

NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences

MA International Leisure, Tourism & Events Management

Limited Study Programme Assessment

Summary

In November 2019 the Master programme International Leisure, Tourism & Events Management (MILTEM) of NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (hereafter NHL Stenden) was visited by an audit panel from NQA. MILTEM offers a one-year full-time programme. The programme is taught in English at the main location in Leeuwarden. The audit panel assesses the quality of the study programme as **positive**.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 1.

The professional profile of MILTEM is relevant and the competencies and derived learning outcomes are defined at the Master level (NLQF 7). MILTEM has a good sense of what the work field demands of graduates and what the work field can offer to students. The learning outcomes are well articulated and covered by the educational units. The learning outcomes represent the Master level and relate to the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude that is needed in the rapidly developing Tourism Leisure and Events (TLE)-domain. The panel has appreciation for the set-up of the learning outcomes and for the fact that MILTEM has an interdisciplinary approach and intersects with other important work fields.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 2.

MILTEM offers its students a challenging and interesting Master programme. The programme has a clear set-up and offers many opportunities to obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to become future leaders in the TLE-industry with a keen sense of sustainability. This is supported by great facilities and highly qualified staff. MILTEM puts strong emphasis on personal development within the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, and on practical research skills. MILTEM offers student-centered education with an open-door policy and good student guidance by staff.

The introduction of Design Based Education (DBE) is in progress. The panel advises to monitor this closely, although the panel thinks that the changes in the working environment (atelier, open work spaces) are a bigger change than the introduction of DBE. In future MILTEM can educate its students more about the intentions and effects of DBE; that way the students can design their learning paths more consciously and in line with the didactical concept and the expectations of the staff.

Standard 3: Assessment

The MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 3.

MILTEM places a lot of emphasis on grading and examination which is supported by the “four-eyed principle” and marking calibration processes. MILTEM offers many feedback opportunities, although mostly verbal and on request. Examiners have many discussions that aim at calibration of grading and guidelines. So, there is consensus among examiners on grading criteria and what these entail. With the current number of students this works well, but with a growing number of students the panel encourages MILTEM to work on more formalisation. MILTEM is advised to continue with calibrations and as a result set up guidelines for grading. Not everything can stay discussion based, especially with the growing number of students. Students want more alignment amongst examiners. This can also be beneficial to new staff members.

MILTEM guards the quality assurance of assessments well. The quality assurance bodies are in place and fulfil their role.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality on standard 4.

The set-up of and expectations for the graduation phase are well described and offer a clear framework to students. The content, level and quality of the selected theses show what is expected from a Master programme. The research subjects fit well with the LTE-field and often have an international character. Students are successful in their career and often find jobs in their field. MILTEM is advised to start some kind of alumni tracking system to monitor if alumni stay in their field of work and if they are able in future to obtain jobs fitting for the Master level.

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Introduction

This is the assessment report of the Master of Arts International Leisure, Tourism & Events Management (MILTEM) offered by NHL Stenden. The assessment was conducted by an audit panel compiled by Netherlands Quality Agency (NQA) and commissioned by NHL Stenden. Prior to the assessment process the audit panel has been approved by NVAO¹.

In this report NQA gives an 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 limited programme assessment*.

The site visit took place on 13 and 14 November 2019.

The audit panel consisted of:

Mr F. Radstake, chair

Mr T.G. Bauer PhD, THE-ICE auditor

Mrs dr. N. Ferdinand PhD, senior lecturer Oxford Brookes University

Ms E.M. van der Vies, student member

Mrs ir. M. Dekker-Joziase, NQA-auditor, acted as secretary of the panel.

The MILTEM study programme forms, together with the Master programme in Tourism Destination Management of Breda University of Applied Science, the visitation group 'HBO Master Toerisme', with the date of May 1st 2020 as the ultimate date for delivering this audit report to the NVAO. 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.

MILTEM offered a critical reflection that was set up according to the requirements of the appropriate NVAO assessment. During a preliminary consultation the site 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 supporting documents. Preliminary findings were discussed during the preliminary consultation during a Skype meeting. The critical reflection and all other (oral and written) information have enabled the panel to reach a deliberated judgement.

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

¹ Dutch, Flemish Accreditation Organisation

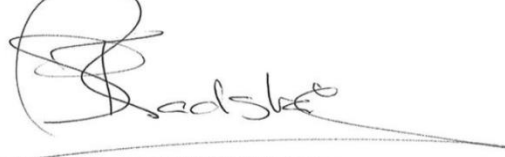
the final feedback session, the chair of the panel communicated the final assessment and the important findings to the study programme.

The Self Evaluation Report was aligned with the Self Reflection Report of the Academy's Research Unit. The research unit was assessed according to the *Branch Protocol for Research Quality Assurance 2016-2022*. The two audits are being completed back to back by the same audit panel. This reflects the high degree of integration between the activities of the research unit and the educational programme.

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

Utrecht, March 17, 2020

Panel chairman



Mr. F. Radstake

Panel secretary



ir. M. Dekker-Joziase

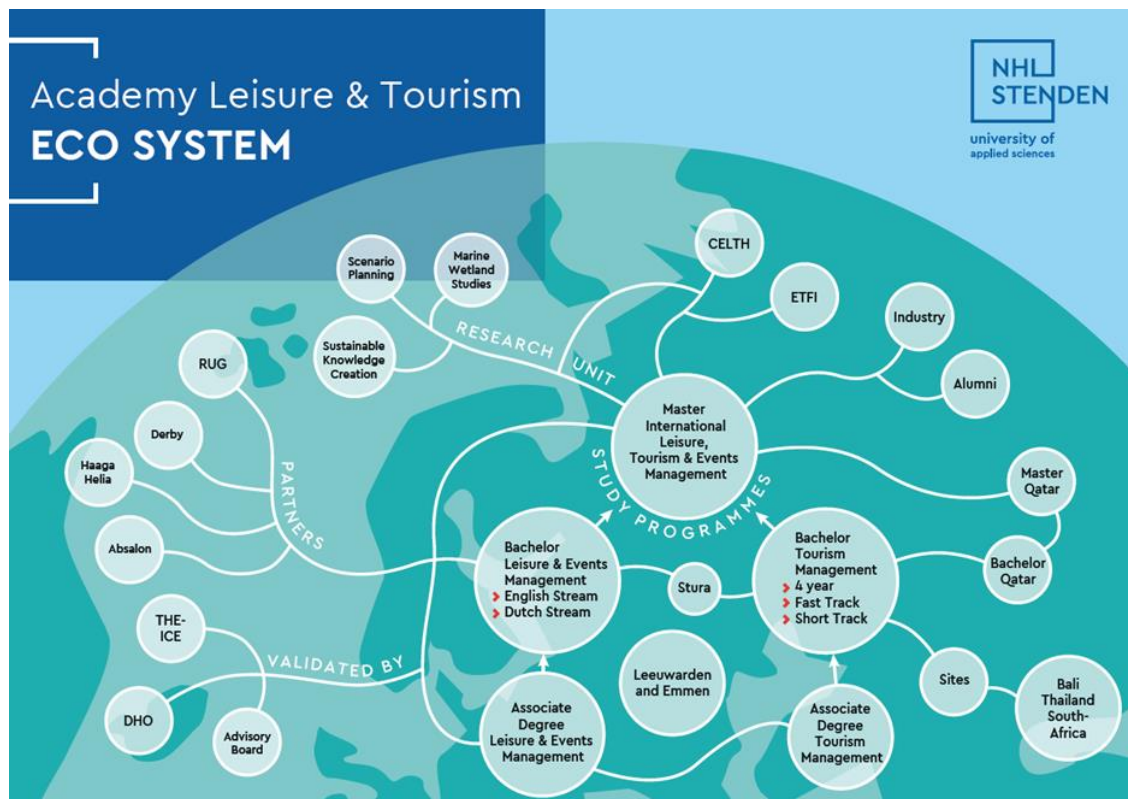
Basic data of the study programme

Administrative data

<i>Administrative data of the study programme</i>	
Name study programme as in CROHO	International Leisure, Tourism and Events Management (ILTEM)
Orientation and level study programme	Higher professional education; Master Education level 7
Grade	Master of Arts
Number of study credits	60 EC
Location(s)	Leeuwarden
Variant(s)	Fulltime
Language used	English
Registration number in CROHO	49135

Short outline of the study programme

MILTEM is part of the Academy of Leisure & Tourism of NHL Stenden. In this academy there is close cooperation with the Bachelor and Associate Degree programmes in Leisure & Events Management and Tourism Management (see figure below). All educational programmes are organised by the Academy of Leisure and Tourism Management. Within the academy there is close cooperation between ITM, the research groups of the Academy and the research centres of CELTH² and ETFI³.



² Centre of Expertise in Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality, since 2013

³ European Tourism Futures Institute (since 2010)

In 2018 MILTEM received its current name. Before, it was named Master International Leisure & Tourism Studies (MILTS). MILTEM offers a one year full-time study programme. In 2018 MILTEM had an intake of 39 students from sixteen different countries of origin. In 2019 the intake rose to fifty-six students.

The international credentials and the quality of education of the MILTEM programme are secured externally by the full membership of THE-ICE⁴.

The Academy of Leisure and Tourism Management aims to deliver industry-relevant, academically challenging educational experiences for students. It also offers a pre-master programme with the University of Groningen⁵. With the NHL Stenden international campuses in Indonesia, Thailand, South Africa and Qatar, mostly bachelor students are given the opportunity to spend a part of their study programme abroad to obtain hands on experiences in other countries and cultures.

Currently, about half of the MILTEM students followed an extra-curricula study route of 15 EC in partnership with the University of Derby (UoD in the United Kingdom). This route (15 EC) comprised additional guest lectures, field visits, a module in team leadership and group activities delivered by the UoD staff. Students had to explore contemporary and critical issues facing the tourism, leisure and event industries within the UK and work on innovative and creative solutions. On completing this route, the students obtained the UoD Master diploma. The two study programmes are wholly distinct. The academic regulations of each of the universities apply to the respective programmes. Each institution oversees its own qualifications. Therefore this UoD route is not taken into account in this accreditation report. Since 2017 the student satisfaction regarding the Derby route dropped, due to difficulties in enrolment in Derby. The Academy has rethought the cooperation with UoD and as result the contract with UoD will most likely not be renewed in September 2020. The Academy is exploring other strategic partnerships.

Previous accreditation

Since the previous accreditation in 2015 MILTEM has changed, reviewed and refreshed the content, structure and methods in the Master programme. The components of Leisure, Tourism and Events are restructured to get a better balance and focus in the curriculum. This enables a wider use of the expertise from within the whole Academy. Also, more attention is incorporated for creative and innovative ideas within students' work. Academy-wide, more focus is placed on an intensified educational experience, with greater industry relevance and interface, heightened attention for academic processes, disciplines and standards, more explicit attention to the development of professional competencies.

Student numbers

Since the Master programme opted for government funding in 2017 and was accepted, more students enroll in the programme as result of the lower tuition fee for Dutch and EU students. In

⁴ <http://the-ice.org>. The International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education, an international accreditation agency and global network of leading quality tourism, hospitality, events and culinary arts institutions.

⁵ By following this pre-master student scan secure a direct transfer to the MSc programme Tourism, Geography and Planning.

2019-2020 seventy students enrolled the Master programme. This enables the Academy to keep their PhD-staff and uphold the quality of the research focus in the curriculum.

Students from IC Qatar

In 2018 the MILTEM study programme was also launched at the NHL Stenden International Campus (IC Qatar) in Doha Qatar. This resulted in an intake of nine students in 2018. The Qatar programme was supported with content and quality assurance procedures, including second assessors for the theses and the service of an independent external supervisor. During the audit visit there were still five Master students active in Qatar, but they had not yet advanced in their thesis phase. The board of NHL Stenden has decided to end the Dutch diploma routes offered at IC Qatar.

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.

Conclusion

Based on the mentioned substantiation, the audit panel assesses that the MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 1

The professional profile of MILTEM is relevant and the competencies and derived learning outcomes are defined at the Master level (NLQF 7). MILTEM has a good sense of what the work field demands of graduates and what the work field can offer to students. The learning outcomes are well articulated and covered by the educational units. The learning outcomes represent the Master level and relate to the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude that is needed in the rapidly developing TLE domain. The panel has appreciation for the set-up of the learning outcomes and for the fact that MILTEM has an interdisciplinary approach and is looking at intersects with other important work fields.

Substantiation

Professional orientation

The panel finds that MILTEM has a clear professional orientation. With its curriculum, MILTEM offers graduates an international oriented programme that allows them to deepen their professional knowledge and to identify new opportunities for career and personal development. MILTEM is a strong and vibrant community, with strong shared values that educates Master students to become responsible professionals who can contribute to a sustainable future for the international tourism, leisure and events (TLE) industries. Through successful completion of the programme, students demonstrate a critical awareness of responsible approaches towards developments in the leisure, tourism and events industries, and a comprehensive understanding of applied research. MILTEM states that the students are facilitated to become responsible leaders within a dynamic international TLE-community.

MILTEM states in its self evaluation report that the study programme is unique in its integration of leisure, tourism and events, and uses a holistic, interdisciplinary approach. Tourism, Leisure and Events form the context for everything the students are learning. MILTEM graduates will typically (but not exclusively) find jobs in such fields as: policy and planning, management, consultancy and development, research or education, coordination of the interests of different industries and stakeholders in NGOs and other organisations.

To attain this MILTEM has four central aims:

- a. Academic aim, to develop the student's intellectual skills, competencies and way of independent thinking and working, based on academic, professional and international expertise.
- b. Professional aim, to provide students with in-depth knowledge and specialist skills and prepare them for their career.as Master of Arts in International Leisure, Tourism & Events Management.

- c. Personal aim, to encourage the development of the student's personal qualities: interpersonal skills, self-confidence, leadership, initiative and enterprise and an appropriate attitude to work.
- d. Sustainability aim, to enhance and promote innovation and creativity within students, preparing them to meet the challenges of a dynamic and rapidly changing industry with attention for the balance between the supply and demand of tourism, leisure and events within the limits of acceptable change for the destination community.

The panel has great appreciation for the MILTEM study programme and concludes that MILTEM has a good sense of what the work field demands and what MILTEM can offer. There is a great need to increase the educational level of employees the TLE-work field. This is in line with the aims of MILTEM and will also benefit essential interdisciplinary work with other fields like hospitality and retail. MILTEM reflects the needs of the TLE-field and educates its Master students accordingly. The students have a proper understanding of what the MILTEM programme is about. They understand that TLE-industry is the context for everything they are learning. The panel advises MILTEM first to seek cooperation with the hospitality study programmes and thereafter expand to retail and other fields within the boundaries of NHL Stenden's educational programmes. Hospitality offers the most natural extension for the MILTEM as much of leisure, tourism and events involves hospitality.

Final qualifications

The curriculum competencies are set up by MILTEM, in line with the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualification at level 7 and the Dublin Descriptors at Master level. The competencies and learning outcomes were developed and validated with the UK partner, the University of Derby. The cooperation with Derby will end after 2019-2020. MILTEM is looking for new benchmarking partners to provide similar input.

The central competencies are:

1. General objectives: critical reading, thinking independently, internationalisation and performing in a broader framework;
2. Conceptual reasoning: thinking in concepts and communicate ideas;
3. Strategic analysis: critical understanding of strategy questions and strategic planning, ability to analyse, evaluate and appreciate strategic policy documents;
4. Quality questioning and social responsibility: awareness of social responsibility and business ethics, critical attitude towards existing quality concepts, understanding of inter-wovenness of leisure, tourism and the events industry;
5. Research competency: understanding, production and presentation of academic evidence at a basic level, critical evaluation and analysis of research results and findings;
6. International orientation: critical visioning on globalisation processes within the domain, intercultural communication skills, operating in an international environment or organisation;
7. Making a difference to practice: usage of theoretical models as a tool and testing theory in practice.

In the *Teaching and Examination Regulations 2018-2019* the competencies are broken down into twenty learning outcomes with mentioning of the educational units in which the learning outcomes are addressed.

The relevance and currency of the competencies and learning outcomes are assured by the ongoing dialogue with the Advisory Board of the Academy of Leisure & Tourism, a group comprising of international practitioners and academics, and by the close alignment with the L&T

Research Unit's research agenda. Since 2013 MILTEM is a full member of THE-ICE (Tourism & Hospitality Education – International Centre of Excellence). Benchmarking cycles with other ICE member institutions, act as a guarantee of quality and comparability. Important partners for benchmarking are: Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, University of Derby and Breda University of Applied Sciences. Feedback on the connection with the work field is also collected by the MILTEM Board of Study (comprising staff and students), that continually evaluates the students' experiences within the study programme and during internships in the work field. The panel finds that MILTEM can work more strategically with employers to determine the skills they require.

Research skills

Nine out of the twenty learning outcomes and four study blocks (in total 20 EC) are directly related to research skills for the performance of practical research based on academic methods. This shows the importance of research in the MILTEM study programme. Students must be able to understand, produce, and present academic evidence at a level appropriate to a Master programme. This includes the review of literature, the definition of a problem, and development of research design, gathering data, and analysis of these data into a meaningful report. Overall students must develop the ability to critically evaluate and analyse the results of research and interpret findings (seek, handle and interpret information). In the final thesis students need to create a substantial piece of independent, investigative research using appropriate research instruments, underpinned by a consideration of methodological issues, and conduct reflective analysis of the findings of the research data.

To realise this MILTEM has a close relation with ETFI⁶ and with the Academy's research groups: Marine Wetlands Studies (WMS), Scenario Planning (SP) and Sustainable Innovation in the Regional Knowledge Economy (SIRKE). The professorship MWS organises the module 'Theoretical Perspectives in Leisure, Tourism and Events'. The professorship SIRKE organises the module 'Quality of Leisure, Tourism and Events' and the professorship SP organises the module 'Policy and Planning for Leisure, Tourism and Events'. Furthermore, the professors are involved in the research modules and thesis process. Also, the close relation to CELTH⁷, results in interesting research topics from the work field. The panel concludes that research and the attention for research skills are integrated very well in the Master study programme.

Internationalisation

International and intercultural aspects form an integral part of the student experience (competency 1). In the sixth competency it is described that students will develop a critical vision on the globalisation process in the context of leisure, tourism and events. Furthermore, there is focus on the development of communication skills in general and intercultural communication skills in particular and on the ability to act in an international environment or organisation. Students and lecturers have an international background and, through this, students learn to cooperate with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

The panel found that the Master programme embraces and puts the focus on internationalisation. Within the international community of staff and students it may be taken for granted. The panel thinks the students can be made more conscious of this by addressing internationalisation more

⁶ ETFI: the European Tourism Futures Institute, this is the knowledge centre of the Academy of Leisure and Tourism. Many student projects form the bases for ETFI output.

⁷ CELTH: the national Centre of Expertise for Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality in which the research groups of the Academy work closely together with researchers from, among others, the Breda University of Applied Sciences. CELTH aims to identify trends and developments in the work field.

specificly in the learning outcomes. The alignment from the sixth competency to the learning outcomes can be strengthened. Especially since internationalisation is one of the focus points in the renewal of the curriculum since 2018, and it is a priority of NHL Stenden.

Standard 2 Teaching-learning environment

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

Conclusion

The audit panel assesses that the MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 2.

The panel is convinced that MILTEM offers a challenging and interesting Master programme. The programme has a clear set up and offers students many opportunities to take in the necessary knowledge and skills to become future leaders in the TLE-industry with a keen sense for sustainability. This is supported by great facilities and highly qualified staff. MILTEM puts strong emphasis on personal development within the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities and on practical research skills. MILTEM offers student centred education with an open-door policy and good student guidance by staff.

The introduction of Design Based Education (DBE) is in progress. Certain elements are already present, like the attention for personal development. Some new features will be addressed in the upcoming years, like more flexibility in study routes. For DBE to be successful there needs to be a consensus among staff about its implementation. The panel advises that this is monitored closely, although the panel thinks that the changes in working environment (atelier, open work spaces) are a bigger change than the introduction of DBE. The panel recommends that the health and well-being of staff working in the open work spaces be monitored. Proactive steps should be taken to prevent the well-known downsides of working in open plan offices for staff. In future MILTEM can educate its students more about DBE, that way students can design their learning paths more consciously and in line with the didactical concept and the expectations of the staff.

Substantiation

Structure of the curriculum

The panel finds that the MILTEM curriculum has a clear structure. The alignment of the modules with the competencies and the learning outcomes is clearly described in the Course document and in the Module manuals. The curriculum is delivered in four periods of ten weeks; each period accounting for 15 EC. Each period consists of a core module (10 EC) combined with a research module (5 EC). One could say that there are two learning lines: the LTE (Leisure, Tourism and Events)-core modules and the Research modules. These are more interwoven than Figure 1 shows. Research is integrated with the knowledge of the LTE-line. The four research-specific modules run sequentially and concurrently with the core modules. Each core module is supported by one of the Academy research units' professorships. This gives a good guarantee for connectivity to the research unit, a firm academic grounding and for ensuring of the currency of TLE-content. The fourth and final period consists of the analysis and writing of the final thesis (10 EC) and a choice of an elective module of 5 EC; either participation in an ETFI research project, the module Entrepreneurship and Innovation or the module Managing Events Organisations. An elective in Contemporary Issues in Heritage is being piloted in 2019-2020. In total MILTEM offers its students a one-year, full-time curriculum of 60 European Credits (see Figure 1).

Introduction Week			
Period 1: Setting the Framework : The Past <i>Academic underpinning from: Marine Wetlands Studies</i>			
Theoretical Perspectives on Leisure, Tourism & Events (10 EC) <i>Explores conceptual contributions of philosophy, psychology, sociology, geography and economics to the field of LT&E Sustainability is a core element in this and draws the contributions of theory into debate with the viewpoint of stakeholders, with a specific tourism destination as case</i>		Research 1: Defining a Contemporary Topic (5 EC)	
Period 2: Operationalising the Framework: The Present <i>Academic underpinning from: Sustainable Knowledge Creation in the Regional Economy</i>			
Quality of Leisure, Tourism & Events (10 EC) <i>Analyses quality aspects of LT&E in the context of quality of human life, from a multidisciplinary aspect followed by an applied case involving Community Development</i>		Research 2: Thesis Proposal (5 EC)	
Period 3: Beyond the Framework : The Future <i>Academic underpinning from: Scenario Planning</i>			
Policy & Planning & the Future of Leisure, Tourism & Events (10 EC) <i>Explores the frameworks and issues for the development of policy in LT&E, incorporating scenario planning methods in conjunction with ETFI and incorporating change management and project management attributes</i>		Research 3: Data Collection (5 EC)	
Period 4 : Master Thesis			
Electives (one of the following)			Research 4: Analysis and Writing (10 EC)
ETFI Projects (5 EC)	Entrepreneurship and Innovation (5 EC)	Managing Events Organisations (5 EC)	
Submission/Completion & Graduation			

Figure 1: structure of the MILTEM curriculum

Didactic concept

The educational programmes of the Academy are based on the didactical vision of Stenden; that builds on Problem and Case Based Learning and attention for internationalisation and research. Now there is a gradual shift towards the new didactical concept of NHL Stenden, called Design Based Education (DBE) with more attention for personal learning routes and personal development. The basis remains a social constructivist approach: the use of realistic learning environments in which students develop their knowledge, attitude and skills. MILTEM has started with a more student-centered approach supported by an appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategy and will continue to develop this in the upcoming years. For a realistic learning environment, students work on theme-based cases from the professional practice and have to apply the obtained knowledge directly in the cases to come up with solutions for new or improved practice. The learning activities are designed for co-operative learning as experience in team projects with emphasis on group work in class, coupled with individual assignments. The MILTEM team is discussing how they can further incorporate DBE. The team sees it as a chance to further strengthen the interaction with the industry. The panel has confidence that the MILTEM team will be successful.

To accomplish this didactical concept, a mixture of teaching and learning methods is used: lectures, seminars, skills labs for research and personal development, workshops, case studies, fieldtrips, projects and independent self-study. In their portfolio, the students describe their

learning process and achievements and collect the evidence from assignments, presentations, assessments, feedback, records of discussions and self-reflection.

Since 2016, staff members are becoming increasingly familiar with the new DBE-approach. A new learning environment is being developed to facilitate the DBE-concept. In practice students and staff are already enthusiastic about working closer together in the new 'Atelier' working space, where there is close interaction with peers and lecturers, from all study programmes within the Academy.

From the discussions with the lecturers the panel concludes that the DBE concept is not seen as a big change. Many elements of this didactical concept are already in place within the Master curriculum. The panel finds the staff and management very conscious regarding the ongoing changes and the position of the MILTEM study programme. A point for improvement, according to the panel, is to educate students more on the DBE-concept. In that way students can design their learning paths more consciously and in line with the expectations of the staff and the didactical concept.

Knowledge and skills

In the co-operative learning setting, students must look for knowledge actively in literature, through research and in encounters with fellow students and lecturers and representatives of the industry. Students learn to monitor, describe and analyse international and national developments in the leisure, tourism and events industries and to link this to their understanding of individual, social, cultural, economic, and environmental values of industry developments. Emphasis is placed on a sustainable approach towards leisure, tourism and events, through concepts such as quality of life, personal leadership and sustainability. Students learn to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs. That requires knowledge and understanding, careful analysis, visioning, planning and leadership, together with emphasis on process rather than product.

The panel is convinced by the course description and the explanations of the lecturers that the students obtain the desired level of theoretical knowledge with perspectives from different fields: geography, social studies, life style, identity formation, sustainability, economics et cetera). Students are taught the underlying general principles and the effect and impact on the sectors of tourism, leisure and events. Students have to read articles and research papers and connect the theory to the fields of TLE. Since the incorporation of Events, more articles were added on sports and events. The panel concludes that there is a good balance in the knowledge and the context. Students do learn and understand that they have to apply the general concepts and knowledge in different settings and that the assignments steer them in the right direction, for example the case of a manager of an escape room, where students had to discuss play theory, customer satisfaction and international perspectives. Students also confirm how sustainability is embedded in the whole curriculum. The UN-goals are integrated in many assignments.

The MILTEM curriculum focuses on the development of skills like critical understanding, critical and inquisitive attitude, vision and international perspective in relation to academic and professional enhancement in the leisure, tourism and events industries. Students have to combine insights from different disciplines and develop ideas for new or improved practice. Students learn to create and balance benefits for the communities, the industry and the individuals.

Like most management education programmes there is a focus on intellectual skills, practical, subject specific and transferable skills. Students need to demonstrate their capacity to use theoretical tools to test practice and oversee the consequences of decisions. Students develop their social skills and emotional resilience, creativity, mental agility, learning habits, independent

thinking and self-knowledge. This will help to determine their own role and position in situations and processes. Critical thinking and basic research skills are essential life long learning skills to let students develop a critical vision on the globalisation process in the context of leisure, tourism and events. Last but not least, emphasis is put on leadership skills, because MILTEM wants to educate the future leaders for sustainable tourism, leisure and events management. This starts by letting students determine their personal goals in the very first module. Students have to reflect on and evaluate their own values and goals regularly in all modules and assignments in presenting, pitching, chairing, debating, being critical, analysing, steering, making decisions, and being aware of trends. This is an important part of the personal development, which makes it possible for students to underpin their decisions. The panel had the opportunity to speak to students individually and students demonstrated by using examples how they were applying theoretical knowledge to real-world problems (e.g. by developing thesis questions or completing coursework projects). Besides the development of personal skills, the panel prompts MILTEM in the direction of leadership skills training to prepare students even more for the future leader positions.

Research

Practical research and research skills have been major focus points for the Master study programme. The panel concludes that the attention for research is clearly visible in the curriculum set-up with the four research modules and the adoption of the research modules by the three professorships of the Academy. The distinct modules represent different stages in the development of a final thesis, so their place, scope and coherence in the curriculum is clear. Furthermore, the professors and lecturer-researchers are involved in the research modules and in the thesis process.

Students' projects and products show a comprehensive output of the research done. The student projects are often the basis for publications in the ETFI (Journal of Tourism Futures). The panel judges the quality of the ETFI Journal as very good.

The panel concludes that students are trained in an appropriate regard for academic standards and with the aim to develop critical and inquisitive skills towards sustainable tourism, leisure and events and perform practical research individually and based on sound academic standards. The panel concludes that the research modules eventually culminate in the thesis. Students perform a research project individually for a company/organisation in the tourism, leisure or events industry. The panel finds that the MILTEM curriculum shows a strong research line throughout the whole curriculum.

Internationalisation and choice of language

As mentioned in standard 1 internationalisation is a central focus point in the MILTEM study programme. It seems so naturally integrated in the whole curriculum that it is sometimes forgotten and could be mentioned more explicitly in the learning outcomes and the module descriptions. This will make staff and students more conscious of what is offered and what is learned regarding international subject and context. The goal of MILTEM is to educate students in serving the needs of a truly global industry. Staff members have the aim to best equip an international student population to achieve their full potential in pursuing a career in the globalising industry of leisure, tourism and events. By offering the MILTEM curriculum in English a broader group of students can be taught and the opportunities for the students and graduates in the very international work field are maximised.

Students and many lecturers have an international background and, through this, students learn to cooperate with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Because of the international

community and the international, even global, challenges in the work field the MILTEM curriculum is offered in the English language. This also facilitates a high level of connectivity with the research activities of the Academy's Research Unit, professorships, ETFI and with the international strategic partners.

The panel finds the choice for the English language acceptable and well underpinned.

Admission and student coaching

MILTEM has one intake per year in September. In 2019 there were students of 21 different nationalities active in the MILTEM curriculum. The management sees a shift from Asian students to more European students. About a quarter to a third of the student population is of Dutch origin. The panel judges that ITM has a robust admissions policy and the requirements for enrolment are described in the TER of MILTEM. Enrolling students must have a Bachelor degree (internationally recognised), preferably in Leisure, Tourism, Economics or Business Studies. Other Bachelor degrees are evaluated on a case-by-case basis of which a Skype interview can be part. Students must submit an English proficiency test with scores of at least 6.0 Academic IELTS, 550 TOEFL, Cambridge ESOL score FCE-C 169, TOEIC 670 (listening reading) and 290 (speaking and writing). Students with an appropriate Bachelor degree, including English language exams at havo/vwo level, can be exempted from the mandatory language test. If students are not directly eligible, they can follow a pre-master, about 10-15 students per year opt to follow this route. Students can apply for further exemptions, based on prior education and diplomas. All exemptions are closely controlled on an individual basis by the Exam Committee.

With study coaching lecturers maintain an open-door policy to address student concerns and to coach students in their study path. Throughout the programme, students have the opportunity to meet their module coordinator, course leader or thesis supervisor individually in the capacity as personal coach. Students will meet a minimum of three times in a year with the mentioned members of staff. Central in these meetings will be the student and his or her personal progress in the Master programme. Students register their progress in a portfolio. In the portfolio students collect proof of their skills and knowledge through collection of assignments presentations, test results and test evaluations, feedback on seminars, records of discussions with staff, thesis supervision discussions and reflection on modules taken.

The panel is very positive regarding the Personal and Professional Development and extracurricular guidance that is offered to students. Students can choose freely which workshops they want to attend, for example workshops in job application, intercultural, presentation skills and management skills. Each student is guided by a coach/staff member.

The panel is very positive regarding the open door policy and the way this is imbedded in the ateliers where students and teachers work close together. This gives great opportunities to students to receive proper and especially personal guidance. Students appreciate this highly and student centered approach of staff members. The panel also sees the great effort that staff members put in and warns management to safeguard the staff members. The panel advises the management to evaluate the open environment from the staff's perspective and determine if the open door policy is feasible with the growing student numbers.

Learning paths

The MILTEM curriculum has no specific specialisations. By choosing a context for assignments and with projects students can obtain experience in the tourism, leisure and/of events work field.

With the extracurricular University of Derby study route of 15 EC students can gain more experience in team leadership and obtain more direct experience in tourism, leisure or events management concepts and challenges in the UK context. After completion students obtain the Master degree from UoD.

Staff

The MILTEM curriculum is being delivered by a very dedicated and highly qualified core team of staff. The staff team is responsible for the set-up, content of the programme and the teaching, tutoring and assessing of students. Staff members have extensive academic and/or industry experience and current research activity. The team is supported by an extended auxiliary team with members with specific expertise. The restructuring of MILTEM within the new Academy has created a basis for establishing a broader input of specialists to represent the different themes, tapping the diverse expertise within the Academy. MILTEM has the ambition to create a dedicated MILTEM team within the Academy, with the MILTEM Course Leader becoming more responsible for steering and developing the team. This could strengthen the programme, creating greater consistencies, furthering a research culture, and seeking new opportunities for combining research and lecturing duties. The current growth in student numbers might make this possible.

A staff overview counts 21 staff members (in total 16.5 fte), who all have a Master degree and seven hold a PhD-title. Three staff members working on their PhD. Most lecturers are also a member of the Academy's research unit and participate in the research of the professorships and/or ETFI. The lecturers with a PhD and/or research experience form a thesis supervisors and assessors team.

Services and facilities

The panel finds that the facilities for the MILTEM study programme are good. There are not yet specific provisions or facilities for the Master students, but from a tour of the facilities the panel found the general facilities supportive. Especially the atelier where students from different levels and study programmes work together on projects and with the lecturers close by, is very inspiring. These kinds of facilities fit with the DBE-concept. It enhances the cooperation among students and with teachers and sometimes representatives from the work field. In the discussions with students, staff and management the panel found that the open-door working policy (in the atelier and with student's counselling) can have some set backs. It is not put in practice or embraced by all staff. The panel advises to keep a close look on this and to create several quiet work spaces for staff. The panel thinks that the changes in the working space are a bigger change than the incorporation of DBE. These concerns are shared by the management and staff.

Students are overall positive regarding the services and facilities, although there are some remarks about the on timely availability of books and assignments. Many of the supporting processes and procedures are addressed in close collaboration with the Master of Arts in International Hospitality & Service Management of NHL Stenden. Blackboard is the principal medium used in the MILTEM community. Most of the literature needed during the modules can be found in the NHL Stenden library. The collection comprises study books, journals and a lot of online content. Catalogues of other universities are also available online, and MSc students have access to the electronic journals of the University of Derby.

Standard 3 Assessment

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

Conclusion

Based on the substantiations the audit panel assesses that the MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 3.

The panel is impressed with the emphasis that MILTEM places on grading and examination and the way the four-eye-principle and examiner calibration is set in place. It is positive that a more holistic approach is used and that students are offered feedback, mostly verbal. Examiners have many discussions that aim at calibration of grading and guidelines. With the current number of students this works well, but with a growing number of students the panel encourages MILTEM to work on more formalisation. The panel advises to put in place written guidelines as a result of all the calibrations and common understanding. Not everything can stay discussion based, especially with the growing number of students. Students want more alignment amongst examiners. This can also be beneficial to new staff members.

The panel appreciates the efforts MILTEM puts in the quality assurance of assessments. The quality assurance bodies are in place and fulfil their role. The external examiner and peer review with other academies and universities are extras that contribute to the assessment quality.

Substantiation

Assessment policy

The panel finds that MILTEM has a clear and well described assessment policy and regulations. The assessment strategy is based on the *Stenden Testing and Assessment Policy Framework* (April 2010) and is described in the *Teaching and Examination Regulations 2018-2019* (TER). In the coming year adaptation of the assessment policy to the DBE is on the agenda. The TER offers a test overview with a breakdown into test components, learning outcomes, test form, study load, compensations, responsible teacher and test period. The Course Document and the module books contain more detailed information on assessment criteria, which are also discussed in class. This enables students to prepare well.

MILTEM incorporates a mix of formative and summative assessments, both oral and written, that suits the Master level. The testing and assessment procedures must be clear, balanced, transparent and efficient and meet with internationally comparable standards. Therefore MILTEM works with peer reflection and lecturer's feedback to provide a holistic and constructivist underpinning throughout the curriculum. This contributes to a broad and mutual understanding of grading criteria. MILTEM works with combinations of group and individual assessments. Group assessment makes up a maximum of forty percent of the total scores. The maximum group size for group assessment is five students. Individual students need at least fifty-five percent of the maximum score to pass a module. With insufficient grades only one re-sit is offered for each module, exam, or assignment within the same academic year.

Oral examination and presentations are assessed by two assessors. If only one, the assessment will be recorded. Written exams are assessed by one assessor. A student may submit a request to the Exam Committee for a second opinion. If examiners cannot agree the Examination

Committee may appoint a third examiner, who gives a binding verdict. Students can ask the Exam Committee for extra time, enrolment or re-sits, in case of force majeure circumstances. If a student has passed all modules but one, and the score for this one module is at least 40 percent, one extra re-sit opportunity may be given for this module, with the exception of the Master thesis. A Master thesis can be re-submitted only once.

With the holistic approach, feedback is seen as an essential part of the learning process. Students receive feedback on assignments and tests and are stimulated to contact staff to discuss this. The feedback is noted in the assessment rubrics of assignments, though much feedback is given verbally.

Execution of assessment policy

The panel finds the assignments and assessments to be of the expected Master level and the given scores are noted on the grading forms that graders and examiners work with. This became clear in viewing a representative selection of exams, assignments and tests. The panel has seen a good mixture of formative and summative testing and of individual and group assessments. The panel encourages examiners to note down the feedback more often and more clearly on the exam forms in order to inform students more clearly on where they stand and what can be further improved. Students do acknowledge that they can always ask for feedback voluntarily and that teachers are eager to do so. But for the holistic and constructivist approach to assessing, the panel recommends to note down the feedback more often. Staff and examiners have convinced the panel that the practice of calibration discussions between the various graders is in place and helps to develop a common level and approach to grading. These discussions take place before, during and after grading and help to limit the differences between graders. Students still notice differences among examiners; although overall they are positive regarding examinations and assessments (3.6 out of 5 score in annual student survey). The panel recommends putting in place written guidelines as a result of all the calibrations. Not everything can stay discussion based, especially with the growing number of students. Such guidelines can also be beneficial to new staff members.

The ratio between individual grading and group grading is present in every module. Students experience it as a good balance and a good way to individually show their knowledge and skills and in the meanwhile also show certain skills related to co-operation and communication. Students experience that grades are given according to the effort students show within the group work. In the discussion part of report and assignments, each student has to show understanding. If necessary, grades can differ within the group. To determine this, the instrument of peer-assessment is used.

Quality assurance of assessments

Several bodies play a role in the quality assurance of tests and examinations. The Exam Committee (combined with the Master International Hospitality Management) oversees the adherence to the TER, annually nominates the examiners and handles the formal requests and complaints from students. The Test Committee, as a sub-committee from the Exam Committee, inspects the tests, testing procedures, administration, testing facilities and lesser complaints. The Test Committee also gives feedback and advice on tests to the examiners, to guarantee validity, transparency, reliability and efficiency of assessments. The quality is monitored in regular audits. An external examiner regularly checks example sets of student work, assessment materials and procedures. There also is peer review with other academies and universities. The input is used for the discussions amongst the examiners and within the MILTEM team.

The panel appreciates the fact that with many exams and grading, certainly at end level, the four-eye-principle is used. Especially with the thesis, two examiners first grade individually and then come to consensus during a meeting. The students receive their final grade on the consensus form, together with the combined feedback. The panel finds that MILTEM is open to exchanging experience and views on grading and examination and puts in more than standard effort to improve grading and assessments. Most staff members/examiners are BKE-trained and some are SKE-certified. This supports this quality assurance of assessments.

Standard 4 Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Conclusion

The audit panel assesses that the MILTEM study programme **meets** the generic quality for standard 4.

The panel is positive regarding the set-up of the graduation phase and the content, level and quality of the selected theses. The research subjects fit well with the LTE-field and often have an international character. Students are successful in their career and often find jobs in their field. MILTEM is advised to start some kind of alumni tracking system to monitor if students stay in their field of work and if they are able to find jobs fitting for the Master level.

Substantiation

Set-up of graduation phase

The Master of Arts degree is obtained when all modules, assessments and the Master thesis are passed with at least a grade of 6 points (pass rate is 55%). The student's achievements and his/her reflection on the modules are collected in a portfolio. The thesis builds on the previous three research modules and is the overall final assessment at end level. Students must individually create a substantial piece of independent, investigative research using appropriate research instruments, underpinned by a consideration of methodological issues, and conduct reflective analysis of the findings of the research data. The chosen topic is derived from and planned in their previous modules. With the thesis most of the competencies are covered: conceptual reasoning, strategic analysis, quality questioning, research competencies and international orientation. The *Master Thesis Handbook* gives clear guidelines regarding the desired learning outcomes, the assessment and criteria for marking, the planning, report guidelines and possible resit procedure. The Master thesis is assessed by two examiners: the student's supervisor and a second staff member. The supervisor is allocated early in the academic year when the topics of the theses become clear and a fit with the expertise of staff members is possible. During the academic year, students have four central supervision sessions. For these sessions, students create (poster) presentations to discuss and stimulate ideas, give each other feedback and keep an eye on the progress overall. This gives input to the students for their research plan, including a basic literature review. The connection with the research modules supports the process and helps students to sustain momentum.

Level of intended learning outcomes in graduation products

The panel has selected fifteen theses from the total lists of graduates. One third was chosen from the graduation cohort 2017-2018 and two thirds from the cohort 2018-2019. The given grades were chosen in a range from 5.5 to 9, according to the differentiation in grading in the total list. There are no theses from Doha students, because there are no graduated students yet from Doha.

The panel found the subjects and level fitting for the Master level and often related to the international LTE-field. The panel saw theses on for example: the effects of FIFA World Cup 2014 in Brazil on local residents, the effects of home sharing and overtourism on local residents in

Berlin, the pleasure and fun in fright attractions and the service experience of Dutch day spa customers.

The theses show a sound approach to applied research and show that students can follow the proper phases in research, analyse their findings and underpin these in a research report at Master level. The panel is positive about all theses, also the ones with somewhat lower grades. MILTEM guards the threshold for the Master level. This is confirmed by the external examiner who regularly reviews samples of theses and provides feedback on the content, set-up and grading. This supervisor, in his report, is positive regarding the level of the theses and the grading and describes them as comfortable passes, even the lower grades. The currency and relevance of topics is also discussed with the Advisory Board of Leisure & Tourism.

Functioning of alumni in the field

MILTEM invests in maintaining contact with alumni to collect their opinions regarding the MILTEM study programme and the connection to the work field. From a survey, which was executed by the programme itself, it is clear that alumni hold positions mostly as team or sales managers, project leaders/coordinators, or as directors/CEOs/founders of companies with a variety of commercial and non-commercial companies often related to TLE or as (senior) lecturer or at universities. A minor fraction of the students continue in PhD-study programmes.

The panel notices that there is a great demand in the work field for highly educated professionals in the TLE sectors. The question worldwide is if students end up at the right level in the appropriate jobs. This is something that MILTEM can monitor more by starting an alumni system to keep better track of the positions after graduation or after five to ten years in the work field. This will provide more information whereby the connection with the work field can be further strengthened.

General conclusion on the study programme

Assessments of the standards

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

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

Considerations and conclusion

Weighing of the judgements with regard to the four standards is based on the assessment rules of NVAO:

The panel finds that MILTEM offers an interesting study programme to students. It aims at the right Master level and prepares students for leading positions with the Leisure, Tourism and Events industry. Students are educated in the domain of TLE and obtain the skills and knowledge to research and address more specific subjects in their thesis phase. MILTEM maintains very good connections with the international work field, which is beneficial for a good alignment of the curriculum with the demands of the work field. The panel has great appreciation for the staff and the quality culture within MILTEM. Staff is very dedicated and has good attention for the students and closely monitors the quality of the curriculum and the assessments. Although, more formalisation is recommended by the panel regarding grading frameworks. MILTEM already incorporates elements of the new NHL Stenden's educational vision and has a good basis to expand this further.

The audit panel assesses the quality of the Master of Arts study programme International Leisure, Tourism & Events Management of NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences as **positive**.

Recommendations, points of attention

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

Standard 1

- The panel recommends MILTEM to continue the good contact with the TLE work field to stay on track of what skills are asked for in the fast-evolving domain.

Standard 2

- The panel recommends MILTEM to safeguard the working conditions of staff and to monitor if the open-door policy and the very student centered approach is workable in future with the growing student population.

Standard 3

- MILTEM is advised to continue with the calibrations and, as a result, form derived guidelines for grading. With a growing Master programme not everything can stay discussion based. Some formalisation might be needed, also as a framework for new staff members.

Standard 4

- The panel advises MILTEM to set up an alumni monitoring system, to keep track of the career and positions of the alumni and the connection to the fast developing TLE-domain.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme for the site visit

Wednesday the 13th of November 2019 - MILTEM

Time	Activity	Location
08.30 – 08.45	Welcome and document explanation	Lobby Stenden Hotel / meeting room 11
08.45 – 09.45	Showcase (MILTEM & Research Unit), including tour	Meeting room 9
09.45 – 11.00	Document check by panel	Meeting room 11
11.00 – 11.45	Meeting with Management Team	Meeting room 9
11.45 – 12.30	Lunch panel	Meeting room 11
12.30 – 13.15	Meeting with lecturers	Meeting room 9
13.30 – 14.15	Meeting with students and alumni	Meeting room 9
14.30 – 15.15	Meeting with committees*	Meeting room 9
15.30 – 16.15	Meeting with industry representatives	Meeting room 9
16.15 – 17.00	Internal deliberations and preparation feedback	Meeting room 9
17.00 – 17.15	Feedback to Management Team	Meeting room 9

* Committees consist of Exam Committee, Test Committee, Admissions Committee and Board of Study

Thursday the 14th of November 2019 – Research Unit L&T

Time	Activity	Location
08.30 – 09.30	Document check by panel	Meeting room 11
09.30 – 10.15	Presentation research projects	Meeting room 9
10.30 – 11.15	Meeting with professors	Meeting room 9
11.30 – 12.15	Lunch panel	Meeting room 11
12.15 – 13.00	Meeting with lecturers, students and research group members	Meeting room 9
13.15 – 14.00	Meeting with external stakeholders	Meeting room 9
14.15 – 15.00	Meeting with Management Team	Meeting room 9
15.15 – 16.00	Internal deliberations and preparation feedback	Meeting room 9
16.00 – 16.15	Panel report of findings (for Management Team)	Meeting room 9
16.15 – 16.30	Panel report of findings (plenary)	Meeting room 9
16.45 – 17.15	Development conversation with Management Team	Meeting room 9
16.30	Drinks	Lobby Stenden Hotel

Appendix 2: Documents examined

Critical Reflection report MILTEM, October 2019

Teaching and Examination Regulations for the MILTEM programme and appendices 2017-2018 and 2018-2019

Course document MILTEM 2018-2019

MILTEM Staff Overview 2019

MILTEM testing and Assessments Policy 2019

Thesis handbook 2018-2019

List of graduates 2017-2018 and 2018-2019

Report external examiner theses

Theses and grading forms of fifteen selected graduates

Selection of testing and education materials, including student products

Subject for development conversation: integral approach visitation

Notes from quality committees