



# **Utrecht University of Applied Sciences**

## **Bachelor International Business**

### **Limited Study Programme Assessment**



## Summary

In October 2019 the bachelor programme International Business was visited by an audit panel from NQA. The International Business programme is a four year fulltime programme. The programme is taught in English at the main location in Utrecht. The audit panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **positive**. The programme meets the generic quality of all the standards.

### Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 1. The intended learning outcomes are in line with the National Framework for International Business Programmes as it is published by the National IB platform in 2017. They adhere to the national HEO standard and to the Dublin descriptors. After thorough consultation of the work field the study programme added a valuable and ambitious sustainable profile to this national framework. The programme focuses on global changes and on sustainable developments in international business. The aim is to encourage, equip, empower students to become innovative transformational leaders who can create shared value and come up with sustainable business solutions.

### Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 2. The study programme offers since September 2018 three curricula, a new designed International Business curriculum, a restructured International Business Management Studies curriculum and a restructured International Business Language curriculum. Restructuring was needed to meet the programme learning outcomes of the International Business programme. This restructuring is well executed. Students experience no difficulties or delay in their study programmes. Regarding the professional field it is justified that the programme uses the English language and an English title. In the programme the global orientation is strong and there is a good balance between sustainable development and business subjects. The educational approach is student-centred. Through learning circles students can develop themselves personally and professionally. The class room is quite international as is the composition of the team with lecturers. The new curriculum and the new educational approach put quite a challenge on the lecturers. Sufficient time for developing and implementing is important to complete the new curriculum successfully. The programme is advised to connect with critical network partners who can support the lecturers in the developments needed. Also the Utrecht campus and sustainable networks could contribute more to the sustainable practical orientation of the programme.

### Standard 3: Assessment

The programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 3. The programme has a clear vision on testing and the vision is well documented. This is also the case with the test programme. The testing is well documented, students are well informed. The tests in the new curriculum are clearly more integrated than in the existing curricula. The tests are more connected to practical professional roles and assignments. The assessment quality assurance is well organized and executed. For the programme management the examination board and test committee are solid partners. It is advised to listen carefully to their findings and suggestions to implement assessing further according to the test policy.

#### **Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 4. The achieved learning outcomes are in line with the intended learning outcomes of the restructured curricula and the International Business profile. The current graduation programme consisting of several elements is adequate. The combination of an internship, a thesis project and five relevant modules gives a complete indication of the achieved learning outcomes. The fifteen graduation units examined indicate that the thesis subjects are relevant and are according to the professional bachelor level. For the new curriculum it is advised to adapt holistic assessing more. The professional work field finds the graduates adequately prepared for a professional field. Graduates experience also a good connection to the first starting position in the professional field. For the new curriculum it is advised to implement thesis projects leading to professional products. It is also advised to stimulate creativity and developing concepts, since this is more in line with the new profile and can demonstrate that students are encouraged, equipped and empowered to create innovative and sustainable business solutions.

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## Introduction

This is the assessment report of the bachelor programme International Business offered by Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. The assessment was conducted by an audit panel compiled by Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA) and commissioned by Utrecht University of Applied Sciences. Prior to the assessment process the audit panel has been approved by NVAO.

In this report the audit panel gives account of its findings, considerations and conclusions. The assessment was undertaken according to the *Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands* of NVAO (September 2018) and the *NQA Guideline 2019 for a limited programme assessment*.

The site visit took place on 15 October 2019.

The audit panel consisted of:

Mrs G. Geitz, PhD ES (chair panel, domain and educational expert)

Mr J.J.J.W.G. Moors, MA PGDip (domain expert)

Mr M.G.G. Le Roux, MA, (domain expert)

Ms N. Usama, (student member)

Mr ir. A.B.C. Hoitink acted as secretary of the panel.

The study programme is part of the visitation group 'HBO IBMS groep 2 midden'. Panel members received an instruction regarding the Assessment Framework. The assessment criteria calibrated between Hobéon and NQA are part of this instruction. Next to this, alignment between sub-panels is guaranteed by experts being a member in several sub-panels. In addition, taking into account that each programme assessment is an individual assessment, panel members reflected on previous visits within this visitation group. Alignment between panels is furthermore as much as possible guaranteed by the support of the same secretary from NQA, of other evaluation agencies and by the deployment of trained panel chairmen.

The study programme offered a self evaluation report that was according to the requirements of the appropriate NVAO assessment. The audit focused on the programme visit by the audit panel. During a preliminary consultation the visit was prepared and panel members were instructed on the NQA working method and the NVAO framework. The audit panel studied the self evaluation report and visited the study programme. Preliminary findings were discussed during the preliminary consultation and during the visitation. The self evaluation and all other (oral and written) information have enabled the panel to reach a deliberate judgement.

For the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes the panel examined 15 graduation units. The graduation units were selected from the list of students who graduated in the last two years. The variation in results was taken into account, as was the number of graduates in the restructured IBMS and IBL curricula.

During the programme visit, the panel has spoken with various stakeholders of the programme, such as students, lecturers, and representatives from the professional field. Staff members and students of the study programme were given the opportunity to approach the panel (via e-mail) in addition to the visit agreed. No staff member or student used this opportunity to approach the

panel. The panel studied the additional material related to the study programme (see Appendix 2). At the end of the visit, the audit panel formulated a preliminary assessment with substantiation. During the final feedback session, the chair of the panel communicated the final assessment and important finding to the study programme.

The panel declares the assessment of the study programme was carried out independently.

Utrecht, February 4, 2020.

Panel chairman



Mrs G. Geitz, PhD

Panel secretary



Mr./r. A.B.C. Hoitink

## Short outline of the study programme

The bachelor programme International Business (IB) is a relatively new programme. It is the result of an initiative by the Dutch government to reconsider the proliferation of the programmes in the economic domain. This initiative led to the nation wide conversion of the two existing programmes International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) and International Business Language (IBL) into a new broad IB programme. To support this conversion the National Platform International Business developed in 2017 a National Framework for International Business programmes.

Utrecht UAS offers the new IB programme from September 2018 onwards. Students start since then in a new designed IB curriculum. Students who started earlier in the IBMS or IBL programme continue since then in a restructured IBMS and IBL curriculum. The IB programme committee compared the IBMS and IBL competences with the new IB Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and established that these competences matched almost completely the PLOs of IB. Adaptions were needed in a limited number of courses and in the graduation forms to match the existing programmes with the new IB programme. Therefore the IB programme offers at the moment three curricula; the restructured IBMS, the restructured IBL and the new IB curriculum.

At Utrecht UAS the Institute for International Business Studies (IIBS) is responsible for the IB programme. This institute offers also several exchange programmes and the master programme Innovation in European Business. This master programme is offered in three European cities; Cork, Paris and a Utrecht. Finally the institute offers a Summer School in cooperation with University Utrecht. At the moment of the programme visit around 1200 students enrolled the IB programme of which around 120 students are international exchange students. The largest number of international students comes from Spain, France, Finland and South-Korea. In addition around 70 international exchange students are studying one of the minor programmes.

## Basic data of the study programme

### Administrative data of the study programme

Name study programme as in CROHO	B International Business
Orientation and level study programme	Higher professional education; Bachelor Education
Grade	Bachelor of Business Administration
Number of study credits	240 EC
Graduation courses / 'tracks'	-
Location(s)	Utrecht
Variant(s)	Fulltime, including fast track
Joint programme	-
Language used	English
Registration number in CROHO	30029

## Standard 1 Intended learning outcomes

*The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.*

### Conclusion

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses that the programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 1. The panel established that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are based on the National Framework that is developed by all IB programmes in the Netherlands. This national framework is validated by the professional field and international partners. The Programme Learning Outcomes defined in the National Framework adhere to the national HEO standard and the Dublin descriptors. The panel agrees with the profile HU IB adds to the national IB framework. The focus on global changes and sustainable developments in international business is according to the panel, valuable, important and ambitious. The panel advises to bring in more critical stakeholders to ensure the ongoing development towards the profile chosen. The added profile requires special attention in the educational development in order to realise the ambition.

### Substantiation

#### *Professional profile*

IB graduates operate within the wide spectrum of the international Business Administration domain. They need to have a set of interdisciplinary skills and a solid knowledge base. They have to be able to perform as intermediary within various business domains. Versatility and being able to cope with changing job market requirements is important. In medium-sized companies graduates are often generalists with a wide range of duties. In larger international operating companies they have a more specialist role in the areas of Marketing & Sales, Finance & Accounting, Operations & Supply Chain Management or in the area of Organization & People.

#### *Educational profile*

The educational profile of the HU IB programme is based on the National Framework for International Business that is published by the National IB Platform in 2017. The stakeholders involved described developments in the external environment, developments in education and introduced the IB profile. An important new aspect of the IB framework is the strong focus on generic skills as is advocated by the professional field. IB graduates are expected to perform successfully in an international context. Therefore the importance of intercultural communication and cultural sensitivity is stressed. The IB framework advises to include flexibility and entrepreneurial skills in the IB programme. Also a broad orientation enabling graduates to connect their own subject area to others is considered to be important. Skills like critical thinking and argumentation, a reflective attitude and analytical skills related to management of information are also considered to be important.

In the national IB framework the existing IBMS and IBL competences are integrated in a new set of 24 Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), headed by 14 themes and clustered in 4 domains. The domains are derived from the KSAVE model which emphasises Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, Values and Ethics in education. Per domain the following themes are formulated:

Ways of Thinking:

1. Critical Thinking,
2. Innovation & Creativity,
3. International Business Awareness.

Ways of Working:

4. International Business Communication,
5. Collaboration,
6. Management of Information as Digital Citizen.

Living in the World:

7. Personal & Professional Development,
8. Ethical & Social Responsibility,
9. Intercultural Proficiency.

Tools for Working & Management:

10. Marketing & Sales,
11. Finance & Accounting,
12. Operations & Supply Chain Management,
13. Organisation & People,
14. Business Research.

Per theme one or more PLOs are formulated. The PLOs and themes are validated by the professional field and related to the HEO standard and Dublin descriptors. Almost all the PLOs and themes should be accomplished at the end level as described in the IB framework. An exception is made for the second foreign language. This PLO belongs to theme 4 International Business Communication. Another exception is made for the end levels in the domain for Working & Management. In this domain at least the theme Business Research and at least one of the other themes: Marketing & Sales, Finance & Accounting, Operations & Supply Chain Management and Organisation & People should be accomplished at the end level.

### *Specific HU IB Profile*

According to the panel the specific HU IB profile is valuable, important and ambitious. The study programme aims to encourage, equip and empower students to become critical and innovative transformational leaders who can create shared value and come up with sustainable business solutions. The programme wants to educate students through working on global challenges for international business. Therefore the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are incorporated in the programme. There is also special attention for transformational leadership to achieve shared value in international business. In line with this specific profile the programme focuses more on two themes of the IB framework. The second language on the end level is mandatory and the theme Organisation & People has to be acquired at the end level. The panel agrees that these requirements are in line with the focus on transformational leadership. The IB students who started in the former IBMS and IBL programmes will acquire one or more themes at the end level of the domain Tools for Working & Management depending on their specialisation in Marketing, Finance or Management.

### *Input from professional practice*

At the start of the IB programme development, the programme consulted alumni and representatives of the professional field. Staff involved explained that Alumni and advisors in sustainable business were interviewed by them. The new profile for IB was validated in February 2017 by alumni and representatives of the work field. This thorough consultation lead to the decision that graduates should be able to initiate and implement change that has a positive impact on global changes like climate change, overpopulation and food issues and rapid innovation in technology. This focus in the IB programme is in line with what was recommended in the 2013 audit visit. Later on the consultation group transferred into the External Advisory Board that now regularly meets to give input on the implementation of the IB programme.

## Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment

*The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

### Conclusion

Based on the below mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses that the programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 2. The panel concludes that the programme learning outcomes of the International Business programme are adequately translated into module learning outcomes of the new curriculum and the restructured curricula. The fundament of the programme is in place and in line with what the business environment requests. The panel substantiates that the programme is offered in the English language since the professional domain is international oriented, as is the student and staff community. The programme has a strong global orientation. The attention for sustainable development is in good balance with the attention for business. The context of the programme has clear features of sustainability. The programme has become more student-centred and the learning circles contribute to the student development. The teaching-learning environment is open and friendly for students. Students are offered the opportunity to learn and grow as a professional and according to the panel fulfil their placements in decent international operating companies. The lecturers are well educated and dedicated to the programme. According to the panel the implementation of the new curriculum is ambitious and challenging. The alignment of subjects within semesters and the decentralised ownership of subjects in the team are new. The panel suggests that time for adjustment and for intervention is important to complete the implementation successfully. The student association and extra curricular activities could contribute more to the development of the new curriculum.

### Substantiation

#### *Restructuring existing and introducing a new curriculum*

Since September 2018 the IB programme offers three curricula, a restructured IBMS curriculum, a restructured IBL curriculum and the new IB curriculum. The panel establishes from the documentation and from the meeting with students that the restructuring is well executed. During the panel visit, third and fourth year students explained that the restructuring of IBMS and IBL did not delay their study progress and did not lead to difficulties or confusion about the restructured subjects. For the restructuring the curriculum committee designed an important basic document, the PLO matrix. In this matrix the relations between the PLOs and the subjects of the IBMS and IBL curricula is clearly explained. It also indicates where in the restructured IBMS and IBL curricula the PLOs are tested at a certain level according to the Aucom (Autonomy and Complexity) model. In the coming years the restructured curricula programmes will gradually be replaced by the new IB curriculum as is explained in the following diagram.

## HU IB NEW CURRICULUM

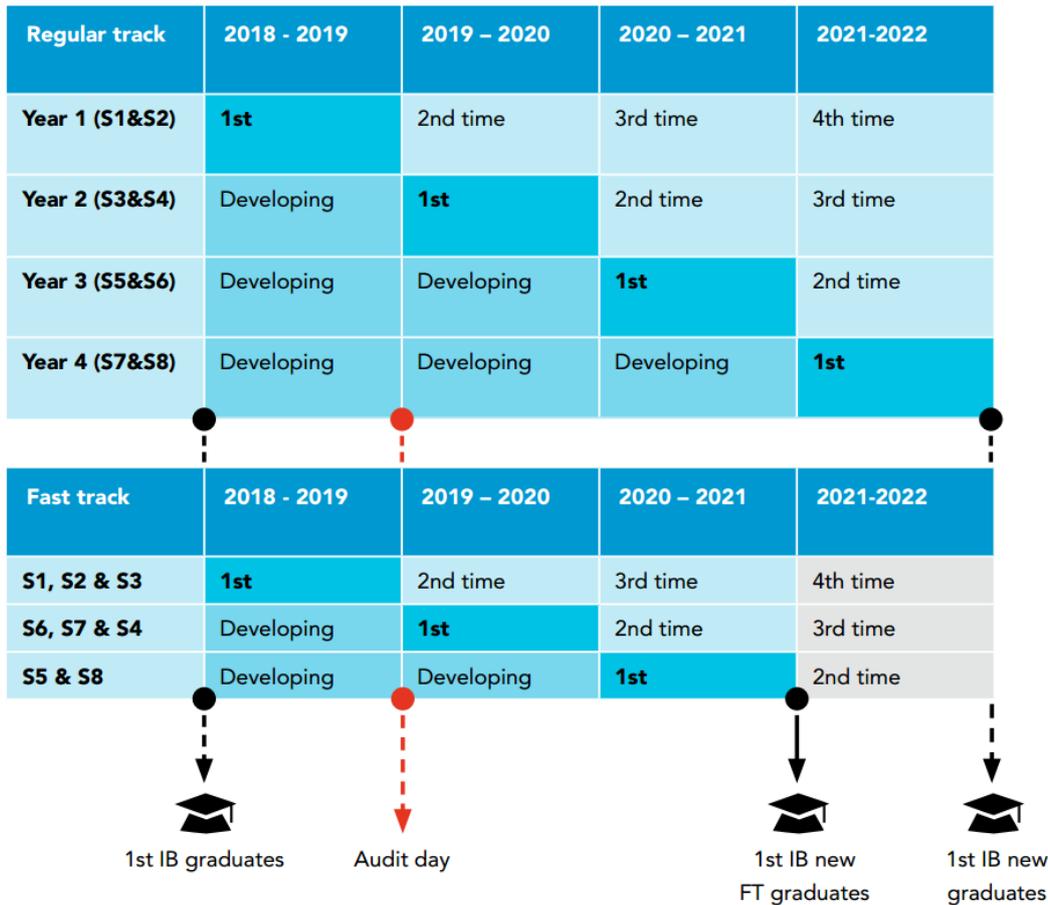


Diagram 1: the introduction process of the new IB curriculum (*Self Evaluation IB Utrecht*)

The diagram shows that at the moment of the audit day the second year of the new IB curriculum starts for the first time and that the whole new IB curriculum will be introduced from September 2022 onwards. The diagram also shows that next to the regular track a fast track is offered. This track is for students who would like to complete the programme in three years. Students who study the fast track complete an average of 80 EC per year. Applicants need to pass an intake assessment that consists of a motivation letter, two written assessments and an assessment interview. In addition there are selection criteria on the educational background and work experience. The number of students in the fast track is relatively small; about ten percent of the students are enrolled in the fast track programme

### *Design of the IB curriculum*

The new curriculum consists of eight semesters. Every semester has a main theme and has several modules related to that theme. The first year starts with the theme Master the Basics in which six modules introduce the basics of International Business. In the second semester the main theme is Ideas worth Spreading. In this theme, modules, a project and the first elective are offered. The semester approach is quite new for the team of lecturers and their first experiences are that the skills are more intertwined with the subjects offered. Although the new IB curriculum differs a lot from the restructured curricula, certain elements of the restructured curricula are kept

such as the mandatory study abroad is and the strongly advised internship abroad. Diagram 2 gives an overview of all the semesters.

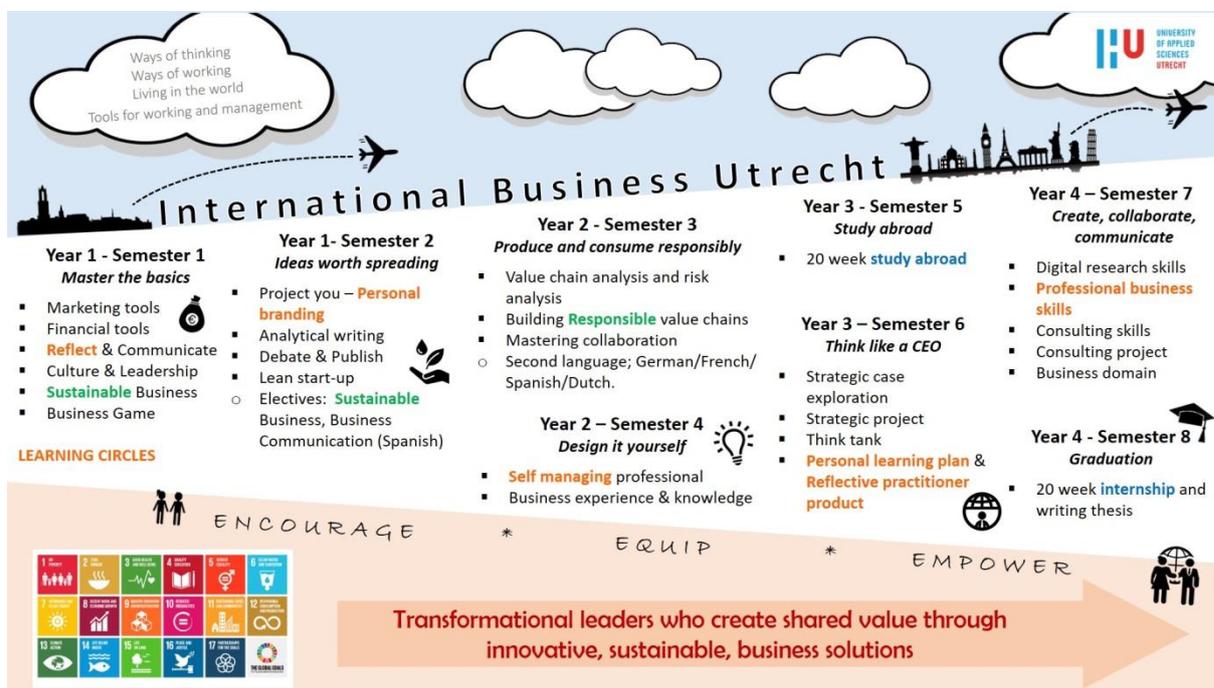


Diagram 2: programme overview IB Utrecht

The panel finds the design of the curriculum to be in line with the intended learning outcomes and students are encouraged to challenge themselves. In the first year students learn their own strengths and weaknesses and are challenged to step out of their comfort zone. In the first year the sustainable development goals are introduced and students are asked to select the goals that are the most appealing to them. In the second year students are further equipped with knowledge and skills. According to the panel the balance between sustainable development goals and business subjects is good.

The panel finds the context of the programme to be in line with the aim of the programme. The programme wants to deliver IB professionals who are able to initiate and implement changes that have a positive impact on global changes. These are changes like climate change, overpopulation, food issues and rapid innovation in technology. The context of the programme is focused on Sustainable Development Goals and Shared Value Creation. The value chain analysis and risk analysis project in semester three is a clear example of this context. Developing transformational leadership skills is another aim of the programme. In every semester there is specific attention for this development. Like Reflecting in semester one, Personal Branding in semester two, Self Managing in semester four, and Professional Business skills in semester seven. The panel establishes that this aim and focus is in line with what was recommended in the 2013 audit. The context of the IB programme is now connected to geopolitical, social and economic dimensions and has clearly features of sustainability.

### *Educational approach*

The panel notices that the educational approach introduced has become more student-centred. The programme consists of a variety of activities like lectures, tutorials and workshops. The panel learned from the lecturers and students that the way of teaching has changed. During contact moments, lecturers are not so much teaching and explaining the theories, but students are requested to prepare the theory in advance and lecturers discuss and process the theory. In addition to these changes in lecturing, students weekly have learning circle meetings. These learning circles are small groups of students (eight to fourteen) in which students can learn together through peer feedback. The learning circles are facilitated by a learning circle facilitator who also coaches students individually. According to the panel this creates an environment in which possible barriers for study progress can be discussed.

### *Content IB Programme*

The panel established that the content of the programme matches the national agreed framework for International Business. The programme translated the IB programme learning outcomes into module learning outcomes and assigned these to the courses of the programme. The programme distinguishes three levels. Level one is achieved in the first year, level two in the second year and level three in the third and fourth year.

The restructured IBMS curriculum has three specialisations focusing on Finance, Marketing or Management. The restructured IBL curriculum has two specialisations focusing on Export or Marketing. Depending on the specialisations PLOs of the related themes in the domain Tools for Working and Management are on level three. For the new IB curriculum the programme related the PLOs to the assessments of each semester.

### *Education in co-creation with professional practice*

The redesigned curriculum is created in close cooperation with the professional field. Before the new curriculum was developed by the team, external representatives of the professional field were consulted about the aim and profile of the programme. The programme appointed an external advisory board to monitor the further developments and the alignment to the professional field. The panel recommends increasing the connection with the professional field. The panel suggests inviting selected critical stakeholders like companies and organisations related to sustainability to support the team in the development of the programme according to the chosen direction.

The panel notices that students do their internships at decent and suitable companies of the professional field. Companies are also involved regularly in the programme. For semester three the programme works with input from Solidaridad and with methods that are applied in professional consultancy like from PWC. In the third year the programmes works together with ING in a business challenge and in the fourth year business proposals are written for companies like Gispen and Esperanto XL.

In the meeting with students the panel notices a difference between the first and second year students and the third and fourth year students. The first and second year students are more focused on working on sustainable goals in a profitable manner. The panel finds this to be in line

with the aim of the IB programme and notes that this focus could be further increased via extra curricular activities. Existing sustainable business networks like Enactus Utrecht are not connected yet to the programme and are unknown to the students. These sustainable networks could contribute more to the focus and the practice oriented development of students. Also the planned revitalisation of the Study Association Get Connected can contribute to this development.

Research skills are developed also in co-creation with the professional practice. Students carry out business assignments throughout the whole programme. Specific research knowledge and skills is tested at certain moments in the programme such as in the Value Chain Analysis or in the Business Modelling in semester three. Students learn how to use applied research for the choices or the plans they make. The programme is connected to several research centres of the Utrecht UAS like the Research Centre of modern Foreign Languages. Next to the research subjects, knowledge from research centres is shared throughout the programme through conference talks.

### *Global orientation*

The panel experiences a strong global orientation in this programme. Considering the programme profile the panel finds it justified that the programme name is in English and that the programme is offered in the English Language. According to the national framework, English is the lingua franca of International Business. The strong global orientation is also present in the class rooms. Per class of 25 – 30 students on average seven students have an international background. This share of international students gives the programme a more intercultural balance.

The international students are well looked after by the programme. The panel notices from the interviews with students, that the information given before the programme start and the support given during the programme are on a good level. International students feel well informed and supported via several ways like the buddy programme and the international student association. The strong global orientation is also demonstrated by the large international educational network with partner universities. The programme runs exchange programmes with about 80 partner universities. Finally the programme features like the compulsory study abroad, the strongly advised internships abroad and the intercultural learning activities throughout the programme contribute to a more than sufficient global orientation. The panel suggests to keep enriching this global and intercultural context in the coming years and to embed upcoming global themes within the curriculum like geopolitical trade agreements and ethical leadership.

### *Team of lecturers*

The panel establishes that the work load for the staff is relatively high. Although, the number of lecturers involved in the programme meets the general required capacity. The staff overview shows that the total International Business team consists of 65 lecturers and that the total capacity is just over 51 full time employed staff to offer a programme to just more than 1200 students. However, the programme runs three curricula and is in the middle of developing and introducing a new curriculum. This leads according to the panel to a high work load for the staff involved.

The composition of the team is sufficiently international. About one third of the team has an international background. These lecturers come from all over the world. The staff overview also shows that the all the important subjects related to International Business are present in the team.

Next to this guest lecturers from well known companies and organisations like AEGON, Rabobank, Alibaba and Dopper are invited for specific topics or assignments related to the subjects.

The staff quality certainly meets the standard requested. Student evaluations demonstrate that lecturers are appreciated by the students. On the scale of one to ten the average satisfaction score for the lecturing is eight. The staff is passionate and dedicated to both the students and the curriculum on one hand and the business community on the other hand. Students also indicate that the level of teaching in the English language is on a sufficient level. There is some variation between lecturers but the on average students are satisfied. Lecturers themselves mention the changing role from purely teaching towards more coaching the students in their educational process. Also they notice a shift from being a specialist in one topic to being an expert on several topics. Next to this the education has become more a combination of off line and on line education, through the digital learning environment. The panel recommends to the programme to allocate to the staff sufficient time for these adjustments and to invest in intervision. The start of the redesign is executed well for a good continuation throughout the whole programme sufficient time allocation is needed.

## Standard 3 Assessment

*The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.*

### Conclusion

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses that the programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 3. According to the panel, the programme developed a clear test vision that is in line with the institute's assessment framework. The quality of testing, the test cycle, roles and responsibilities in testing are clearly described in the test vision. The testing is also well documented in the test programme. The students are well informed about testing programme and the PLO levels related to the tests. The quality assurance in assessing is organised well. The roles and responsibilities of the Examination Board, Test Committee and Curriculum Committee are clear. The quality requirements for summative testing are met and the quality assurance is sufficient. To support the students learning process the panel advises examiners to elaborate more on individual personalized feedback in final level assessments. The panel notices that the programme management sees the Examination Board and Test Committee as solid partners. The panel advises the programme management to make better use of them for the further implementation of the test policy and suggested developments like providing more written individual feedback in interim and final assessments.

### Substantiation

#### *Test policy*

The panel notices that the programme has developed a clear own vision on testing. According to the panel, this vision gives the direction needed to implement testing parallel with the redesign of the programme. The vision on testing is well formulated, contains new developments in testing. It is also in line with the HU Vision on Education and with the programme vision on education. The practices and principles are derived from best practices in testing and quality frameworks. Examples are the Quality Pyramid of Testing and Assessing and the Test Cycle based on Expert group BKE/SKE. According to the programme the testing is to be derived as much as possible from the professional practice and the testing should be accompanied by feedback from professional practice to ensure relevancy for the professional practice.

#### *Test execution*

The panel concludes that testing is well documented, well organised and that the test policy is recognizable in the test programme. At the moment of the visit the programme offers a test programme for three curricula: the new IB curriculum and the two restructured curricula for IBMS or IBL students. The number of tests in the first year is reduced considerably. The number is reduced from twelve to nine and the number of test positions from thirty to ten. In the first year that is to be offered this study year for the second time, testing is even more integrated and practice oriented than in the previous study year. Because of this reduction the test codes are separated from the course codes to allow integrated tests that cover several subjects. A second

example of implementing the test policy is the observation that in the first two years the number of written examinations is reduced from several per semester to only one written examination per year. The majority of the tests consist of individual and group assignments. In case of a group assessment the test always has an individual component like the individual contribution to the group work that is assessed.

The panel examined several assessments during the audit visit and concludes that the levels required and the methods applied are adequate. Examples of the new IB curriculum are the Sustainable Business examination and the Value Chain Analysis examination. Both examinations consist of an individual and a group assignment. According to the panel these examples indicate that assessments are derived from professional practice. The panel also examined several examinations of the restructured IBL and IBMS curricula. Examples of the restructured curricula are Online Marketing and Media and Sustainable Finance. These examinations consist of two tests, a presentation and report assessment or case study. The panel notes in general that the feedback given varies and could be elaborated more. The lecturers and examiners explain that the oral feedback usually is more extensive. The panel advises to put this also in writing for the professional development of the students.

The panel examined the digital learning environment Canvas and notes that it provides good support to the testing programme. Canvas gives a clear overview of all the products handed in by the students and the status of the portfolio assessments. It also provides the option to digitally assess student products via Speedrate. Students can hand in their assignments in Canvas and several examiners can simultaneously assess digitally. This feature supports the integrated assessing and in some stations the feedback is supported by a rubric.

### *Quality assurance*

The quality assurance of the testing is adequately organised and well documented. There are several documents like the Test Policy, PLO Matrix and Test Programme that together support the quality assurance of testing in a good way. The roles and responsibilities related to testing are clear and mechanisms and procedures are described adequately according to the Test Cycle. For examiners a manual for developing summative tests is available in the Test Policy. Student satisfaction on testing is good. Students are satisfied with the transparency of testing and with the quality of testing. The panel finds this student satisfaction quite an achievement regarding the restructuring of the former curricula and the introduction of the new curriculum.

The programme pays sufficient attention on implementing the test vision on testing. The examination board and test committee experience improvement in testing. However, the panel notes that still 30 out of 60 lecturers need to acquire the Basic Qualification in Examination before study year 2020 - 2021. The panel understands that this is an ongoing process but thinks this an important element in the quality assurance of testing.

The panel supports the decision of programme management to reduce the number of lecturers involved as examiner to assure that assessing the final learning outcomes is according to the agreed standards. The panel supports also the calibration sessions that are organised in the spring semester to assure the same interpretation of assessment criteria in the graduation phase.

The panel notes that for the programme management the examination board and test committee are solid and constructive partners. One of the managers meets the examination board biweekly. The whole management team meets the examination board four to five times per year. The panel advises the management to approach them more as critical partners and to respond appropriately to advice given. Their findings and advice are valuable for a successful further implementation of the test policy in the new curriculum.

## Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

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

### Conclusion

Based on above mentioned considerations the audit panel assesses that the programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 4. The achieved learning outcomes are in line with the intended learning outcomes of the restructured curricula and the International Business profile. According to the panel the graduation programme is adequate. The combination of an internship, a thesis project and five relevant modules gives a complete indication of the achieved learning outcomes. The panel examined fifteen graduation units and concludes that the subjects are relevant for the domain and that the final level achieved is according to the professional bachelor level. The panel advises to adapt to the holistic assessing more, since this is more in line with the focus of the new curriculum on sustainable business projects. The professional work field is satisfied with the graduates of this programme, they are adequately prepared for a professional field. Graduates also feel adequately prepared for a starting position. For the new curriculum the panel suggests to implement thesis assignments that are in line with the new profile that aims to encourage students to develop own ideas and concepts and aims to equip and empower them to create innovative and sustainable business solutions.

### Substantiation

#### *Graduation programme*

In the restructured IBMS and IBL curriculum the main element of the graduation programme is the graduation unit. This is an internship at an international oriented company for half a study year. The internship is combined with a graduation assignment. Students write a thesis on a topic relevant for the company where they do their internship. The total size of the graduation unit is 30 credits. The graduation unit assessment consists of three elements; the internship, the thesis and the oral defence. The restructured IBL curriculum also assesses the language skills based on the presentation and the reports. The internship itself is assessed by the student's supervisor. For this assessment an advice from the company is taken into account. The thesis is assessed by two independent examiners, other than the supervisor. They also assess the presentation given by the student. The panel notes that the roles and the assessment procedures are clear. The programme demonstrates that the assessment is optimized and the transparency is improved as was recommended at the previous accreditation.

In addition to the graduation unit five modules are part of the graduation programme. For the restructured IBMS curriculum these five additional modules are:

1. Language (Spanish, French, German, Dutch) (year 2),
2. Strategic Marketing Management (year 3),
3. Intopia – Business Game (year 4),
4. Corporate Governance and Scandals (year 4),
5. Research Skills (Year 4).

For the restructured IBL curriculum these five additional modules are:

1. Sales and account management (year 2),
2. IBL project: Innovation & international entrepreneurship (year 3),
3. Spanish language and culture (year 3),
4. English Language and culture (year 3),
5. International Marketing communication or Export management and Internationalisation 2 (year 3).

#### *The examined graduation units*

The panel examined 15 graduation units from the last two study years. From study year 2017-2018 two IBL and three IBMS units were selected. From study year 2018 – 2019 four restructured IBL and six restructured IBMS units were selected. In this selection the levels average, lower than average and higher than average were equally distributed. In addition to the graduation projects, from several students the assessments of the five additional modules were inspected during the panel visit.

The panel concludes that the graduation subjects examined are relevant for the International Business domain and that the graduation units are on the level of a professional bachelor. The topics vary from marketing strategies, to business development advice or the description of future business scenarios. The panel notes that the research approach is strictly applied in every graduation unit examined. For the new curriculum the panel would welcome more variety in research approaches and would expect more initiative from students to choose a different approach. Following strictly a programme's frame, limits their own initiative, creativity and conceptual thinking.

The panel recommends the new sustainable educational profile to be recognizable in the future graduation units. The panel suggests relating business developments or business solutions more to the company's actual needs. The panel has a similar suggestion for the intercultural tools currently applied. In the new profile the cultural awareness should be applied less theoretical. Students should analyse and apply these tools more to the business development or solution suggested in order to meet the profile of sustainable business.

The panel finds the assessment forms of the graduation to be well designed. The forms give good opportunities to assess in a holistic way. However, on some forms only the boxes of the rubric were ticked. The panel recommends elaborating more on the written feedback to support the professional development of the students. The panel also notices that in most of the cases examined the mark for the graduation internship is significantly higher than for the thesis project. Apparently the company appreciates the internship more than the programme appreciates the thesis report. The programme has the intention to direct the research subject more towards a professional product. The panel agrees with this intention and finds assessing the achieved outcome through a professional product to be more in line with the focus of the new curriculum.

#### *Connection with professional practice*

The panel concludes that the connection between the study programme and the professional practice is good. Representatives from internship companies and from the work field are satisfied with the achieved learning outcomes of this programme. Graduates explained to the panel that

the study programme prepares them well for the professional practice. Graduates liked the focus on project based education and value that they learned to solve problems with different contacts. The graduation internship is experienced as a good hub for the first position as a professional. The combination of the internship and the research however, is a difficult combination to manage, because it is difficult to divide attention evenly between internship and research. The programme mentions also that the employability is on a good level. Graduates easily find a starting position in international business. Those who continue in a related master programme experience also a sufficient connection with the study programme completed.

# General conclusion of the study programme

## Assessments of the standards

The audit team comes to the following judgements with regard to the standards:

Standard	Assessment
1 <i>Intended learning outcomes</i>	Meet the generic quality standard
2 <i>Teaching-learning environment</i>	Meet the generic quality standard
3 <i>Assessment</i>	Meet the generic quality standard
4 <i>Achieved learning outcomes</i>	Meet the generic quality standard

## Considerations and conclusion

The study programme International Business is a programme in transition. It started well with a new curriculum according to a clear and ambitious vision on education and on sustainable business development and solutions. The programme is in the middle of the introduction of this new curriculum and at the same time offers two restructured curricula. The students are well looked after, they feel adequately informed and experience no uncertainty or delay. The panel finds this to be quite an achievement and finds it promising for the remaining study years to be implemented. The programme development could benefit from critical stakeholders and role models to embody the vision and to support the development direction towards sustainable business graduation projects. The Utrecht campus and other sustainable networks could be connected more to the programme to support the innovative education and to develop transformational leaders. The programme is ambitious but has started to encourage, equip and empower students to become of value for sustainable developments in international business. The audit panel assesses the quality of the bachelor programme International Business of Utrecht University of Applied Sciences as **positive**, the programme meets all standards.

# Recommendations

The audit panel has the following recommendations for the study programme:

## Standard 2

- Increase the connection with the professional field and invite critical friends to support the team in the further implementation of the new programme in line with the specific sustainable profile.
- Enable the team sufficiently for the remaining curriculum to be introduced

## Standard 4

- Focus the graduation unit on the sustainable educational profile of the programme.
- Elaborate more on the feedback in the final assessment to support the professional development of the students

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Programme for the site visit

Time	Program	Meeting with
9:00 – 9:30	Word of welcome, showcase IB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dean Institute for International Business Studies</li> <li>2. Programme Manager Bachelor International Business Studies.</li> </ol>
9:30	Study documents	Panel
11:00-11:45	Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 2<sup>nd</sup> year IB-student, HAVO (E+M and C+M)</li> <li>2. 5<sup>th</sup> year IB-student (former IBMS) Diploma de Bacalaureate (Romania)</li> <li>3. 2<sup>nd</sup> year IB-student Fast Track, VWO (E+M and C+M)</li> <li>4. 5<sup>th</sup> year IB-student (former IBL) HAVO (E+M)</li> <li>5. 1<sup>st</sup> year IB-student, Diploma de Bacalaureate (Romania)</li> <li>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> year IB-student, member Institute Council, HAVO (E+M)</li> <li>7. 1<sup>st</sup> year IB student, member Institute Council, MBO level 4 (specialisation: Juridisch medewerker)</li> </ol>
11:45	Lunch	
12:30 - 13:15	Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lecturer MBA, Business modelling, lean start up, design thinking, online marketing/product (year 1 - 4). Chair Institute Council &amp; Student Participation Council,</li> <li>2. Lecturer MA, Coaching, Leadership, Branding (year 1-4), vision IB, Honours program,</li> <li>3. Lecturer PhD, Merger &amp; Acquisition, research (year 3 and 4), Knowledge Centre</li> <li>4. Lecturer MBA, Account management, leadership, Business Strategy (yr 1-4), Professional field, Honours program, Fast track</li> <li>5. Lecturer MA, Spanish, Intercultural management (year 1 -4), Study abroad coordinator (former IBL), member Curriculum committee</li> <li>6. Lecturer MA, Teacher trainer, didactic coach (former IBL), Business English, HU Open Tournament director</li> <li>7. Lecturer MA, Research, CSR, CSV, Business ethics (year 2 and 4), Chair Graduation committee, Knowledge Centre</li> <li>8. Lecturer MA, Sustainable Development,</li> </ol>
13:30–14:15	Examination board, Test committee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Chair Examination board</li> <li>2. member Examination board</li> <li>3. member Examination board</li> <li>4. member Examination board</li> <li>5. member Test committee and member Curriculum committee</li> </ol>
14:30 – 15:15	Alumni, professional field	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IBMS alumnus 2014, Product designer - Caliibrate</li> <li>2. IBMS alumnus 2016, Sales marketing manager - Yameo</li> <li>3. IBMS alumnus 2016, Cloud application innovation consultant - IBM</li> <li>4. IBMS Fast track alumnus 2017, Sales development representative - Datto</li> <li>5. IBMS alumnus 2018, Business manager - BrightStone group</li> <li>6. IBMS alumnus 2018, Project leader - Utrecht University</li> <li>7. IBL alumnus 2014, Operations Control Specialist - Bank Mendes Gans</li> <li>8. IB alumnus 2019 (former IBL), Operational Marketing Assistent - Morres</li> </ol>
15:30-16:00	Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dean Institute for International Business Studies</li> <li>2. Programme Manager bachelor International Business Studies</li> </ol>
17:00-17:15	Feedback session	Every member of the team International Business is invited

## Appendix 2: Documents examined

- Test programme
- Staff overview bachelor IB
- PLO matrix
- Our world of tomorrow – vision of education HU
- Nuffic programme internationalisation checklist
- National framework IB
- IB Utrecht Programme Overview
- IB Test Policy
- HU Koers 2020
- HU IB vision
- HU Assessment framework
- Graduation Phase Handbook IBMS IBL IMM 2018 - 2019
- Graduation Phase Handbook IBMS IBL 2018 - 2019 final
- Graduation Phase Handbook IBMS 2017 - 2018
- Education and Examination Regulations 2019 - 2020
- Study guide bachelor International Business 2019 - 2020
- Study guide bachelor International Business 2018 - 2019
- Study guide appendix course descriptions IB 2019 - 2020
- Study guide appendix course descriptions IB 2018 – 2019
- Fifteen internship graduation reports