

**Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences**  
**Faculty of Sports and Nutrition**

**Advisory Report to NVAO**

**Bachelor programme Sportkunde/Sport Studies**

**CROHO: 34040**

**\*\*\* FINAL \*\*\***

**25 January 2022**



## Table of contents

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT .....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT.....	11
Standard 1 – Intended learning outcomes .....	11
Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes.....	17
Overall judgement.....	21
ANNEXES .....	23
Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme .....	23
Annex 2 – Panel.....	24
Annex 3 – Schedule of the site visit .....	25
Annex 4 – Materials reviewed.....	26



## SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

This document reports on the external assessment of the bachelor programme Sportkunde / Sport Studies at the Faculty of Sports and Nutrition of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. It covers the findings, considerations and recommendations of the panel with regard to the quality of the programme's intended and achieved learning outcomes. While the assessment was undertaken in view of the programme's application for reaccreditation by NVAO, the panel also looked at other components of the programme, such as curriculum, assessment and future developments. The panel observations on these topics are covered in a separate report. In the run-up to the visit, the panel received an extensive and highly informative self-evaluation report, *Playing for Keeps*. It also tested the NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes by reviewing the end-level projects of twenty students who graduated between September 2019 and August 2021.

The panel consisted of eight members, including a student member, and an NVAO-certified secretary. The assessment visit was held on 1 and 2 December 2021: all meetings were held on site, with one panel member participating in part of the sessions online due to the COVID-19 situation. The panel appreciated the open atmosphere in the discussions. Throughout the visit, the panel sensed a positive spirit among all interviewees, as well as a clear commitment to the institution, the faculty and the programme. Management and staff were passionate about their discipline, the courses they teach and the programme they relate to. Similarly, students, alumni and professional field representatives felt part of the Sport Studies community and were advocating strongly for the programme.

In terms of intended learning outcomes, the panel considers that the Sport Studies programme is built on very strong foundations: it is not only rooted in nationally agreed educational and vocational profiles, but also manages to carve out its own distinctive features and communicate these successfully to (potential) students. In this way, the programme-specific learning outcomes allow students to not only to graduate in Sport Studies but also to become sport managers AUAS-style, i.e. as a 'somebody' with a heart for sport and a head for business.

Acknowledging the history of the programme and its two tracks – Leerroute Sport, Management en Ondernemen, and the International Sports, Management and Business track – the panel welcomes the growing integration of both learning trajectories. In this regard, the panel considers that the recent formulation of an educational vision and core values will help the programme advance in its ambitions. The panel subscribes to the framework of competencies, contexts, tasks, core values and educational vision that the Sports Studies programme managed to build over the years. In addition to these bones, the panel appreciates even more the flesh that was put to the bones, the elements of content that the programme has chosen to focus on when setting its competencies and formulating its core values.

In terms of achieved learning outcomes, the panel considers that the SM&O and ISMB students who graduate from the Sport Studies programme have the necessary competencies to move on

in their career. Based on the intermediate test materials provided on site, its extensive review of the quality of graduation projects, and the discussions and available data on the whereabouts of Sport Studies alumni, the panel is very confident that graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes as laid out in the ten competencies and the forty mastery criteria. The panel was highly positive about the quality of the graduation projects: all twenty projects were of more than sufficient quality. There was not a single doubt on the quality of even the lower scored projects, while some of the higher graded projects were excellent. These results cover the entire sample of graduation projects; the panel found no difference in quality or scoring across both the SM&O and ISMB track.

Furthermore, the panel considers that the AUAS Sport Studies alumni are successful in their career. A good number of graduates move on to a master programme, possibly after having followed a pre-master programme as part of their Sport Studies minor; others start their own company or use the programme as a lever for their entrepreneurial ambitions; most graduates enter the labour market where they invariably find a job that is commensurate with the level and orientation of their study. Moreover, the panel observed that the learning characteristics of the programme easily transfer to other work situations. In this regard, the panel found it a particularly strong feature that many graduates find relevant employment outside the world of sport.

As a suggestion for the programme on its ambitious journey towards world-class quality, the panel advises reviving the professional board and developing the alumni board.

Based on the written materials provided and the discussions during the visit, the panel considers that the bachelor programme Sportkunde/Sport Studies meets the quality requirements set by the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments and relevant for this particular external assessment visit: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of the bachelor programme Sportkunde/Sport Studies submitted for accreditation by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they 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.

On behalf of the external assessment panel,

Tony Sainsbury  
Chair

Mark Delmartino  
Secretary

Date: 25 January 2022

# INTRODUCTION

## **Bachelor programme Sport Studies**

This document reports on the assessment of the Bachelor programme Sportkunde/Sport Studies (further: Sport Studies) offered by the Faculty of Sports and Nutrition at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS). It is one of eight professionally oriented bachelor degrees in Sport Studies that are offered in the Netherlands. The bachelor programme Sport Studies at AUAS consists of two tracks: the Dutch-language track *Sport, Management en Ondernemen* (SM&O) and the English-language track International Sports, Management and Business (ISMB). Both tracks have the same CROHO code and are accredited by the NVAO as a joint education programme, Sport Studies (in Dutch: *Sportkunde*). Administrative data on the institution and the programme are listed in Annex 1.

## **Assessment framework**

To establish the quality of the Sport Studies programme from an NVAO perspective, the panel has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. As AUAS has received accreditation at institutional level, its programmes can be assessed according to the limited evaluation framework of NVAO, which consists of four standards. Moreover, AUAS' participation in a pilot of the Dutch Ministry of Higher Education allows its programmes to experiment with a new accreditation process. It means that external assessment on standards 1 (intended learning outcomes) and 4 (achieved learning outcomes) needs validation by NVAO, while standards 2 (teaching-learning environment) and 3 (student assessment) can be assessed by an external panel without the involvement of NVAO.

While the external assessment was undertaken in view of the programme's application for reaccreditation by NVAO, it was the explicit wish of the institution and the programme that the panel would also look at other components of the programme, such as curriculum, assessment, the future-proof character of programme inputs and outcomes, and future developments in the sport work environment. This extended panel assignment followed from the positive experience the programme has had with its internally organised mid-term review. This review was held in 2019, involved a broad range of both external and internal reviewers and led to an extensive report with findings, considerations and concrete recommendations for the future development of the programme. Four external experts who had participated in the mid-term review joined the panel for the current assessment.

## **Panel composition**

The assessment was performed by a panel featuring a chair, six members and one student member and was accompanied by an NVAO-certified secretary. The panel, which was approved by NVAO, consisted of:

- Tony Sainsbury (UK), chair
- Anneke van Zanen-Nieberg (NL), member
- Keith Jones (UK), member

- Marianne van Leeuwen (NL), member
- Bas de Wit (NL), member
- Maritza Helfferich (NL), member
- Daniel Jansen (NL), member
- Ivy Bekkers (NL), student-member

The panel was accompanied by Mark Delmartino (BE), a NVAO-certified secretary who liaised between the panel and the programme and ensured that the visit complied with NVAO procedures. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. Annex 2 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

### **Assessment visit**

Prior to the visit, the programme management was in contact with the panel chair and the panel secretary to work out the programme of the sessions and agree on the materials to be made available. In order to allow the panel to prepare for its tasks, the programme produced an extensive Self-Assessment Report called *Playing For Keeps*, addressing the history and future plans of the programme, as well as its current learning outcomes, curriculum and assessment provisions. Panel members also had the opportunity to visit and observe the programme in action prior to the assessment date. Furthermore, university and faculty-wide policy documents on Quality Assurance and assessment as well as programme-specific materials on the curriculum and course assessments were made available on site. The materials which the panel studied in the framework of this assessment visit are listed in Annex 4.

The panel chair and secretary visited the programme on 18 November 2021 to meet the programme management in person and discuss the organisation of the site visit. In view of the developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic at the time, both programme management and the Dean offered extensive reassurances that the assessment visit could be organised on site. Asked to confirm their willingness to attend the visit on site, all but one member eventually agreed to participate in person; one member attended sessions online.

In the run-up to the site visit, the panel members reviewed the self-evaluation report and a set of graduation projects, and reported their findings in writing to the panel secretary. Their first impressions were compiled in a discussion note and led to a list of questions for the respective sessions. The site visit on 1 and 2 December started with a preparatory meeting, where the panel identified the strengths of the programme, as well as the key issues and questions that required further clarification during the discussions. The schedule of the site visit is presented in Annex 3.

The visit schedule also featured an open consultation hour for Sport Studies students, teaching and support staff, the possibility of which was communicated by the programme to aforementioned stakeholders; eventually one person made use of this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel. The visit did not include a separate Development Dialogue. However, the purpose of the entire assessment visit went far beyond the mere



requirements of an NVAO review. Hence, discussions in several sessions focused on both recent and forecasted developments. The panel reflected on these developments in the final plenary feedback session and its observations will be covered in a separate report.

### **Review of end level products**

The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes was tested among others by examining a sample of end level products. The panel secretary organised the thesis review with the programme representatives and supported the panel members in their work. On request of the programme management, the panel reviewed the graduation projects of twenty students who graduated between September 2019 and August 2021. Based on a list of 337 entries, the chair and secretary selected 20 projects produced by students from both SM&O and ISMB tracks who had obtained a variety of scores and had worked on a range of graduation products. The slightly bigger sample of projects allowed to review a truly representative sample of end level products in terms of products, scores and tracks. Moreover, the graduation projects were allocated over the panel members in such a way that most projects were reviewed by two members and that each member reviewed at least one project per track.

### **Report structure**

This report covers the external assessment of the bachelor programme Sport Studies from an NVAO perspective. In the underlying document, the panel has given a substantiated judgement on NVAO standards 1 and 4 on a three-point scale: meets the standard, partially meets the standard or does not meet the standard. The panel subsequently recommended a final conclusion regarding the Sport Studies programme on a three-point scale: positive, conditionally positive or negative. This weighted and substantiated appreciation serves as advice towards NVAO when taking a decision on the re-accreditation of the bachelor programme Sport Studies at AUAS. The panel observations on other aspects of the Sport Studies programme are covered in a separate report.

The next chapter constitutes the core of the report as it presents the findings, considerations and conclusions of the panel with regard to the intended learning outcomes and the achieved learning outcomes of the programme. After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the panel for review and feedback. The comments of the panel members were incorporated in a pre-final version, which was validated by the chair. The final draft was sent to AUAS for a check on factual errors on 20 December 2021. The feedback from the institution and the programme was discussed in the panel that modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was sent to AUAS on 25 January 2022.



## PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

The bachelor programme Sport Studies is part of the Faculty of Sport and Nutrition at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS). The Faculty also offers degree programmes in Physical Education, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Sports Leadership. It is situated on the Sport Campus, which is also home to the Sport Data Valley Lab Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Institute of Sport Science and the Team NL talent development programme.

The Sport Studies programme features two tracks: the Sport, Management & Ondernemen (SM&O) track was launched in 2002 as one of the first bachelor degrees in Sport Management in the Netherlands. In 2011, the International Sport Management and Business (ISMB) track was added, attracting students from all over the world, as well as Dutch students with an international mindset. Every year 225 students are accepted in the SM&O track and 75 students can enrol in the ISMB track. In principle, the programme consists of four years and a total of 240 credits. Every year about 35 students with a sport qualification from vocational colleges (MBO) are allowed to follow an adapted SM&O programme combining the first two years in one year.

The precursors of the Sport Studies programme were accredited by NVAO in 2001, 2008 and 2013; the last accreditation rated both tracks as ‘good’. In 2019 AUAS organised an extensive mid-term review. The conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term review panel have led the programme among others to reformulate some of the intended learning outcomes and to adjust the curriculum. The history and current status of the Sport Studies programme, as well as its follow-up to the mid-term review and plans for the future have been described in a highly informative way in the self-evaluation report *Playing for Keeps*.

### **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.*

#### **Profile**

The Sport Studies programme at AUAS is represented in the National Platform for Sport Studies (*Landelijk Opleidingsplatform Sportkunde*) alongside seven other Sport Studies programmes in the Netherlands. This platform developed an educational profile for Sport Studies programmes, which was approved by the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (*Vereniging Hogescholen*). This profile describes the competencies of a sport professional, a term which was chosen deliberately to cover not only sport managers, but also other professionals working in the world of sport. Senior staff from the AUAS programme play an active role in the national platform and have been instrumental in developing the set of competencies. During the visit, they informed the panel that there is a good cooperation among

the Sport Studies programmes, as well as a healthy atmosphere of competition to attract potential students.

According to the self-evaluation report, this nationally agreed education profile enables individual institutions and programmes to formulate their own profile of competencies and a corresponding curriculum, based on their own view of the sport industry and how they want to serve it. Three universities of applied sciences in Groningen, The Hague and Amsterdam present their programmes explicitly as sport management programmes with a focus on economics. The five other institutions in Eindhoven, Haarlem, Zwolle, Vlissingen and Arnhem/Nijmegen emphasise they educate sport professionals; their graduates tend to have a focus on promoting sport and physical activity in the areas of health and social welfare. The programme management indicated to the panel that all Sport Studies programmes have things in common, as well as their own perspectives. These perspectives are known and every programme including AUAS is trying to communicate the commonalities and particularities as transparently as possible.

Combining the information provided in the Playing for Keeps document with their own familiarity with Sport Studies programmes in the Netherlands, the panel recognises that the AUAS programme distinguishes itself from most other Sport Studies programmes by its focus on the (economic) management aspect of sport. Compared to the programmes in The Hague and Groningen, the Sport Studies programme in Amsterdam focuses on hardcore management subjects, including a considerable number of financial topics. According to the panel, this focus on business provides for a unique selling point both to students and potential employers from commercial enterprises because the Sport Studies programme in Amsterdam really prepares students for the world of work. The panel also found that both SM&O and ISMB tracks stand somewhat apart from many other programmes offered abroad through the integration in the curriculum of active participation in sport. These sport lessons also aim at teaching personal and professional management skills. The panel strongly welcomes this attention to physical education in the curriculum of the Sport Studies programme in Amsterdam. In this regard, they appreciated the subtitle of the self-evaluation report announcing that the programme is educating “Sport Managers with a Heart for Sport and a Head for Business”.

Finally, the AUAS programme has a long-standing focus on entrepreneurship; this is not only the case for the Dutch-language track where entrepreneurship is part of the programme title, but also in ISMB. In fact, the programme was awarded the NVAO Distinctive Feature Entrepreneurship in 2010 and 2013. According to the panel, this focus is still very much present in the teaching and learning approach of both programme tracks, and also visible in the graduation projects.

Talking to students and alumni, the panel noticed that they all had “done their homework” before applying at AUAS and had consciously decided to enrol because of the international track, the combined focus on sport and business, and/or the attention to entrepreneurship. Some of the international students were attracted by what they considered “good value for money”: relatively low student fees combined with many contact hours and an attractive curriculum with

many opportunities for internships and study periods abroad. Some of the Dutch students had meticulously compared Sport Studies programmes at several institutions and eventually opted for the combination of sport and business, and the atmosphere they sensed at AUAS during the Open Days. One former student indicated she had looked at the careers of Sport Studies graduates before deciding to enrol at AUAS. Finally, some Dutch and international students and alumni also pointed to the attractiveness of studying in Amsterdam because of the presence of relevant and potentially interesting companies. These individual and personalised testimonials indicate according to the panel that the programme manages to successfully communicate its unique selling proposition among Sport Studies programmes.

### **Educational vision**

The panel noticed in the self-evaluation that the two tracks of the Sport Studies programme are taught based on a specific educational vision featuring four core values. Elements of this vision and these values have been around since the start of the programme but were not consolidated until recently. Over the last five years there has been a tendency to integrate the SM&O and ISMB tracks organisationally, operationally and educationally. Moreover, the mid-term review panel recommended in 2019 to make the educational vision and the core values more explicit if the programme wanted to deliver on its ambition to become the top sport management programme in the world. The programme management followed the reasoning of the mid-term review panel that setting an educational vision as well as core values of the programme means setting a cultural standard that clarifies what is expected from students and teaching staff in an ambitious learning environment.

The educational vision is inspired by the Self Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan. This theory links personality, motivation and functioning and posits three basic psychological needs – autonomy, competence and connection – that need to be fulfilled in order to become a self-determined individual making choices and being in control of his/her life. In line with this theory, the programme wants each student to take ownership of their education, their life and their future as a sport manager; it wants them to become autonomous, authentic and self-motivated human beings. Based on this vision, both programme tracks educate students to become ‘T-shaped’ professionals and provide them with in-depth knowledge of the world of sport and the professional and personal skills to be successful in that world.

In addition to the educational vision, the programme also set out four core values which shape the day-to-day culture in which students and teachers interact. These values form the foundation of the programme’s educational vision:

- we provide a safe, inclusive and diverse learning community;
- we stimulate professional and personal growth;
- we act ethically, responsibly and with integrity;
- we add sustainable value to the world of sport.

Both core values and educational vision were formulated very recently. Asked to provide their first impressions on the self-evaluation report prior to the site visit, several panel members expressed their appreciation. They found them to be clear, explicit, well described and properly

chosen: inclusive, safe, personal growth, integrity, sustainable, autonomy. Each core value has its unique purpose and is thoroughly described. The choice of values is complete, culturally and environmentally sensitive, with an encouraging growth mindset for each individual in mind. One panel member reported that the section about autonomous motivation gives a great perspective on how things are done at SM&O and ISMB. Another member commented that putting core values in the spotlight of the educational vision is a strong positive statement. Still another member liked the focus on personal development and growth, and the opportunities that are offered to students to take leadership of their own study programme. Finally, all members appreciated the slogan: “*Je wordt niet iets, maar iemand.*”

### **Intended learning outcomes**

In order to educate sport managers with a heart for sport, a head for business and the right personal and professional skill set, the Sport Studies programme defined ten competencies which are believed students need to be successful as professionals and make a difference in the world of sport. These competencies follow the above-mentioned national educational profile for Sport Studies programmes, but are not identical in their formulation. The panel studied the AUAS Sport Studies competencies and established, based on the alignment table that was provided in the self-evaluation report, that the competencies are in line with the national requirements.

Their alignment with the national profile implies that the AUAS programme competencies allow both SM&O and ISMB graduates to demonstrate that they can think and act at the level expected of someone with a professionally oriented bachelor degree. This convergence applies both at national level and internationally, meaning that the competencies also fulfil the requirements set by the EU-wide Dublin Descriptors. Notwithstanding this automatic recognition, the programme has spelled out also this alignment in the report. The panel was therefore in the position to establish when reading the dedicated table in *Playing for Keeps* that there is indeed an alignment of the AUAS Sport Studies competencies with the Dublin descriptors.

Each of the ten competencies is broken down in four mastery criteria. These criteria define what SM&O and IMBS students must achieve in order to demonstrate that they have mastered that competency. The total set of 40 mastery criteria makes up the intended learning outcomes of the SM&O and ISMB tracks of the Sport Studies programme at AUAS. The panel studied the mastery criteria and confirm that they are appropriate in terms of discipline (sport studies), level (bachelor) and orientation (professional).

The panel gathered from the self-evaluation report that the competencies have been updated on a regular basis since the start of the programme in 2002, following modifications to national vocational and educational profiles, recommendations from internal and external audits and the programme’s consultation with industry professionals. The most recent update took place following the 2019 midterm review: two competencies were reformulated adding references to cultural sensitivity and sustainability; two other competencies on the research-driven and

entrepreneurial approach, and on personal skills were added. As part of this update, the mastery criteria were also reviewed and fine-tuned.

As part of their preparation for the site visit, panel members were asked to provide their first impressions on the intended learning outcomes. All members appreciated the clear link to the national set of competencies and the alignment with national and international requirements regarding level and orientation. They also recognised the work that had been done since the previous review. In addition to confirming the appropriate level and orientation of the learning outcomes, panel members found them to be clear and logical, a well thought out mix of competencies ranging from business skills to sensitivity for cultural and societal developments. One member commented that the competencies go hand in hand with putting knowledge into practice and with the top five of future competencies required of sports managers according to the New Age of Sport Management Education in Europe project: teamwork, decision-making skills, oral communication, planning skills and organisational skills. Another member confirmed that they describe the right competences to be a sport manager.

The panel learned during the meeting with the Dean that the newly added reference to sustainability is particularly relevant given that sustainability is one of three key goals of the university, next to digital transformation and diversity. In the session with the programme management, the panel discussed the intended learning outcomes: the panel indicated that it welcomed very much the adjusted set of competencies and mastery levels, while the management described the background for the specific formulation of the individual competencies and mastery levels. According to the panel, the first five competencies seem to be more specific as they refer to attitudes, while other competencies are more descriptive and might benefit from a more specific angle in their formulation. In this way, according to the panel, the educational vision would be translated and visible in all competencies.

### **Professional field**

According to the self-evaluation report, there is no up-to-date national vocational profile for sport managers that is legitimised by industry professionals. The most recent version dates from 2013 and was an update from an earlier 2004 version. The Sport Studies programme has developed its own view on the world of sport, which it divides in three contexts: sport commerce (with a focus on customer in commercial environment), sport development (with a focus on the participant in an inclusive environment) and high performance sport (with a focus on the athlete in an exclusive environment). These contexts are used to see where SM&O and ISMB graduates will work, which tasks they will perform and what kind of professional attitude they need to develop in order to be successful. The panel acknowledges this description of the world of sport and considers that the tasks for which sport managers are prepared in the Sport Studies programme and the professional attitude the programme aims to instil in its students largely correspond to the tasks and professional attitude described in the vocational profile.

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that there are many different links between the programme and the professional field. Several staff make a living through combining educational and professional assignments in the field of sport; individual

staff are well connected professionally; the programme features an extensive database of contact and internship opportunities; alumni are increasingly called upon to return to AUAS for specific curriculum-related and extra-curricular events; and also at the level of the Faculty and the University there are contacts and agreements with relevant public and private actors. Students are aware of the programme's connections with the professional field and think it constitutes a particular strength of the Sport Studies programme at AUAS.

Nonetheless, the panel thinks that there is room for improvement by upgrading these mostly organic contacts to a level of structural cooperation and systematic input. It is clear to the panel that the programme is well embedded in the professional field and the world of sport and that these contacts ensure that the programme is and remains up-to-date. However, a more systematic and structural involvement of the world of sport through a professional advisory group would enhance the legitimacy of the programme even more, certainly at times when inputs are needed and validation is required on the quality and relevance of more comprehensive adjustments of the programme objectives and components. The panel therefore encourages the programme to revive its – currently dormant – professional board and to proceed swiftly with establishing the foreseen alumni board.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that the Sport Studies programme is built on very strong foundations: on the one hand the programme is rooted in a nationally agreed set of competencies, which ensure that it complies with both national and international requirements. On the other hand, the programme manages to carve out its own specific learning outcomes allowing students to not only graduate in Sport Studies but also become sport managers AUAS-style, i.e. as a 'somebody' with a heart for sport and a head for business.

The panel thinks highly of the way in which the programme at AUAS has found its own distinctive feature among the other Sport Studies programmes in the Netherlands and manages to communicate its unique selling proposition to (potential) students.

Furthermore, the intended learning outcomes reflect strongly both the educational and vocational profile of the programme. The panel acknowledges the history of the programme and its two tracks and welcomes the growing integration of both learning trajectories. In this regard, the panel considers that the formulation of the educational vision and the core values constitute an added value that will help the programme advance in its ambitions.

Finally, the panel wants to emphasise that it very much welcomes the framework of competencies, contexts, tasks, core values and educational vision that the Sports Studies programme managed to build over the years. However, in addition to these bones, the panel appreciates even more the flesh that was put to the bones, the elements of content that the programme has chosen to focus on when setting its competencies and formulating its core values.



As a suggestion for the programme on its ambitious journey towards world-class quality, the panel advises reviving the professional board and developing the alumni board.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the panel considers that the intended learning outcomes are formulated in such a way that they align nicely with the objectives of the programme and the profile of the institution. Moreover, the intended learning outcomes are sufficiently concrete with regard to content, level and orientation. As a result, **the panel judges that the bachelor programme Sport Studies at AUAS meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

### **Standard 4 – Achieved learning outcomes**

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

There are two ways to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved – through a quality review of the final products and through checking what programme graduates are doing after they finished the programme.

#### **Quality of the end level products**

The panel noticed in the self-evaluation report that it is a deliberate choice of the programme that all SM&O and ISMB students do real-life graduation projects. During these projects, each student works with an industry client generally on relevant, strategic organisational issues. They may draw up an advisory report or marketing communication plan but may also do a project that largely revolves around practical implementation. During the site visit, the graduation project supervisors emphasised that the projects display a wide variety of topics because the programme tries to accommodate as much as possible the interests of the individual students. Students who have or create their own business, can use their own real-life setting as background for a graduation project on their entrepreneurial realisations. The assessment of the graduation projects takes account of both the written document and the student's performance in practice.

On request of the programme management, the panel reviewed the graduation projects of twenty Sport Studies students who successfully finished their programme between September 2019 and August 2021. This - slightly bigger than normal - number of projects allowed to review a truly representative sample of end level products in terms of products, scores and programme tracks. Based on a list of 337 entries, the chair and secretary selected 20 projects produced by students from both SM&O and ISMB tracks (12 and 8, respectively) who had obtained a variety of scores and had worked on a range of graduation products. The graduation projects were allocated over the panel members in such a way that most projects were reviewed by two members and that each member reviewed at least one project per track.

The panel secretary organised the thesis review with the programme representatives and supported the panel members in their work. The programme provided the selected end level products and their assessment forms, which were divided over the panel with each member receiving four projects. Each file consisted of an intake form stipulating the topic, the company arrangements and the graduation project plan; a process file on the graduation trajectory; the final end-level product/thesis; a presentation of the product (findings); and the evaluation protocol. The panel secretary briefed the members on their specific review task and provided further guidance in an accompanying note to the review template panellists were asked to complete. Prior to the site visit, the panel members reported on their review. Although the underlying assessment report to NVAO only covers standards 1 and 4, the panel was also asked to look at the quality of the evaluation forms. For each student the panellists answered three questions: (i) Is the thesis of sufficient quality to pass? (ii) Do you agree to the score given by the assessors? (iii) Is the evaluation form completed in an insightful way? Furthermore, panel members were asked to indicate particularly strong or weak elements they had come across in the sample of projects they had reviewed. Once all contributions were gathered, the secretary drafted a note which was discussed at the preparatory meeting.

In terms of graduation project quality, the panel members were very clear: all projects they had reviewed were definitely of sufficient quality to pass. There was not a single doubt on any of the projects and therefore no project was submitted for a second opinion. In fact, given that most projects were reviewed by two panellists independently, it is fair to state that none of the 32 projects were earmarked as potentially (too) weak.

Asked to comment on the overall quality of the graduation projects they had reviewed, panel members indicated that the quality of the products was good, that the texts were well written, that students used systematically constructed and recognizable models, and that the end products matched the issues of the internship organisations. The panel also appreciated the combination of a bachelor thesis with a work portfolio because in this way research and practical work are both included and assessed. Panel members were also impressed with the amount of work that was put in the individual projects and with the diversity of the products. By doing so, students tackle many objectives and produce results in different aspects of the business. In sum, the panel found that the quality of the graduation projects was consistent with the high standards claimed by the programme in the Playing for Keeps document.

As a few panel members had commented on the quality of the research, mentioning that in some cases the projects could have benefited from somewhat more and better quality research by the students; moreover, the research could have been supervised and checked more by the programme during the project trajectory. It seems that in these cases, the research was not really reviewed because the assessment team emphasised in its feedback the overall attitude and work efforts of the students. During the site visit, the graduation project supervisors acknowledged this observation and made two comments to contextualise the finding: first of all, every student/project has to achieve/contain a minimum level of research work; students have to put in additional efforts before handing in the graduation project in case the supervisor or the graduation coordinator expect the projects are likely not to reach this minimum threshold.

Secondly, students often decide on a graduation project in view of their career expectations; some students have a very clear idea what they want to do upon graduation. In certain cases this means that they use the graduation trajectory to obtain a highly relevant internship position with a company and pay more attention to the professional than the research component of their assignment. These students are very motivated to do well on the work floor; a substantial number of them in fact gains employment with the organisation where they did their graduation internship. During the visit the panel was informed that the programme had recently established a research unit. A more prominent location of this unit and its personnel within the main body of the programme may result according to the panel in more visibility of this resource for the benefit of and relevance to the student.

In terms of scoring, the panel agreed to almost all scores: only 4 of 32 projects were deemed somewhat overrated and one project with a low score could have benefited from a slightly higher grade. In terms of unique projects, panel members agreed entirely to 16 out of 20 scores. These scoring results did not differ per track.

Asked to comment on the scoring, panel members indicated that the evaluation criteria were valuable and constituted an effective tool for summative assessment. The evaluation was well structured, which gave the impression that students were supported during their work. Because it showed that students had to do a lot of work, it is good that the criteria and forms are of good quality. One of the panel members agreed to all projects and their assessment judgements and found these to be of equal standing to other final projects he had marked, standardised, moderated or evaluated in his own or in other institutions internationally where he had been an external examiner.

Two members who had not always agreed to the given scores, indicated that they thought the score was influenced by the satisfaction of the company and that the scoring template was not always interpreted in the same way. The thesis supervisors commented during the site visit that the company representative is part of every assessment team but normally does not have a particularly strong influence on the overall score. In order to counter different interpretations in scoring, the programme has been organising calibration sessions on a yearly basis for all thesis supervisors/assessors. Moreover, every year two graduation projects are submitted for calibration among the network of Sport Studies programmes.

### **Performance of graduates**

Another way to demonstrate the achievement of programme learning outcomes is to look at the whereabouts of the graduates. The panel noticed that the post-study implications of the bachelor Sport Studies are discussed in a manner that gives clear insights into what effect this study has for the students, how good they find their space in the working environment and what they are able to do for different types of organizations. The information demonstrates that graduates do very well on the labour market: results from the 2020 edition of HBO-Monitor show that 89% of recent graduates have gained a graduate-level job and just 3% are unemployed.

Moreover, the panel gathered from several discussions on site that both SM&O and ISMB graduates are in high demand and smoothly transition to the labour market. According to the panel this seems to confirm the statement in *Playing for Keeps* that sport managers who possess the ten competencies are successful in the world of sport and beyond. Industry partners give positive feedback when students do internships and the same goes for employers of alumni: Sport Studies students and graduates from AUAS are proactive, motivated, socially skilled and know how to get things done.

The panel also noticed that a good number of AUAS graduates do not enter the labour market directly but move on to a master programme. Partly due to privacy legislation there are no exact figures available on the number of graduates who do so, either immediately or after a few years of work experience. Specific information that was made available on site conservatively estimates that 12% of Sport Studies students pursue master programmes after graduating from SM&O and ISMB. The panel was informed that some of these students prepared for this academic career by doing a pre-master or bridging programme as part of their minor in the third or fourth year of their bachelor programme. To this effect, there are formal agreements with universities at home (VU, University of Amsterdam, Utrecht University) and abroad (Temple University, USA). Students also continue to study at Erasmus University Rotterdam or Loughborough University in the UK. The additional information also featured a list with the preferred master programmes for Sport Studies graduates: Business Administration (UvA, EUR), Movement Science (VU), Sport Business and Leadership (Loughborough), Sport Management (Johan Cruyff Institute), Sport administration (Ohio University), and Sportbeleid en sportmanagement (UU).

Finally, a 2018 survey among alumni revealed that 53% of the Sport Studies graduates find their first job outside of sport, a percentage that increases up to 62% in the years following graduation. This statement seems to confirm what was already mentioned in the mid-term review, namely that the learning characteristics of the Sport Studies programme prepares students for a career not only in sport, but also in other industries and in this way distinguishes itself from most other subject-specific management programmes. The panel noticed that this point was also brought up in the discussion with alumni, where half of the interviewees were now active outside of the world of sport and provided many similar examples of their previous fellow students. Alumni emphasised that they found this a particularly strong feature of the programme and were thankful for the opportunity they were given by the programme to discover the world outside sport already during one of the internships.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers that the SM&O and ISMB students who graduate from the Sport Studies programme have the necessary competencies to move on in their career. Based on the intermediate test materials provided on site, its extensive review of the quality of graduation projects, and the discussions and available data on the whereabouts of Sport Studies alumni, the panel is very confident that graduates have achieved the intended learning outcomes as laid out in the ten competencies and the forty mastery criteria.

The panel was highly positive about the quality of the graduation projects: all twenty projects were of more than sufficient quality. There was not a single doubt on the quality of even the lower scored projects, while some of the higher graded projects were excellent. These results cover the entire sample of graduation projects; the panel found no difference in quality or scoring across both the SM&O and ISMB track.

Furthermore, the panel considers that the AUAS Sport Studies alumni are successful in their career, which in turn is a positive indication that graduates have indeed achieved the programme learning outcomes. A good number of graduates move on to a master programme, possibly after having followed a pre-master programme as part of their Sport Studies minor; others start their own company or use the programme as a lever for their entrepreneurial ambitions; most graduates enter the labour market where they invariably find a job that is commensurate with the level and orientation of their study. In this regard, the panel found it a particularly strong feature that many graduates find relevant employment outside the world of sport.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the panel considers that students who pass the graduation project invariably achieve the intended learning outcomes and are therefore entitled to graduate. Moreover, both SM&O and IMBS graduates manage to find a job quickly and advance swiftly in their careers. As a result, *the panel judges that the bachelor programme Sport Studies at AUAS meets standard 4, achieved learning outcomes.*

### **Overall judgement**

The panel considers that the bachelor programme Sport Studies meets the two NVAO standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes and achieved learning outcomes. **The panel therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the bachelor programme Sportkunde/Sport Studies at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.**



## ANNEXES

### Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programme

#### Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution:	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Status of the institution:	publicly funded
Result of the institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive (2019)
Contact person:	Katelijne Boerma (k.boerma@hva.nl)

#### Administrative data on the programme

Name:	Sportkunde/Sport Studies
CROHO:	34040
Level:	bachelor
Orientation:	professional
Credits:	240 ECTS (regular) 180 ECTS (mbo sport- & beweegdiploma)
Location:	Amsterdam
Mode of study:	full-time
Language:	Dutch (SM&O track) English (ISMB track)
Tracks:	Sport, Management en Ondernemen International Sport, Management and Business

## Annex 2 – Panel

### **Tony Sainsbury, chair**

Tony is director of Unitman Sports Consulting and involved with the Paralympics Movement in the UK. He has extensive experience in Olympic Athletes Villages. Tony has performed audits of sports federations and chaired the Sport Studies mid-term review panel.

### **Anneke van Zanen-Nieberg, member**

Anneke is currently president of NOC\*NSF and has extensive experience as sport manager both locally, nationally and internationally and as an auditor in the public and private sector. Anneke has been involved in several accreditation panels, also on Sport Studies.

### **Keith Jones, member**

Keith has extensive experience as manager of similar Sport Studies programmes in the UK and the US, and in designing degree programmes covering several teaching concepts. Keith was member of the Sport Studies mid-term review panel.

### **Marianne van Leeuwen, member**

Marianne is an entrepreneur and advisor on sustainability issues in both the Netherlands and abroad. She occupies management positions in the world of cycling, where she oversees digital transformation, innovation and sustainability with the KNWU and UCI.

### **Bas de Wit, member**

Bas is an alumnus (2008) of the SM&O programme. He is manager Sport en Bewegen at Stichting Sportsupport Kennemerland. Bas participated in the Sport Studies mid-term review panel and in the accreditation panel of the Sport Studies programme at InHolland.

### **Maritza Helfferich, member**

Maritza is Senior manager Brand Communications Operations at Adidas Group. In this function she regularly supervises students of this and other Sport Studies programmes during their placements and traineeships.

### **Daniel Jansen, member**

Daniel is alumnus (2007) of the SM&O programme and has a master in Bedrijfskunde. He is education manager at ROC Amsterdam and responsible for the examination of the programme Sport & Bewegen. Daniel was member of the Sport Studies mid-term review panel.

### **Ivy Bekkers, student-member**

Ivy is third-year bachelor student International Sport Management at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

The panel was assisted by **Mark Delmartino**, MDM Consultancy bv, Antwerpen – Belgium. As freelance secretary, Mark has worked with NVAO panels since 2006. He is certified by NVAO and belongs to the AUAS pool of certified external secretaries.

All members of the panel, as well as the secretary have signed the NVAO independence form.

The panel chair was informed of the NVAO profile for Panel Chairs (2016).



## **Annex 3 – Schedule of the site visit**

### **Wednesday 1 December 2021**

11.00h	Open consultation hour (online)
12.00h	Internal panel lunch
12.30h	Internal panel meeting
14.30h	Meeting with students (three parallel sessions)
15.30h	Internal panel meeting
16.15h	Meeting with alumni and professional field (two parallel sessions)
17.15h	Internal panel meeting
18.00h	End of day 1

### **Thursday 2 December 2021**

09.00h	Internal panel meeting
09.30h	Meeting with Faculty Dean and Director of Operations
10.00h	Meeting with Management Team Sport Studies programme
11.00h	Internal panel meeting
11.30	Meeting with teaching staff (three parallel sessions)
12.30h	Lunch and internal meeting
13.30h	Meeting with Exam Committee & Graduation project supervisors
14.30h	Meeting with Management Team
15.30h	Internal panel meeting
16.30h	Plenary feedback
17.30h	End of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available from the programme on request.

## Annex 4 – Materials reviewed

Prior to the site visit, the Peer Review Team received following documents:

- Playing for Keeps, Self-Assessment Report Bachelor Sport Studies, October 2021.
- Mid-term review report Bachelor Sport Studies, AUAS February 2020.

Moreover, the panel had access to other university-wide, faculty-wide and programme-specific materials on site, such as:

- Study manuals SM&O and ISMB
- Curriculum overview
- Graduation manuals (EN & NL)
- Assessment matrix SM&O and ISMB
- Research group Sport Management
- Intermediate assessments
- Landelijk opleidingsprofiel Sportkunde
- Beroepsprofiel Sport Manager
- Keuzegids hoger onderwijs 20-21/21-22
- Executive Programme: Sports Leadership Programme
- Master Sport Management and Leadership
- Minor Future of Esports (co-creation AUAS two faculties).

The panel reviewed a representative sample of 20 graduation projects from SM&O and ISMB students who graduated between September 2019 and August 2021. A list of the selected end products is available from the programme on request.