

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration **Nyenrode Business Universiteit** **Assessment report**

9 August 2021



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1. SUMMARY

This document reports on the programme assessment of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at Nyenrode Business Universiteit (NBU), conducted online on 18 May 2021.

The NBU bachelor's programme in Business Administration aims to provide students with academic knowledge and the ability to apply this information within a management context. Besides the academic components of the programme, personal development of students is considered very important. The programme has adopted the NBU mission (to serve society by shaping responsible leaders) in the so-called LES trinity of values (Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Stewardship). Several benchmarks of the ILO's have been executed with ILO's at other universities in the Netherlands and Europe. According to the panel, the learning outcomes reflect the interdisciplinary character of business administration studies, connecting knowledge and insights from various disciplines.

In the first year, the development of professional and personal skills involve mainly basic academic knowledge and skills; in year 2, these basic skills are being extended and applied. In year 3, students are encouraged to broaden their horizon by studying abroad and by doing thesis research. During their studies, students undergo a Personal Leadership Development Journey (PLDJ) which runs throughout the three years of the program. The programme offers many different ways for students to develop themselves professionally and personally, which is reflected in courses, projects, the PLDJ, campus life and in sports.

The panel found the programme in line with the NBU ambitions and the ILO's. The structure of the programme clearly reflects a professional character, fuelled by a scientific and theoretical background. The programme acts very responsive to its environment and actively incorporates new relevant subjects. The language of the programme is English, which serves the international orientation of the programme; students are being prepared for a career in international business. The intake of students is well organized and realistic in view of the ILO's. The panel acknowledges efforts from programme management to diversify the student population.

Student support and counseling services are well in place. Connections between programme management, lecturers and students are informal and close. The small scale character of the program enables programme management to closely monitor students and their progress and act on this accordingly.

NBU requires that all lecturers have an international focus and their English language skills are adequate for teaching in English. Currently 22% of faculty members teaching in the programme come from outside the Netherlands. The panel appreciates the high student/staff ratio which fits the small-scale learning environment and facilitates intensive contacts between staff and students. The dedication of the staff to education, and their engagement with the learning experiences of students is impressive.

NBU has a beautiful campus in Breukelen, and constitutes a very special environment in which to live and learn (referred to as the Nyenrode Experience). All facilities here are excellent for academic and

social life, including sports. The Amsterdam campus has its own interesting features, but academic life and social life are separated (with student housing in Diemen-Zuid). Students in Amsterdam tend to be much more on their own. The panel suggests to monitor the learning experiences of students in Amsterdam carefully.

The quality assurance system is well organized and addresses the plan-do-check-act cycle in an appropriate way. It includes all relevant stakeholders and the small scale and informal culture enables the program to react promptly to any issues occurring. As a next step, the panel advises to incorporate the individual elements into a more structured, embedded and connected system, while finding a proper balance between a formal and informal culture.

NBU has an elaborate assessment system in place, including oral and written exams, essays, reports, reflections, portfolios and group assignments. Lecturers are required to indicate in the course constructs how the LES values and the Head-Heart-Hands educational philosophy will be assessed. Assessment contains a good balance between group and individual assignments. The panel has reviewed several assessments and theses and confirms that they meet the required level and provide appropriate grading and feedback to students. Alumni seem to be very satisfied with what they have learned and indicate that they have benefited a lot from the programme.

Hence, the panel issues a positive recommendation to NVAO for the accreditation of the Bachelor of Science programme in Business Administration offered by NBU.

The chair and the secretary of the panel declare that all panel members have studied this report and agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Utrecht, 9th August 2021



Prof.dr. Joël Branson
(chair)



Suzanne den Tuinder MSc
(secretary)

2. INTRODUCTION

Procedure

Nyenrode Business Universiteit (NBU) assigned Odion Onderzoek to perform the quality assessment of the Bachelor of Science programme in Business Administration. The assessment was performed according to the eleven standards of the 2018 NVAO assessment framework for extensive programme assessment.

The programme composed a panel of peers (assessment committee) that performed the underlying assessment¹:

- Prof. dr. J. (Joël) Branson, professor in Accounting and Auditing, dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and member of the Board of Vrije Universiteit Brussel (België) [chair];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jan) de Vries, professor of Operations Management at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (panel member)
- Prof. dr. M.G. (Mariëlle) Heijltjes, professor of Organizational Behavior at Universiteit Maastricht (member)
- Prof. M.J. (Mike) Page, professor of Finance & Management at Bentley University (Massachusetts, USA) (member)
- J. (Jessica) Woitalla, student International Business Administration at the Rotterdam School of Management (student-member)

The panel was supported by drs. (Suzanne) den Tuinder (secretary), and dr. (Egide) Maassen of Odion Onderzoek.

The composition of the panel and secretary was approved by the NVAO. The panel members were instructed and informed about the assessment framework and procedure prior to and during the preparatory meeting by the secretary. The panel members and secretary all signed a declaration of independence.

The site visit was initially planned for November 2020, but postponed to 18 May 2021 due to the COVID situation. In the run-up to the site visit in May, NBU prepared an additional report (next to the self-evaluation report which was already written for November), with an update on recent developments and a description of NBU measures to cope with the COVID situation (including reflection). The panel studied the self-evaluation report and the additional report prepared by NBU and several supporting documents that were made available online. NBU also made a complete list of final graduation projects

¹ Extended biographies are provided in annex 4.

available (digitally) of all graduates in 2019 and 2020. The panel selected fifteen theses (from five different content areas) from this list, that were made available to the panel, including the assessment forms. These were distributed among the panel members. The student member reviewed three theses that one other panel member also reviewed. The reviews were discussed by the panel prior to the site visit. A list of all documents examined by the panel is available in Annex 3.

The panel members shared their first impressions (on the self-evaluation report plus a report on the current state of affairs) with the secretary prior to the site visit. The secretary made a compilation of these first impressions and shared it with the panel members.

During a preparatory meeting on the 17th of May the panel members discussed their impressions and identified key issues for discussion. On the 18th of May the panel visited NBU online. It conducted interviews with management, teaching staff, committees, students and alumni. The online learning environment for the students, exams and digital tools used by NBU students was made available to the panel one day prior to the online visit.

As required by the 2018 NVAO assessment framework, NBU staff and students were given the opportunity to address and discuss issues with the panel in confidence. They were notified in an email by NBU. Before the site visit, two students contacted the secretary to meet the panel (online) during the site visit. This meeting was scheduled during lunchtime in a confidential setting, and lasted twenty minutes.

At the end of the site visit the panel issued a judgement on the programme according to the eleven standards of the 2018 NVAO assessment framework for extensive programme assessment. The panel assessed the programme in an independent manner. At the end of the visit, the chair presented the initial findings (orally) to NBU.

The programme of the site visit is described in Annex 2.

The underlying report contains a systematic presentation of the panel's findings, considerations and conclusions according to the 2018 NVAO assessment framework for extensive programme assessment. A draft version of the report was prepared by the secretary after the site visit and was sent to the panel members for comments. The draft report was then edited based on the panel's comments and subsequently endorsed by the chair. Thereafter, the report was sent to NBU for a review on any factual inaccuracies. Upon their response, this report has been finalised and endorsed by the chair.

Institution

NBU was founded shortly after World War II by leading Dutch businesses – AkzoNobel, Philips, Unilever and Shell – with the purpose of creating a new generation of business leaders who were action focused

and internationally oriented. It operates under the name NBU Nyenrode Business Universiteit (NBU). In the 1970s, the institute focused on its degree programs, achieving university status in 1982, thus becoming a fully private, but state-recognized, university in the Netherlands. The education is delivered by about 100 core and adjunct faculty and roughly 380 external lecturers and 150 administrative staff. NBU has been EQUIS and AMBA accredited since 2000 and is currently undergoing the AACSB accreditation process.

The mission of NBU is “serving society by shaping responsible leaders”. It focuses on long-term value creation and requires balanced considerations between societal impact and business responsibility. NBU emphasizes the need to build one’s character and focuses on attitude and personal skills. This holistic view is expressed in NBU’s Leadership, Entrepreneurship & Stewardship (LES) trinity of core values.

Programme

The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration is a three-year academic program that was launched in 2016. The programme has nine ILOs and wishes to educate academically trained professionals in business, responsible leadership and entrepreneurship. NBU aims to combine academic knowledge with attention to the LES values in the development of students’ personal skills, sports, student exchange and extra-curricular activities on campus. During their studies, students undergo a Personal Leadership Development Journey (PLDJ) which runs throughout the three years of the program, aimed at personal and soft skills development. NBU endeavors to prepare students for a career in business or academia. The university strives to combine scientific knowledge on the whole spectrum of business administration with academic and professional skills.

The administrative data on the programme and the institution are provided in Annex 1 to this report.

Developments since the previous accreditation

The programme was initially accredited in 2015, with a follow-up assessment (of standard 10 and 11, after three years) in 2019. It was then assessed as positive. The assessment report from 2015 contains a recommendation of the panel at that time. The present panel checked how this recommendation was followed up by the programme.

Programme management mentions the following developments, since the programme assessment after three year (executed in March 2019):

- A detailed course review has been completed. In order to have a more balanced curriculum, it was decided to combine some overlapping courses and to combine methodology courses and add statistics courses. Another decision was to organize the courses into six learning trajectories (one of which specifically focuses on research methodology) to achieve more alignment between the courses in the curriculum;
- A program Advisory Board and an International Advisory Board for the whole University have been formed. Both boards offer advice to the programme on national and global market developments;
- Policies have been established by the Exam Committee regarding student exchanges. Procedures have been put in place to ensure that the policies are executed;
- In September 2020, one additional cohort of students has started its programme at the Amsterdam campus;
- The Program Management team has grown in FTEs to accommodate the increase in the number of students as well as to be able to assure the quality of the program;
- At the moment, BKO (basic university teaching qualification) is the standard requirement. To strengthen capabilities regarding examination-related matters, selected faculty (and exam committee members) are involved in a training course leading to SKE (senior examination qualification).
- The Assessment Committee organizes peer-review sessions to review the assessment process, guidelines and procedures across all NBU programmes. Thesis guidelines have been adjusted to include rubrics and the review of the assessment of all courses is scheduled to be completed by December 2021;
- In preparation for the AACSB accreditation programme management is implementing an Assurance of Learning (AoL) system and is in the process of combining (where possible) the intended learning objectives of the programme with the AoL goals and objectives.

3. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

Standard 1: intended learning outcomes

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

Findings and considerations

The NBU bachelor's programme in Business Administration aims to provide students with academic knowledge and the ability to apply this information within a management context. Besides the academic components of the programme, personal development of students is considered very important. The programme has adopted the NBU mission (to serve society by shaping responsible leaders) in the so-called LES trinity of values (Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Stewardship).

According to the panel, the learning outcomes reflect the interdisciplinary character of business administration studies, connecting knowledge and insights from various disciplines. The nine ILO's of the programme are quite broadly formulated, comprising many different components into one ILO. It is clearly visualized how the Dublin descriptors are linked to the ILO's.

NBU's educational philosophy is represented by a so-called Head-Heart-Hands approach. This means that academic rigor based on solid theory (Head) is combined with personal development and behavior (Heart) and practical relevance (Hands). During their studies, students undergo a Personal Leadership Development Journey (PLDJ) which runs throughout the three years of the program.

Altogether, the LES values, the PLDJ and the head, heart and hands approach result in ambitious learning goals with many different goals, values and competences. According to the panel, the mission of the university, the LES values, the PLDJ and the triple H approach are implicitly linked with the ILO's. Alignment and fine-tuning of these components is continuous work-in-progress, where good progress is made in finding the right balance, with input from staff and students. Program management is working towards adjusted and more measurable ILOs together with the AoL Committee (Assurance of Learning – for AACSB accreditation) and the chairs of the learning trajectories. The panel suggests to integrate the LES values, soft skills development and the triple H approach more explicitly into the ILO's.

Alignment of the learning goals with the professional field is achieved by consulting professionals and academics, and meetings with the Program Advisory Board and the International Advisory Board. Several benchmarks have been executed with programs at other universities in the Netherlands and Europe, which has indicated that more attention is needed for digitalization and big data. It wasn't evident to the panel which programmes the ILO's were benchmarked against. The panel recommends programme

management to organize benchmarks regularly on a more structural basis with other universities. It acknowledges the identified need to address digitalization and big data in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The panel regards the intended learning outcomes to be in line with the Dublin Descriptors and sufficiently relevant for the international field. It recognises the link between ILO's and NBU's mission, vision and LES values, although somewhat loosely coupled. To further strengthen this link, it advises to describe this connection more explicitly. The panel recognises the efforts to benchmark the ILO's with other international programmes, but advises the university to clarify which programmes the ILO's are benchmarked against. The programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.

Standard 2: curriculum; orientation

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

Findings and considerations

In the first year, the development of professional and personal skills involve mainly basic academic knowledge and skills; in year 2, these basic skills are being extended and applied in (for instance) a company project. In year 3, students are encouraged to broaden their horizon by studying abroad and by doing thesis research. Students are introduced into the corporate world through guest speakers, company visits and lecturers who are (also) involved in many ways in business life. This establishes a better understanding of local and international business and helps students to understand the importance of cross-cultural management and international business.

During their studies, students undergo a Personal Leadership Development Journey (PLDJ) which runs throughout the three years of the program. Active participation from the students is required at all levels. Sport is used in the curriculum as part of the PLDJ to help build the student's character. The panel highly appreciates the PLDJ as a way to develop professional skills. According to some students, the PLDJ could be better focused and more impactful. The panel acknowledges the distinct characteristics of the PLDJ, and recommends programme management monitor and ensure the small scale character of the PLDJ is safeguarded if the number of students grows.

From the beginning of the program, students are encouraged to participate in research and to develop research knowledge, research skills and critical analytical thinking. Education on research methods & research skills has improved; qualitative and quantitative research methods & skills are no longer combined in one course for year 3. Students do a research project in a company, either qualitative or quantitative. Furthermore, students are required to write an academic paper. Students argue that the preparation for thesis research has been strengthened by offering a course in R (instead of SPSS) in the

first year. According to the panel, the programme properly reacts to what is happening in the field and incorporates new subjects in the programme accordingly (for instance in the research line). This was evident in all conversations.

Many of the lecturers have strong ties with the business world as they combine teaching with industry-related work, which ensures that they bring in relevant cases and examples into their teaching & learning practices.

Conclusion

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the panel concludes that the programme offers many different ways for students to develop themselves professionally and personally, which is reflected in courses, projects, the PLDJ, campus life and in sports. The programme acts very responsive to its environment and actively incorporates new relevant subjects. The panel highly appreciates the PLDJ, which is – according to staff members – part of their DNA. The programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.

Standard 3: curriculum; content

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

Findings and considerations

Each year of the programme is divided into four terms; in each term, the student follows three to four courses, plus the PLDJ that runs throughout the programme. Most courses have a weight of four or five EC. The first year of the curriculum includes academic research skills and provides a foundation of knowledge regarding business disciplines such as management, marketing and international business. During the second year, students apply academic theory to find solutions for market-related problems (in a company project). In the third year, students are encouraged to go on international exchange (two terms), and they do research for their bachelor's thesis (10 EC).

All courses in the programme are part of a learning trajectory. The six learning trajectories are: finance, marketing, strategy, organization, personal development, and research. The documentation presents how the trajectories address the nine ILO's. Matrices indicate how courses contribute to the achievement of these ILO's. During the visit, lecturers confirmed that they incorporate the ILO's as well as the HHH-approach into their course constructs.

The programme differs from other business administration programmes in the Netherlands, due to its unique campus in Breukelen, the attention to values, the triple H educational philosophy, the PLDJ and mandatory sports. Each course has a theoretical and a practical component. The practical component includes a team project (paper and/or presentation) in which the theoretical component is applied. LES

values are incorporated in a variety of courses, projects and sports, and involves the application of the head, heart & hands philosophy. The panel appreciates the way in which the programme accommodates the LES values, soft skills development and the triple H approach in the curriculum, which certainly helps the students to achieve the ILO's.

Conclusion

The panel found the programme in line with the ambitions and ILO's. The structure of the programme clearly reflects a professional character, fuelled by a scientific and theoretical background. The panel appreciates that a system has been put in place for the review of ILO's in courses, which will help to strengthen the link between the ILO's and the curriculum. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3, curriculum; content.

Standard 4: curriculum; learning environment

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

Findings and considerations

The didactical concept of the programme is based on the educational philosophy of NBU, which can be summarized by the Head, Heart & Hands approach. This approach combines academic knowledge (head) with personal development (heart) and practically relevant skills (hands). In every course construct it must be made clear which components of the triple H approach will be applied. For instance, the head is trained through knowledge transfer in class; the heart is trained in games and in the PLDJ; the heart and hands are trained in projects and in sports. The panel appreciates the application of the head, hearts and hands in all course constructs.

Education takes place in a small-scale and informal learning environment, with a lot of interaction between staff and students. Students report being happy with the teaching formats; small classes, with a focus on presentation skills and groupwork, where students from different cultures work together. Students value the personal touch in the program, and enjoy direct contact with their lecturers. These personal and informal connections came under pressure due to COVID. During COVID, NBU adapted flexibly and quickly, by investing heavily in technology, studios, proctoring systems, etc. Sometimes, extra sessions and courses have been organized. Some practical and experiential classes (such as in soft skills development) were difficult to continue online, which is well understood by the panel. The panel highly values the informal and personalized approach and suggests that, if students numbers might rise, NBU seeks a balance between this informal culture and a more structured approach, without jeopardizing the corporate culture and conducive campus life.

The learning environment at NBU in Breukelen is conducive for achieving the ILO's, supported by student centred learning, campus life, sports, informal and direct contacts with lecturers. At the Amsterdam campus, this seems to be less the case, as some students argue. The panel recommends programme management to strengthen the learning environment in Amsterdam (in connection with the Breukelen campus) to ensure a similar learning experience for the students in Amsterdam.

A lot of work has been done to eliminate overlaps in current curriculum. The trajectories are now better coordinated, the leaders of these trajectories meet regularly in order to diminish these overlaps. For this purpose, some courses have been merged, and the focus of other courses has been adjusted (for instance in Marketing and Consumer Behavior). Some students argue that some overlaps between courses still exist and should be prevented, while some lecturers argue that overlaps are sometimes good for students. The panel didn't find any hindering overlap between courses themselves, but invites programme management to seek acceptable optima and communicate this clearly to students.

The language of the programme is English, which serves the international orientation of the programme; students are being prepared for a career in international business. Nevertheless, some students argue that language education should be better. The panel suggests programme management to stimulate language education, also in the light of further internationalization.

NBU acknowledges that international students sometimes experience integration problems, although they make a lot of effort to stimulate a certain level of belongingness (including sports, a buddy system for internationals, a committee Nyenrode United, celebrating the Chinese new year, etc.). The COVID situation was especially difficult for international students in the Amsterdam campus. Some extra mentoring efforts have been done to keep them on board. The panel appreciates these efforts from programme management, which may become even more important when the number of international students increases.

Conclusion

The panel highly values the ways in which the educational philosophy is implemented in the small-scale and informal learning environment. Furthermore, the panel is impressed by the dedication of the staff to education in general, and their engagement with the learning experiences of students. The panel concludes that the learning environment is conducive for achieving the ILO's. As such, the programme meets standard 4, curriculum; learning environment.

Standard 5: intake

The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.

Findings and considerations

Next to the application of the usual entry requirements, NBU has its own assessment test developed for the selection of students: the so-called LTP test, developed jointly with LTP Business Psychologists, an agency that specializes in recruitment and assessment. The selection process includes tests (including English proficiency) and an interview during which the candidate is assessed on their intellectual, academic, emotional and social capabilities, including their sense of purpose and direction as well as a hands-on mentality.

Programme management wishes to increase the number of international students. However, it seems that international students score lower on the LTP test than Dutch students which makes it difficult to select a growing percentage of international students. Somehow, it seems that the selection process is inhibiting further internationalization of students; a steering group has been put in place to address the challenge of increasing the number of international students and to increase diversity and inclusivity. The panel believes that it is important for the students to be confronted with diversity (internationally, domestically and in terms of gender) and helps to prepare students for a career in international business.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the intake of students is well organized and realistic in view of the ILO's. The panel acknowledges efforts from programme management to diversify the student population. The programme meets standard 5, intake.

Standard 6: staff

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

Findings and considerations

NBU requires that all lecturers have an international background and their English language skills are adequate for teaching in English. Currently 22% of faculty members teaching in the programme come from outside the Netherlands. The programme wishes to involve more international lecturers with international business experience, which is a challenge according to the SER. The panel appreciates efforts from programme management to increase the number of international lecturers involved in the programme, and also to increase diversity amongst lecturers.

Currently, 65% of the staff are BKO certified. New lecturers have to obtain their BKO within two years. Many lecturers are involved in business, so practical business experience is guaranteed. Eighteen of the twenty-two core staff members have a PhD, while others are working towards that goal. Students are generally satisfied about the qualifications and competences of staff.

The student/staff ratio is 1 : 4, which is quite impressive, partly due to the fact that NBU also has graduate programmes and a sizeable executive education portfolio. This ensures the engagement of lecturers and facilitates a lot of personal contact with students. Although the total number of staff seems sufficient, it is argued by the lecturers that they have a lot of tasks on their plate, especially since the opening of the Amsterdam campus. The approachability of staff to students and the personal and small-scale character of the program adds to the workload staff experiences.

The programme employs many parttime lecturers, who operate under the responsibility of a core lecturer, and are helped out by tenure staff members if problems or questions arise. Parttime lecturers are often involved in other programmes at NBU as well. As such, there is sufficient involvement and commitment.

Many of the lecturers have strong ties with the business world as they combine teaching with industry-related work, such as consulting or being an entrepreneur. In this way, the programme ensures that its education is in line with professional developments in the industry. Although NBU claims to be primarily a teaching university, core and adjunct lecturers are also expected to do research, up to 45% of their time. According to the panel, this ensures both professional and academic competencies sufficiently.

Conclusion

The panel appreciates the high student/staff ratio which fits the small-scale learning environment and facilitates intensive contacts between staff and students. The panel believes that the programme can rely on sufficient and competent staff, and suggests to monitor the workload and approachability of lecturers carefully, especially since the opening of the Amsterdam campus. The programme meets standard 6, staff.

Standard 7: facilities

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

Findings and considerations

NBU has a beautiful campus in Breukelen, and constitutes a very special environment in which to live and learn (referred to as the Nyenrode Experience). All facilities here are excellent for academic and social life, including sports. With the growth in student numbers (as of all programmes combined), this NBU experience is increasingly under pressure. The Amsterdam campus has its own interesting features, but academic life and social life are separated (with student housing in Diemen-Zuid). Students in Amsterdam tend to be much more on their own. In the eyes of some students, the learning experience is less conducive than in Breukelen. Programme management realizes that some teaching & learning practices cannot be realized in Amsterdam, so they constantly think of appropriate substitutes and provide alternative learning experiences, which assure a proper application of the triple H didactical approach.

Apart from the physical facilities, staff and students are satisfied about the digital learning environment offered by NBU.

Conclusion

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the panel concludes that the infrastructure and facilities in Breukelen are excellent. It acknowledges efforts from programme management to develop alternative opportunities for Amsterdam students, so that similar learning experiences (as in Breukelen) can be offered. The panel suggests to monitor the learning experiences of students in Amsterdam carefully. The programme meets standard 7, facilities.

Standard 8: tutoring

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

Findings and considerations

The programme highly values personal contact. Student support and counseling services are well in place. Connections between programme management, lecturers and students are informal and close. The small scale of the program enables programme management to closely monitor students and their progress and act on this accordingly. There is a first-year mentoring system in place where first-year students meet individually with the programme manager or campus dean every three weeks in the first two terms of the programme. Nevertheless, international students sometimes find it challenging to integrate into the predominantly Dutch culture on campus. Also the SER indicates that diversity among students is becoming an increasing challenge.

Connections between programme management, lecturers and students are close and informal, which usually ensures smooth communication. Information services are well-developed through the use of various information systems such as Osiris, Intranet, Teams, Cirrus and Canvas. Some students expressed minor complaints about communication and planning of social life and educational life.

Conclusion

The panel has no concerns regarding the tutoring and the provision of information to students. Nevertheless, the panel recommends programme management to put more emphasis on the integration and inclusiveness of foreign students, which will contribute to the learning experiences of all students. Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the panel concludes that the programme meets standard 8, tutoring.

Standard 9: quality assurance

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

Findings and considerations

Quality assurance at NBU is organized primarily at programme level. The academic director and programme director are responsible for the design of the curriculum and the assignment of courses to centers. These centers are responsible for course outlines, material, involvement and development of lecturers, exams and examiners. Programme management is primarily responsible for planning and organization of courses and exams.

As NBU is a private university, it is not bound to comply to the WHW regarding requirements to formal committees. Nevertheless, NBU has installed a programme committee and examination board to ensure involvement of these bodies in the quality assurance process.

NBU has a variety of sources available to gain insight into the quality of the programme. There are student evaluations of courses, lecturers and assessments and regular meetings are organized with student representatives, programme committee, campus dean and the Advisory Board. Programme management visits lectures to ensure quality and discusses findings with teachers and students. The programme plans to conduct regular alumni surveys and organize an external review every four years to evaluate courses.

The informal and personal character of the programme is also evident in the quality assurance system; students tell the panel that teachers are very approachable, they can always ask for help and that day to day issues that might arise are solved quickly by addressing these with teachers. According to the programme committee, their input is addressed promptly and programme management is very approachable. However, some students that cannot find their way into this informal culture and feel somewhat left out and not heard. A linking pin between students, student representatives and the programme committee might be helpful in order for students to have a more solid student base in QA.

According to the panel, the quality assurance system is well organized and addresses the plan-do-check-act cycle in an appropriate way. NBU incorporates many relevant elements in the quality assurance process. The panel has discussed the responsibilities in quality assurance and the extent to which QA loops are closed. It determines that a lot of effort is geared towards planning and checking. When it comes to acting on desired improvements, stakeholders seem to rely on the strong community culture and the informal system. However, not all issues are properly addressed through this informal system, with the risk that there is not always an appropriate follow-up of desired improvement in a structural matter.

Conclusion

The quality assurance system has a solid basis and consists of appropriate elements. It includes all relevant stakeholders and the small scale and informal culture enables the program to react promptly to any issues occurring. As a next step, the panel advises to incorporate the individual elements into a more structured, embedded and connected system, while finding a proper balance between a formal and informal culture.

Standard 10: student assessment

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

Findings and considerations

NBU has an elaborate assessment system in place, including oral and written exams, essays, reports, reflections, portfolios and group assignments. Courses are structured in such a way that they always include an individual assessment component in the form of an individual exam (accounting for at least 50% of the final grade for the course), and optionally an individual or group assignment. Students are encouraged to work in groups via group assignments and group presentations where theory is put into practice. According to the panel, assessment seems to contain a good balance between group and individual assignments. Group assignments are always done in different groups (which supports preparation for real life settings).

Lecturers are required to indicate in the course constructs how the LES values and the Head-Heart-Hands educational philosophy will be assessed. The PLDJ, mandatory sport participation and, in general, active participation at all levels are also part of the assessment. The programme uses software (Academy Attendance) to monitor students' presence at the scheduled lectures. Some lecturers argue that the assessment of soft skills can be improved. The panel acknowledges the importance of proper soft skills assessment (of LES values, the heart and hands, in the PLDJ), since this is important for a number of ILOs.

The design of all exams is subject to the four-eyes principle: the examiner needs to present a draft exam, the assessment criteria (model answers and scoring) and assessment matrix to another faculty member with examiner status. The four-eyes principle is also confirmed by the lecturers and exam committee members. The panel acknowledges that a lot of work is being conducted here; every exam is checked by the assessment committee. The procedure has become more formalized and labor intensive; the panel suggests to streamline the quality assurance process of assessments, for instance by random selection and periodic checks of exams.

There are calibration sessions, information sessions and evaluation sessions to assure that all lecturers understand the rubric and the criteria, and also to align assessment between supervisors and second

readers. The panel suggests to continue these sessions regularly (also with parttime staff), since it is one of the recommendations that was given by external experts (during an evaluation of the thesis programme in 2019), and on the to-do list in the SER.

Due to COVID, assessments had to be converted to online assessments quickly, which forced NBU, programme management and exam committee to formalize procedures and rules. Staff acknowledged that this felt somewhat awkward and in contrast with the rather informal and personal character of NBU's normal practices. However, in hindsight, COVID has proved to be a blessing in disguise; many improvements have been made, in terms of tools, rules and procedures with regards to assessment. Digital assessments are expected to increase in the future.

The exam committee offers training (through CITO) and workshops on assessment and on the prevention and detection of fraud, which are well attended by lecturers. When fraud is detected, a hearing with the student is always organized. After the hearing, the student receives a formal letter covering the facts, considerations and the decision made. In case of disagreement, students can go to the appeal committee. The rules are transparent, with clear instructions and online forms for the students.

Conclusion

The panel appreciates the large amount and wide variety of assessments for measuring study progress and performance. The panel has reviewed some of these assessments and confirms that they meet the required level. The assessment procedures and system are considered to be valid, reliable, sufficiently independent and in line with what can be expected from a program in Business Administration. The panel concludes that an adequate system of quality assurance is in place, and that the programme meets standard 10, student assessment.

Standard 11: achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings and considerations

The bachelor's thesis (10 EC) is part of the assessment procedure to determine whether or not the student has achieved the ILO's. Students can choose one of the five thematic areas of research: Marketing, Strategy, Finance, Sustainability and Organizational Behaviour. There is no oral defence. The process involves an independent as well as a joint assessment of the thesis by the supervisor and a second reader. Since recently, a third reader gets involved in order to settle the grade when there is a difference of 1,5 points (or more) between the initial assessments by the supervisor and the second reader.

Students seem to feel quite well prepared for the thesis in year 3, through courses on research methods & skills, statistics, data analysis and writing skills. Guidance by thesis supervisors is considered frequent and direct. Lecturers indicate that the thesis research done by students has improved a lot since three years.

The panel has reviewed 15 theses and their grading, which has not resulted in any doubts about the coverage of ILO's, the bachelor level, professional relevance of the theses, nor were there any doubts about the grading and the feedback provided to the students.

55% of the first group of graduates continued their studies by starting a master's programme, while approximately 40% of them started to gain work experience. Alumni seem to be very satisfied with what they have learned and indicate that they have benefited a lot from the programme.

Conclusion

The panel is convinced that the ILO's are achieved as is demonstrated in the theses, and has confidence in the quality and organization of the thesis programme. The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.

Overall conclusion

The panel has assessed the programme along eleven standards. The panel concludes that the programme meets all standards (intended learning outcomes, curriculum; orientation, content and learning environment, intake, staff, facilities, tutoring, student assessment and achieved learning outcomes) and subsequently assesses the overall quality of the programme as positive.

Standard	Judgement
<p>Intended learning outcomes</p> <p><i>Standard 1: 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.</i></p>	<p>Meets the standard</p>
<p>Curriculum; orientation</p> <p><i>Standard 2: The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.</i></p>	<p>Meets the standard</p>

<p>Curriculum; content</p> <p><i>Standard 3: The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Curriculum; learning environment</p> <p><i>Standard 4: The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Intake</p> <p><i>Standard 5: The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Staff</p> <p><i>Standard 6: The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Facilities</p> <p><i>Standard 7: The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Tutoring</p> <p><i>Standard 8: The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Quality assurance</p> <p><i>Standard 9: The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Student assessment</p> <p><i>Standard 10: The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Achieved learning outcomes</p> <p><i>Standard 11: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.</i></p>	Meets the standard
<p>Overall conclusion</p>	Positive

In the previous sections, the panel has evidenced and articulated its positive considerations about the programme per standard. It established that:

- An incredible amount of good and hard work is being done for assuring programme quality and quality assurance;
- NBU's aspiration to achieve a triple crown status clearly supports efforts to meet and go beyond NVAO standards;
- Quality assurance rules and procedures are becoming more formalized and transparent.

In addition to the positive considerations, the panel considers there is (still) room for improvement on several aspects of the programme. It therefore suggests programme management:

- To integrate the LES values, soft skills development (as in the PLDJ) and the head, heart & hands educational philosophy more explicitly in the ILO's;
- To strengthen the role and position of the programme committee, and to be more accountable and transparent to students about decisions made by programme management;
- To incorporate the individual elements of the quality assurance system into a more structured, embedded and connected system, while finding a proper balance between a formal and informal culture.
- To carefully monitor the learning experiences of students of the Amsterdam campus. Whereas the campus in Breukelen offers a whole experience for students, including campus life and sports, this seems to be much less the case in Amsterdam;
- To intensify efforts to become more diverse, international and inclusive as a programme;
- To carefully monitor the impact of growth on the overall learning experiences of students, and on the need for formalization of quality assurance procedures.

4. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Administrative data

Name institution	Nyenrode Business Universiteit
BRIN-code CROHO	01MC-50897
Status institution	Not funded, private Legal entity for higher education
Result institutional quality assessment	Not applicable

Name programme in central register programmes higher education (CROHO)	Universiteit Nyenrode B.V. operating under the name Nyenrode Business Universiteit
ISAT-code CROHO	01MC-50897
Orientation and level of the programme	BSc Bachelor, general management Fulltime
Name of the programme	Business Administration
Credits	180 EC
Graduation specializations	Not applicable
Programme locations	Breukelen and Amsterdam
Language of the program	English

Contactperson accreditation request

First name	
Surname	
Phone number	
Email address	

Billing address

Billing address	
Postal code	
City	
Reference institution for procurement	
Email address for digital billing	

Annex 2: Site visit programme²

Date : Tuesday the 18th of May 2021

Venue : Online

Time	Session
09.00-09.30	Arrival Panel and review documents (closed session)
09.30-10.30	Meeting with program Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector Magnificus • Academic Director, Chair of trajectory Research & Academic Development, Lecturer of the courses; Business Games & Start Ups and Research Methodology, Member of the Assessment Committee • Associate Dean • Head of Program Management • Program Director
11.00-12.00	Meeting with students & Alumni <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third year student, student member of the Program Committee • Third year student • Second year student, student member of the Program Committee • First year student Amsterdam, member of the Student Representative Board • Alumnus cohort BSc BA 2016 • Alumnus cohort BSc BA 2017
12.00-13.00	Lunch, review of documents and walk-in hour
13.00-14.00	Meeting with lecturers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of the Program Committee, Lecturer of the course Sustainability & Strategic Innovation , Thesis supervisor • Lecturer of the course Organizational Behaviour - HRM • Member Program Committee, Lecturer of the course International Relations & Diplomacy, Chair of International Advisory Board

² Names of persons are left out due to the GDPR.

- Lecturer of the courses Principles of Business Administration, Managerial Finance and Business & Taxes, coach in Company Project course
- Chair of the trajectory Finance & Accounting & Economics
- Chair of the trajectory Organization, Lecturer of the courses Doing Business Research and Methods of Data Analysis, Thesis supervisor
- Lecturer of the course Principles of Economics, Thesis supervisor
- Lecturer PLDJ

14.30-15.30

Meeting with the exam Committee

- Member of the Exam Committee General Management
- Chair of the Assessment Committee General Management
- Chair of the Exam Committee General Management

15.30-17.30

Deliberations panel (closed session)

17.30-17.45

Main findings presented by panel chair to Program Management

- Rector Magnificus
- Academic Director, Chair of trajectory Research & Academic Development, Lecturer of the courses; Business Games & Start Ups and Research Methodology, Member of the Assessment Committee
- Associate Dean
- Head of Program Management
- Program Director
- Other members of the Program Management

Annex 3: Documents

Materials made available beforehand

- Self evaluation report
 - Including student chapter (video by students)
- Report on the current state of affairs (including special information on the COVID situation)
- Organizational structure of NBU, composition boards & Academic Partners
- Strategic Plan
- BSc BA Curriculum with trajectories, assessment forms and descriptions of courses
- Overview of ILO's in the curriculum
- Internationalization policy and partner guidelines
- Rules and Regulations Degree Program 2020-2021
- BSc BA teaching team of lecturers
- Assessment Quality Checklist
- Bachelor's Thesis Regulations including grading form
- Annual report of the Central Exam Committee (2019-2020)
- National Profile of Business Administration Studies
- Draft of the new assessment policy

Materials made available electronically

The panel was given access to the digital learning environment, including:

- NBU Teams environment
- Cirrus (including a variety of examples of assessments)
- Canvas
- Intranet

Final graduation projects

The secretary selected 15 theses, divided over the different content areas and grade categories. The exact selection was as follows:

Research topic	Grade 6 – 6,5	Grade 7 -7,5	Grade 8 – 8,5	total
Marketing	000477102	000477097	000474961	3
Organisational behavior		000477093	000477086	2
Sustainability	000474962 000476901	000477095		3
Finance	000475183	000477087	000477096 000477099	4
Strategy	000475314 000477221	000477089		3
Total	6	5	4	15

Annex 4: Panel members

Prof.dr. J. (Joël) Branson - Chair

Joël Branson is professor of accounting and auditing at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), where he teaches courses in financial accounting, managerial accounting and auditing. His current research interests include audit quality, earnings management and comparability of financial statements. He has published books and articles on these and other subjects, e.g. in international journals as diverse as Journal of Accounting Research & Audit Practices, International Journal of Managerial and Financial Accounting, International Journal of Accounting, Economics Letters, European Accounting Review and Accounting in Europe. He is invited regularly as a guest speaker at foreign universities. Joël Branson is also certified public accountant for Grant Thornton Bedrijfsrevisoren and member of several committees within the Belgian Auditors Institute (IBR). Since 2009, he is dean of the faculty of Social Sciences and Solvay Business School.

Prof.dr. M. (Mariëlle) Heiltjes - member

She is full professor in Managerial Behavior and has extensive international experience in working with executives and top management teams on questions relating to their effectiveness. Clients that she worked with include APG (pension group), Daimler, European Heart Academy, Philips Healthcare, Unilever, Vodafone and World Bank as well as smaller regionally and nationally operating organizations. She has taught in the executive MBA programs of Maastricht University, TRIUM (HEC Paris, London School of Economics, Stern School of Business at New York University), and Reykjavik University. In addition, Mariëlle is frequently invited as a speaker, panelist or moderator at different events and programs worldwide. In addition to her roles at SBE, she currently also serves as Chair of the Board of Governors of Beta Gamma Sigma (a US-based international honor society for AACSB accredited schools), the International Advisory Board of IESEG (a French business school), HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management (a German business school) and Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (a Belgian Business School), on the Board of United World College Maastricht and as commissioner on the Supervisory Board of MECC (the Maastricht Exhibition and Conference Center).

Prof.dr. M. (Michael) Page – member

Michael Page is Professor of Finance and Management and past Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Bentley University in Massachusetts, United States of America. He also serves as Senior Advisory for the EFMD Global Network, Americas. Before joining Bentley, he served as the Dean of Post-Experience Programs at Erasmus University's Rotterdam School of Management and as the Executive Director of the Rotterdam School of Management, The Netherlands. Previously he was the Dean of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus Graduate School of Business, and also served a term as its Dean of Academic Affairs. Mike joined Erasmus after sixteen years at Cape Town University's Graduate School of Business where he also held the Len Abrahamse Chair in Finance. Mike has just completed a six-year term on the board of South Africa Partners. On June 30, 2018 he completed an eight-year term of office as a member of the board of the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), and on June 30, 2017 he completed a six-year term of office as a member of the board of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, International). Mike also

served on the AACSB's Committee for Issues in Management Education (CIME), is a past chair of its Initial Accreditation Committee (IAC), and was a member of the International Blue Ribbon Committee on Accreditation Quality that developed the new accreditation standards.

Prof.dr. J. (Jan) de Vries – member

Jan de Vries studied Business Administration (MSc) at the University of Groningen (the Netherlands). Although a strong interest in all parts of the topics within Operations Management, the research interests of Jan de Vries include Supply Chain Networks, the organizational embedding of planning and control systems and the application of Operations Management concepts within a Service context. From 2004-2017 Jan de Vries held the position of director of the BSc Business Administration programme. Currently, Jan de Vries is chairing the Board of Examiners of the Faculty of Economics and Business. Next to his regular teaching tasks, Jan de Vries was/is closely involved in the teaching of MBA courses on Operations Management, both national as well as international. Jan de Vries furthermore contributed to external executive programmes amongst which courses on Good Manufacturing Practice Programme Patient Logistics/Integrated Care Pathways and Operations Management. The research of Jan de Vries concentrates on developing analytical frameworks which can be helpful in understanding the complex interrelationship between planning and control systems on the one hand and the organizational setting of these systems at the other hand. Jan de Vries publishes his research in various international refereed Journals including the International Journal of Operations and Production Management, and the Journal of Strategic Information Systems.

Jessical Woitalla – student member