

Assessment report  
Extensive Framework Programme Assessment

**Master of Business Administration**

Maastricht School of Management (MSM)

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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 Master of Business Administration (MBA) of Maastricht School of Management (MSM) in Maastricht. The programme was assessed according to the standards of the extensive framework, as laid down in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands, as published on 20 December 2016 (Staatscourant nr. 69458).

MSM aims to deliver the MBA as a generalist management programme emphasizing international development and sustainable leadership. The summarized vision of MSM is 'Working together for better global management.' The programme has defined five intended learning outcomes and has linked them with the Dublin descriptors to demonstrate the master's level and compliance with international requirements. The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be sound and relevant; they clearly reflect the unique profile of MSM. The intended learning outcomes fit within relevant international frameworks and meet the professional and academic requirements for a master in the field of business administration.

The curriculum consists of three central domains: Global Opportunities, Creative Leadership and Societal Concerns. All these domains, including the specializations, converge in the Final Project. The panel has established that both academic and professional skills area addressed in the curriculum. The reviewed materials reflect the focus on soft skills and on the professional practice. This is particularly evident in the course on corporate responsibility and ethics. The connection of the lecturers with the professional practice is a strong point of the study programme. In addition, the panel established that academic research has its place in the curriculum, however on the modest side.

In total, the programme comprises 70 ECTS, 600 lecture hours and the equivalent to 1960 overall learning effort hours. The programme is delivered in full-time (residential), and part-time (in two different modes: one geared towards executives and the other one is offered online). All variants have the same content, but with other didactics and teaching forms. The curriculum of the programme covers all intended learning outcomes. It contains a complete range of courses with relevant and up-to-date topics. Sustainable development is a recognizable common theme through the programme.

The design of the curriculum is properly tailored to the target group. Various didactical approaches are used. The teaching methods are tailored to the mature profile of the students and the degree of independence that they can handle. The programme is intensive but feasible. The international classroom is definitely a valuable asset of the programme. In the delivery of the online mode, more sophisticated use can be made of digital possibilities and blended learning.

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are well elaborated and appropriate for the intensity of the programme. MSM has developed a selective admission procedure that focuses on the right expectations for the intensive programme of 70 ECTS. The personal attention during the intake surpasses what is common.

The professional and didactic qualities of the lecturers are appropriate. The staff is furthermore strongly committed to the vision of MSM; it is dedicated to teaching in an intercultural context. The staff also has adequate academic credentials.

The teaching rooms and the facilities offered are sufficient to provide the programme. The digital infrastructure is also acceptable.

Regarding the tutoring, MSM focuses on self-development of students and learning how to maintain a healthy, sustainable work-life balance. Students are closely monitored by the institution. The tutoring is adequate. Student also appreciate the accessibility (open-door policy).

The quality assurance system of the programme is appropriate. MSM applies the plan-do-check-act cycle. Students, alumni and the professional field are involved. The quality assurance system includes periodical evaluations and possible improvement measures according to the panel's perception. The quality culture relies on short lines and an agile approach. This partly informal approach fits the size of the institution.

The examination and assessment policies for the programme are adequate. The examination board is functioning corresponding to its formal tasks and takes its responsibility seriously. The panel approves of the examination schedule in the courses. The measures taken by the examination board to ensure the validity and the reliability of assessments are adequate. This is exemplified by the assessment plan for the whole programme and assessment matrices for each course. The reviewed tests and assignments are up to standard and reflect the MBA level.

The panel confirms that the learning outcomes are realized. The panel has reviewed final projects and concludes they fit in with the profile of the programme. The panel also considers that the assessment criteria match the MBA level. The projects show the desired complexity of an MBA. For some of the final projects however, the panel would have given lower grades. The panel sees room for improvement of the academic rigour in the final projects, especially the projects concerning a business plan and consultancy. The panel therefore advises to strengthen and further elaborate the requirements regarding the academic rigour of the underpinning for the business plan and consultancy report as types of graduation project.

The panel also considers that the satisfaction among alumni and representatives of the professional field is an indication that the programme meets the demands of the professional field and that students achieve the desired level.

The panel that conducted the assessment of the Master of Business Administration of Maastricht School of Management (MSM) assesses this programme to meet the standards of the extensive 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 recommends NVAO to accredit this programme.

Rotterdam, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dr. C. Terlouw  
(panel chair)

T.T. Lamers MSc  
(panel secretary)

## 2. Assessment process

The evaluation agency Certiked VBI received the request by Maastricht School of Management (MSM) to support the extensive framework programme assessment process for the Master of Business Administration. The objective of the programme assessment process was to assess whether the programme would conform to the standards of the extensive 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 Business Administration convened to discuss the composition of the assessment panel and to draft the list of candidates.

Having conferred with management of the Master of Business Administration of Maastricht School of Management (MSM), Certiked invited candidate panel members to sit on the assessment panel. The panel members agreed to do so. The panel composition was as follows:

- Dr. C. Terlouw, educationalist, former lector of higher education intake and transition management at Saxion University of Applied Sciences (panel chair);
- Prof. dr. K. Lauche, professor Organizational Development and Design at Radboud University (panel member);
- Prof. dr. M. De Ceuster, professor of Finance at Antwerp University (panel member);
- Prof. dr. J.W. Wierda, professor Media & Marketing Glion La Gruyere University-Montreux, Executive Board member at Hobéon (panel member for Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalization);
- C.J. Stam MSc, recent graduate of the master's in Environmental Sciences: Sustainable Development in Utrecht University (student member).

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercooteren served as the process coordinator and T.T. Lamers MSc (independent advisor) as 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 authorization by Maastricht School of Management (MSM), Certiked requested the approval of NVAO of the proposed panel to conduct the assessment. NVAO have given their 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 Certiked 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 last two complete years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the process coordinator selected fifteen final projects from this list. 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 date of the site visit, the assessment panel chair and the secretary discussed the self-assessment report provided by programme management, the procedures regarding the assessment process and the site visit schedule. 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 discussion 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 complete panel met to go over the preliminary findings concerning the quality of the programme. During this preliminary meeting, the preliminary findings of the panel members, including those about the final projects were discussed. 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 4 and 5 December 2018, the panel conducted the site visit on the building of the school. The site visit schedule was in accordance with the schedule as planned. In a number of separate sessions, the panel was given the opportunity to meet with school representatives, programme management, Examination Board representatives, lecturers and final projects examiners, and students and alumni.

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.

Upon request by the school, the panel has also made an assessment with a view to the Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalisation. The panel presents its findings about that in a separate report.

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 were given two weeks to respond. After correcting these factual inaccuracies, the final report was established by the chair at February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Subsequently, the Certiked bureau sent the report to the School Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation of this programme.

### 3. Programme administrative information

Name programme in CROHO:	M Master of Business Administration
Orientation, level programme:	Academic Master (post-initial)
Grade:	Master of Business Administration (MBA)
Number of credits:	70 EC
Specializations:	Accounting & Finance, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare Management, International Business and Development, Public Sector Management, Sports Management, The Digital Economy
Location:	Maastricht
Modes of study:	Full-time and part-time (language of instruction: English)
Registration in CROHO:	28AT-75013
Name of institution:	Maastricht School of Management (MSM)
Status of institution:	private legal body for higher education (in Dutch: <i>Rechtspersoon voor hoger onderwijs</i> )
Institution's quality assurance:	does not apply

## 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*

MSM aims to deliver the MBA as a generalist management programme emphasizing international development and sustainable leadership. The summarized vision and mission of MSM is ‘Working together for better global management.’ Therefore, the goal of the MBA programme is geared towards developing globally-minded business leaders and management who can respond and adapt to new trends in the business world, especially in relation to emerging markets and economies and dealing with sustainability and inclusiveness on societal level.

The programme has defined five intended learning outcomes and has linked them with the Dublin descriptors to demonstrate the master’s level.

MSM has demonstrated the mapping of the programme goals on international requirements. MSM received several accreditations by international accreditation bodies (AMBA, IACBE and ACBSP) that compared the programme and its learning outcomes to international requirements and assessed them as satisfactory.

Furthermore, MSM had established that the learning outcomes are in line with the key competences for life-long learning and its changes and updates as projected by the European Commission.

MSM maintains an international network of partner institutions across the globe that provide the same MBA programme. These internationally provided programmes are not accredited by NVAO, and do therefore not lead to a Dutch-degree in terms of legislation in the Netherlands and fall outside the scope of this assessment. This network however contributes to the international contacts of MSM and ensures feedback is given on the relevance of the programme to fulfil the mission of MSM.

#### *Considerations*

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be sound and relevant.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes fit within relevant international frameworks and meet the professional and academic requirements for a master in the field of business administration.

The panel appreciates the way by which the learning outcomes of the programme meet the objectives and the mission of MSM. It clearly reflects the unique profile of MSM, with its focus on leadership and sustainable development in a globalized world. The elaboration of the vision and mission into the learning outcomes surpasses the common phrasing of intended learning outcomes.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 1 (Intended learning outcomes) to be good.

## 4.2 Standard 2: Curriculum; orientation

The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.

### *Findings*

The curriculum consists of three central domains: Global Opportunities, Creative Leadership and Societal Concerns. All these domains, including the specializations, converge in the Final Project.

Academic research and skills are paid attention to in the first domain, via the courses Research Methods and Decision-Making Tools, where research methodology in an applied context is discussed. In addition, some workshops are offered to enhance academic research skills, such as: Literature search, Reviewing Literature & Academic Writing (APA), Surveys, Interviewing & Coding Qualitative Data.

Professional skills are developed within several courses, where upon request of the professional field the focus is sharpened on soft skills, like leadership, communication, emotional intelligence and intercultural awareness. These skills are addressed in courses like Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Organizational Behavior, Change Management, Managing Cultural Diversity and Corporate Responsibility and Ethics.

The panel has learned that the development of professional skills has been fostered by the used material: academic articles are supplemented by materials from professional bodies, like consultancy white papers. The connection with the professional field is furthermore strengthened by guest lecturers and MSM lecturers bringing in their own professional experience. A simulation game (negotiation) is performed in the courses on corporate responsibility and ethics.

Parallel to their courses, students are required to work on an individual final project, which allows them to demonstrate their application of knowledge over concepts, tools, competencies, research skills, communication and critical thinking. Students are prepared for the final project through the Decision-Making Tools and Research Methods courses.

MSM demonstrates the correspondence of the curriculum with the international trends and requirements in the discipline and professional field. MSM maps for this correspondence the contents of the curriculum on the AMBA framework. This framework outlines the specific type of Master that the MBA entitles and describes the discipline requirements that it should have in terms of curriculum content and in terms of the MBA graduates' attributes. The Quality Assurance department checks yearly if the courses fit within the requirements of the international business accreditors.

### *Considerations*

The panel has reviewed the curriculum and the course materials and concludes that both academic and professional skills are addressed in the courses. Classics in the field of business administration are used, supplemented by articles of - among else - the Harvard Business Review, which is academic and tailored to the professional practice. The materials reflect the focus on soft skills and on the professional practice. This is particularly evident in the course on corporate responsibility and ethics.

The panel considers the lecturers to be strongly connected to professional practice in the field of sustainable development and management development in emerging markets and economies. This is a strong point of the study programme.

The panel considers the share of academic research in the curriculum on the modest side and therefore advocates an extension of this. The panel is aware of the inherent tension between the academic and professional aspects of an MBA programme and has noticed this debate is also going on within MSM. The panel encourages the staff to continue this debate with the aim to improve the balance. At this moment, the courses do not prepare much for the final projects, as was also apparent from the discussions with students. This could be remedied by training students to run through the empirical cycle earlier in the curriculum.

*Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 2 (Curriculum; orientation) to be satisfactory.

### 4.3 Standard 3: Curriculum; content

The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
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#### *Findings*

The MBA curriculum consists of 14 core courses (42 ECTS) and 4 specialization courses of the students' choice (12 ECTS). The final project has a study load of 16 ECTS. In total, the programme comprises 70 ECTS, 600 lecture hours and the equivalent to 1960 overall learning effort hours.

The size and layout of the programme has changed in recent years. Initially the programme even counted 80 ECTS. According to the management, this was too great of a burden for students and has therefore been reduced to 70 ECTS. The curriculum is now divided into courses of 3 ECTS. This corresponds to the size of courses at the neighbouring Maastricht University. In addition, it allows to deal with many subjects and thus to cover the broadness of the MBA.

All courses, including the specializations, have specific learning outcomes defined according to the programmatic outcomes. In the same way, all assessment measures at course and programme level include this framework, allowing students to identify their own achievements in terms of competencies. MSM had presented the mapping of the programme learning goals with the course learning outcomes, which demonstrates all programmatic learning goals are covered.

MSM presented the coherence of the programme by the three domains (Global Opportunities, Creative Leadership and Societal Concerns) developed around the mission statement. The lecturers also point out that coherence is achieved by treating subjects in the generic courses in the context of sustainable development. In this way, global development of the programme is shaping the course subjects in the three domains.

Students can choose between seven specializations: Accounting & Finance, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare Management, International Business and Development, Public Sector Management, Sports Management, The Digital Economy. For the optional course in Innovation Management, there is collaboration with RWTH Aachen, where students can follow the course.

The programme is delivered in full-time (residential), and part-time (in two different modes: one geared towards executives and the other one offered online). All variants have the same content, but with other didactics and teaching forms.

MSM puts forward that it ensures that the programme is up-to-date, by the routine of the 'pre-course audit check', at which each course is reviewed by a second reader (peer-review).

#### *Considerations*

The panel has established that the curriculum of the programme complies with the intended learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the careful elaboration of MSM's mission, the Dublin descriptors and intended learning outcomes into the course outcomes. This system has been worked through into the feedback sheets.

The panel recognizes the objective of delivering a generalist MBA in the curriculum. The programme contains a complete range of courses with relevant and up-to-date topics. Sustainable development is a recognizable common theme through the programme. The panel has studied the course guides and has established the course contents enable the students to develop the desired competencies on the master's level.

The panel appreciates the possibility for students to make their own choices within the tight programme. For example, the exchange course with RWTH Aachen University offers great opportunities. Students however point out the specializations only tailor a small part of the curriculum to their wishes and that this could be stronger. The panel therefore encourages the management and staff to explore if the specialization options can be further developed in the programme.

*Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3 (Curriculum; content) to be satisfactory.

#### 4.4 Standard 4: Curriculum; learning environment

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

##### *Findings*

In the programme, various didactical approaches are used, and each course is designed as a mix of different teaching/learning methods addressing different competencies and subject matter. The didactical methods used are lectures, case analysis, group work, presentations, guest lecturers, research projects in business organizations, role-playing, simulations and behavioural exercises.

In the didactic approach, MSM expects its students to be familiar with recent state-of-the-art management knowledge, where they learn to be less dependent on the teacher, thus allowing them to improve their learning skills. Students are expected to manage their own learning needs.

The programme is intensive; the full-time mode consists of learning activities scheduled during weekends and holidays.

The learning environment is international by nature, especially in the full-time mode. The full-time MBA programme has a 100% international class. In the part-time executive group 44% is from outside the Netherlands and in the online delivery 75%. MSM wants to reap the rewards of the international classroom. Diversity is managed, to make sure students are mixed from the first day and students only do group work in mixed groups. Teamwork in the international classroom is aimed to provide students with the opportunity of experiencing multicultural communication and collaboration at first hand.

The panel has paid special attention to the online delivery mode. MSM is still in the process of evaluating this new variant. The management states it wants to carefully enlarge the programme; quality is tantamount. The courses in the online delivery mode are based on similar principles as the face-to-face programmes, encouraging student-centred learning. The online delivery mode has 120 synchronous hours in which students participate in video conferencing sessions, reviewing and discussing the topics with their peers and instructor. The lectures are supported by animated videos. Students make journal entries to make explicit what they learn. Four courses are redesigned to also make blended learning possible.

Students in all modes make use of Moodle as digital platform for learning.

##### *Considerations*

The panel is of the opinion that the design of the curriculum is properly tailored to the target group. The programme and the teaching methods are tailored to the mature profile of the students and the degree of independence that they can handle. The programme is intensive but feasible. Students point out that they notice when they are too much absent, because they must work hard in order not to get behind.

The panel considers the choice of teaching methods to be justified and assesses the interaction between teachers and students as sufficient.

The international classroom is definitely a valuable asset of the programme. Teachers consciously manage the class room dynamics to make this an enriching learning environment, fit to the profile of MSM.

Although a digital platform is in use, the panel advises MSM to make the online mode more visible and tailored. It has learned that Moodle is mainly used for uploading course materials, while more interaction could take place, such as forums in digital classrooms.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 4 (Curriculum; learning environment) to be satisfactory.

### **4.5 Standard 5: Intake**

The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students
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#### *Findings*

The admission policy of the programme is set by the Education Board. The target group of the full-time and online delivery mode comprises international students, while the part-time executive mode aims at mainly regional students (Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands).

The main prerequisite for admission is a sound academic and professional background. In order to be eligible for admission, an applicant needs to fulfil the following requirement:

- Bachelor's degree from a recognized university as well as the transcript.
- From 3 to 5 years relevant working experience
- Two employer letters of recommendation
- A letter of motivation
- Proof of English proficiency (for non-native English-speaking candidates and candidates whose previous education has been in a different language than English) with these minimum scores:
  - TOEFL scores: 88 for the internet-based test, 230 for the computer-based test, 570 for the paper-based test, or
  - IELTS score: 6.5 minimum, with no section below 5.5 on the academic test.

According to the programme management, the international credentials from applicants are checked with the NARIC (UK) database and the Nuffic database.

MSM will conduct an interview (Skype or in person) with all applicants who meet the formal requirements. The aim of the interview is to filter out applicants without the right motivation or mentality.

MSM provides online levelling courses (Accounting, Finance, Statistics and Economics) to ensure students have a similar entry level, especially to students with a prior bachelor's programme out of the field of business administration. These courses were introduced in 2013 and are delivered by Peregrine Academic Services. MSM has asked Peregrine to make some changes following the first experiences. Lecturers told the panel the introduction of levelling courses have eased the start of the regular courses. If the applicant has a GMAT score of 600 or higher, the levelling courses are waived.

The programme starts with a two-week induction programme in which students become acquainted with each other and with MSM and intercultural awareness is raised.

The management states it pays a lot of attention to expectations management during the intake. Students told the panel that thanks to the information, they had the right expectations about the programme, although students of the part-time mode had expected a more practical and less academic orientation.

#### *Considerations*

The admission requirements and admission procedures of the programme are well elaborated and appropriate for the intensity of the programme. MSM has developed a selective admission procedure that focuses on the right expectations for the intensive programme of 70 ECTS. The personal attention during the intake as especially concretised in the personal interview and the extensive introduction week is a good example in this field for intake management of international students

The panel notices that students however remain critical about the added value of the levelling courses. The panel is of the opinion the levelling courses are a good solution in itself to improve the junction with prior education but encourages MSM also to further adjust the contents and way of delivery of the levelling courses.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 5 (Intake) to be good.

#### 4.6 Standard 6: Staff

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

##### *Findings*

MSM faculty members teach in MSM programmes, conduct research in areas of specialization and supervise students. MSM seeks for a balance for the MBA between academic and professional background of its teachers. Several lecturers of the MBA programme are actively engaged in MSM's International Projects and Consultancy Department, which delivers programmes and international capacity development projects abroad. They therefore have experience with applied scientific research.

MSM presented the following hiring criteria as its policy: a doctoral degree from an accredited institution, excellence in teaching, innovative teaching ability, track record in research and or publications, record of accomplishment in consultancy experience, proficiency in the English language and excellent intercultural communications skills. In case of a master's degree, a relevant professional career additional to teaching and research experience will be required.

In the academic year 2017-2018, the faculty teaching staff comprises fourteen different nationalities. 70% of the teaching staff have a doctorate. Almost half of the teaching staff has relevant professional experience.

MSM seeks a UTQ (University Teaching Qualification, in Dutch: *basiskwalificatie onderwijs*) for every teacher, but this is not yet prescribed. Now, only a few teachers have this certificate. To ensure the professionalization of its faculty, MSM has sought training offers from recognized international providers. For example, recently faculty members attended the Successful Case Teaching Workshop at IMD Case Center.

To further train teachers and to encourage teachers to learn from each other, MSM organizes lunch meetings for staff. These have a theme linked to education. Recurring topics are teaching professionalization and thesis supervision. In addition, teachers are coaching and helping each other with coping with different backgrounds and teaching in an intercultural context. Teachers told the panel to share teaching skills.

The student-to-staff ratio is 1:16, with only small differences in intensity between the full-time and the part-time mode.

MSM questions students in surveys for their opinion on the quality of the teachers. During the period 2014-2017 the average score given by the students to the teachers was 4.49/5.0.

##### *Considerations*

The panel has studied the curriculum vitae of the teaching staff members and concludes that the professional and didactic qualities of the lecturers are appropriate. MSM has an effective policy in place to ensure the qualities of the staff team are fitted to the profile of the programme. The panel considers the student-to-staff ratio favourable for offering the curriculum.

The panel has observed a strong commitment to the vision of MSM; the staff is dedicated to teaching in an intercultural context. It is valuable that teachers take their experience from abroad to the programme. The staff also has adequate academic credentials, as showed by their recent contributions to scientific journals.

The educational expertise is in order but limited. This is evident not only from the limited share of teachers with a UTQ, but also because a lot of professionalization happens as learning by doing. Formal processes for professionalization are therefore only limited. The panel therefore advises to include educational expertise in the development of the programme and the staff.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 6 (Staff) to be satisfactory.

### **4.7 Standard 7: Facilities**

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

#### *Findings*

The MBA programme is housed at the campus of MSM in Maastricht. The facilities comprise class rooms, lecture rooms, a library and workplaces for students. Housing for international students is adjacent to the building of MSM.

Moodle is MSM's virtual learning platform. All study programmes make use of Moodle to support the face-to-face educational environment. This is the platform also used for the online delivery mode. Students noticed during the interview with the panel that in total four different platforms are in use.

#### *Considerations*

Based on a tour of the building and conversations with students, the panel assesses the teaching rooms and the facilities offered as sufficient to provide the programme. The digital infrastructure is also acceptable, although the four different platforms could become integrated.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 7 (Facilities) to be satisfactory.

#### 4.8 Standard 8: Tutoring

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

##### *Findings*

MSM focuses on self-development and learning how to maintain a healthy, sustainable work-life balance. From the introduction week the students participate in sessions highlighting learning styles, stress and time management. Towards the end of the introduction week, students perform a 'self-awareness test' which gives them useful insight into their own motivations and strengths. Tutoring and counselling services are being offered on a demand-driven basis.

Each MBA group is coordinated by an education officer who is the contact person for the students and coordinates with the Career Services team and the Academic Coordinator for the counselling and tutoring activities. MSM has different education officers for the residential (full-time and part-time) and the on-line mode. Amongst the counselling tutoring activities are:

- Career and Personal Development Track, with activities to continue developing self-awareness and soft-skills,
- Mentorship programmes, with Dutch local and regional senior managers as mentors to make students familiar with the Dutch way of living and doing business.
- Career services.
- Tutoring based on an open-door policy (or easy to connect with for student of the on-line mode).

Students confirm to the panel that they have close contacts with the education officers and do not experience any obstacles.

##### *Considerations*

The panel concludes that students are closely monitored by the institution and that there is adequate tutoring in place. In particular, the accessibility is appreciated (open-door policy). The panel is also enthusiastic about the explicit attention given to the healthy work/life balance, which is necessary given the intensive nature of the programme and the high motivation of the students.

##### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 8 (Tutoring) to be satisfactory.

#### 4.9 Standard 9: Quality assurance

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

##### *Findings*

MSM has set a Quality Assurance Policy, which applies the plan-do-check-act cycle. Within the quality cycle, MSM has several mechanisms to ensure that the experiences and opinions of students can be considered in the design and delivery of the MBA programme: course evaluations, midterm survey, talks with the Academic Coordinator (by individual students or class representatives) and a final programme satisfaction survey (after thesis submission). MSM also uses an alumni survey. In addition, it collects feedback of the professional field with its business advisory board and of peers with its faculty advisory board.

The results of the surveys are brought to the academic coordinator. Course evaluations are discussed in faculty meetings and with the discipline heads. The panel has noticed a lot of (informal) debate is going on among the staff members. The dean takes the final decision about adjustments to the curriculum or the policies. The management has stated it is monitoring if the changes proceeds.

MSM has showed several examples of adjustments that were made as a result of feedback, like reducing the study load to 70 ECTS. Students have also pushed for more topics on current innovations and the digital economy and have been critical about the implementation of the sports specialization. Students told the panel the management was open to feedback.

##### *Considerations*

The panel considers the quality assurance system of the programme to be appropriate. All relevant stakeholders are involved. The quality assurance system also includes periodical evaluations and possible improvement measures according to the panel's perception. In addition, the panel values the quality culture that emerged from discussions with students and lecturers. The quality culture now relies on short lines and an agile approach. This partly informal approach fits the size of the institution.

The panel has noted a declining trend in student satisfaction, according to the surveys. The small responses make it hard to the programme management to analyse the causes of this trend. The panel recommends that the management takes an in-depth look into this matter.

##### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 9 (Quality assurance) to be satisfactory.

#### 4.10 Standard 10: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.
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##### *Findings*

MSM's examination board has drawn up the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) containing the Rules of Procedure and Academic Conduct for obtaining the MBA degree. All delivery modes have the same rules with minimal exceptions on operational issues.

MSM has an outcomes assessment plan that demonstrates how all programmatic learning outcomes are assessed in the different courses. For each course, the way of assessment is described in the course manual. By using the same structure for rubrics, the academic coordinator has been given the possibility to oversee the development of students on each of the competencies (and linked Dublin descriptors).

The EER prescribes that individual assessment must be at least 70% of the final grade for a subject. This can be from various forms of assessment, such as written or oral examinations and/or written assignments. The remaining 30% can be constituted by alternative forms of assessment, such as class participation, take home assignment, case study, and presentation or group assignments. The EER furthermore prescribes the use of model answers for exams, to deliver written feedback on the exam scripts and to use rubrics in assessing assignments.

MSM has in place a process of 'pre and post quality check' in which course content and assessment are discussed with peer faculty. In addition, the examination board is conducting quality checks on the course assessments and final projects.

The examination board is involved with all the MBA programmes, at Maastricht and abroad (programmes abroad are out of scope of this assessment). The panel has noticed the Examination board and teachers are aware of dangers of plagiarism and paying attention to it. The board is maintaining a two-strikes-out policy on fraud and other ways of misconduct.

##### *Considerations*

The panel considers the examination and assessment policies for the programme to be adequate. The examination board is functioning corresponding to its formal tasks and takes its responsibility seriously. The panel approves of the examination schedule in the courses.

The measures taken by the examination board to ensure the validity and the reliability of assessments are adequate. This is exemplified by the assessment plan for the programme. Since this year, also assessment matrices are mandatory for all courses. The panel has reviewed the assessment matrices of the current courses and finds them nicely elaborated. The rubrics are transparent.

The panel has also reviewed assignments and considers them to be up to standard. The tests clearly reflect the MBA level. They also show the profile of the programme, namely the attention for the development of intercultural competencies and working on issues in the field of sustainable development. This is evident not only from the content of the assignments, but also from the way they were done, such as in interculturally mixed group work.

Finally, the panel has established that the grading scale is still used differently in different courses. In all cases, the pass/fail decision was well established, but there is still room for further coordination and improvement. The programme management has explained that the calibration upon this matter is still going on.

#### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 10 (Student assessment) to be satisfactory.

### **4.11 Standard 11: Achieved learning outcomes**

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

MSM applies several direct and indirect measures to evaluate the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. The main direct measure is the final project. Students can graduate with an academic research project, a business consultancy project or a business plan. According to the lecturers, approximately 85% of the students chooses for a business consultancy project or business plan; only 15% graduates on an academic research, especially students who consider pursuing a PhD or DBA.

Students can pick their own topics. As preparation students develop an idea and later a proposal for their final project, both incorporated in the Research Methods course. Students are free to choose their own supervisor. According to the lecturers, 32 hours is allocated to supervise a final project.

Students report to the panel that the supervision was fine, and the idea and proposal phase justly timed in the curriculum. In some cases however, it took a long time (several months) before the supervision was started because no supervisor was available. The students told the panel this did not hinder them. Besides, students have experienced that the supervisors did not know as well how much academic orientation was required, especially for the more practice oriented final projects.

The final projects are assessed by two independent evaluators, based on elaborated performance levels. This way of grading is in accordance with the requirements of international accreditors. Since this year, there has been a policy that if there is too much difference between the two assessments, the evaluators will confer about the grade. Supervisors told the panel they are calibrating their opinions and expectations on the final project.

Besides the final project, MSM demonstrates the achievement of the learning outcomes with an inbound-outbound test, which shows the added value of the MBA programme. The exams allow the analysis of the results per student, the performance in the cohorts, and to benchmark information regarding the learning outcomes with other programs globally.

As indirect measure of the achievement of the learning outcomes, MSM also follows the career paths of alumni and sets up an alumni survey. In the alumni survey run in January 2018, 95% of the alumni agree or fully agree with the statement “The knowledge and skills I gained during the study program have helped me in my personal development and prepared me for managerial/leadership functions”.

### *Considerations*

The panel has reviewed fifteen recent final projects and determines that they fit in with the profile of the programme; topics relate to practical problems in the field of sustainable development. The projects also show the desired complexity of an MBA. The panel considers that the assessment criteria match the MBA level.

For some of the final projects however, the panel would have given lower grades than the final project examiners did. Moreover, because the old assessment forms did not contain written feedback, the panel could not weight the argumentation for the grades. In one case, the panel discussed that the thesis did not meet the criteria set by the programme, while it had been graded as (very) good by the evaluators. It was argued that this final project did not contain an explicit theoretical grounding, leaving it unclear whether the intended level had been achieved. The majority of the panel qualified this project rather as an outlier.

After reviewing fifteen final projects, the panel observes a thin level of academic depth in some graduation projects that take form of a business plan or consultancy report. The panel is aware of the tension between the academic and professional orientation of a final project, as inherent to the profile of an MBA, and notices this debate is also going on in several other institutions. This tension is most evident with the business plan. Notably, there is room for improvement in the critical discussion of the theory, in the justification of methodological choices and in the connection between theory, analysis and advice. By majority, the panel concludes the final projects demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. However, the panel also advises to strengthen and further elaborate the requirements regarding the academic rigour of the underpinning for the business plan and consultancy report as types of graduation project.

Besides, the panel notes the timely allocation of supervisors as a point of attention.

The panel also considers that the satisfaction among alumni and representatives of the professional field is an indication that the programme meets the demands of the professional field and that students achieve the desired level.

### *Assessment of this standard*

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 11 (Achieved learning outcomes) to be satisfactory.

## 5. Overview of assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Good
Standard 2: Curriculum; orientation	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Curriculum; content	Satisfactory
Standard 4: Curriculum; learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 5: Intake	Good
Standard 6: Staff	Satisfactory
Standard 7: Facilities	Satisfactory
Standard 8: Tutoring	Satisfactory
Standard 9: Quality assurance	Satisfactory
Standard 10: Student assessment	Satisfactory
Standard 11: Achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
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.

- To strengthen the academic depth of the programme, preferably in service (and not in contrast to) its practical orientation. The academic nature can especially be more reflected in the final projects, with the panel advising to reconsider the business plan as type of graduation project.
- To explore if specialization options can be further developed in the programme, since they are independently positioned and communicated by MSM but only tailor a small part of the programme.
- To develop the online mode and improve the advanced use of learning platforms for interaction between students and lecturers. Also, possibilities for blended learning could be explored.
- To continue the adjustment of the contents and way of delivery of the levelling courses, as students are now critical about the added value of the levelling courses.
- To structure and formalize professionalization and didactic training of the teaching staff and include an educational expert in this process.
- To take an in-depth look into the causes of the declining trend in student satisfaction, to be able to take action upon the root causes of this.
- To strengthen and further elaborate the requirements regarding the academic rigour of the underpinning for the business plan and consultancy report as types of graduation project .
- To take care of a timely allocation of supervisors of the final projects to students, to avert students swim around without proper guiding.

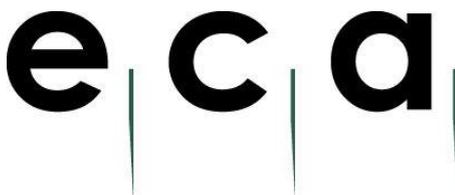
Assessment report

# Master of Business Administration

Maastricht School of Management (MSM)



Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation



european consortium for accreditation



Assessment report

# Master of Business Administration

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## 1. Executive summary

The Master of Business Administration of Maastricht School of Management (MSM) was assessed by Certiked vbi. Certiked vbi convened an assessment panel which studied the self-evaluation report and undertook a site visit December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

### **Standard 1 – Intended internationalization**

The panel considers the internationalization goal of the programme to be clear and convincing. It reflects the unique profile of MSM and are shared by important shareholders. The internationalization goal has been translated well into a reasonable set of verifiable objectives. These are monitored. The goal and especially its derived objectives relate to teaching and learning. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be systematically surpassed. The panel therefore assesses Standard 1. Intended internationalisation as good.

### **Standard 2 – International and intercultural learning**

The panel found the intended learning outcomes to be very clear manifestations of the internationalization goals, with the international and intercultural competences as an integral part of it. The assessment methods in the programme are directed towards the valid and reliable assessments of the intended learning outcomes. The graduates' achievements in the course assessments and the final project testifies very clearly to them having attained the learning outcomes, including the international and intercultural elements. The panel deems the criteria regarding the intended learning outcomes and the student assessment to be surpassed, while the graduate achievement is satisfactorily demonstrated. The panel therefore assesses Standard 2. International and intercultural learning as good.

### **Standard 3 – Teaching and Learning**

The panel has established that the curriculum, teaching methods and learning environment are very international and intercultural, allowing students to achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The panel deems the criteria regarding the curriculum and the learning environment to be surpassed, while the suitability of the teaching methods is satisfactorily demonstrated. The panel therefore assesses Standard 3: Teaching and Learning as good.

**Standard 4 – Staff**

The panel considers the staff composition, staff experiences, knowledge and skills and services provided for staff members to be in line with the international and intercultural ambitions of the programme. The panel deems the criteria regarding the composition and the experience to be surpassed, while the services provided are satisfactorily assessed, as the professionalization activities can be made more systematically. The panel therefore assesses Standard 4: Staff as good.

**Standard 5 – Students**

The panel found the student composition, student experiences and services provided to students to correspond very strongly to the international and intercultural dimensions of the programme. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be systematically surpassed. The composition of the student group and the careful managing of its mixed character can even be regarded as an international example. The panel therefore assesses Standard 5: Students as good.

Based on ECA's assessment rules, the panel nominates the Master of Business Administration of Maastricht School of Management (MSM) for the Certificate for Quality in Programme Internationalisation.

## 2. The assessment procedure

The assessment procedure was organised as laid down in the Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalisation (Frameworks) published by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

A panel of experts was convened and consisted of the following members:

- Dr. C. Terlouw (chair), educationalist, former lector of higher education intake and transition management at Saxion University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands);
- Prof. dr. K. Lauche (member), professor Organizational Development and Design at Radboud University (the Netherlands);
- Prof. dr. M. De Ceuster (member), professor of Finance at Antwerp University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. J.W. Wierda (member), professor Media & Marketing Glion La Gruyere University-Montreux, Executive Board member at Hobéon (the Netherlands);
- C.J. Stam MSc (student member), recent graduate of the master's in Environmental Sciences: Sustainable Development in Utrecht University (the Netherlands).

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by the Frameworks. The individual panel members' expertise and experience can be found in [Annex 1: Composition of the assessment panel](#). All panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. These signed statements are available from Certiked vbi upon simple request. The procedure was coordinated by drs. W. Vercouteren on behalf of Certiked vbi and the panel was supported by T.T. Lamers MSc (independent advisor) as secretary.

The assessment panel studied the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation provided by the programme before the site visit. ([Annex 2: Documents reviewed](#)) The panel organised a preparatory meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The site visit took place on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 at Maastricht School of Management (MSM). ([Annex 3: Site visit programme](#))

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per standards immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings of the site visit which built upon the review of the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation.

The panel finalised the draft report on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2019. It was then send to the institution to review the report for factual mistakes. Some minor issues were reported. The panel amended the report where necessary. The panel approved the final version of the report on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2019.

### 3. Basic information

<b>Qualification:</b>	Master of Business Administration
Number of credits:	70 ECTS
Specialisations:	Accounting & Finance, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare Management, International Business and Development, Public Sector Management, Sports Management, The Digital Economy
ISCED field of study:	0410 Business and Administration
<b>Institution:</b>	Maastricht School of Management (MSM)
Type of institution:	Private legal body for higher education
<b>Status:</b>	Accredited
QA / accreditation agency:	NVAO - Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders
Status period:	August 1st 2013 – January 1st 2020

## 4. Assessment scale

The assessment-scale relates to the conclusions of the assessment panel at the level of the standards and is based on the definitions given below. Through the underlying criteria, each of the standards describes the level of quality or attainment required for a satisfactory assessment. The starting point of the assessment scale is however not threshold quality but generic quality. Generic quality is defined as *the quality that can reasonably be expected from an international perspective*.

<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<p>The programme does not meet the current generic quality for this standard.</p> <p>The programme does not attain an acceptable level across the standard's entire spectrum. One or more of the underlying criteria shows a meaningful shortcoming.</p>
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<p>The programme meets the current generic quality for this standard.</p> <p>The programme shows an acceptable level of attainment across the standard's entire spectrum. If any of the underlying criteria show a shortcoming, that shortcoming is not meaningful.</p>
<b>Good</b>	<p>The programme surpasses the current generic quality for this standard.</p> <p>The programme clearly goes beyond the acceptable level of attainment across the standard's entire spectrum. None of the underlying criteria have any shortcomings.</p>
<b>Excellent</b>	<p>The programme systematically and substantially surpasses the current generic quality for this standard.</p> <p>The programme excels across the standard's entire spectrum. This extraordinary level of attainment is explicitly demonstrated through exemplary or good practices in all the underlying criteria. The programme can be regarded as an international example for this standard.</p>

## 5. Assessment criteria

### Standard 1: Intended internationalisation

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#### Criterion 1a: Supported goals

*The internationalisation goals for the programme are documented and these are shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.*

MSM aims to deliver the MBA as a generalist management programme emphasizing international development and sustainable leadership. The summarized vision and mission of MSM is 'Working together for better global management.' Therefore, MSM has formulated its goal for this programme as: "developing globally-minded business leaders and managers who can respond and adapt to new trends in the business world with inclusiveness on societal level".

This goal is well documented in the programme information. Furthermore, it is supported by relevant stakeholders, like the staff, the professional field (represented in the Business Advisory Board) and academic peers (represented in the Faculty Advisory Board).

The panel appreciates the way by which the internationalization goal is derived from and related to the vision and mission of MSM. It clearly reflects the unique profile of MSM, with its focus on leadership and sustainable development in a globalized world. Thus, internationalization lies at the heart of the programme.

#### Conclusions and recommendations

The panel concludes that the internationalization goal of the programme is satisfactorily documented. The goal is shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme. The panel recommends however to give the advisory bodies a more formal role, since their formal influence was difficult to establish.

**Criterion 1b: Verifiable objectives**

*Verifiable objectives have been formulated that allow monitoring the achievement of the programme's internationalisation goals.*

The programme documentation shows six objectives regarding the internationalization of the programme:

1. Student group: the objective is to have at least a 70% international student body overall (full-time and part-time combined programs).
2. Faculty: MSM aims at having an equally international faculty, not only through nationality but also through international experience. All MSM faculty must have any of the following: education, working or teaching experience internationally.
3. Curriculum: MSM's objective is that a minimum of five core courses in which internationalization and intercultural learning outcomes are fully represented in any curriculum update of the MBA.
4. International network: the goal is to have minimum seven events promoted to create additional opportunities for international networking during the programme duration.
5. Alumni and life-long learning: the objective is that the international networks on the various platforms grow and at least 80% of the recent graduates (each year) from the MBA program in Maastricht keep contact with the network.
6. Input from international advisory boards: the Faculty Advisory and the Business Advisory Board have been appointed with advisory capacity to the Dean and Management Team. The objective is to increase external stakeholders input to the program with two meetings per year.

The panel considers the internationalization objectives to be formulated in rather precise and concrete terms to enable programme management to check whether they have been achieved. The panel considers these objectives challenging but reasonable.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that objectives have been formulated and that these objectives are verifiable. They allow monitoring the achievement of the programme's internationalisation goals.

**Criterion 1c: Impact on education**

*The internationalisation goals explicitly include measures that contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning.*

The MBA programme aims to challenge its participants to develop skills in the area of intercultural communication, teamwork, leadership and collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, self-awareness, resilience and time management. It intends that the students not only get the knowledge, tools and skills to manage effectively, but also gain a deeper understanding of how to manage responsibly.

As global, multicultural, leadership skills and knowledge of emerging economy business climates are vital assets for managers, the programme management emphasizes the international, diverse environment and cross-country lessons of its MBA programme.

The panel considers that the internationalizing goal reflects this focus. The derived objectives cover the entire programme; they relate among other things to the use of staff, students and content. The international character is an essential part of the programme and the realization of objectives therefore obviously contributes to the quality of teaching and learning.

The panel recommends adding an element to the goal, so that it also relates to the interaction between students. The assessment of this now only takes place indirectly, such as via the survey to measure to what extent students are integrated.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The panel concludes that the internationalisation goals relate to teaching and learning. The measures included contribute to the quality of teaching and learning. The panel recommends adding an element to the internationalization goal, relating to the interaction between students. For example, the faculty can organize a number of formal and informal (also social) events (guest lectures / workshops, sports, discussions, contests, arts, site-visits, intercultural dinners, meet & greet meetings, etc.) in order to foster the international communication.

**Overall conclusion regarding Standard 1. Intended internationalisation**

The panel found the internationalization goal for the programme to be clear and convincing. It reflects the unique profile of MSM and are shared by important shareholders. The internationalization goal has been translated well into a reasonable set of verifiable objectives. These are monitored. The goal and especially its derived objectives relate to teaching and learning. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be systematically surpassed. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 1. Intended internationalisation* as good.

## Standard 2: International and intercultural learning

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### Criterion 2a: Intended learning outcomes

*The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its internationalisation goals.*

MSM has defined five intended learning outcomes for the MBA programme and has linked them with the Dublin descriptors for the master's level; each descriptor is covered by one intended learning outcome. The intended outcomes have been documented in the programme written information as well as in the programme self-assessment report.

Of the five programmatic learning outcomes, two mention explicitly the internationalization and intercultural learning outcomes: learning outcome 1 (globalizing, multicultural context) and learning outcome 4 (multicultural stakeholder groups). The others include them in an implicit way, since words such as "contemporary business challenges" (learning outcome 2) and "society" (learning outcome 3) involve the global and international context.

The panel considers the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes are an integral part of the overall programmatic learning outcomes and not considered to be separate or separable. It underlines that internationalization is at the heart of the programme. The outcomes all aim at the manager MSM looks for (responsible, global oriented and working together for global management).

Furthermore, the panel appreciates the careful elaboration of MSM's mission, the internationalization goal and the intended learning outcomes into the course outcomes. This system has been worked through into the feedback sheets.

### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes correspond with the programme's internationalisation goal and the mission of MSM.

**Criterion 2b: Student assessment**

*The methods used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

The international and intercultural learning outcomes are not assessed independently but as part of the regular course assessments. The courses which learning outcomes are specifically oriented towards international and intercultural competences have assessment methods reflecting this. MSM makes use of cases from its international network.

An example is the assessment of the course Managing Cultural Diversity. The course provides the theoretical framework for understanding cultural differences at international level, the barriers to intercultural communication and how to address them, as well as the problems and challenges of international and multicultural management. The assessment of this course includes individual written reflections (assessment criterion on adequate and in-depth treatment of relevant concepts, literature and their application), a reflective journal, and a group assignment paper (assessment criterion on presence of self-awareness and quality of reflection).

The panel has reviewed assignments and tests and considers them to be up to standard. They show the profile of the programme, namely the attention for the development of international and intercultural competencies and working on issues in the field of global management and sustainable development. This is evident not only from the content of the assignments, but also from the way they were done, such as in interculturally mixed group work.

As the programme uses a wide range of assessment methods, the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes may be said to be assessed in a reliable way. The panel encourages MSM to evaluate the intercultural competences even more explicitly and directly, now this is mainly done informally by assessing in group work.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The panel concludes that methods used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The panel encourages MSM to evaluate the intercultural competences even more explicitly and directly.

**Criterion 2c: Graduate achievement**

*The achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes by the programme's graduates can be demonstrated.*

The panel has established the achievement of the learning outcomes – including their international and intercultural elements.

The achievement of the learning outcomes is demonstrated by the examinations, assignments and the final project. The final project is assessed by the supervisor and an independent assessor. They verify whether the programme graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes, including its international and intercultural elements.

The panel has reviewed fifteen final projects and concludes the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes to be achieved by the graduates of the programme. The panel has determined the projects fit in with the profile of MSM; topics relate to practical international oriented problems in the field of sustainable development and global management.

Furthermore, the programme uses alumni survey and collects information on the career of its alumni. The panel considers this information to be fragmentary.

**Conclusion and recommendations**

The panel concludes that the graduates satisfactorily demonstrate the intended learning outcomes and their international and intercultural elements are achieved. The panel recommends to systematically use alumni surveys to demonstrate and monitor the realization of the learning outcomes.

**Overall conclusion regarding Standard 2. International and intercultural learning**

The panel found the intended learning outcomes to be very clear manifestations of the internationalization goals, with the international and intercultural competences as an integral part of it. The assessment methods in the programme are directed towards the valid and reliable assessments of the intended learning outcomes. The graduates' achievements in the course assessments and the final project testifies very clearly to them having attained the learning outcomes, including the international and intercultural elements. The panel deems the criteria regarding the intended learning outcomes and the student assessment to be surpassed, while the graduate achievement is satisfactorily demonstrated. The panel therefore assesses Standard 2. International and intercultural learning as good.

### Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

#### Criterion 3a: Curriculum

*The content and structure of the curriculum provide the necessary means for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

The curriculum consists of three central domains: Global Opportunities, Creative Leadership and Societal Concerns. The MBA consists of 14 core courses (42 ECTS) and 4 specialization courses of the students' choice (12 ECTS). All courses, including the specializations, have specific learning outcomes defined according to the programmatic outcomes.

The programme is delivered in full-time (residential), and part-time (in two different modes: one geared towards executives and the other one offered online). All variants have the same content, but with other didactics and teaching forms.

The panel has established that the curriculum of the programme complies with the intended learning outcomes. All courses deal with the international and intercultural phenomena and trends, as all courses provide relevant and up-to-date topics related to the field of global management and sustainable development. The courses are described in the course manual.

The panel has learned that the programme has students from all over the world. MSM makes levelling courses mandatory, to ensure all students have a similar entry level and all courses are doable to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The panel considers the curriculum is structured in a coherent way, allowing students to proceed through the programme and to attain the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the content and the structure of the curriculum provides the necessary means for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

#### Criterion 3b: Teaching methods

*The teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

The programme management states the choice of case studies and teaching materials aims to keep a focus on the international setting and to apply the knowledge acquired to different contexts. Courses with emphasis in intended international and intercultural learning outcomes have a similar teaching method making sure there is a mix of lecturing, critical class and group discussions. Class activities are designed to encourage self-assessment and reflection at each stage.

Lecturers make use of international cases, which have been collected thanks to the international network of MSM and the international professional activities of the lecturers.

The panel has verified the teaching methods as described in the course manuals and considers the choice of teaching methods to be justified and assesses the interaction between teachers and students as sufficient. It is possible for all the students, through the teaching methods provided, to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The panel however still sees room for innovation of the didactical strategies, especially by make use of blended learning. That would also utilize more the professional experience of the students.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended learning outcomes including the international and intercultural learning elements. The panel recommends making more use of blended learning as didactical strategy.

### **Criterion 3c: Learning environment**

*The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

The programme management emphasizes the function of the classroom in the enriching learning environment. The class is considered by MSM as an international community in which students learn to apply business concepts for a multicultural, emerging economy environment. Given the diversity and multi-cultural essence of the groups, the input of each one of the students enriches the interaction with unique insights.

Moodle is MSM's virtual learning platform. All study programmes make use of Moodle to support the face-to-face educational environment. This is the platform also used for the online delivery mode.

The panel has established that the learning environment in the programme is very international and very intercultural, as students from many countries participate in the programme and interact in the teaching and learning processes. This diversity is well curated; the management ensures not one country or nationality is dominant in the body of enrolled students. As part of the introduction to the programme, students are mixed and intercultural awareness is deliberately raised. Even during the programme duration, the lecturers are attentive to the international and intercultural diversity in the student population and managing the classroom dynamics.

The panel is of the opinion that the learning environment is properly tailored to the target group and the international ambitions of the programme. The international classroom is definitely a valuable asset of the programme.

Although a digital platform is in use, the panel advises MSM to make the online mode more visible and tailored. The panel has learned that Moodle is mainly used for uploading course materials, while more interaction could take place.

#### Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the learning environment is very well suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The panel recommends enhancing more interaction on the digital learning platform and to include educational expertise in the development of the programme and professionalization of the teaching staff.

#### **Overall conclusion regarding Standard 3: Teaching and Learning**

The panel found the curriculum, teaching methods and learning environment to be very international and intercultural, allowing students to achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes. The panel deems the criteria regarding the curriculum and the learning environment to be surpassed, while the suitability of the teaching methods is satisfactorily demonstrated. The panel therefore assesses Standard 3: Teaching and Learning as good.

### **Standard 4: Staff**

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#### **Criterion 4a: Composition**

*The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.*

MSM has a combined staff and faculty of 65 FTE. Seventeen nationalities are represented in the faculty and only 33% of the total teaching in the MBA are Dutch.

MSM ensures the diversity of the staff, as an essential requirement in the vacancies for faculty at MSM is “to have well developed intercultural communication skills”

Students are satisfied with the quality of the faculty teaching in the MBA Program. During the period 2014-2017 the average score given by the students to the teachers was 4.49/5.0.

The student-faculty ratio is 1:16, with only small differences in intensity between the full-time and the part-time mode.

The panel has studied the curriculum vitae of the teaching staff members and concludes that the professional and didactic qualities of the lecturers are appropriate. The panel also notes that the staff is very international, both in terms of origin and work experience. This is assured in the hiring policy of MSM.

The panel has observed a strong commitment to the vision of MSM; the staff is dedicated to teaching in an intercultural context. It is valuable that teachers take their experience from abroad to the programme.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the composition of the staff does facilitate the achievement of the international and intercultural elements of the intended learning outcomes.

**Criterion 4b: Experience**

*Staff members have sufficient internationalisation experience, intercultural competences and language skills.*

MSM maintains an international network of partner institutions across the globe that provide the same MBA programme. MSM's faculty not only teach at the main campus in Maastricht, but also at several of MSM's academic partners around the world. On average, a full-time faculty member teaches or evaluates final projects in three to four international locations each year. The list of possible teaching (working) sites during the past two years are: Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Hungary, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Peru, Romania, Suriname, UK, and Vietnam.

MSM teachers from the MBA are also asked to participate in international consulting assignments through MSM's International Projects Department (IPD) which delivers programmes and international capacity development projects abroad.

The panel considers that the teaching staff has excellent international experience, through previous work and through participation in the MSM network and activities abroad. All staff members are proficient in English.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that staff members have sufficient internationalization experience, intercultural competences and language skills. This surpasses the set criterion.

**Criterion 4c: Services**

*The services provided to the staff (e.g. training, facilities, staff exchanges) are consistent with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.*

Various services are offered by MSM to staff members. Human Resources office supports them in the settling process and guidance with housing, whenever it is needed. The Travel Officer provides assistance to the travel planning (including visas if required) for teaching courses and supporting projects abroad. When foreign lecturers come to teach in MSM, there is accommodation available close to MSM's building.

To train teachers and to encourage teachers to learn from each other, MSM organizes brown bag meetings. These have a theme linked to education. Recurring topics are teaching professionalization and thesis supervision. Furthermore, teachers are coaching and helping each other with coping with different backgrounds and teaching in an intercultural context.

The panel considers the services provided and the information given geared towards the staff involved. The services provided allow staff members to do their work and to engage in international research and intercultural and international teaching, guidance and supervision of students in the programme.

The panel considers the training facilities in order but limited. A lot of professionalization happens as learning by doing. Formal processes for professionalization are only limited and could be made more systematically.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the services provided to the staff are consistent with the staff composition. These services adequately facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and if necessary, language skills.

#### **Overall conclusion regarding Standard 4: Staff**

The panel found the staff composition, staff experiences, knowledge and skills and services provided for staff members to be in line with the international and intercultural ambitions of the programme. The panel deems the criteria regarding the composition and the experience to be surpassed, while the services provided are satisfactorily assessed, as the professionalization activities can be made more systematically. The panel therefore assesses Standard 4: Staff as good.

### **Standard 5: Students**

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#### **Criterion 5a: Composition**

*The composition of the student group (national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme's internationalisation goals.*

The figures on the composition of the average MBA cohort at MSM, are:

- Full-time delivery: 100% international (non-Dutch), with never more than 15% of the class from one nationality and fifteen to twenty nationalities on average
- Part-time, for executives: 75% international (non-Dutch), with 25% Dutch and among the other nationalities never more than 15% of any one.
- Part-time, online delivery mode: 85% international (non-Dutch), with eleven nationalities represented.

Also students from partner institutions participate in various (specialization) courses at MSM. This even increases the classroom diversity.

The panel has noticed the programme management takes deliberately measures to ensure no nationality or cultural background is dominant. For example, the intake procedure comprises a personal interview, with the aim to filter out students who don't have the right mentality or motivation with regard to the intercultural experience MSM offers.

The panel considers the diverse student population composition in terms of nationalities and cultures mirrors the ambition of the programme. The diversity even surpasses the objective set by the programme management, to have at least a 70% international student body overall.

#### Conclusion

The panel concludes that the diversity of the student body is in line with the programme's internationalization goal and can be regarded as an international example.

**Criterion 5b: Experience**

*The internationalisation experience gained by students is adequate and corresponds to the programme's internationalisation goals.*

The student body (especially in the full-time programme) is more than 75% international. Many of these international students are coming from emerging and developing markets. Students gain international experience through interaction with other students, faculty, staff, and corporative partners and through the curriculum. The programme management points out the international travel experience is for the majority the total study experience in Maastricht itself.

An exchange abroad is not a mandatory part of the programme, however students can opt to attend courses in other institutions, like a course on Innovation Management at RTWH Aachen. In addition, students often choose a case abroad for their final project and stay abroad for a while.

Students and alumni told the panel they experienced the international nature of the programme.

**Conclusion**

The panel concludes that the international experience gained by the students is in line with the internationalization goal of the programme.

**Criterion 5c: Services**

*The services provided to the students (e.g. information provision, counselling, guidance, accommodation, Diploma Supplement) are adequate and correspond to the composition of the student group.*

The programme management intends to create a student community and to accomplish students feeling at home in the programme. For this purpose, students are offered a series of services. Services include visa assistance and facilitation, student housing assistance and facilitation adjacent to the building of MSM, pre-arrival contact with embassy and alumni in a new student's country, mentorship programme in which full time students are paired with a Dutch professional to help the student to build their network and learn first-hand about doing business in the local context, "facilitation" for Dutch learning and a Career Center which prepares the students for the job market. The panel also finds it particularly special that MSM itself also provides scholarships to give students with an international background the opportunity to study the programme.

Special attention is paid to the counselling and guidance services. In discussion with the students, the panel has noticed the mentoring and tutoring are well appreciated. Students tell the panel they feel the teachers are sitting on their shoulders.

Programme management provides Diploma Supplements, stating the nature, level, context, contents and status of the programme. These Diploma Supplements are in line with the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO standards.

Conclusion and recommendations

The panel concludes that the services provided for students are very much up to standard. The panel appreciates the proactive approach by MSM.

**Overall conclusion regarding Standard 5: Students**

The panel found the student composition, student experiences and services provided to students to correspond very strongly to the international and intercultural dimensions of the programme. The panel deems all the underlying criteria of this standard to be systematically surpassed. The composition of the student group and the careful managing of its mixed character can even be regarded as an international example. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 5: Students* as good.

## 6. Overview of assessments

Standard	Criterion	Level of fulfilment for each standard unsatisfactory/satisfactory/good/excellent (see descriptions in chapter 4)
1. Intended internationalisation	1a. Supported goals	Good
	1b. Verifiable objectives	
	1c. Impact on education	
2. International and intercultural learning	2a. Intended learning outcomes	Good
	2b. Student assessment	
	2c. Graduate achievement	
3. Teaching and learning	3a. Curriculum	Good
	3b. Teaching methods	
	3c. Learning environment	
4. Staff	4a. Composition	Good
	4b. Experience	
	4c. Services	
5. Students	5a. Composition	Good
	5b. Experience	
	5c. Services	

## Annex 1. Composition of the panel

### Overview panel requirements

<i>Panel member</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Internat.</i>	<i>Educat.</i>	<i>QA</i>	<i>Student</i>
• Dr. C. Terlouw	X		X	X	
• Prof. dr. K. Lauche		X	X		
• Prof. dr. M. de Ceuster		X	X	X	
• Dr. J.W. Wierda		X	X	X	
• C.J. Stam MSc				X	X

Subject: Subject- or discipline-specific expertise;

Internat.: International expertise, preferably expertise in internationalisation;

Educat.: Relevant experience in teaching or educational development;

QA: Relevant experience in quality assurance or auditing; or experience as student auditor;

Student: Student with international or internationalisation experience;

Chair: dr. C. Terlouw, educationalist, former lector of higher education intake and transition management at Saxion University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands);

Prof. dr. K. Lauche, professor Organizational Development and Design at Radboud University (the Netherlands);

Prof. dr. M. De Ceuster, professor of Finance at Antwerp University (Belgium);

Prof. dr. J.W. Wierda, professor Media & Marketing Glion La Gruyere University-Montreux, Executive Board member at Hobéon (panel member for Distinctive Quality Feature Internationalization);

C.J. Stam MSc, recent graduate of the master's in Environmental Sciences: Sustainable Development in Utrecht University (the Netherlands).

Coordinator: drs. W. Vercouteren, self-employed advisor, acted on behalf of Certiked vbi

Secretary: T.T. Lamers MSc, self-employed advisor, acted on behalf of Certiked vbi.

## Annex 2. Documents reviewed

- MBA Self-evaluation report and appendices
- MBA Internationalization Self-evaluation report and appendices
- CVs of relevant staff
- Template Diploma Supplement 2018 Example

Presented documents in the baseroom:

- Sample of course materials and assessments
- Education Board minutes
- PRME, Responsible Management Education at MSM report 2016
- Marketing brochure MBA/Executive MBA/Online MBA
- Faculty Handbook
- Student yearbook 2016-2017
- Class CV book 2017-2018
- Examination Rules (EER)

## Annex 3. Site visit programme

### Overview

**Date:** December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
**Institution:** Maastricht School of Management (MSM)  
**Programme:** Master of Business Administration  
**Location:** Endepolsdomein 150, 6229 EP Maastricht, the Netherlands

### Programme

#### Tuesday 4 December 2018

12.30 - 16.45: Arrival of the panel, internal meeting and possibility to review documentation

16.30 - 16.45: Tour of MSM's facilities

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement
• [REDACTED]	Manager Information Center
• [REDACTED]	Event Officer

16.45 - 17.30: Meeting with MSM representative and programme director

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Dean a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Chief Executive Officer a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Director of Education and Executive Development
• [REDACTED]	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement

17.30 - 18.30: Programme management and core lecturers

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs
• [REDACTED]	Director DBA and Online Education
• [REDACTED]	Director of Education and Executive Development
• [REDACTED]	Lecturer/Academic Coordinator Online MBA Program, International Business & Sustainable Development Specialization

18.30 - 19.15: Quality Assurance Officers

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement
• Senior Secretary Examination Board	[REDACTED]
• Quality Enhancement Officer	[REDACTED]
• Quality Enhancement Officer	[REDACTED]

19.15: End of site visit day one

Wednesday 5 December 2018

08.30 – 09.00: Arrival of the panel and review of documents (closed session)

09.00 – 10.00: Meeting with lecturers and final projects examiners.

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Module/Course</i>
• ██████████ ██████	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs	-
• ██████████ ██████	Lecturer/Academic Coordinator Online MBA Program, International Business & Sustainable Development Specialization	Corporate Responsibility and Ethics, Green & Inclusive Innovation (Specialization)
• ██████████ ██████████	Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship / Academic Coordinator Executive Short Program Full Portfolio	Entrepreneurship, Designing and Scaling your Business (Specialization), Innovation and New Business Ventures (Specialization)
• ██████████ ██████	Professor Economics	Sustainability in the Global Economy
• ██████████ ██████████	Associate Professor Sustainable Business	Research Methods
• ██████████ ██████	Senior Lecturer of Marketing and Strategy/Special Advisor the Dean a.i./ Academic Coordinator MME (RWTH)	Marketing in the Global Context, Global Corporate Strategy
• ██████████ ██████████	Assistant Professor of Management Information Systems, Discipline Head Technology, ICT and E-Business	Decision-making Tools, Digital Transformation
• ██████████ ██████	Director International Projects and Consultancies a.i / Ass. Professor in Sustainable Business Development	Fair Trade and Global Value Chains (Specialization)
• ██████████ ██████	Senior Project Consultant	Managing Cultural Diversity
• ██████████ ██████████	Associate Professor of Organization Behavior	Leadership and Organizational Behavior, Managing Cultural Diversity
• ██████████ ██████	Lecturer Online MBA Program	Business Communications, Global Corporate Strategy, Managing Cultural Diversity,

		Corporate responsibility and Ethics
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10.10 - 11.00: Examination Board

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Chair Examination Board / Professor of Managerial Economics / Academic Coordinator MM Programs
• [REDACTED]	Vice-Chair Examination Board / Assistant Professor in Marketing
• [REDACTED]	Senior Secretary Examination Board

11.00 - 11.45: Students (with programme committee member) and alumni

Students

<i>Full name</i>	
• [REDACTED]	MBA student
• [REDACTED]	MBA student
• [REDACTED]	EMBA student
• [REDACTED]	EMBA student
• [REDACTED]	Online MBA student

Alumni

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Current position/company</i>
• [REDACTED]	EMBA 2017-2018	Manager Maatschappelijk Presteren at ZOWonen
• [REDACTED]	MBA 2017-2018	Financial Analyst at Medtronic

11.45 – 12.45: Lunch, including internal meeting and review of materials

12.45 – 13.15: Meeting with staff internationalisation

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Director of Education and Executive Development
• [REDACTED]	Manager Enrollment and Career Services
• [REDACTED]	Senior Officer Global Education Programs
• [REDACTED]	Officer Global Education Programs
• [REDACTED]	Officer Global Education Programs

• [REDACTED]	Online Education Officer
• [REDACTED]	Student Services and Alumni Officer
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement

13.15-13.45: External stakeholders regarding internationalisation

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Current position/company</i>
• [REDACTED]	Managing Director at Weir Minerals Netherlands / MSM Mentor
• [REDACTED]	Managing Director at 6P Consultancy / MSM Mentor
• [REDACTED]	Member MSM Faculty Advisory Board / MSM Adjunct Faculty

13.45 – 15.15: Deliberations panel (closed session)

15.15 - 15.30: Main findings presented by the panel chair to programme management and others

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Dean a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Chief Executive Officer a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Chief Financial Officer a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Director of Education and Executive Development
• [REDACTED]	Director Human Resources & Legal Affairs
• [REDACTED]	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement

15.30 - 16.00: Development dialogue for panel recommendations

<i>Full name</i>	<i>Position</i>
• [REDACTED]	Dean a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Chief Executive Officer a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Chief Financial Officer a.i.
• [REDACTED]	Director of Education and Executive Development
• [REDACTED]	Director Human Resources & Legal Affairs
• [REDACTED]	Academic Coordinator MBA Programs
• [REDACTED]	Manager Quality Enhancement

16.00: End of site visit day two and departure

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