

Assessment report
Limited Framework Programme Assessment

International Bachelor in Communication and Media

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the International Bachelor programme in Communication and Media of Erasmus University Rotterdam, which has been assessed according to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016.

The programme objectives are sound and relevant. The panel welcomes students being educated broadly in communication and media. The programme objectives are geared towards the study of mediated communication, in particular for organisations in business, government, media and entertainment. Students are introduced to both research and the professional practice in the programme domain. They are also trained in the mind-set and skills to face current challenges in this domain.

The panel appreciates the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Communication Science domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master programmes in this domain. The panel welcomes the objectives of this programme to be aligned with this framework, and other Dutch and international frameworks.

The panel approves of the students being primarily educated to proceed to master programmes in this domain, but also being trained to enter the labour market.

The intended learning outcomes are comprehensive, match the programme objectives and meet the bachelor level. As the intended learning outcomes are grouped into two not very clearly delineated categories, the panel proposes to reorganise the intended learning outcomes into more distinct groups on the basis of more content-based classifications.

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are up to standard. The student body is very balanced in terms of composition of Dutch and foreign students, promoting the international classroom in the programme.

The curriculum matches the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the curriculum contents, courses addressing theory, methodology and practice. The panel welcomes the balance of mandatory, foundational courses and specialisation and elective courses and considers the curriculum coherence to be up to standard. After the first year, students seem to have a rather unrestricted choice of focus areas courses, making the focus areas' contents and structure rather unclear. The panel, therefore, proposes to define and delineate the focus areas more clearly and probably to reduce their number, especially since they are mentioned in the Diploma Supplement. Although the academic contents and practical orientation are balanced, the panel suggests to continue emphasising the academic character of the programme.

The panel is very positive about the expertise, research track records and educational competencies of the lecturers in the programme. During their courses, junior lecturers and PhD candidates are well-guided by

senior staff members. The team-spirit in the lecturing team is strong. The panel is positive about the lecturers meeting regularly to discuss the programme.

The programme offers small-scale, interactive and collaborative education. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. The support and guidance by the support staff of the programme are tailored well to the needs of the student group. The drop-out rates and student success rates of the programme are very favourable.

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme. The Examination Board monitors the examinations and assessments appropriately. The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments as adequate.

The programme has made well-deliberated choices for examination methods in line with the course goals and contents to be assessed. The panel welcomes the wide range of examination methods adopted in the programme. The measures taken to counter the effects of free-riding are effective.

Both the supervision and assessment processes for the Bachelor theses are up to standard. The assessment processes involve two examiners and are founded on valid assessment scoring forms. The panel suggests, however, to clarify in the forms how much each score of assessment criteria contributes to the final grades.

The Bachelor theses match the intended learning outcomes and are up to standard. The panel agrees with the grades given by the programme examiners. No theses were found by the panel to be unsatisfactory.

The panel feels that the programme succeeds in acquainting students with the professional practice and in preparing them for the professional field, either directly or after having completed master programmes.

The panel considers students completing the programme definitely to have reached the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel greatly appreciates the wide range of master programmes programme graduates are admitted to and their performances in these master programmes. These master programmes are not confined to the communication and media field but comprise various neighbouring domains. The panel is impressed by the proportion of programme graduates entering the labour market either directly or after the subsequent master programme and with the positions they secure.

The panel which conducted the assessment of the International Bachelor programme in Communication and Media of Erasmus University Rotterdam assesses this programme to meet the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, judging the programme to be satisfactory. Therefore, the panel advises NVAO to accredit the programme.

Rotterdam, 24 April 2019

Prof. dr. H. Vandebosch
(panel chair)

drs. W. Vercooteren
(panel secretary)

2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Erasmus University Rotterdam to coordinate the limited framework programme assessment process for the International Bachelor programme in Communication and Media of this University. This objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the limited framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

Management of the programmes in the assessment cluster Communication Sciences convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of candidates.

Having conferred with management of the Erasmus University Rotterdam programme, Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Prof. dr. H. Vandebosch, professor Department of Communication Sciences, University of Antwerp (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. A.A. Maes, professor Communication and Cognition, Tilburg University (panel member);
- Prof. dr. T. Smits, professor Faculty of Social Sciences, Leuven University (panel member);
- C.H.W. Buurman, chair Logeion, Netherlands Association for Communication Professionals (panel member);
- Prof. dr. K. Schoenbach, distinguished adjunct professor, Northwestern University in Qatar (panel member);
- P.A.M. Kwakman BSc, student Research Master Communication Science, University of Amsterdam, (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercouteren served as the process coordinator and secretary in the assessment process.

All panel members and the secretary confirmed in writing being impartial with regard to the programme to be assessed and observing the rules of confidentiality. Having obtained the authorisation by the University, Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO has given the approval.

To prepare the assessment process, the process coordinator convened with management of the programme to discuss the outline of the self-assessment report, the subjects to be addressed in this report and the site visit schedule. In addition, the planning of the activities in preparation of the site visit were discussed. In the course of the process preparing for the site visit, programme management and the process coordinator regularly had contact to fine-tune the process. The activities prior to the site visit have been performed as planned. Programme management approved of the site visit schedule.

Well in advance of the site visit date, programme management sent the list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the most recent years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected fifteen final projects. The grade distribution in the selection was ensured to conform to the grade distribution in the list, sent by programme management.

The panel chair and the panel members were sent the self-assessment report of the programme, including appendices. In the self-assessment report, the student chapter was included. In addition, the expert panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates, these final projects being part of the selection made by the process coordinator.

A number of weeks before the site visit date, the assessment panel chair and the process coordinator met to discuss the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. In this meeting, the profile of panel chairs of NVAO was discussed as well. The panel chair was informed about the competencies, listed in the profile. Documents pertaining to a number of these competencies were presented to the panel chair. The meeting between the panel chair and the process coordinator served as the briefing for panel chairs, as meant in the NVAO profile of panel chairs.

Prior to the date of the site visit, all panel members sent in their preliminary findings, based on the self-assessment report and the final projects studied, and a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives on the day of the site visit. The panel secretary summarised this information, compiling a list of questions, which served as a starting point for the discussions with the programme representatives during the site visit.

Shortly before the site visit date, the panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. The procedures to be adopted during the site visit, including the questions to be put to the programme representatives on the basis of the list compiled, were discussed as well.

On 1 February 2019, the panel conducted the site visit on the Erasmus University Rotterdam campus. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, panel members were given the opportunity to meet with Faculty representatives, programme management, Examination Board members, lecturers and final projects examiners, students and alumni, and external stakeholders.

Very shortly before the site visit, one of the panel members reported ill and declared to be unable to be present at the site visit of 1 February 2019 on the Erasmus University campus. Following internal deliberations, the panel decided to proceed with the site visit. The programme was informed about the situation and about the panel's proposition to proceed with the site visit. Being conscious of the absence of one of the panel members, programme management informed the panel to support the decision to go on with the site visit and to proceed with the assessment process as planned. The panel member concerned was absent on the day of the site visit, but did study the self-assessment report and appendices of the programme. The panel member also fully participated in the preparation of the site visit. After the site visit, the panel member studied the assessment draft report and commented on the contents of the

draft report. The panel member was given the opportunity to make additional inquiries into the proceedings during the site visit.

In a closed session at the end of the site visit, the panel considered every one of the findings, weighed the considerations and arrived at conclusions with regard to the quality of the programme. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair presented a broad outline of the considerations and conclusions to programme representatives.

Clearly separated from the process of the programme assessment, the assessment panel members and programme representatives met to conduct the development dialogue, with the objective to discuss future developments of the programme.

The assessment draft report was finalised by the secretary, having taken into account the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was sent to the panel members, who studied it and made a number of changes. Thereupon, the secretary edited the final report. This report was presented to programme management to be corrected for factual inaccuracies. Programme management was given two weeks to respond. Having been corrected for factual inaccuracies, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the University Board to accompany its request for re-accreditation of this programme.

3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO: B Communication and Media
Orientation, level programme: Academic Bachelor
Grade: BSc
Number of credits: 180 EC
Specialisations: None
Location: Rotterdam
Mode of study: Full-time (instruction language English)
Registration in CROHO: 21PE-50374

Name of institution: Erasmus University Rotterdam
Status of institution: Government-funded University
Institution's quality assurance: Approved

4. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

4.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The International Bachelor programme in Communication and Media is one of the programmes of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The management team of the School, chaired by the Dean and composed of the Director of Education, the Director Business Operations and the Heads of Departments, have the responsibility for all programmes of the School. The Heads of Departments are in charge of both education and research within their Departments. The International Bachelor programme in Communication and Media is part of the Department of Media and Communication. The programme director, assisted by the programme staff, manages the programme on a day-to-day basis. The programme staff is composed of the programme coordinator, student advisor, exchange coordinator, internship and alumni coordinator and admissions and recruitment officer. The policy advisor assists on the School level. The Programme Committee, having five staff members and five student members, councils programme management on quality issues. The School Examination Board with two members representing this programme has the authority to assure the quality of examinations and assessments of this and the other programmes of the School.

The objectives of the International Bachelor in Communication and Media programme of Erasmus University Rotterdam are to educate students in state-of-the-art knowledge of communication and media, and to acquaint them with the international and intercultural dimensions of communication and media. The programme is directed towards the study of mediated communication in various contexts, new forms of mediated communication and the role of mediated communication for organisations in business, government, media and entertainment. The programme trains students broadly in this domain and even beyond the domain. Students are offered a range of focus areas they may specialise in, preparing them for specialised, advanced studies or careers in the media and communication field or in related fields. The programme is both research-driven and practice-oriented. Students engage in research in this field and are acquainted with some professional practice. In addition, students are trained in the mind-set and skills to face current challenges in the programme domain.

The programme objectives are aligned with the requirements of the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science. This framework has been drafted by the joint Communication Science programmes in the Netherlands. In this framework, the position of the discipline internationally and in the Netherlands, the joint principles of Dutch Communication Science programmes as well as the general objectives and the final attainment levels for Bachelor and Master Communication Science programmes in the Netherlands have been outlined. The programme objectives meet the Media Studies and Communication and Information Sciences reference frameworks in the Netherlands. The objectives of the programme match international frameworks as well, such as the NCA Standards for Undergraduate

Communication Programmes. The programme has permanent relations with nearly 100 foreign partner universities for student exchange.

The programme has been benchmarked against the frameworks for communication science, media studies and communication and information sciences programmes in the Netherlands. The programme distinguishes itself from these programmes by the social sciences orientation, the emphasis on strategic, organisational, political and business dimensions of media, the cultural aspects of communication and the focus on the creative and cultural industries.

The programme aims to prepare students both for advanced, master-level studies in communication and media or related domains at universities around the world and for positions in communication and media fields. The programme monitors trends in the professional field.

The objectives of the programme have been translated into the programme intended learning outcomes. These intended learning outcomes specify, as main points, knowledge and understanding of theoretical approaches, perspectives and debates in the broadly defined field of communication and media; knowledge and understanding of and skills in research designs, methods and techniques in social scientific study of communication and media; knowledge to critically assess views on communication and media related issues; collaboration skills and oral and written communication skills in international and intercultural settings; and a reflective mind-set.

Programme management compared the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin descriptors for bachelor programmes, to demonstrate that these meet bachelor level requirements.

Considerations

The programme objectives are regarded by the panel as sound and relevant. The panel welcomes students being educated broadly in the communication science field, especially in communication and media. The programme profile is clear. Summarised, the programme objectives are geared towards the study of mediated communication, in particular for organisations in business, government, media and entertainment. Students are introduced to both research and the professional practice in the programme domain. They are also trained in the mind-set and skills to face current challenges in this domain.

The panel appreciates the Joint Disciplinary Framework for Communication Science, which has been drafted by the joint programmes in the Netherlands. The panel considers this framework to be a sound and up-to-date description of the Communication Science domain and of the attainment levels of Bachelor and Master programmes in this domain.

The panel welcomes the objectives of this programme to be aligned with frameworks of programmes in the Netherlands and international frameworks. From this comparison, it may be derived that the programme meets international requirements, at the same time having a distinct profile.

The panel approves of the students being primarily educated to proceed to master programmes in this domain, but also being trained to enter the labour market.

The intended learning outcomes are comprehensive, match the programme objectives and meet the bachelor level. As the intended learning outcomes are grouped into two not very clearly delineated categories, the panel proposes to reorganise the intended learning outcomes into more distinct groups on the basis of more content-based classifications.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1, Intended learning outcomes, to be satisfactory.

4.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The student influx between 2013 and 2016 amounted to about 180 incoming students to rise to around 250 students in 2018. The programme expects student numbers to gradually rise further in the years to come. To achieve and maintain student body diversity, the programme firmly intends to have about 50 % of the students coming from the Netherlands and about 50 % international students. Dutch *Additional Requirements* regulations allow the programme to steer the student body composition in this sense. The admission criteria for the programme are the Dutch pre-university diploma (vwo) or, under some conditions, the completed first year of higher professional education (hbo). Non-Dutch students are admitted, if they report equivalent prior education, international experience and a strong motivation to apply for the programme. All non-native speakers are to report adequate command of the English language. Acting on behalf of the Examination Board, the Admissions Committee screens all applications.

The programme takes three years to complete and carries 180 EC of study load. The courses have been mapped to the intended learning outcomes to show the curriculum meeting the programme intended learning outcomes. The curriculum consists of theoretical core courses (45 EC), methodological courses (25 EC), specialisation courses (30 EC to 45 EC), elective courses (15 EC to 30 EC), practice-oriented courses (18 EC), an internship (12 EC), and the Bachelor thesis class and Bachelor thesis (15 EC). In the theoretical core courses, students study communication and media theory, international and global communication and related business, culture, politics and technology. The methodology courses introduce students to statistics and social science research methods and techniques. In the practice-oriented courses, students are trained in information skills, communication management, new media production or communication ethics. Soft skills may be addressed in all courses of the curriculum. At the end of the second year, the mandatory internship (12 EC) is scheduled. Students are acquainted first-hand with the professional practice. Prior to the internship, students take the mandatory labour market orientation and preparation course. All courses mentioned are mandatory. For the second and third year, students draft their study plan outlining their study path. Students are allowed to make changes to the plan. In the second and third year of the curriculum, students select two out of six focus areas offered. These focus areas are *Communication & Business*; *Communication & Politics*; *Communication, Culture & Society*; *International & Global Communication*; *Media & Entertainment* and *New Media Technologies*. The focus areas courses allow students to specialise in subfields within the programme domain. In addition, students take elective courses in other study fields offered at Erasmus University, such as arts and culture studies, business administration, economics, history, law, public administration or sociology. In the second year, talented students may take the Honours Programme, allowing them to deepen or broaden their education. In the first part of the third year, students may take a minor with courses in other disciplines or may go on international exchange. About 70 % of all students go abroad, the country of destination not being their home country. Focus areas courses, elective courses, minor and internship give

access to master programmes in communication and media or in neighbouring domains. At the end of the curriculum, students complete the Bachelor thesis, this being an individual research project.

A total number of 65 staff members are involved in the programme as employees of the Department of Media and Communication of Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. Over 70 % of the lecturers hold PhD degrees and are active researchers in their fields. Often, they are affiliated with research schools or international research associations. The other lecturers are PhD students or junior lecturers. More than 90 % of all lecturers are BKO-certified. About ten lecturers are SKO-certified or are in the process of acquiring this certificate. Junior lecturers and PhD candidates who are involved in the courses are guided and supported by senior staff members. They are asked to take the Basic Didactics course. Quite often, courses are taught by teams of lecturers. Course coordinators meet regularly to align the courses. The lecturers experience the workload to be high, but manageable. Students appreciate the lecturers.

In line with the diverse, international student body, the programme promotes the international classroom. The programme provides small-scale, interactive and collaborative education. Collaborative education means students and lecturers working towards productive learning processes. The students-to-staff ratio for the programme is 16.6/1 for the academic year 2017/2018. In the years before, the ratio was slightly different. The number of hours of face-to-face education is over 14 hours per week in the first year, 11 hours per week in the second year and 5.5 to 8.5 hours per week in the third year. In the courses, lectures, tutorials, practical classes, seminars and workshops the main study methods are adopted. The class sizes in the tutorials are about 20 students. The programme offers students multiple perspectives on subjects by presenting them readings, examples, real-life cases or assignments. Students are encouraged to participate actively in discussions, debates or brainstorm sessions. The support staff of the programme takes care of information provision and study guidance. Prospective students are informed by the admission and recruitment coordinator about the admissions procedures and about Dutch regulations applying to foreign students. For all study-related issues, students may contact the study advisor. The study advisor monitors study progress, assists in drafting study plans, signals study delay and assists in resolving study delay-related and other problems. In the first year, students are guided by student mentors in the IBCoMpanion programme. For exchange possibilities and procedures, students may contact the exchange coordinator. The internship coordinator informs students about placements and regulations applying. Students planning internships are expected to find placements themselves, although they may be assisted by the internship coordinator. During internships, students are guided by the company coach and the university academic supervisor. Students contact the supervisor every two weeks. The programme drop-out rates amount to about 10 % to 15 %. The student success rates of the programme are on average 80 % after three years and 94 % after four years (last five to six cohorts; proportions of students re-entering in the second year).

Considerations

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are up to standard. The panel feels the student body is very balanced in terms of composition of Dutch and foreign students, promoting the international classroom in the programme.

The curriculum matches the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the curriculum contents, courses addressing theory, methodology and practice. The qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques being addressed are considered positive by the panel. The panel welcomes the balance of mandatory, foundational courses and specialisation and elective courses and considers the curriculum coherence to be up to standard. After the first year, students seem to have a rather unrestricted choice of focus areas courses, making the focus areas' contents and structure rather unclear. The panel, therefore, proposes to define and delineate the focus areas more clearly and probably to reduce their number, especially since they are mentioned on the Diploma Supplement. Although the academic contents and the practical orientation are balanced in the curriculum, the panel suggests to continue emphasising the academic character of the programme.

The panel is very positive about the expertise, research track records and educational competencies of the lecturers in the programme. The proportions of lecturers having PhD degrees or being BKO-certified are up to standard. During their courses, junior lecturers and PhD candidates are well-guided by senior staff members. The team-spirit in the lecturing team is strong. The panel is positive about the lecturers meeting regularly to discuss the programme.

The panel appreciates the programme offering small-scale, interactive and collaborative education. The number of hours of face-to-face education and the students-to-staff ratio are adequate. The support and guidance by the support staff of the programme are tailored well to the needs of the student group. The drop-out rates and student success rates of the programme are very favourable.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, to be satisfactory.

4.3 Standard 3: Student assessment

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

Findings

The programme examination and assessment rules and regulations match the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Assessment Policy and Assessment Protocol and are aligned with the Erasmus University Rotterdam Reference Framework in this respect. The Examination Board of the School has the authority to monitor the quality of examinations and assessments of the programme. As has been said, two members sit on the Board especially for this programme.

The examination methods for the courses are selected to conform to the course goals and contents. The examination methods vary to allow for different course goals to be tested. In all of the courses, both formative tests and summative examinations are scheduled. Throughout the courses, students tend to complete regular formative tests, such as assignments, oral presentations, papers and participation in class. The summative examination methods in the programme include written examinations with multiple-choice or open-ended questions, written assignments, practical exercises or small and larger papers. In the first part of the curriculum, written examinations are dominant. In the second part of the curriculum, assignments or papers take this role. The change in examination methods follows the course learning goals to be assessed. Students are given feedback on formative and summative examinations. To assure the assessment of students' individual performances, individual examinations within courses constitute at least 60 % of the final grades for the courses. In the case of group work, students may review each other's individual performances.

The guidelines for the Bachelor thesis have been laid down in the *Writing Guide* and the *Methodological Guidelines for Thesis Research*. The Bachelor theses are individual research projects. In the *Bachelor Thesis Class* course, scheduled in parallel, students meet in small groups--arranged along the lines of the programme focus areas--to work on their theses. They draft the research question for the thesis, organise the research to be done and write the thesis. The lecturer guiding students in these classes is the thesis supervisor. The theses are assessed by the supervisor and the second reader. They assess the thesis separately, both using the same thesis assessment scoring forms. They contain the relevant assessment criteria. The two forms are combined and presented to the student. The *Second Reader Panel* studies the assessment scoring forms. If one of the examiners doubts the thesis to be passable, if the final grade is 8.0 or more or if the examiners' judgments differ more than 1.0 point, an arbitrator is appointed who will decide on the assessment and the grade.

Programme management and the Examination Board have taken a number of measures to promote the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments. The Examination Board appoints examiners. The programme assessment plan outlines the relations between the programme intended learning outcomes, the course learning goals and the course examinations and specifies rules and regulations pertaining to examinations and assessments. In the course guides, students are informed about the assessment forms, assessment criteria, grading factors and deadlines. In line with the assessment protocol, course examinations include assessment matrices and assessment forms and criteria. The

Examination Board every year reviews samples of courses to ensure compliance with the assessment protocol. As has been said, the Second Reader Panel, acting on behalf of the Examination Board, inspects all Bachelor thesis assessment forms. One of the subcommittees of the Examination Board handles fraud and plagiarism cases.

Considerations

The panel approves of the examinations and assessment rules and regulations of the programme, these being in line with Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication and Erasmus University assessment policies. The Examination Board monitors the examinations and assessments appropriately.

The programme has made well-deliberated choices for examination methods in line with the course goals and contents to be assessed. The panel welcomes the wide range of examination methods adopted in the programme. The measures taken to counter the effects of free-riding, are effective.

Students are provided with well-organised supervision for the Bachelor theses. The assessment processes are adequate as well, involving two examiners and being founded on valid assessment scoring forms. The panel suggests, however, to clarify in the forms how much each score of assessment criteria contributes to the final grades.

The panel considers the measures ensuring the validity, reliability and transparency of examinations and assessments to be up to standard. The programme assessment plan, the assessment matrices for the courses, the periodic screening of course examinations and the Second Reader Panel looking into the Bachelor thesis assessments may be cited as evidence.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3, Student assessment, to be satisfactory.

4.4 Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.
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Findings

The final Bachelor theses are individual research projects. Students are required to complete the empirical cycle from the research question to the discussion of the results. In the Bachelor theses, all of the Dublin descriptors and most of the programme intended learning outcomes are addressed. In the theses, students may adopt qualitative or quantitative research methods and techniques. In practice, these methodologies are evenly distributed among students, half of them using qualitative methods and the other half applying quantitative methods.

The programme maintains contact with a wide range of individuals and organisations in the professional field, in order to adjust the programme to current trends in the field. The Professional Advisory Committee is important in aligning the programme with the professional field and in maintaining contact with individuals and organisations in the field. In courses, students are presented with cases derived from practice. They also take part in field trips. The internship is one of the mandatory components of the curriculum, allowing students to become acquainted with professional practice first-hand. Guest lecturers from the professional field are involved in the curriculum. Programme management, the Professional Advisory Committee and the study association organise a range of extracurricular events to inform students about the labour market. The programme alumni coordinator coordinates relations with alumni.

The programme monitors very closely the programme graduates' studies or careers. Every year, the data on the graduates' careers are updated. Every three years, the programme conducts a survey among alumni. The programme graduates indicate having acquired a range of skills of importance for the professional field. About 60 % of the programme graduates proceed to master programmes immediately, whereas about 20 % of them take a gap year before enrolling in a master programme. Another 20 % of the graduates enter the labour market. About 40 % go to master programmes in the communication and media field, but no less than 60 % to master programmes in other domains, among which marketing management; business administration and management; public administration and policy; and cultural entrepreneurship or management are most popular. About 80 % of the older cohorts of graduates indicate having completed their master programme. About 90 % of the programme graduates have paid positions. Most of them are working in marketing, advertising and sales (34 %), communications and public relations (15 %) or management (11 %).

Considerations

The Bachelor theses the panel studied, match the intended learning outcomes. The theses are regarded by the panel to be up to standard. The panel agrees with the grades given by the programme examiners. No theses were found by the panel to be unsatisfactory.

The panel feels the programme succeeds in acquainting students with the professional practice and preparing them for the professional field, either directly or after having completed master programmes.

The panel considers students completing the programme definitely to have reached the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The panel greatly appreciates the wide range of master programmes programme graduates are admitted to and their performances in these master programmes. These master programmes are not confined to the communication and media field but comprise various neighbouring domains. The panel is impressed by the proportion of programme graduates entering the labour market either directly or after subsequent master programmes and with the positions they secure.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4, Achieved learning outcomes, to be good.

5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Good
Programme	Satisfactory

6. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations by the panel have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below. These panel recommendations are the following.

- To reorganise the programme intended learning outcomes in more distinct groups on the basis of more content-based classifications.
- To define and to delineate the focus areas students may select in the second and third years more clearly, especially since they are mentioned on the Diploma Supplement.
- To continue emphasising the academic character of the curriculum, although the academic contents and the practical orientation are found to be balanced.
- To clarify in the Bachelor thesis assessment scoring forms how much each score of the assessment criteria contributes to the final grades.