

The Master International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences offers a curriculum that uses a set of competences that is closely aligned with the professional qualifications of Logeion and validated by the MICM Advisory Board.

The faculty is well equipped to teach in this Master degree programme. Students, alumni and work field representatives are satisfied with the programme's level and the quality of the graduates. In the opinion of the panel the final level of the students reflects Master degree level.

The panel evaluates Standards 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 as 'good' and Standards 1, 5, 9, 10 and 11 as 'satisfactory'. Hence, following NVAO regulations the overall judgement on the Master International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences reads 'satisfactory'.

Therefore, the panel recommends the NVAO to award re-accreditation for another six years to the Master International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

The Hague, 25 April 2016

Drs. W.G. van Raaijen
chair



I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc
secretary / coordinator

3. INTRODUCTION

The Master International Communication Management (MICM) is part of the Academy for Masters and Professional Courses of The Hague University of Applied Sciences. This Academy accommodates seven master's programmes. MICM is a professional master taught entirely in English. MICM is offered as a fulltime track (one year) and a part-time track (two years). Both tracks result in the same set of learning outcomes.

The MICM programme educates students to become communication professionals who work at a strategic level in an international environment. They learn how to look at communication issues from a broad managerial perspective, wielding a holistic approach.

The management of the course indicates that in recent years MICM has been working on improving its studiability and efficiency. In 2012 a new course manager was appointed for the MICM programme. In the same year it was decided to restructure the curriculum, as only 50% of the cohort passed. The restructuring consisted of constructing a more modular build-up, better spread of the exams and more time dedicated to the thesis. The restructured programme was introduced in September 2013. The graduation rates have increased ever since.

Also, in recent years (and still) a lot of changes at THUAS' institutional level have occurred. This too affected the Academy for Masters and Professional Courses, as a new Dean was appointed in June, 2015. These management changes had and still have their effect on the MICM programme. The Academy is developing a long-term business plan, which contains the most important goals for the upcoming years. One of these goals is to build a strong alumni association. MICM itself is working on formalizing the PDCA-cycle.

Previous accreditation

The previous accreditation audit took place in 2010. The audit panel evaluated the MICM programme as positive for all standards. On the advice of the NVAO, MICM agreed with an additional external examination of the theses in 2013. As a result, external thesis evaluations were conducted in the fall of 2013. Three external assessors were each asked to review a set of five theses. The findings of the reviewers were satisfactory.

The panel also recommended several improvements; these are set out in the table below. The course management indicated the actual status of each of the recommendations and, when applicable, the panel addressed them during the audit.

Judgement of the 2010 audit panel	Improvements
Alumni relations management needs improvement	Alumni from the masters programmes have been brought into the THUAS alumni system; as well, research is being conducted with a view to establishing a formal MICM Alumni Association. One of the alumni is currently writing a new 'alumni policy'.
Involve employers and client organizations in quality assurance cycle in a more structured manner	The composition of the Advisory Board was renewed and now includes its first alumna of the MICM programme, and more professionals from the work field, than in earlier years.

4. JUDGEMENT PER STANDARD

4.1 Intended learning outcomes

Standard 1: The intended learning outcomes of the program have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Explanation: As for level (bachelor or master) and orientation (professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the program.

Findings

The Master programme in International Communication Management has closely aligned its programme competencies with the professional qualifications identified by Logeion⁴. The six programme competencies cover:

- Intercultural, cross-cultural, and international communication with diverse audiences and in multiple contexts;
- Analysis, research, reporting and interpretation of communication issues in a rigorous and scientific manner;
- Advice and evaluation on communication issues for international organizations;
- Design of communication proposals, frameworks and strategies in response to client issues, needs and demands;
- Management of communication resources and strategies in response to client issues, needs and demands;
- Decision-making regarding strategic issues in the area of communication management for international organizations.

The programme has elaborated each competency into three learning outcomes (see Box 1). The MICM Advisory Board is involved in the validation and modification of the competencies and the learning outcomes. The current set of programme learning outcomes was developed in the summer of 2015. The panel considers the competencies and learning outcomes appropriate for the MICM programme.

Programme competency

Decision-making regarding strategic issues in the area of communication management for international organization.

Programme learning outcomes

1. Formulate judgments related to strategic issues with incomplete and limited information and involving uncertain outcomes.
2. Decide on research methodologies and strategies to develop new information, knowledge and insights needed to solve strategic issues.
3. Propose solutions to strategic issues that involve a pro-active consideration of ethical implications as reflected in the concept of sustainability.

Box 1. Elaboration of the Management competency into learning outcomes

The programme learning outcomes are eventually converted into course level learning outcomes by the MICM staff. The course outlines include the course level learning outcomes students have to achieve during a specific course.

⁴ Logeion is The Dutch Association for Communication Professionals

Profile

The mission statement of the MICM programme is 'to provide professional, talented and ambitious men and women from The Netherlands and from across the globe with the theory, skills and competencies they will need to succeed in the communication fields of their choice'. In the opinion of the panel, this mission statement – and the programme as a whole – implicitly reflects the international character of THUAS. On the other hand, the panel would like to bring forward that the mission statement and profile of the MICM programme are so broad that they do not differentiate MICM from any other master programme in communication. As internationalism is part of MICM's DNA, the panel would like to encourage the management to add this international dimension to the mission statement in a more explicit way. The panel also believes that MICM can take advantage of its broad spectrum and holistic approach by linking it to cultural diversity going beyond communication competencies. In the eyes of the panel emphasizing MICM's management dimension can also be used to specify the mission statement and programme as a whole.

Also, the panel would encourage the programme management to perform a benchmark, whereby the THUAS programme is compared with other MICM programmes - both in the Netherlands and abroad. This benchmark could also help to unveil the programme's unique selling points.

Internationalisation

By its very nature the Master programme in International Communication Management should have the obvious international focus. The panel has established that the programme competencies and learning outcomes clearly reflect the international dimension. For example, on completion of the programme students have to be able to identify, analyse and report on communication issues that involve international contexts and must be able to develop strategic communication proposals and plans that respond effectively to challenges in international environments. Also, students must be able to demonstrate awareness of different cultural and international perspectives and handle them with sensitivity and practicality.

Research

As the international communication management professional is involved in plan- and decision making at a strategic level, he must be able to found his decisions in a reliable way. Most of the time the underpinning is based on research. This is reflected in the MICM programme competencies and learning outcomes. Among other things, students are expected to 'evaluate, integrate and apply theory to create new, relevant, and specialized understandings and insights in communication management' and to 'decide on research methodologies and strategies to develop new information, knowledge and insights needed to solve strategic issues'. Besides that, students also have to 'express the continuous learning skills needed to adapt and apply problem-solving abilities to unfamiliar and complex environments'. The panel established that the way the intended learning outcomes deal with research fits hbo-master level, featuring both academic and applied elements.

Considerations and judgement

The programme has adopted a suitable set of competencies and learning outcomes that were validated by the professional field. The profile of the MICM programme could be made more explicit e.g. by comparing the THUAS programme with other MICM programmes. The expected international features of the MICM programme are elaborated in terms of competencies and learning outcomes. The same applies to research. The intended learning outcomes enable students to become young professionals at the end of their study.

On the bases of these findings the panel considers Standard 1 to be 'satisfactory'.

4.2 Curriculum

Standard 2: The orientation of the curriculum assures the development of skills in the field of scientific research and/or the professional practice.

Explanation: The curriculum has demonstrable links with current developments in the professional field and with the discipline.

Findings

Professional practice

The MICM programme has several mechanisms in place to ensure that it fits the developments and requirements of the professional practice.

MICM Advisory Board

The current MICM Advisory Board is composed of various professional, among others the director of Logeion, an emeritus professor of Intercultural Business Communication from a sociolinguistic perspective of Radboud University and the director of the Max Havelaar Foundation. The audit made it clear that the MICM Advisory Board regularly confers with the management about current professional developments and how these perchange impact the MICM learning outcomes and curriculum. Within this context the Advisory Board had recently discussed the Social Media module.

Besides meetings with the management the MICM Advisory Board members also play an active role within the programme itself, e.g. by delivering guest lectures and professional skills seminars. Furthermore, they sometimes invite students to join networks or to attend speaking events, as the director of Logeion had recently done.

Based on the minutes and the meetings with the management and the Advisory Board, the panel concludes that the board plays an important role in keeping up with the latest developments. The board members give suggestions for adjustments and also speak with the management about policy-related matters, such as the differences in work experience between students.

Faculty

Interaction with and input from the professional field is also guaranteed through the teaching staff as they lecture on a part-time basis. They are all either academics or expert professionals working in the communication area. This results in present-day topics and assignments, live cases involving professional organisations and real-life examples discussed in class. The panel considers this a real plus point of the programme.

Not only the Advisory Board and the teaching staff provide information on current developments in the professional field of communication management, also the deployment of guest speakers and company visits – including a presentation by a brand manager or director of communications – ensure that the curriculum stays up-to-date.

Research

The aim of the MICM programme is to learn students to make decisions based upon research. Therefore the programme wields a research oriented approach. Students have to read a substantial amount of textbooks and (academic) articles related to the various MICM modules.

The panel looked into the reading list and established that the prescribed books and articles are authoritative and relevant, and represent the international character of the programme.

The research oriented approach is also reflected in the research paper and their proposal for solutions students have to write as their final assignment for the MICM programme. As mentioned before, these assignments frequently comprise existing challenges faced by communication managers of real-world organisations. The same applies to the thesis project, which requires students to engage with a client in the professional communication area.

Some of the MICM lecturers have an appointment as a researcher at another (research) university. It is clear that the MICM programme benefits from their knowledge of research in the marketing and communication area. To further enlarge the research oriented culture within the MICM programme, the management aims at building a close connection with research professors (*lectoren*) from THUAS or other universities in the near future.

The panel established that the programme is giving sufficient attention to research and research methods applicable for communication management professionals. Students learn to use books and articles, write papers, learn about research methods and write research papers and their final theses.

Internationalisation

From the first day of their studies students learn to bridge cultural difficulties because of the multicultural composition of the classes and the teaching staff. The panel spoke with students and lecturers from Greece, Canada, the Netherlands, Sudan, Russia, Jordan, China, the United States of America and Zimbabwe. Through the influx of international students, the MICM programme by itself has an international character. As students corroborated during the site visit, the cultural differences between students add an extra dimension to the discussions in the classroom.

Moreover, the international dimension of the programme is enhanced further by inviting guest lecturers from multinational organisations within the Netherlands, such as Unilever and the European Court of Justice.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel endorses the way the programme is kept up-to-date. Contributions to its topicality are made by the faculty with relevant employments and research projects, the MICM Advisory Board with their feedback and professional expertise, and guest speakers and company visits.

In various ways the MICM programme has incorporated research. Not only do students learn about the theory of research methods, they also have to write a research paper at the end of every module and a thesis during the final stage of their studies.

The panel observed a programme with an international focus. The student population, the composition of the teaching staff, the literature, the assignments and the thesis topics clearly contribute to the international character of the programme. Furthermore, the panel believes that the attention within the programme for both research and internationalisation tie in nicely with the professional practice.

The panel perceived that the practical orientation of the MICM programme is secured by the (real live) assignments. Both in the literature, the reading list and the way research is in place, the MICM programme reflects Masters level.

Therefore the panel considers Standard 2 to be 'good'.

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

Explanation: The learning outcomes have been adequately translated into attainment targets for (components of) the curriculum. Students follow a study curriculum which is coherent in terms of content.

Findings

From intended learning outcomes to learning outcomes per module

The panel established that the MICM programme competencies and learning outcomes are reflected in the competencies and learning outcomes per module. The programme has provided an overview to specify how the module learning outcomes relate to the specific programme learning outcomes.

Structure and coherence of the programme

The MICM programme consists of nine modules. Seven of these modules relate to specific communication management related areas. The panel is of the opinion that these seven modules cover the broad spectrum of communication management. The other two modules cover research and methodology for communication, and the writing of the final thesis.

Modules (ECTS)	
Managing corporate communication (5)	Managing cross cultural communication (5)
Managing internal communication (5)	Managing media relations (5)
Managing crisis communication (5)	Social media (5)
Brand management (5)	Communication research & methodology (5)
Thesis (15)	

Table 1. The nine modules of the MICM programme

As – for fulltime students – a year is divided into five periods of eight weeks and each period handles two modules. The last period is completely devoted to writing the thesis. Part-time students take one module every period. The first week of each module is spent on the Professional Skills seminar. During these seminar weeks students develop their presentation and consultancy skills and learn how to write a communication plan. They also include workshops on self-branding. The workshops are positioned in such a way, that the skills learned contribute to and can be applied during the following weeks of that period. The Professional Skills seminars also represent 5 ECs.

The MICM programme builds upon three broad orientations: the professional practice, research and internationalism. All modules consist of a theoretical part that helps students in coming to grips with a specific communication area. Based on the theories they learn and the articles they read students can explain and predict developments in the field of communication management. Furthermore, as part of each module, students have to apply theory to the professional practice, for instance by writing a research paper or a crisis communication plan.

In order to write a solid paper or plan, students have to do (literature) research. In the audit students told the panel that they experience true progression in the level of assignments. Some of these assignments are dedicated to learning how to write the final thesis. Students say this facilitates them to gather and collate the right data, practice the skills and gain the confidence they need to work on their final theses.

The third orientation – internationalism – is not so much a pillar that structures the programme. It is more an aspect that is reflected in the module. This can be in the professional workshops when it comes to intercultural communication or in a case study about a large international organisation.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel established that the programme is well-structured and coherent. The distribution of the content into clearly demarcated modules is helpful for students. The professional skills workshops at the start of each period help students to successfully complete their assignments. The panel judges standard 3 to be 'good'.

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

Explanation: The teaching concept is in line with the intended learning outcomes and the teaching formats tie in with the teaching concept. Factors pertaining to the curriculum and hindering students' progress are removed as far as possible. In addition, students with a functional disability receive additional career tutoring.

Findings

Didactical concept

The didactical concept of the MICM programme is based upon its didactical vision. Core principles of this vision are:

- the learning process is motivated by a desire for achievement, actualization and growth, rather than by fear of failure;
- learning, within the MICM programme, is best achieved within the context of a supportive and diverse learning community;
- learning is achieved and reinforced through a variety of pedagogical styles and techniques.

The panel established that this vision, indeed, gives direction to the didactical interpretation of the programme. For example, at the beginning of the second period a peer-to-peer weekend is being organized. This weekend, that takes place in a non-school setting, is meant to get to know each other outside the classroom context, to create an open atmosphere and to improve teamwork abilities. Students are really positive about this peer-to-peer weekend as it also builds upon their fellowship and their confidence.

In the classroom lecturers use a mix of teaching methods, such as workshops, role plays, presentations, cases, group assignments, etc. During the site-visit the panel also learned that in the International Communication course the lecturer makes effective use of blended learning, as students weekly present their interpretation of the compulsory readings and individual practice linked paper.

This mixture of methods ties in well with the aim of the programme and its intended learning outcomes. For example, in the Media Relations module students work on a case about the corrupted FIFA. Part of this is the organisation and simulation of a press conference. The panel endorses the use of such cases as they address current issues implying intercultural aspects, as Swedes may have different views on corruption than Belgians or Chinese. To the panel it is clear that assignments like these contribute to several of the intended learning outcomes in that they require students to deal with 'international communication with diverse audiences', 'management of communication resources and strategies in response to client issues' and 'advice and evaluation on communication issues for international organizations'.

Class composition

The THUAS offers the MICM programme as a fulltime (one year) and a part-time track (two years). The modular build-up structure of the programme allows it to blend fulltime students with part-time students, the latter having real work experience. This enhances the level of reflexivity and brings in more – spontaneous – case studies. Fulltime as well as part-time students told the panel that they are very pleased with the way the students mix, both inside and outside the classroom.

Study load

In 2012-2013 MICM made some changes to the structure and content of the curriculum in response to the low study success rate. One of the implemented improvements was the smoothing of workloads across the entire curriculum together with the introduction of the modular structure. On average students are now satisfied with the study load. For part-time students it is extremely important to plan their study activities well. The strict schedule and the number of group assignments oblige students to rapidly master the skills of well-balanced time management. Not only does this apply to part-time students, but also to fulltime students as they are in projects together.

When it comes to disabled students, MICM follows the university-wide policy on studying with a handicap or disability. An article is dedicated to this matter in the Programme and Examination Regulations (PER).

Considerations and judgement

The peer-to-peer weekend, the variety of lectures, the skill training and the well-balanced work load fit the didactical vision of MICM and contribute to the attainment of the intended learning outcomes. The panel considers the blending of fulltime and part-time students an attractive and challenging concept. Altogether, the panel judges standard 4 as 'good'.

Standard 5: The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students

Explanation: The admission requirements are realistic with a view to the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

The MICM programme has adopted a set of formal admission requirements that apply to both the fulltime and part-time track. First of all, candidates must have a Dutch Bachelor's degree or an international equivalent. A degree in communication or any related field (e.g. marketing, journalism) is not required. The diplomas of foreign students need to be officially recognized in the Netherlands as equivalent to that of a relevant Dutch degree. This is done by Nuffic.

Secondly, a total TOEFL score of at least 80 or an IELTS band score of at least 6.0 is required. Students who do not meet these English levels can take a preparatory English course and apply again the next year. The panel spoke with one student who had taken a preparatory course and she said it had truly improved her command of English and strengthened her confidence.

From the assignments and reports the panel reviewed, it became clear that students' command of English varies. Some of the Asian students seem to have difficulty writing in well-structured English. Therefore, the panel would suggest to consider raising the bar for the TOEFL and IELTS tests.

The third entrance requirement is that all students need to have at least two years of work experience. Since 2014-2015 it is possible for professionals with all different kinds of backgrounds to apply for the MICM programme. It's not necessary for candidates to work or have worked in the communications field. The Advisory Board agreed upon this change to cater for the trend that more professionals outside the communication field want to study communication management.

The panel is of the opinion that the work experience of students positively contributes to the programme, as they know how companies work and bring in real life cases into the classroom discussions. However, the admission criterion has been formulated solely quantitatively (2 years of work experience) instead of also qualitatively (at a certain level). In the final theses the panel reviewed it noticed level differences between students (see *Standard 11*) that appear to relate to some of the students' entrance level. Therefore the panel would recommend to consider reviewing this particular application criterion.

The panel would like to emphasize that students they met do not experience any hindrance caused by differences in prior education or work experience (in function and years). The students the panel spoke with – who had different kinds of prior education and work experience – said that these different background do not cause any problems. They say that the programme is structured in such a way (modular) that students who are new to the communication field can keep up with the programme and those who did have prior experience within the communication domain still feel challenged.

Intake

The International Office of THUAS checks all of the MICM applications for completeness. Besides the above mentioned requirements, candidates also have to submit a current Curriculum Vitae, a reference letter and a letter of motivation to study in the MICM programme.

When the dossier is complete and the candidate meets all requirements, the course manager arranges an admission interview. As for international students the admission interview can take place either by phone or Skype, but growing numbers of students come to The Hague to have a face-to-face interview with the course manager. The objective of the interview is to find out candidate's verbal proficiency in English and to discuss his or her motivation for the programme.

From the conversation with the students it appeared that not all of them have had contact with the course manager before arriving at The Hague to start in the MICM programme. As the oral interview is also a mechanism to assess the motivation, expectations and the English proficiency of the students, the panel would recommend making the oral intake interview compulsory.

Considerations and Judgement

Except for the level of education and years of work experience in any professional field, the MICM programme does not have any other admission requirements such as a specific pre-study profile or mandatory courses. The wide range of professional experience and study backgrounds of the incoming students adds an extra dimension to the classroom discussions. At the same time, these various backgrounds lead to clear level differences between students. The panel considers the TOEFL or IELTS tests an adequate instrument for establishing students' level of English, although the panel would suggest the minimum score be raised.

In view of the design and structure of the programme, the panel judges the admission requirements as realistic. The admission procedure is clear, although the requirements for work experience seem to create level differences between the students. In all, the panel deems Standard 5 to be 'satisfactory'

4.3 Staff

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

Explanation: The factual expertise available among the staff ties in with the requirements set for professional or academic higher education programs.

Findings

Regarding the staff qualifications policy the MICM programme requires its lecturers, amongst other things, to have professional and theoretical expertise in the specific area of their profession, to have a deep and broad international understanding and to be versed in a variety of pedagogical methods.

The panel established that the programme lives up to its policy. The programme is conducted by eight lecturers, who represent the disciplines within the programme. All of them have a Master's degree from a research university and five of them also obtained a PhD. The number of lecturers with a PhD has increased from one to five over the last couple of years.

As MICM is a relatively small programme with a student body of 35 and a modular structure, the programme works with visiting faculty. Some faculty members do not live in the Netherlands. They come over from e.g. the United Kingdom to teach their module and/or for meetings with colleagues and staff.

Most of the lecturers also have an (core) appointment at another university or (their own) company. For example, MICM lecturers also work at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Amsterdam, Webster University Leiden and Northumbria University (United Kingdom). One of the lecturers is a freelance social media and business strategist, who works for different companies. The panel welcomes the broad work field experiences and the extensive research activities of the faculty. Besides that, the students are very positive about their so-called 'classroom experience'.

The part-time appointment of the lecturers could be a disadvantage with regard to cohesion and communication issues, but the students conveyed that the lecturers – even if they are not at THUAS or not even in the Netherlands – respond very quickly to e-mails.

Professionalisation

There are various mechanisms for professional development at THUAS MICM. At the end of every module students are asked to fill out a questionnaire, among other things on the lecturer's performance. The course manager discusses the results of this questionnaire individually with each lecturer and gives feedback on their performance.

The course manager also attends classes on a regular basis to provide lecturers with feedback. Sometimes lecturers ask a colleague to visit their class or to attend a student's presentation and evaluate it afterwards. Calibration sessions are being organised to discuss the interpretation of various assessment criteria and how to weigh them.

All teaching staff at the MICM programme must be qualified examiners. To become a qualified examiner lecturers have to participate in a two-day workshop provided by THUAS. Recently, the academy provided a training programme to develop course outlines.

Another feature of the programme to bring in external expertise is a scheduled series of guest lectures. Recently Dutch hockey coach Marc Lammers conducted a guest lecture for students and lecturers of the MBA programme. The MICM lecturers were also invited to join this session to gain insight into the way Marc Lammers transfers his experiences with improving team performances in hockey to improving performances of project teams in businesses.

Furthermore, there are at least four official faculty meetings each year. Every meeting one or more of the lecturers present the latest developments in their professional domain to the other lecturers. They are also encouraged to write articles, to go to conferences and to do a PhD.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel is positive about the high qualifications of the faculty, holding at least a Master's degree, but mostly a PhD. The professional experience of the faculty is in line with the practice-oriented character of a professional master programme. Adjunct faculty explicitly use their practical experiences to enrich their classes. The panel considers the broad work field experiences and the extensive research activities of the faculty as a genuine strength. This led the panel to the conclusion that the faculty is well-equipped to execute this educational programme. The opportunities for training and development are in accordance with higher education standards.

Weighing all of the above, the panel rates Standard 6 as 'good'.

4.4 Services and facilities

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

Findings

Buildings and facilities

As part of the audit the panel members conducted a guided tour around the school. Recently, the academy moved in to a new building where it has its own floor. The classrooms are well-equipped. There are small spaces for team meetings and a Wi-Fi connection. The material facilities and the housing of the programme tie in nicely with the requirements of a professional Masters programme in Communication Management. The presence of all (international) professional master students into the new building, contributes to the creation of a knit student community.

The MICM building is about 100 meters away from the main building of THUAS. Students can go there to visit the library, use the (individual) work spaces or go to the restaurant. The library has sufficient books, journals and digital databases to provide students with relevant English-language publications in the communications field.

The panel established that the International Office of THUAS serves the special needs of international students, including housing and counselling.

Considerations and Judgement

From this tour on the premises, it became clear to the panel that the school buildings meet the standards for classrooms and facilities required for professional education at Masters level. The panel believes that the physical environment contributes to students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes. The panel therefore rates Standard 7 as 'good'.

Standard 8: Tutoring and student information provision bolster students' progress and tie in with the needs of students

Findings

Introduction

At the beginning of their study – before the start of classes - new students get introduced to all aspects of academic life at THUAS. During the introduction week students learn about THUAS facilities and service centers. They receive support to enroll in the programme, learn how to use the (digital) library, get familiar with the use of the Programme and Examination Regulations, and they also get acquainted with their fellow students as well as the course manager and the course coordinator. Students said they considered the introduction week very useful and it helped them to find their way into the programme and to familiarise themselves with THUAS and The Hague.

The panel is pleased with the scheduling of the module 'Managing Cross-Cultural Communication' in the first period of the academic calendar. As students learn about cultural differences and challenges, they can relate this knowledge to their own situation, living and studying in another country.

Information provision

Blackboard is being used to provide students with the information they need to prepare the courses and make the assignments. Course outlines are available on Blackboard eight days prior to the beginning of a particular course. Students have access to the digital library, they have a webmail account and they can look into Osiris for information about test results.

Mentoring

The course manager fulfils the role of mentor. He speaks with all students about their performances in a formal setting at least twice a year. Moreover, as there are only 35 students in the programme, informal talks between the course manager and students are very common.

In addition to the formal mentoring scheme, the panel learned that the course manager and faculty members are always available to give additional tutorials to students who need extra help on a certain topic. Students who require a re-sit for an examination are offered three one-hour individualized coaching sessions from the course lecturer before the re-sit. Students feel free to ask their lecturers for help. They told the panel that their lecturers can easily be consulted and are always willing to help them whenever they can.

Students, who cannot find their niche or have personal problems, can go to a professional counsellor or psychologist.

Considerations and Judgement

Considering that students receive a solid introduction to their study (environment), are well informed about the courses, have regular individual meetings with the course manager and experience their lecturers as easily accessible, the panel rates standard 8 as 'good'

4.5 Quality assurance

Standard 9: The program is evaluated on a regular basis, partly on the basis of assessable targets.

Explanation: The program monitors the quality of the intended learning outcomes, the curriculum, the staff, the services and facilities, the assessments and the learning outcomes achieved through regular evaluations. The outcomes of these evaluations constitute the basis for demonstrable measures for improvement that contribute to the realisation of the targets. Program committees, examining boards, staff, students, alumni and the relevant professional field of the program are actively involved in the program's internal quality assurance.

Findings

Because of the small number of students the MICM quality assurance cycle focusses on qualitative data instead of quantitative data. MICM has several quality assurance mechanisms in place to keep control of the educational quality.

First of all, at the end of each module students evaluate the educational programme and the lecturer by completing a questionnaire. The results are discussed in a meeting with the course manager and the relevant faculty member. The faculty member can also come up with improvements in response to classroom experiences.

Secondly, the Programme Council has a role in improving the programme. The Programme Council consists of three Student Council representatives from all three MICM cohorts (fulltime, part-time 1st year and part-time 2nd year) and two lecturers. The Programme Council meets twice a year and proposes improvements to the course manager.

The MICM Advisory Board is meant to advise THUAS about the adaptation of the MICM programme to (future) developments in the professionals domain. The Advisory Board meets at least twice a year.

MICM is planning to also involve alumni in the evaluation of the programme and to ask an alumnus to sit in the Advisory Board. The panel agrees to this improvement. From 2015-2016 onward alumni will receive a questionnaire about the quality, relevance and usefulness of the programme to their careers. Despite these new plans, the panel established that informally a lot of services are already offered to the alumni (for instance, through informal talks with the course manager). But the panel considers it certainly useful to involve the alumni more formally in the curriculum revision processes.

Another instrument used by THUAS (institute wide) is the *Nationale Studenten Enquête* (NSE). The NSE response rates have always been very poor among MICM students (and the other master students as well). The management believes this might be the result of MICM's intimate atmosphere. The open-door-policy encourages students to directly speak out when they see room for improvement. They apparently do not need to wait for the NSE to give their opinion.

All the official bodies the panel spoke with stated that the management takes the results of evaluations seriously. Students clearly see the results of their feedback. Although, some interviewees mention that management feedback on implemented measures could be improved.

Because of the informal culture and the short lines of communication within the MICM programme, the management does not always record faculty meetings and does not always inform its stakeholders formally on implemented measures.

The panel learned that this is something the management intends to improve. The plan is to formalize the PDCA cycles and to report more on the results of evaluations. The panel supports this plan and established that the management had already started to test several formats for writing an improvement plan.

Considerations and Judgement

All stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance system. The input from alumni could be retrieved in a more formalised way. Management and faculty are easy to approach and are open to students' feedback. Previously detected points of improvement are clearly implemented. The reporting on and monitoring of the implemented measures should be further formalized.

Weighing up all of the above, the panel rates Standard 9 as 'satisfactory'.

4.6 Assessment

Standard 10: The program has an adequate assessment system in place.

Explanation: The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students
The examining board of the program safeguards the quality of interim and final tests.

Findings

Assessment system

As mentioned before, the MICM programme builds upon three broad orientations: the professional practice, research and internationalism. The way of testing in the MICM programme clearly reflects these orientations. The testing formats used comprise research papers, case studies and the master thesis. The research papers reflect the research orientation, the case studies ensure that students come to grips with the professional domain, and the thesis includes both research and professional practice. The way in which students have to work together on projects and come into contact with international literature and international/multinational companies relates to the international orientation.

Not only are the individually written performances of students examined. The MICM programme also uses presentations, group assignments and oral exams as test methods. However, these methods have a lower weighting. For example, a paper counts for 90% of the final grade and the presentation for 10%. The panel is of the opinion that the testing formats fit the professional Master's level.

The criteria for each assessment are derived from the learning outcomes of a specific course. Lecturers have to write a testing plan that incorporates all of the course level learning outcomes as stated in the course outline. Since the spring of 2015, lecturers have undergone training sessions concerning the use of learning outcomes in the design of the course outlines and tests. Their testing plans, including the tests themselves, are submitted to the course manager for a check on completeness. Once the course manager is confident that both the course outline and tests are well-prepared, they are submitted to another qualified examiner who needs to approve the course outline and the test before they can be published on Blackboard.

On the basis of a selection of course outlines, assignments and papers the course had on display in the audit, the panel members conclude that the programme uses a relevant mix of test formats. The assignments are clearly linked to the course related learning outcomes. The panel looked at several assignments and papers, including Corporate Communication, Internal Communication, Cultural Diversity and Media Relations. The panel members conclude that the MICM assignments are relevant and comprise a suitable reading list (compulsory) directly related to the specific subject field.

Examination Board

The Academy of Masters and Professional Courses has one academy-wide Examination Board. It consists of three members and a secretary. The chair of the Examination Board has affiliation with the MICM programme. The Examination Board meets biweekly. The panel looked into some minutes and established that relevant issues are being discussed by the Examination Board.

As MICM is a small programme, there might be some tension on the independent position of the Examination Board. The Examination Board feels like the course manager is not always convinced of the remarks and comments of the Examination Board. The panel recommends both the course manager as well as the Examination Board to keep an eye on the independent position and functioning of the Examination Board as an important body for monitoring and safeguarding the quality of assessments and the students' graduation level.

The panel looked into the extensive Annual Report 2014-2015 of the Examination Board. The report contains administrative information on all the requests of students and all the decisions of the board. Next to that, the report demonstrates that the examination board also made some recommendations to the management with regard to the independent position of the Examination Board. The panel recommends to also incorporate the Boards' reflection on the level of the theses into the next edition of the Annual Report.

Test coordinator

Each programme has its own test coordinator, delegated by the Examination Board. The test coordinator evaluates the quality of tests and assignments on the basis of samples. He also reviews the grading results of tests to see if there are grounds for a test to be additionally evaluated. The test coordinator reports to the Examination Board and course manager, who then talks with the examiners on the findings.

Considerations and Judgement

Based on the course outlines, assignments and papers, the panel concludes that the programme applies an adequate mix of testing methods that fit the orientation and level of the programme.

The Examination Board functions properly and monitors the quality of assessments through the test coordinator.

Based on these findings the panel rates Standard 10 as 'satisfactory'.

4.7 Learning outcomes achieved

Standard 11: The program demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved

Explanation: The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in subsequent programs.

Findings

The achieved learning outcomes of the MICM programme are measured on the basis of a thesis and an oral defence thereof. As mentioned before, the curriculum has been restructured (starting 2013-2014) to increase the passing grade of 50%. One of the changes involves the graduation process. The last period is now completely dedicated to the thesis.

Students can only start their Master thesis if they have completed the Research Methodology module and have approval of their research proposal. The thesis consists of an applied research project in an international context that results in a strategic communication advice for the client. The thesis reflects 15 ECs.

The thesis is assessed by two examiners, one of whom is also the supervisor of the student (second examiner). They assess the thesis independently, submit their assessment, and – if both rate the thesis sufficient – come to an agreement on the grade.

Panel judgement on the theses

A stratified selection of fifteen theses with a spreading in the grades given by the examiners was evaluated by the panel members before the audit took place. An overview of the inspected theses is provided in the Appendix V. The choice for these theses was made by the panel from a list provided by the programme that included the final papers of all graduates of the past two years.

In most cases the panel agreed on the grades given by the examiners. Out of fifteen the panel graded one thesis as insufficient. Although the findings of the panel are positive, the panel noticed a big gap between students who really internalised the content provided during the seminars and those who had just followed the guidelines. The theses of the latter group of students showed an over-presence of all kinds of theories related to the topic and an over-presence of all possible methodologies apparently to prove that they knew them all. Instead, they should have been guided to choose the most appropriate method(s) and provide underpinnings for their choices. Some of these theses also did not really provide the strategic level of a communication advice, but rather a tactical plan ready for implementation but without the link to the organisation's objectives.

The alumni convey to the panel that they are well-equipped for working in the professional field. They expressed their satisfaction about the content and level of the programme. The work field representatives commended the eagerness of the MICM students. They said that the holistic approach of MICM – which does not confine itself to 'just communication', but also considers communication in relation to the whole company – is particularly mentioned as an important feature of the programme and is clearly said to be present in the way MICM students approach problems.

Considerations and Judgement

The panel is positive about the quality of the theses. Some of them are more profound than others. The panel assessed one thesis as insufficient, but in general the theses demonstrated that the graduated students are well-prepared to act at Masters level in the communication domain. Also, both the work field representatives and the alumni showed their satisfaction about students' professional performance.

Hence, the panel judgement on Standard 11 reads 'satisfactory'.

5. OVERALL CONCLUSION

The programme uses a set of competencies which is closely aligned with the professional qualifications as identified by Logeion and validated by the professional field; the panel considers this an adequate set of intended learning outcomes.

The MICM programme is very international, topical and practical. Research is used to contribute to creating a useful advisory report. Also, the professional and research experiences of faculty contribute to a pleasant, international and rich learning environment.

The curriculum is up-to-date, internationally oriented and coherent. The practical orientation of the MICM programme is secured by the real life assignments. The role of internationalism and research in the programme fits actual practice and contributes to creating a useful strategic communication advice. The faculty contribute to an international, professional, and dynamic learning environment. The building and facilities tie in with the requirements of the programme.

MICM has a working quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are involved. Still the PDCA-cycle should be executed in a more formalised way.

The programme applies an adequate mix of testing methods that fit the orientation and level of the programme. The Examination Board functions properly and monitors the quality of assessments by means of the test coordinator. Through reviewing fifteen theses the panel established that the graduates of the course achieve its intended learning outcomes.

The panel judgement on Standard 2,3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 reads 'good', while Standards 1, 5, 9, 10 and 11 are considered 'satisfactory'. According to the NVAO regulations the overall judgement on the MICM programme of The Hague University of Applied Sciences reads 'satisfactory'.

Hence, the panel recommends the NVAO to award re-accreditation for another six years to the hbo-master programme International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the report the panel has stated a number of recommendations. In this chapter, the most important recommendations are explained in more detail.

Mission statement

The mission statement of the MICM programme has been formulated in such a broad way that it doesn't really differentiate MICM from any other Masters in communication. The broadness allows lecturers to adapt easily as there is no strict frame. The panel gives the MICM programme into consideration to rethink the mission statement, because –as it is now - it does not reflect the unique features of the programme.

As internationalism is part of MICM's DNA, it should be described better. Also, the mission statement should include the international dimension in a more explicit way. Furthermore, the mission statement could take advantage of the broad spectrum/holistic approach (linking to cultural diversity, going beyond communication competences). And last but not least, it should emphasize the management/strategic dimension as this is a unique selling point of the programme.

Admission criteria

The incoming students-mix contributes to the dynamic classroom experience. However, students' backgrounds differ widely. This relates to the admission criterion that students must have two years of work experience, without indicating at which level. These different intake-levels seem to be reflected in the papers and theses the panel looked into. To secure the level and cohesion of each cohort, the panel recommends revising the current admission criterion regarding work experience and language proficiency.

The following recommendation is not related to the findings we have described above. Therefore, it has no influence on the judgment within the four standards, which constitute the assessment framework.

Role(s) of the course manager

Throughout the audit, it became clear to the panel that the course manager is 'the strongest link' and at the same time 'the weakest link' of the programme. The course manager is involved in almost every process. He is the one who does the oral intake interviews, he is very committed to his students and his teachers, he initiates and maintains the contacts with the field and the Advisory Board, he is a member of the academic committee, he is involved with test construction, he oversees all the course modules, he attends classes of colleagues to give them feedback and to coach them, he teaches classes himself, he is the one who coordinates and implements the suggested improvements, etc. etc. He is clearly the key figure of the programme.

However, his very important role can also be a risk for the programme. If the course manager 'wins the lottery tomorrow' and he immediately stops working, then a lot of knowledge, contacts and procedures will suddenly be gone. Therefore, the panel talked with the course manager about the importance of making sure that his agenda, his contacts and his approach should be 'shadowed' to make sure that someone else can take over if necessary. The course manager agreed with this remark, even saying he started to do so. The panel is very pleased with this development and wishes to emphasize the importance of it, by including it in this chapter.

APPENDIX I Overview of judgements

Overview of judgements on the Master International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences	
Standards	Judgements
Intended learning outcomes	
Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Curriculum	
Standard 2: Orientation of the curriculum	Good
Standard 3: Contents of the curriculum	Good
Standard 4: The structure of the curriculum	Good
Standard 5: The interface of the curriculum	Satisfactory
Staff	
Standard 6: Quality of the staff	Good
Services and facilities	
Standard 7: Housing and infrastructure	Good
Standard 8: Tutoring and information	Good
Quality assurance	
Standard 9: Evaluations	Satisfactory
Assessment	
Standard 10: Assessment system	Satisfactory
Achieved learning outcomes	
Standard 11: Learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Overall judgement	Satisfactory

APPENDIX II The course's learning objectives

MICM programme competencies	MICM programme learning outcomes At the completion of the programme, the student will be able to:
<p>Intercultural Communication:</p> <p>Intercultural, cross-cultural, and international communication with diverse audiences and in multiple contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communicate ideas, knowledge, and arguments clearly and persuasively in English using visual, oral and written presentation techniques before multi-cultural / international audiences b. Demonstrate awareness of different cultural and international perspectives and be able to handle them with sensitivity and practicality c. Collaborate effectively on multi-cultural teams by contrasting and integrating different perspectives in a way that contributes to team performance
<p>Analysis:</p> <p>Analysis, research, reporting and interpretation of communication issues in a rigorous and scientific manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify, analyze and report on communication issues that involve international contexts or multiple stakeholders b. Evaluate, integrate and apply theory to create new, relevant, and specialized understandings and insights in communication management c. Apply critical thinking, reflection, and problem-solving skills to assess, synthesize, and report on research formulations and outcomes
<p>Advice:</p> <p>Advice and evaluation on communication issues for international organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulate (original) options and produce advice to solve strategic problems and resolve key issues related to international communication management b. Communicate conclusions persuasively, by showing evidence-based reasoning that responds in a clear and sufficient manner to problems and contexts c. Express a high level of emotional intelligence when presenting advice, by exhibiting self-regulation, active listening and contextual awareness
<p>Design:</p> <p>Design of communication proposals, frameworks and strategies in response to client issues, needs and demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design, conduct, and write applied research projects that are rooted in the professional practice and that produce original value by generating knowledge and insights b. Develop strategic communication proposals and plans that respond effectively to challenges in international environments c. Design integrated marketing communication (IMC) plans and strategies that effectively and efficiently coordinate communication disciplines, techniques and tools
<p>Management:</p> <p>Management of communication resources and strategies in response to client issues, needs and demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manage and organize communication resources and strategies in several functional areas b. Implement communication strategies that integrate resources across different communication functions c. Express the continuous learning skills needed to adapt and apply problem-solving abilities to unfamiliar and complex environments
<p>Decision-Making:</p> <p>Decision-making regarding strategic issues in the area of communication management for international organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formulate judgments related to strategic issues with incomplete and limited information and involving uncertain outcomes b. Decide on research methodologies and strategies to develop new information, knowledge and insights needed to solve strategic issues c. Propose solutions to strategic issues that involve a pro-active consideration of ethical implications as reflected in the concept of sustainability

APPENDIX III Overview of the programme

	Period 1 Sept-Oct		Period 2 Nov-Jun		Period 3 Jan-Mar			Period 4 Mar-May		Period 5 May-Jun	
Module	Managing Corporate Communication	Managing Cross Cultural Communication	Managing Internal Communication	Managing Media Relations	Managing Crisis Communication	Social Media	Communication Research and Methodology	Brand Management	Communication Research and Methodology	Social Media	Thesis
FT 15-16	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X
PT 15-17 1 st year	X		X		X			X		X	
PT 14-16 2 nd year		X		X			X				X

APPENDIX IV Programme of site-visit

Programme: Master International Communication Management

Date: 21 January 2016

Location: Johanna Westerdijkplein 109, Den Haag

Time	Auditees
08.00 – 08.10	Reception by school management
08.10 – 09.00	Preparatory meeting panel members
09.00 – 09.45	School Management and Programme management Clemens Berendsen (dean Academy of Masters and Professional Courses) Joe Goldiamond (course manager MICM)
09.45 – 10.00	Break/panel retrospective
10.00 – 11.00	Teaching staff members Schelte Beltman (lecturer and research staff) Michael Koenka (lecturer and member Curriculum Committee) Bruce Mutsvairo (lecturer and member Programme Council) Peter Horsseleben (lecturer, member Curriculum Committee and member Programme Council)
11.00 – 11.15	Break/panel retrospective
11.15 – 12.15	Students 1 st – 2 nd year Joud Hazineh, FT 2015–16, member Programme Council Sami Ahmed FT 2015–16 Vitaly Chugin PT 2014–16 Sabina Janmahomed PT 2014–16
12.15 – 13.00	Lunch / Panel retrospective / Review of additional documents
13.00 – 13.45	Consultation session for students and teaching staff Tour around the school (25 min.) and at random classroom visits (20 min.) ** Presentation by: Umedakan "Ume" Fazlova FT 2015–16 Shakun Sethi FT 2015–16 Loek Houtepen PT 2014–16
13.45 – 14.30	Quality assurance staff members Maaïke Visser-Lens (senior policy advisor Education and Quality) Joe Goldiamond (course manager)
	Review of additional documents
14.30–14.45	Break/panel retrospective

Time	Auditees
14.45-15.30	Assessment system and Examination Board Schelte Beltman (chair Examination Board) Maaïke Visser-Lens (secretary EB) Peter Horsselebenberg (test coordinator)
15.30-15.45	Break/panel retrospective
15.45 – 16.30	Field representatives and alumni 3 members Advisory Board: Marinel Gerritsen (freelance expert) Clarisse Buma (Logeion) Peter d' Angremond (Max Havelaar) 1 extra field representative Nathalie van der Put (Senior Marketing Manager, Unilever) 2 alumni: Gitte Adam FT 2015 Kleio Katsafarou FT 2015
16.30 -16.45	Internal consultation and determine pending issues
16.45 – 17:00	Pending issues <i>(all conversation partners available)</i>
	Review of additional documents
17.00-17.45	Panel retrospective <i>(determine overall assessment)</i>
17.45	Feedback

Approach

Selection of the delegations / the auditees

In compliance with the NVAO regulations the audit panel decided on the composition of the delegations (auditees) in consultation with the course management and on the basis of the points of focus that had arisen from the panel's analysis of the course documents prior to the audit.

An 'open consultation session' was scheduled as part of the site-visit programme. The panel verified that the scheduled times of the consultation session had been made public to all parties involved in the school community correctly and timely. No students or staff members attended the open consultation session.

Audit procedure

The following procedure was adopted. The panel studied the documents regarding the programme (Appendix V: Documents reviewed) and a number of theses. The panel secretary organised input from the auditors and distributed the preliminary findings among the panel members prior to the audit. (Appendix IV: Programme of the site visit).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

The draft version of this report was circulated among the members of the panel for review and comments, and the final draft was subsequently forwarded to the institute to correct factual inaccuracies. The panel finalized the report on the 25 April 2016.

Assessment rules

The assessment panel judges the standards in the assessment framework according to the following assessment scale: unsatisfactory - satisfactory - good - excellent
For a positive final conclusion regarding the programme, each theme must be judged as satisfactory.

The final conclusion regarding a programme will always be "unsatisfactory" if standards 1, 10 or 11 are judged "unsatisfactory". In case of an unsatisfactory score on standard 1, NVAO cannot grant an improvement period.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "good" if at least five standards are judged "good"; one of these must be standard 11.

The final conclusion regarding a programme can only be "excellent" if at least five standards are judged "excellent"; one of these must be standard 1.

The assessment panel has to demonstrate clearly how the assessment of the different standards led to its final conclusion concerning that theme. In other words, the panel has to clarify how - given the criteria in this accreditation framework and the reference framework employed - it has arrived at its assessment of a theme on the basis of the analyses of the underlying standards.

APPENDIX V Documents examined

List of documents examined

- Critical Reflection
- Programme and Examination Regulations
- Competences and learning outcomes of the programme (on final level)
- Scheme of the programme (two variants)
- Description of content (per module, with competences, learning outcomes, working methods, testing method, literature (obligated advised), lecturers involved and ECTS)
- Programme Study Plan
- Overview of faculty (name, function, hours, degree and expertise)
- Complete and anonymous overview of all graduates of the last two cohorts (2013-2014 and 2014-2015), student number, title, graduation date, variant, results in graduation phase (thesis grade and oral defence grade)
- Educational framework Masters education Masters & Professional Courses (2013)
- Quality handbook M&PC (2013)
- Evaluation reports (examples), recent example of management information (evaluation reports, planned improvements, a selection of improvement plans)
- Documentation on student and lecturer satisfaction
- Policy plan studying with a handicap (Bachelor op Maat, THUAS)
- Minutes of all relevant committees (Advisory Board, Examination Board, Programme Council)
- Annual report of the Examination Board
- Selection of course outlines, and other study material
- Admission form
- Findings external reviews 2013 and 2015
- A representative selection of actual tests administered:
 - Managing Corporate Communication
→ Course outline 2015-2016, 2 sample individual student assignments (feedback included), grading sheet and grading rubric
 - Managing Cross Cultural Communication
→ Course outline 2015-2016, 3 sample individual student assignments, grading sheet and feedback spread sheet
 - Managing Internal Communication
→ Course outline 2015-2016, 3 sample individual student assignments (grading and feedback still in process)
 - Managing Media Relations
→ Course outline 2014-2015, 2 sample individual assignments (feedback included), grading sheet and 3 feedback forms of individual assignments
- List of 15 final projects/papers examined prior to the audit:
 - 12116467
 - 14099705
 - 14052032
 - 13123122
 - 14119587
 - 14041871
 - 9062955
 - 13122878
 - 14005638
 - 14084171
 - 13127942
 - 13122770
 - 14093057
 - 13122835
 - 13122711

APPENDIX VI Composition of the audit panel

Panel members	Expertise					
	auditing and quality assurance	education	professional field	discipline	International	student-related
Drs. W.G. van Raaijen	X				X	
Prof. dr. A.M. Cotton	X	X		X	X	
Mrs. S. Yarwood			X	X	X	
Mrs. A. Naesen						X

co-ordinator/certified secretary
I.A.M. van der Hoorn, MSc

Succinct CVs of panel members and secretary/co-ordinator

1	Mr. W.G. (Willem) van Raaijen is senior advisor and partner at Hobéon. He frequently chairs programme assessments of hbo-master and hbo-bachelor programs.
2	Prof. Dr. A.M. (Anne-Marie) Cotton is professor Communication studies at the Arteveldehogeschool in Gent. She is also co-ordinator of the Master in European Public Relations van EUPRERA.
3	Mrs. S. (Samantha) Yarwood is Director Marketing at Starbucks for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA)
4	Mrs. A (Aïcha) Naesen studies International Communication (hbo-master) at the Hanzehogeschool Groningen.
5	Mrs. Van der Hoorn is consultant at Hobéon. She frequently participates in programme assessments as an NVAO registered co-ordinator.

On 24 November 2015 the NVAO endorsed the composition of the panel to assess the hbo-master programme International Communication Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences, registration 004288.

Prior to the audit all panel members undersigned declarations of independence and confidentiality which are in possession of the NVAO. This declaration certifies, among other things, that panel members do not currently maintain or have not maintained for the last five years any (family) connections or ties of a personal nature or as a researcher/teacher, professional or consultant with the institution in question, which could affect a fully independent judgement regarding the quality of the programme in either a positive or negative sense.



Strategische dienstverlener voor kennisintensieve organisaties



Lange Voorhout 14
2514 ED Den Haag

T (070) 30 66 800

F (070) 30 66 870

E info@hobeon.nl

I www.hobeon.nl