

Tilburg University
TIAS School for Business and Society

AACSB – NVAO combined accreditation visit

Report on Programme Assessments

November 2022

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SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Introduction

This document reports on the external assessment of 15 degree programmes at TIAS School for Business and Society (TIAS). The assessment was undertaken as part of a broader exercise combining the Continuous Improvement Review of Tilburg University (TiSEM and TIAS) by AACSB with the assessment of programme quality according to the 2018 NVAO framework for programme assessments. The Peer Review Team (PRT) performing the external assessment consisted of three AACSB volunteers, a Belgian academic expert familiar with the Dutch higher education system, a student member and an NVAO-certified secretary. The combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation visit took place from 29 May until 1 June 2022.

In the run up to the visit, the PRT received extensive and good quality information on TIAS and the respective degree programmes under review. The PRT was particularly satisfied with the efforts of all programme teams to produce informative and individual self-evaluation reports with dedicated and independently written student chapters. As both TIAS and the degree programmes aimed to maintain the AACSB quality mark and obtain re-accreditation by NVAO, the materials and the discussions focused on recent developments at School and programme level. The PRT considers that since the previous accreditation in February 2017, good progress has been made on all accounts. In fact, it thinks highly of the way in which the school and the programmes have engaged with the recommendations of the previous (combined AACSB-NVAO) accreditation.

The PRT appreciated the open atmosphere in the discussions on site. Throughout the visit and across all programmes, it sensed a positive spirit among all interviewees, as well as a clear commitment to TIAS and its programmes. Faculty were passionate about their discipline, the courses they teach and the programmes they relate to. Students and alumni were advocating strongly for their programmes.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

The PRT considers that the degree programmes under review are embedded in a clear and relevant school-wide mission, vision and strategy that have been considerably refined and operationalised since the previous accreditation visit. It is very positive about the way in which each degree programme identifies its own rationale and in doing so, manages to set itself apart from similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad. For each programme, the intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately in terms of content, level and orientation. Moreover, TIAS and its degree programmes maintain good relationships with the “outside world”, which are operationalised among others through a school-wide International Advisory Council and programme-specific corporate Sounding Boards. Although at the time of the site visit, certain programmes are more advanced than others in formulating the intended learning outcomes and in embedding the final qualifications in their curriculum, the panel considers that all programmes are of comparable and adequate quality with regard to their intended learning

outcomes. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.

Standard 2 – orientation

The PRT considers that all degree programmes at TIAS have a clear academic orientation: their curricula contain sufficient elements to ensure that students acquire the necessary academic skills by the end of the programme. Moreover, each programme provides students with relevant professional skills and an up-to-date insight in the respective professional domains. The specific expertise of the teaching staff, the individual perspectives of students and the structural involvement of external stakeholders allow for an active – and highly appreciated – interplay between developments in the business and academic worlds. Given that the orientation of each degree programmes is commensurate with the (inter)national expectations regarding academic (post-experience) master programmes, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.

Standard 3 – content

The PRT considers that the contents of all degree programmes under review are strong. Each curriculum is properly designed with the sum of courses / modules adding up to a coherent and purposeful programme. The recent programme adjustments – both across programmes and in individual curricula – have invariably improved the quality of the curriculum contents. In this regard, the panel thinks highly of the efforts of the different programme teams to ensure that content-wise the learning goals of the respective courses are, and remain, in alignment with the overall learning outcomes at programme level. The PRT understands from the discussions with students and alumni that the study period at TIAS constitutes an impactful phase in their intellectual development, professional career and private life. Their enthusiasm and commitment show that the programmes in general and the curriculum contents in particular are highly appreciated and relevant. Despite individual differences in approach, the panel considers that the curriculum contents are of a comparable and high quality across all programmes under review. Students follow a set of courses and produce a final project that – taken together – enables them to achieve the learning outcomes at master level. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.

Standard 4 – learning environment

The PRT considers that TIAS features a strong learning environment which puts students at the heart of their learning trajectory and allows them to achieve the respective programme objectives. To this effect, the School has developed a comprehensive and relevant vision on teaching and learning that aligns with the profile and the strategic ambitions of TIAS. The discussions on site with management, staff, students and alumni have convinced the panel that this educational vision is being operationalised visibly and successfully in the learning environments of the respective degree programmes. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted considerably on the delivery of education across both degree and non-degree programmes at TIAS. The PRT considers that the School has reacted in a swift way, befitting the unforeseen developments. The panel also appreciates the way in which the compulsory move to online learning has been used by TIAS to inform and adjust its educational offering in the post-COVID

period and the longer-term future. Several (executive) master programmes at TIAS are offered in English. The PRT agrees to the detailed and programme-specific motivation of the School to offer part of its programmes in English. Despite individual differences within programmes, the panel considers that the respective curriculum structures and their operational relevance are of comparable and good quality across all programmes under review. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.

Standard 5 – intake

The PRT considers that TIAS has an adequate admission policy which is properly implemented in the different programmes. While specific requirements for admission differ per programme, the overall framework is identical. The panel appreciates the student-oriented intake interview and the efforts of the School to ensure that all students start the programme with a common understanding of what is ahead for them in terms of time investment as well as with a sufficient level of knowledge, skills and understanding. Moreover, the admission procedure is effective as almost all students who enrol eventually graduate. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 5, intake.

Standard 6 – staff

The PRT considers that the degree programmes under review can rely on a strong and effective School-wide staff policy with clear recruitment and evaluation procedures. The number of academic and professional staff at TIAS in general and within the respective programmes in particular is appropriate. The panel welcomes the efforts at School and programme level to aim in its recruitment for a more gender-balanced team of faculty. The core faculty has extensive domain-specific expertise as well as the necessary didactic skills to deliver their courses. Moreover, they bring a wealth of research and/or professional experience to the class. Lecturers who are involved in English language programmes have an adequate command of English. The professional staff constitutes an important resource for both the academic staff and the students. The panel observes with satisfaction that professors, students and alumni were highly positive about the support they receive(d) from instructional designers and programme managers. Despite individual differences at programme level in terms of perceived staff quality and availability, the panel considers that all programmes under review are of comparable and proper quality when it comes down to staff deployment. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 6, staff.

Standard 7 – facilities

The PRT considers that the facilities at TIAS are adequate for the number of students enrolled and the type of programmes on offer. It appreciates in particular the attention paid by the school to ensure that its physical and teaching infrastructure remains up-to-date. The discussions on site have convinced the panel that the recent - and future - innovations on both Utrecht and Tilburg campuses, the learning management system and the adaptations for hybrid learning enhance the educational well-being of students and staff at TIAS. This appreciation covers the overall facilities of the School and extends to the different degree programmes under review. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 7, facilities.

Standard 8 - tutoring

The PRT considers that students at TIAS receive high-quality tutoring and information services. The panel appreciates the range of services offered and the individualised approach of these services. It therefore comes as no surprise to the panel that most students and alumni are very enthusiastic about the services offered by TIAS and about the personal touch combining professionalism with individualised attention with which individual members of the academic and support staff provide these services. While some programmes have additional and specific personal and career development services for its students and some programme teams are more skilled than others in meeting the expectations of students regarding personalised attention, the panel's overall impression is that across programmes, information provision and tutoring are supporting students in their learning journey. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 8, tutoring.

Standard 9 – quality assurance

The PRT considers that the programmes under review can rely on a comprehensive School-wide quality assurance system that involves all relevant internal and external stakeholders. While the previous accreditation panel established in 2017 that the quality assurance system was up to standard, the current PRT thinks highly of the recent efforts undertaken by the School and its programmes to make the system even more performant. Moreover, all stakeholders are knowledgeable about the quality assurance provisions of the School and the programmes and understand their importance. In this respect, the PRT considers that TIAS features a quality culture that is shared and lived by its management, staff, students, alumni and professional field representatives. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.

Standard 10 – assessment

The PRT considers that the degree programmes at TIAS can rely on a robust system of assessment. The assessment principles and policies are clear, well aligned and properly operationalised in the respective programmes. In terms of assuring the quality of assessment, the panel considers that the Examination Board has a huge remit which it is handling very competently. TIAS has put a lot of effort in bringing its assessment system to the current level of quality, incorporating assessment in the vision of the School on teaching and learning and in the Business and Society Competency framework. Similarly, several stakeholders have made considerable improvements to the assessment system following the comments of the previous accreditation panel. In this regard, the efforts of the Examination Board stand out in enhancing the review capacity of programme, course and thesis assessment by mandating a dedicated assessment committee. Moreover, the PRT considers that assessment has not only improved on paper, but also in the day-to-day reality of the respective courses, theses and programmes. It endorses the findings of the thesis committee that all programmes are using good quality thesis assessment forms and that in a qualified majority of cases (74%) these forms are not only completed properly but also in an insightful way. Hence, it is fair to state that thesis assessment is an integral part of the overall assessment system at TIAS and that over the past few years the different stakeholders have given it the attention it deserves. Although some programmes have more variety in assessment formats and/or provide more insightful feedback in thesis

assessment forms than others, the panel considers that the assessment policy, the course assessments, the thesis evaluation and the work of the Examination Board all contribute to a strong quality culture across TIAS and its degree programmes. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 10, assessment.

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Thesis quality is an important indicator to measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Having established that 99% of the comprehensive final project sample was at least of acceptable quality, the PRT considers that students who graduate from TIAS have indeed acquired the programme learning outcomes at the end of the curriculum. The size of the review exercise (15 programmes) in terms of sample (225 theses) and reviewers (16 experts) demonstrates that TIAS in general and the programmes in particular pay careful attention to the position of the thesis as final end level product. Across all programmes under review assessors to come to final scores that are almost invariably (89%) considered as balanced and adequate by their peers of the thesis committee. Moreover, the PRT considers that TIAS programme graduates are properly qualified to find suitable employment, make internal promotion or even shift careers completely. In each case, the study period at TIAS has enhanced their competencies and boosted their confidence to assume different tasks with greater responsibilities. Although the overall quality of the thesis sample and the adequacy of the final project scores differ slightly across individual programmes, the panel considers that all degree programmes do very well in terms of achieved learning outcomes. As a result, the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.

Overall appreciation

Based on the information provided and the discussions during the site visit, the panel considers that all programmes meet the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards set by NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for programme assessments. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way each degree programme under review fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Given that its overall assessment of the degree programmes under review is positive, the PRT issues a positive advice to NVAO on the quality of each programme submitted for accreditation by the TIAS School for Business and Society:

- Full-time MSc in Business Administration
- Part-time MSc in Business Administration
- Full-time MBA
- Executive Master of Business Valuation
- Executive Master in Finance
- Executive Master of Finance and Control
- Executive Master of Health Administration
- Executive Master of IT-Auditing
- Executive Master of Information Management and Data Transformation
- Executive Master of Management and Organisation
- Executive Master of Management in Education

- Executive Master of Marketing & Customer Management
- Executive Master in Public and Non-Profit Management
- Executive Master of Operations and Supply Chain Excellence
- Executive Master of Real Estate

The chair and the secretary of the PRT 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 Peer Review Team,

Rudy Martens
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Date: 10 November 2022

INTRODUCTION

From 29 May to 1 June 2022, an AACSB-NVAO assessment visit was held at the TIAS School for Business and Society (TIAS) and the School of Economics and Management (TiSEM) of Tilburg University. Organised in line with the AACSB-NVAO Agreement of Cooperation, the visit combines the review of programme quality according to the NVAO framework with a Continuous Improvement Review of Tilburg University (TiSEM and TIAS) by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Following a similar exercise in 2017, it is the second time that TIAS, TiSEM and most of their degree programmes are assessed at the same time in accordance with both AACSB and NVAO quality standards.

This report presents the assessment of 15 (executive) master programmes at TIAS. The administrative data on these programmes are presented in Annex 1. The assessment of TiSEM's degree programmes is presented in a separate report. The following description of the working method reflects the approach to the entire - combined - accreditation exercise.

Panel composition

The assessment was performed by a so-called Peer Review Team (PRT), a panel consisting of three AACSB volunteers, an expert on Dutch higher education and a student member. The team that visited Tilburg University (TiSEM and TIAS) and issued judgements on all standards and programmes, consisted of:

- Rudy Martens, Emeritus Professor University of Antwerp, Belgium, chair
- Philip Vergauwen, (past) Dean Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management, Belgium, vice-chair
- Michael Ginzberg, Dean Emeritus Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA, member
- Filipe Santos, Dean of Católica-Lisbon at Universidade Católica Portuguesa Lisbon, Portugal, member
- Evi Voets, Maastricht University, student-member

The PRT was accompanied by Mark Delmartino, an NVAO-certified secretary who also liaised between the panel and TIAS. All members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. The NVAO approved the PRT in March 2022. Annex 2 contains a short description of the team members.

Preparation

In the run-up to the combined visit, TIAS produced a Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) report addressing the issues covered by the AACSB standards for business schools that already hold AACSB recognition. It also prepared self-evaluation reports for each of the programmes to be reaccredited by NVAO. Furthermore, school-wide policy documents and materials, as well as programme specific information were made available in the digital base room hosted by Tilburg University. The materials which the PRT studied in the framework of this joint accreditation visit are listed in Annex 4. The panel wants to express its gratitude towards the

TiSEM and TIAS accreditation team who has been instrumental in ensuring a good and timely information flow from both schools to the panel.

Prior to the visit, the accreditation team at TIAS and TiSEM was in contact with the PRT, the panel secretary and the AACSB accreditation manager to work out the programme of the sessions and agree on the materials to be made available. Moreover, PRT members have held several internal meetings to prepare for the visit. On 4 May 2022, the AACSB office in Amsterdam organised a briefing session for the PRT. During this so-called pre-visit call, the specific character of this combined accreditation visit was presented to the panel members, as well as the particular perspectives of the AACSB continuous improvement review and the NVAO programme assessment. The PRT vice chair, the student member and the secretary exchanged impressions on the self-evaluation reports during two online meetings. Moreover, this group and the PRT chair held a final preparatory meeting on 25 May to identify the key issues to be addressed during the site visit from both AACSB and NVAO perspective. This meeting also served as Open Consultation Hour: three people related to the TIAS programmes signed up for this opportunity to speak individually and confidentially with the panel.

Site visit

The programme of the site visit was established and fine-tuned between TIAS, TiSEM, AACSB, the PRT chair and vice-chair, and the secretary. The visit was held from Sunday 29 May until Wednesday 1 June 2022. On Sunday afternoon, the PRT had an internal discussion. At this meeting, panel members discussed the key issues they wanted to raise with the different stakeholders and during the respective sessions. In order to fit all components that are customary in AACSB and NVAO reviews, the site visit schedule was very tight: nonetheless, all but two sessions were held in plenary. Given that the PRT had to assess a total of 35 degree programmes, nine sessions were dedicated to discussions with management, lecturers and students of the TiSEM bachelor, TiSEM master and TIAS (executive) master programmes, respectively. On Wednesday morning, the PRT discussed and exchanged good practices on diversity and inclusion, global branding and hybrid learning with a representation of TiSEM and TIAS management and policy staff during a combined Development Dialogue (NVAO) and Consultative Feedback (AACSB) session. At the end of the site visit, the PRT chair presented the key panel findings from both AACSB and NVAO perspective to the management of TIAS and TiSEM, to the programme directors of both schools and to the Rector and Vice-Rector of Tilburg University. An overview of the site visit programme is provided in Annex 3.

Assessment framework

TIAS currently operates three MBA programmes, twelve executive master programmes, two master programmes, twenty non-degree advanced programmes, nineteen non-degree master classes, two TIAS 8hrs programmes and a range of in-company programmes. In the framework of this joint accreditation visit, AACSB examined the entire TIAS portfolio; furthermore, the PRT assessed the quality of 15 degree programmes (1 MBA, 12 Executive masters and 2 master programmes) with the scope of submitting an advice on their re-accreditation to NVAO.

In order to establish the quality of each programme under review at TIAS, the PRT has followed the Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands, which is described in the NVAO publication of September 2018. Given that these fifteen degree programmes were accredited at the time of the visit but TIAS does not hold the institutional quality assurance accreditation (ITK) by NVAO, the PRT was guided by the framework for extended programme assessments. Programmes must demonstrate that their educational practices meet eleven standards. For each programme, the panel has given a substantiated judgement per standard 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 each 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 respective programmes.

Thesis committee

The NVAO standard on achieved learning outcomes has been tested among others by examining a sample of 15 theses for each degree programme. Such thesis review is not part of the AACSB accreditation exercise and was therefore outsourced to a thesis committee of 16 academic experts:

- Philip Vergauwen, Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management, chair
- René de Koster, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Ivo De Loo, Nyenrode Business University
- Rob Gleasure, Copenhagen Business School
- Jochen Mierau, University of Groningen
- Ed Nozeman, University of Groningen
- Liliane Pintelon, KU Leuven
- Lieven Quintens, Maastricht University
- Remko Renes, Nyenrode Business University
- Jan Schoormans, TU Delft
- Piet Sercu, KU Leuven
- Meir Shemla, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Ad van Iterson, Maastricht University
- Kristin Vanlommel, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences
- Renée van Schoonhoven, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- Ton Vorst, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The chair of the thesis committee also served as vice-chair of the Peer Review Team. The panel secretary supported the work of the thesis committee. The methodology adopted for the thesis review is presented in the General Findings section of this report. The theses were selected per programme and allocated according to the expertise of the respective experts. Short CV's of the thesis committee members are provided in Annex 2.

Before the site visit, the thesis committee members reviewed and reported on the quality of the theses as well as on the quality of the thesis assessment. On the basis of their feedback, the

panel secretary drafted a report on the findings and considerations of the thesis committee, both in general terms and for each programme individually. This report was reviewed by the experts and validated by the thesis committee chair. Programme-specific issues that required further clarification were submitted to TIAS with the request to answer in writing by the time of the site visit. The PRT verified the overall considerations and individual clarifications during the interviews and eventually issued a judgement per programme on the quality of both thesis and thesis assessment.

Report

This report covers the external assessment of 15 existing degree programmes, undertaken in the framework of the combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation visit. It will be submitted by TIAS to NVAO as part of the accreditation process of its degree programmes. The next chapter constitutes the core of the report and is organised as follows: in the first section, the panel's general findings and considerations that apply across all programmes are presented per NVAO standard; the second section contains the specific findings per programme, and includes the considerations and judgements of the PRT on each programme individually.

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft version of this report and circulated it to the PRT 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 TIAS mid-September for a check on factual errors. The feedback from the School was discussed in the panel who modified the text where it thought this was appropriate. The chair then established the final version of this report, which was sent to TIAS on 10 November 2022.

PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

TIAS School for Business and Society (TIAS) is a private institution with two shareholders: Tilburg University (80%) and Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). Although operating as a School in the organisational structure of Tilburg University and headquartered on its campus, TIAS is 100% financially independent and has full autonomy over its operations. Classified by the Dutch Government as a non-funded research university, TIAS does not have access to public funding for education or research activities.

TIAS offers a broad portfolio of degree, non-degree and in-company programmes in Tilburg and on its satellite campus in Utrecht, attracting around 4000 participants per year. The School is led by an Executive Management Team - Dean, Vice-Dean and Director of Operations - who is accountable to the TIAS Supervisory Board. To ensure harmonisation and cohesion across the portfolio, all programmes are allocated to one of seven domain-specific clusters headed by a cluster manager. TIAS employs about 200 academic and professional staff; several faculty have a dual appointment at Tilburg University and TIAS.

TIAS is rooted in the Province of North Brabant, which is considered a regional growth engine for the Dutch economy and is home to a prominent business ecosystem: Brainport spans the innovation, technology and entrepreneurship space across several industry domains. Moreover, the School has a good reputation and a long record of service in public and non-profit sectors such as education, health and housing.

The majority of TIAS' degree programmes are accredited by NVAO. This report covers the assessment of fifteen existing and accredited degree programmes. The Peer Review Team noticed that these programmes contain several common features and that some elements of the assessment framework are addressed similarly in each of the programmes under review. Hence the organisation of this chapter in two sections: in the first section, the panel's general findings and considerations that apply across all programmes are presented per NVAO standard; the second section contains the specific findings which are described per programme and includes the considerations and judgements of the PRT on each programme individually.

General findings and considerations

Further to its message during the site visit, the PRT wants to state also in its report that it was very satisfied with the quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided by TIAS. This appreciation relates to the development and current situation of the School, described in the Continuous Improvement Report for the AACSB review, as well as to the state-of-play of the respective degree programmes presented in the Self-Evaluation Reports. The panel thought highly of the benchmarking each programme had made as an exercise in strategic positioning towards similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad; similarly, the PRT welcomed the respective student chapters as informative contributions to the programme reports; finally, the

panel noticed the attention in all reports to how the recommendations of the previous visit had been addressed.

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.

Mission, vision and values

The PRT gathers from the extensive description in the Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) report and the discussions on site that TIAS is operating its (degree and non-degree) programmes in a consistent strategic framework that is rooted in a clear vision and mission. TIAS derives its corporate mission and academic scholarship from the intellectual tradition of its main parent institution: the school of thought at Tilburg University builds on the views and ideas of its founding father Martinus Cobbenhagen who claimed that economics and ethics go hand-in-hand. The panel notices that TIAS strives to embed this overarching principle in its programmes and research. Over the years, TIAS has strengthened and fine-tuned its strategic direction: in 2014 the School changed its name into TIAS School for Business and Society and in 2019, the current strategy was approved in the so-called TIAS Game Plan 2025.

In order to position TIAS as “the go-to school for business transformation that serves society” (mission), the School identified five strategic priorities (Game Plan 2025): organise for growth; accommodate to the needs and expectations of diverse customers; develop thought leadership on business and society themes; build and leverage alliances, partnerships and networks; and enhance the overall TIAS value proposition. Stemming from its conviction that business exists to service society and its vision that the School is an international hub for lifelong learning and development for leaders who want to have impact and serve society by transforming business, TIAS aims to equip participants and clients with a broad perspective and competencies that enable them to address societal challenges and developments and instigate transformation. To this end, TIAS has developed its own signature Business and Society Competency Framework with which it firmly embeds the notion of business transformation into its programmes.

The panel noticed during the discussions that the Business and Society component in the name is a distinctive feature of and value added for the school in attracting (potential) participants and clients. Moreover, the PRT welcomes the operationalisation of the school’s vision and mission in the Game Plan 2025, which consists of relevant priorities with concrete actions, initiatives and clear indications regarding achievements and expected impact. While the overall implementation was reportedly delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the panel acknowledges that at the time of the site visit in spring 2022, several initiatives have been implemented and are showing initial achievements.

Programme purpose

The degree programmes under review at TIAS are all of master level and in almost all cases of post-experience character, i.e. targeting students with (several years of) professional experience

who often combine their study with work and family commitments. Each programme is headed by an Academic Director who is responsible for the development and improvement of the curriculum and for the overall quality of the programme. The Programme Manager supports the Academic Director and liaises between the students and the teaching staff.

Since the previous accreditation visit, TIAS has introduced a cluster structure, which groups together multiple degree and non-degree programmes around specific topics, such as Health and Well-being or Leadership and Transformational Strategy. Each of the seven clusters is headed by a cluster manager who is responsible for internal and external (new) business, operations, and the financial solvency of the cluster and its programmes. Whereas the Game Plan defines concrete strategic priorities at institutional level, clusters operate at tactical level and formulate rather autonomously their own strategic direction and corresponding financial plans within the boundaries defined by the Game Plan. According to the PRT, the School has a relevant organisational structure to develop, manage and implement its degree programmes. It welcomes the newly created structure where clusters facilitate cohesion, harmonisation and interaction among programmes.

In preparing for the site visit, the PRT obtained good insight in the specific features of the individual degree programmes by reading the informative self-evaluation reports. While the specific purpose of each individual programme will be analysed in the next section, the panel notices that overall, there is a clear link between the vision and strategy of the School and the rationale of the programmes. Moreover, the benchmarking exercises in the respective self-evaluation reports show according to the PRT that every programme is well aware of its distinguishing features that set itself apart from similar programmes in the Netherlands and beyond.

Furthermore, the panel notices that although each degree programme has its own rationale, learning outcomes and focus, the TIAS Business and Society Competency Framework is used as a common thread throughout all degree programmes to achieve the School's overall purpose, i.e. developing leaders to serve society by transforming business. This framework is based on four competency areas: Responsible Leadership, Collaboration, Business Modelling, and Sustainable Innovation. Each competency is important in itself, but the combination of all four competencies enables students and alumni to have the transformational impact that TIAS set out as its purpose. Since the previous accreditation visit, the framework has been further refined: each competency area was broken down in three competencies, which in turn have been defined in terms of indicators related to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This enhancement allows to better integrate the competencies in programme objectives and learning outcomes. The panel acknowledges with satisfaction that the Business and Society Competency Framework is an important tool that effectively guides the work of both academic and professional staff as the inclusion of the Business and Society competencies has become a compulsory part of the redesign of the programme objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment that is taking place throughout TIAS.

Intended learning outcomes

In order to set the learning outcomes of its degree programmes at the appropriate level, TIAS follows the provisions of the Dutch Qualification Framework (NLQF), which is linked to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). Hence, the education offered in the TIAS programmes under review is for all final attainments (Context, Knowledge, Applying Knowledge, Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Learning and development Skills, Responsibility and Independence) classified at NLQF/EQF level 7. All degree programmes also take into account the Dublin Descriptors at master level when formulating or adjusting their specific set of learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

The previous review panel recommended in 2017 that TIAS may want to adopt a more standardised approach towards presenting and formulating the intended learning outcomes per programme. In several cases the formulation of these learning outcomes could be sharpened in order to reflect (even) better the specificity of the discipline-based knowledge, skills and attitudes students should acquire within a particular programme. The current PRT establishes that TIAS has taken this recommendation at heart. Across TIAS, programmes have been working since 2018 on an overhaul of their respective objectives and learning outcomes at both programme and course level. Following internal feedback from various review boards, students and staff, it became clear that programme objectives and learning outcomes were not always in agreement and learning outcomes were difficult to measure and thus provided little guidance for learning improvement. This overhaul received additional impetus with the recruitment of two instructional designers (see standard 9).

The current panel gathers from the self-evaluation reports that all degree programmes at TIAS have dedicated intended learning outcomes, and that the contents of the respective programme curricula are aligned to these learning outcomes. Moreover, the PRT notices that the learning outcomes reflect the rationale of the programmes and in this way also the vision and strategy of the School. Acknowledging that the intended learning outcomes of all degree programmes under review are formulated adequately in terms of content, level and orientation, a more in-depth analysis per programme is provided in the next section.

Professional field

The PRT gathers from the written materials and the discussions on site that TIAS in general and its degree programmes in particular are following up the latest developments in their respective professional domains. At school level, the International Advisory Council (IAC) is a diverse group of highly visible alumni, senior executives of multinational firms, client partners and senior academics from institutions and organizations who provide guidance and advice to TIAS on the further development and implementation of its strategic direction. The discussion with several representatives of the IAC demonstrates according to the panel that this board effectively assists the School in its internationalization strategy, in defining key performance areas to ensure sustainability and long-term success, in building relationships with international partners and external stakeholders, and in enhancing its international reputation.

At programme level, corporate Advisory Boards formally meet at least once a year and guard the connection of the respective programmes with the requirements of the professional field. Its corporate members function as sounding boards and provide the respective academic directors with solicited and unsolicited advice concerning the content, quality and organisation of their programme. The panel gathers from its discussion with several corporate sounding board members that they are well placed in professional practice to assess the relevance of the respective degree programmes.

Furthermore, the PRT was informed that three Executive Master programmes (IT auditing, Finance and Control, Real Estate) are also accredited by their respective professional organisations in the Netherlands, which in turn safeguards the relevance of these programmes.

Programme portfolio

Before and during the site visit, the PRT has been inquiring about and discussing the programme portfolio of TIAS. While assessing the portfolio as such is not within the remit of this programme-based accreditation, the PRT thinks the portfolio requires attention of the management at both School and programme level.

The PRT notices that TIAS has a clear rationale for each programme and has no doubts whatsoever regarding the relevance of the individual programmes under review. Nonetheless, the total number of programmes offered by TIAS is large and domain-wise some programmes seem to be very close to one another when looking at their titles. According to the PRT, there is scope for TIAS and its degree programmes to look for synergies within the current portfolio and across programmes.

The panel gathers from the discussions on site that TIAS in general and the newly created cluster structure in particular is actively looking into the programme portfolio. Since the previous accreditation visit, several initiatives have been taken to harmonise and rationalise the offer, notably but not exclusively in the domain of finance/business valuation and education/non-profit management. Specific examples are provided in the next section.

Furthermore, the panel was informed that in order to explore new domains and develop new (degree) programmes in the future, TIAS intends to collaborate more intensively with TiSEM, with TU/e and with partners in Brainport. The PRT very much welcomes these plans, which are fully in line with TIAS' overall strategy to attain a deeper and more robust collaboration with Tilburg University and its Schools and to establish a firm regional footprint by strengthening its embeddedness in the regional business ecosystem.

Finally, the PRT notices that as part of its strategic priority to build and leverage partnerships, alliances and networks, TIAS is increasingly active internationally. Over the past few years, the School appointed a Director Accreditations & International Affairs and developed an internationalisation strategy which is now taken up as an integral part of the business plans of the new cluster structure. Moreover TIAS joined the European University Network ENGAGE and initiated programme-based collaborations with a British and a Swiss university. For some

time now, TIAS is also participating in Internationalisation Meetings at the level of Tilburg University. According to the Dean, TIAS wants to become an interesting partner internationally; the panel encourages the School to pursue on this internationalisation pathway as TIAS has indeed many interesting assets to offer internationally.

General considerations

The PRT considers that the degree programmes under review are embedded in a clear and relevant school-wide mission, vision and strategy that have been considerably refined and operationalised since the previous accreditation visit. The panel thinks highly of the strategic directions of the Game Plan 2025 and of the Business & Society Competency Framework as they state very explicitly what TIAS and its programmes are about.

Hence, the PRT considers that there is a clear link between the vision and strategy of the School and the rationale of the respective programmes under review. Moreover, the panel is very positive about the way in which each degree programme identifies its own rationale and in doing so, manages to set itself apart from similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad.

For each of the 15 programmes under review, the PRT considers that the intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately in terms of content, level and orientation. According to the panel, each programme has aligned its final qualifications with the requirements for a master programme set by the Dutch and European Qualification Frameworks and the Dublin Descriptors. Moreover, the panel welcomes the work of the instructional designers and the programme teams in formulating the learning outcomes more sharply and systematically than the ones reviewed in 2017.

Finally, the PRT considers that TIAS and its degree programmes maintain good relationships with the “outside world”, which are operationalised among others through a school-wide International Advisory Council and programme-specific corporate sounding boards.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that for each programme under review, the intended learning outcomes are sufficiently concrete with regard to content, level and orientation. They address all competencies and reflect the key values of the School. Although at the time of the site visit, certain programmes are more advanced than others in formulating the intended learning outcomes and in embedding the final qualifications in their curriculum, the panel considers that all programmes are of comparable quality with regard to their intended learning outcomes. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each 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.

General findings

The TIAS programmes under review are all of academic orientation. In the self-evaluation reports programmes indicated extensively how they incorporate this orientation in their respective curricula. While each programme has its own specific way of assuring that students develop academic skills at master level, the PRT also noticed a number of common elements across all programmes. These elements were mentioned in the materials and confirmed during the discussions on site.

Individual courses combine elements of theory, application, discussion and critical reflection. Courses start from theoretical models, textbooks and scientific literature, which are distributed before and discussed in class. Moreover, students are stimulated to critically think about these theories, apply them to their own practice and discuss the outcomes. The panel notices that several programmes pay particular attention to (approaching and digesting) research literature and ask students to explore a particular domain through literature review.

All programmes pay good attention to research training and feature a compulsory course module on business research methods. In this course students learn how research is designed, performed and analysed. The knowledge and skills acquired in this module are then to be applied in assignments and in the thesis trajectory.

Since the previous accreditation visit, TIAS has invested considerably in so-called preparation modules, which are mandatory for students who are admitted to a programme but do not have an academically oriented undergraduate degree. One of the key preparation modules concerns Academic Reading and Writing. Several students and alumni indicated to the panel that they appreciated these preparation modules as they provided relevant content that brought them up to par with their fellow (executive) master students. Moreover, participants mentioned that these modules were open to all students and constituted a good way to bring them in a ‘back to school’ mood and mindset.

As most programmes are designed for students with considerable work experience, students are challenged to apply the theories and models to those of the organisations they work for or to compare their own experiences with those of their fellow students. In this way, knowledge is developed through the combination of taught concepts and ideas, assignments, class interaction and by exposure to real-world problems.

The PRT acknowledges that lecturers play an important role in this learning process. Across all programmes, professors are knowledgeable of recent developments in the field and provide students with relevant academic context. Most staff members are actively involved in research and contribute to publications in their field of specialisation. Moreover, many staff members have experience in working at or advising public and private domestic and international organisations. At TIAS they use their ability to connect theory with practice, to teach interactively and to facilitate group discussions. In class, students are challenged to question, explore, engage in dialogue, discuss issues along academic lines, and interrogate and reformulate their preconceptions.

Furthermore, the panel notices that all programmes also have a clear link to the professional practice. In most cases students have their own professional expertise which they are asked explicitly to bring forward in class and during group assignments where the composition is determined based on the professional and organisational background of the participants. Several teaching staff combine their academic career with practical experience, for instance as consultants, managers or board members. In addition, several courses involve one or more guest lecturers. Given the post-experience character of most programmes and the (extensive) professional experiences of the participants, there are also interesting perspectives and forward-looking ideas that come from the students. All these interactions together make for an active interplay between developments in the business and academic worlds.

Finally, the panel gathers from the materials and the discussions on site that the academic directors monitor the relevance of their respective degree programmes in terms of both academic qualifications and expectations from the professional field. As part of the overall quality assurance provisions (see standard 9), the programme management takes into account input from several internal and external stakeholders (students, staff, alumni, professional associations, advisory boards) to ensure that the programme orientation remains up to date with both academic and professional developments.

General considerations

Based on the extensive information materials and the discussions on site, the PRT considers that all programmes at TIAS have a clear academic orientation: all curricula contain sufficient elements to ensure that students acquire the necessary academic skills by the end of the programme. Students often are experienced professionals who have not been educated to master level or in an academic tradition. Through the preparation modules and the (executive) master programmes they acquire proper research skills as well as an attitude to look for (business) research methods to underpin strategic decisions.

Moreover, the panel considers that each programme provides students with relevant professional skills and an up-to-date insight in the respective professional domains. The specific expertise of the teaching staff, the individual perspectives of students and the structural involvement of external stakeholders allow for an active – and highly appreciated - interplay between developments in the business and academic worlds.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the orientation of the degree programmes at TIAS is commensurate with the (inter)national expectations regarding academic post-experience master programmes. Across programmes and in individual courses students are exposed to theory, cases, application, discussion and critical reflection that allow them to obtain the necessary academic and professional skills. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

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

General findings

This report covers twelve executive master programmes, two variants of an MSc programme in Business Administration and one MBA programme. Some programmes have been offered since the start of TIAS in 1986, while the most recent programmes under review exist already for more than ten years. All programmes consist at least of 60 ECTS and amount at most to 70 ECTS. Almost all programmes are offered in a part-time variant and several programmes have a modular set-up. The nominal duration, exact size and possible specialisation tracks of each programme are presented in Annex 1.

The PRT has studied the self-evaluation reports which contain plenty of information on the respective programme curricula in the academic year 2020-2021, as well as on the developments in these programmes since the previous accreditation visit in February 2017. Specific developments and features of individual programmes are covered in the next section.

Across programmes, the panel notices that the curriculum set-up differs somewhat per programme with some curricula consisting of many different small-size modules, while others feature somewhat larger courses. In all programmes, students are expected to produce a final project / thesis that accounts for 15 EC.

Moreover, the PRT gathers from the materials that the curricula are clear and purposeful. All programmes underwent some adjustments since the previous accreditation visit and these changes have been accounted for adequately. Compared to the situation in 2017, the adjustments at programme level have improved the quality of the courses and enhanced the coherence of the respective curricula.

Over the past few years, TIAS has also implemented or initiated a number of developments which affect all programmes: in addition to the preparation modules (see standard 2), TIAS has elaborated a Vision on Teaching and Learning and a Business & Society Competency framework. Both policy documents do not only support the overall mission and vision of the School but are also impacting on the curriculum contents and the way courses are taught and assessed. The panel welcomes these developments and encourages TIAS and its programmes to continue aligning the programme contents to the values of the School.

Each self-evaluation report addresses explicitly how the programme learning outcomes are reflected in the course learning goals. Moreover, each curriculum features a graduation assignment, a masterpiece in which students demonstrate that they have acquired the programme learning outcomes. According to the panel, all programmes demonstrate convincingly that courses and their learning goals contribute to achieving the intended learning outcomes at programme level.

During the site visit, the panel obtained confirmation of the developments mentioned in the reports and in the additional clarifications the programmes provided on request of the panel prior to the visit. According to the PRT, several interviewees proved to be real ambassadors for TIAS and its programmes: management, staff, students and alumni demonstrated a strong sense of pride in their School, with students and alumni very often commenting positively on the quality of the courses, as well as on the accessibility and openness to improvement of both academic and professional staff. Although some individual students and alumni had constructively critical remarks about elements of the curriculum, the overall impression they sketched of their programmes was positive.

General considerations

The extensive and good-quality materials provided in the respective self-evaluation reports and the complementary information obtained during the discussions on site have led the PRT to consider that the contents of all fifteen degree programmes under review are strong. According to the panel, each curriculum is properly designed with the sum of courses / modules adding up to a coherent and purposeful programme.

The PRT considers that the recent programme adjustments – both across programmes and in individual curricula – have invariably improved the quality of the curriculum contents. In this regard, the panel thinks highly of the efforts of the different programme teams to ensure that content-wise the learning goals of the respective courses are, and remain, in alignment with the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

Furthermore, the PRT understands from the discussions on site with students and alumni that the study period at TIAS constitutes an impactful phase in their intellectual development, professional career and private life. According to the panel, their enthusiasm and commitment show that the programmes in general and the curriculum contents in particular are highly appreciated and relevant.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the curriculum contents of the respective programmes are strong and relevant. Notwithstanding individual differences in approach, the panel considers that the curriculum contents are of a comparable and high quality across all programmes under review. Students follow a set of courses and produce a final project that – taken together – enables them to achieve the learning outcomes at master level. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each 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.

Learning environment

This report covers fifteen degree programmes. The panel obtained an informative update in the self-evaluation reports on how the learning environment of each individual programme has developed over the past few years; the most important programme-specific features will be mentioned in the next section. In addition, the PRT was informed of several School-wide developments since the previous accreditation visit that affect all degree programmes.

First and foremost, the School-wide Vision on Teaching and Learning has been revised and fine-tuned. This vision serves as a guideline for academic directors, programme managers and core faculty and ensures that the programmes are aligned with the broader vision and mission of TIAS. According to this vision, teaching and learning includes a mix of theory and practice, is forward looking and innovative, and aims to stay at the forefront of educational developments. The vision is developed – and revised – in such a way that it takes into account the variety of adult learners TIAS attracts and the different instructional models of the respective degree programmes. In short, TIAS wants its participants to become academic reflective practitioners and transformative leaders, an objective that is reflected in the overall programme learning outcomes. In order to achieve this learner’s journey, four learning theories (transformative learning; situated cognition; experiential learning; and action learning) and seven didactic principles (focus, demonstrate, repeat, build on, emotion, creation, and sensory rich) together underpin a mixture of learning activities (including cases, lectures, individual and group assignments, reading materials, (online) exercises, guest lectures) and assessment formats that accommodate the variety of students/learner types who enrol in the degree programmes. According to the panel the TIAS vision on teaching and learning constitutes a robust policy document that reflects the overall vision and strategy of the School and is currently being implemented across the different programmes.

Furthermore, the School has undertaken several steps over the past few years to implement blended learning in the degree programmes. Blended learning helps students combine their studies with (full-time) jobs as it allows students to spread out the education according to their own rhythm and gives them more ownership and flexibility, notably in asynchronous preparation work. The panel was informed that TIAS uses the European Maturity Model for Blended Education, which provides the theoretical backing as well as a practical roadmap for implementing an integrated combination of online and face-to-face learning activities. Until now, several programmes have added an online kick-off session, feature online preparation work and hold interactive lectures. In the near future, all degree programmes will provide at least 25% of their lecturing in an online setting.

Another School-wide development concerns Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL): the panel notices that TIAS is committed to stay on the forefront of TEL developments; hence, the School supports academic and professional staff with a wide range of TEL applications and organises synchronous and asynchronous workshops on the availability and use of new educational resources and tools as part of its standard professional development offer.

Finally, TIAS has worked on the modularisation of its programme portfolio in an attempt to increase the flexibility of its educational offer. Over time, several programmes have switched from one to two entry moments, which is likely to increase the number of participants and hence the viability of the programme. Moreover, combining cohorts enhances opportunities for cross-pollination, i.e. stimulation through group interaction between professionals of different backgrounds. The rationale behind this approach is that the diverse experience of the participants, as well as the individual knowledge and skills they bring to the group will contribute to the depth of the programme for all students. While the effect of the increased modularisation is yet to be measured, the panel gathers from the discussions with students and alumni that they appreciate the attention to group dynamics in the respective programmes.

COVID-19 pandemic

The Continuous Improvement Review report and the Self-Evaluation reports provide extensive information on how TIAS and its degree programmes have addressed the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. During the visit, the impact of the pandemic has also been discussed with all stakeholders.

For TIAS, which is a privately funded higher education institution that mainly targets post-experience part-time students and corporate clients, the COVID-19 pandemic proved particularly tumultuous as it presented various immediate challenges to the School's day-to-day operations. With its business model leaning heavily on face-to-face and personal interaction with students and participants, the social distancing measures and travel restrictions during 2020 and 2021 have proven to be a significant game changer for TIAS.

From the very onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, TIAS decided to switch to 100% online delivery of its (running) programmes. The transition to an online-only business model took place in a matter of days and helped the School to continue its operations and allowed the students to continue their programmes without unnecessary study delays. The overall message the panel received during the visit from staff, students and alumni is that TIAS in general and the programme teams in particular went at lengths to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in terms of educational delivery and assessment. The teaching staff welcomed in particular the support they received from instructional designers on the implementation and use of instructional and technology enhanced tools and pedagogical developments. While some students and alumni were critical about the way individual programmes and staff had dealt with specific issues during the pandemic, several other students and alumni praised their programme teams and academic/professional staff for their resilience in delivering programmes in line with the regularly changing government provisions according to the degree of societal lockdown.

Notwithstanding the School's swift and according to the panel befitting reaction to the pandemic, TIAS did encounter a drop in sales and recruitment figures in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. While the drop was more substantial in the non-degree programmes, the number of incoming students also decreased – at least temporarily - in the degree programmes under review (see standard 5).

Furthermore, the PRT was satisfied to hear that the pandemic has provided TIAS with valuable insights on how to utilise resources more effectively in the future. While most takeaways from the pandemic concern organisational issues, the panel gathers from the discussion with the management that the compulsory period of online learning has allowed the School and its programmes to experiment with and introduce innovative forms and methodologies of digital learning. While online learning will never fully replace or meaningfully substitute personal and face-to-face in-class interaction and experience, it is likely that programmes will strike a balance in the future between online and on-site teaching and develop adaptive and personalised learning paths.

Language of instruction

The panel gathers from the written materials and the discussions on site that depending on the target audience / client, TIAS offers its degree and non-degree programmes in either Dutch or English. For the degree programmes under review, eight are offered in Dutch, six in English and the part-time MSc BA programme consists of two language variants. An explanation of the choice for English is included in the self-evaluation reports of the programmes concerned.

The PRT acknowledges that the MBA programme and the fulltime MSc BA programme target a diverse international audience – hence the term international in their full programme titles – and incorporate a distinctively international and intercultural perspective in their educational activities. Moreover, the executive master programmes that are offered in English target in particular the international workforce in Dutch companies and Dutch employees of international companies in the region of North-Brabant. In both cases, the panel fully understands – and supports - the motivation of the School to offer these programmes in English. The choices TIAS made to offer a certain degree programme in Dutch or in English are clear, relevant and turn out to be effective: programmes offered in English do attract a reasonable number of international students and are taught successfully by an international body of academic staff.

General considerations

The panel considers that across programmes, TIAS features a strong learning environment which puts students at the heart of their learning trajectory and allows them to achieve the respective programme objectives. To this effect, the School has developed a comprehensive and relevant vision on teaching and learning that aligns with the profile and the strategic ambitions of TIAS. The discussions on site with management, staff, students and alumni have convinced the panel that this educational vision is being operationalised visibly and successfully in the learning environments of the respective degree programmes. Each programme is conceived in line with the overall framework and vision of TIAS, while within the boundaries of this framework every programme has developed a structure of its own that is well-suited and appreciated.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted considerably on the delivery of education across both degree and non-degree programmes at TIAS. The PRT considers that the School has reacted in a swift and befitting way to these unforeseen developments. The panel also appreciates the way

in which the compulsory move to online learning has been used by TIAS to inform and adjust its educational offering in the post-COVID period and the longer-term future.

Several (executive) master programmes at TIAS are offered in English. The PRT agrees to the detailed and programme-specific motivation of the School to offer part of its programmes in English.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the learning environment of the respective degree programmes under review is robust. Notwithstanding individual differences within programmes, the panel considers that the respective curriculum structures and their operational relevance are of comparable quality across all programmes under review. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

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

Enrolment figures

The PRT gathers from the Continuous Improvement Report that every year approximately 1500 participants enrol in one of the 18 degree programmes at TIAS. Comparing the exact enrolment data per programme between 2016-2017 and 2020-2021, the total number of executive master students increased from 304 to 330. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted negatively on the enrolment of (only) three programmes, while the total number of participants in these programmes increased slightly from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021. Since 2018-2019, a few programmes feature a modular intake; the panel notices that an increasing number of participants signs up for this variant.

Since the previous accreditation round, the number of MBA students has decreased from 92 to 64, while the total enrolment of MSc students showed a similar downward trend from 161 to 123. The panel understands that these programmes operate in a competitive international market where the recruitment of international participants was particularly difficult during the pandemic. The panel acknowledges the confidence of the management that the redesign of the programmes towards a more blended approach in combination with strong marketing efforts will boost the number of participants in the near future.

As a general rule of thumb, TIAS needs approximately 12 participants per cohort to arrive at a break-even position for its executive master programmes, 29 for the MBA and 39 for the MSc programmes. The panel acknowledges, based on the enrolment data in the CIR, that apart from the part-time MSc programme in 2020-2021, all degree programmes under review fulfil these minimum criteria.

Admission

The self-evaluation reports describe in good detail how each programme guarantees the quality of the incoming students. The panel notices that TIAS has elaborated a policy on admissions that applies to all degree programmes. According to the admission policy document, the School sets minimum standards for enrolment: all students should hold a bachelor degree; in case this degree is obtained at a university of applied sciences, students should attend and successfully complete relevant pre-master modules. These preparatory modules are offered in a blended format; students with a relevant (master) degree are encouraged to attend these courses to refresh their knowledge. In addition, for most programmes students should have at least five years of relevant work experience in order to apply the theoretical models to practical situations. Furthermore, the Policy Functional Limitation describes the provisions taken by TIAS in line with the Dutch Law on Equal Treatment to allow students with functional impairments to enrol in its programmes, follow courses and take exams.

Upon receiving the application and reviewing the applicant's CV, the programme invites those candidates who meet the requirements for an intake interview. The panel understands from the discussions that this interview is an important part of the admission process. Conducted by the academic director, the interview intends to consolidate the initial impression of a candidate by checking the educational background, professional experience, personal ambitions and motivation for the programme. Moreover, practical issues concerning the available time and the work-life balance of the participant are discussed to estimate the chances of success in pursuing the programme. After the interview, the admission committee consisting of the academic director and the cluster manager with secretarial support of the programme manager, decides on the acceptance of a candidate.

General considerations

The PRT acknowledges that TIAS is operating in a competitive environment to attract a sufficient number of good quality students who fulfil at least the minimum criteria for enrolment in its post-experience programmes. The panel considers that TIAS has been doing a good job in this respect over the past few years. Moreover the School managed to keep the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its enrolment figures to a minimum, at least in so far as its degree programmes are concerned.

The PRT considers that TIAS has an adequate admission policy which is properly used in the different programmes. While specific requirements for admission differ per programme, the overall framework is identical. The panel appreciates the student-oriented intake interview and the efforts of the School to ensure that all students start the programme with a common understanding of what is ahead for them in terms of time investment as well as with a sufficient level of knowledge, skills and understanding. Moreover, the panel considers that the admission procedure is effective as almost all students who enrol eventually graduate.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that admission is organised in a proper and effective way at TIAS. While individual programmes may differ in terms of specific entry requirements, they all do so

in line with the school-wide policy on admission, which the panel considers adequate. For those applicants who are eventually admitted, the programmes are feasible in terms of level and study load. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

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

Staff numbers

According to the CIR report, TIAS deploys 107 core faculty as well as 314 visiting faculty and occasional lecturers/speakers. The core group consists of 38 permanent staff (representing 23.9 FTE) who have contracts with TIAS and consider the School as their main employer; in addition, there are also 69 non-permanent staff who often have a long-term relationship with TIAS but are mainly affiliated with other universities and/or businesses. The majority of these staff members holds a PhD and all are experienced MBA or executive education instructors. Among the 107 core faculty, 17% are female and 36% are international; their average age is 53. These overall data will be broken down per programme in the next section. The panel was informed that across all programmes TIAS aims to recruit more female faculty, while certain programmes also look in particular for international and/or younger academic staff. Faculty without a PhD are selected on the basis of their professional credentials. The visiting academic staff members usually combine academic work with a direct link to practice. Furthermore, TIAS employs 172 professional staff (representing 123 FTE) who ensure that students get the individual treatment they deserve and that quality levels are met.

The panel understands that TIAS deliberately deploys a small group of core academic faculty and a broader group of visiting staff because this allows the school to quickly capitalise on developments and (changing) demands in the market. While the total number of staff members was on the rise since the previous accreditation, the financial fall-out following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic required the management to reduce the total staff capacity with about 20 FTE in 2020. Since the end of 2021, TIAS is again recruiting both academic and professional staff.

Recruitment

In general, TIAS recruits new faculty from its own network and upon referral from other faculty members. Newly hired permanent core faculty have a PhD, a significant research record or exceptional professional experience in a relevant subject area, proven educational effectiveness in executive programmes, practical industry and/or consultancy experience, and excellent English language skills. The hiring process of new academic staff includes the Vice-Dean and/or the Academic Director and an HR professional and features the review of credentials, extensive interview sessions and an introductory (test) lecture. The Dean and the Vice-Dean appoint, promote and reward TIAS academic staff, while the appointment of full professors needs to be approved by the Executive Board of Tilburg University.

Staff policy

The permanent core faculty are subject to TIAS Faculty Management policies and the TIAS workload model. As a scientifically oriented business school with an applied focus TIAS values effective teaching that is informed by an engaged scholarly identity and an attention to service. Hence, the School developed a model to divide the time for research, teaching and academic service. The panel was informed that a permanent core faculty with a full-time appointment dedicates 0.3 FTE to research.

The panel understands from the discussions that most faculty are very experienced and often hold the rank of full professors. Their salaries follow the collective labour agreements of the higher education sector in the Netherlands and are therefore at similar payment levels as their colleagues at TiSEM. Hence, several faculty (11 according to the data requested by AACSB) have a dual appointment at TIAS and TiSEM. The very few academic staff who are on a promotion track at TIAS follow the procedures and protocol of Tilburg University.

Upon their start at TIAS, new faculty receive the TIAS Vision on Teaching and Learning and obtain access to the online Learning Innovation Guide. Permanent core faculty are encouraged to follow individual development activities and training programmes organised by the School. Furthermore, they can rely on the support of a team of learning and development managers and instructional designers in their work on individual courses. The panel understands from the discussions that the learning and development team is a particularly appreciated group of resourceful professionals who created among others the online Learning Innovation Guide to support the shift towards digital and blended education.

All core permanent and non-permanent faculty are involved in the life of the school and are central to the development and high quality of the respective programmes. They are involved in the preparation and development of their courses, in the production, grading and feedback of assignments, and in providing course-related academic support to their students. In addition, they serve on committees, participate in study tours and may serve as dedicated thesis supervisors of thesis graduation projects. In order to safeguard their commitment, faculty meetings are organised both within programmes and at School level.

The panel notices that TIAS has an elaborate system of staff evaluation. In addition to yearly HR performance discussions, the academic director appraises the content and materials of each course, while students individually evaluate every course on different dimensions and discuss all modules in a student sounding board. The combined results of these evaluations are processed by the academic director who engages in a discussion with the lecturer concerned a few months before the start of the next course. It is TIAS policy that poorly scoring faculty will be replaced if they do not show improvement. The panel understands from the detailed course evaluation scores that overall, the faculty evaluations are positive and that lower scores for courses or instructors seem to be one-off ‘accidents’ as the scores notably increase the year after. Hence, it is fair to assume that over the past few years and across programmes many changes have been made that consistently improve the quality of the courses.

Staff quality

At programme level, the self-evaluation reports contain an overview of the academic staff (both core and additional faculty members) allocated to the respective programmes and their area of professional expertise, as well as their quality, diversity and sufficiency. Panel findings that relate specifically to individual programmes are presented in the next section.

Overall, the panel notices that the number of lecturers allocated to the respective programmes is appropriate. Based on the description in the reports and the discussions on site, the panel thinks that the academic directors are well qualified for the academic delivery and organisational management of their respective programmes, while both core and additional faculty members have the proper expertise to deliver the educational assignments allocated to them. Most staff hold a university teaching qualification and several staff are in the process of obtaining a senior university assessment qualification. Across programmes, support staff are present in sufficient numbers and provide highly appreciated support.

During the visit, the panel has met a dedicated team of academic and professional staff; students indicated in their programme chapters and during the visit that – with a few individual exceptions – they are satisfied with the quality and availability of their lecturers and with the support provided by the professional staff.

General considerations

The PRT considers that the degree programmes under review can rely on a strong and effective School-wide staff policy with clear recruitment and evaluation procedures.

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of academic and professional staff at TIAS in general and within the respective programmes in particular is appropriate. The panel welcomes the efforts at School and programme level to aim in its recruitment for a more gender-balanced team of faculty.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel considers that the core faculty involved in the respective degree programmes has extensive domain-specific expertise as well as the necessary didactic skills to deliver their courses. Moreover, they bring a wealth of research and/or professional experience to the class. Lecturers who are involved in English language programmes have an adequate command of English.

Finally, the professional staff proves to be an important resource for both the academic staff and the students. The panel observes with satisfaction that professors, students and alumni were highly positive about the support they receive(d) from instructional designers and programme managers.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the staff policy of TIAS is well elaborated and that the School manages to recruit and retain resourceful academic and professional staff. Notwithstanding

individual differences at programme level in terms of perceived staff quality and availability, the panel considers that all programmes under review are of comparable quality when it comes down to staff deployment. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

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

Accommodation

Since 2001 TIAS is located in a building on the campus of Tilburg University. It features ten lecture rooms with a seating capacity from 30 to 75 persons. Some lecture rooms are equipped with video-conferencing facilities and accommodate the technology to digitize lectures in real time. In addition, smaller break-out rooms allow students to work individually or in small groups. During the previous accreditation visit, the panel visited the teaching and learning facilities of TIAS on campus; the current PRT held a few meetings in the TIAS building.

Overall, staff, students and alumni are satisfied with the material facilities of TIAS in Tilburg. Moreover, they can make use of the campus facilities of Tilburg University and have access to the university's library and its online databases. The panel was informed that in the future TIAS plans to upgrade its lecture halls by adding cameras and large screens to fully facilitate hybrid lecturing. This in turn should enhance the participation of (international) students who cannot attend all courses on site.

TIAS has a second campus in the historic city centre of Utrecht where several of its programmes (see Annex 1) take place. Since the previous accreditation visit, the School moved to a new and free-standing building in the middle of the city. The building was recently renovated and is equipped with state-of-the-art classrooms, technology, and breakout rooms. The lecture halls allow for an optimal visual and acoustic setting: the focal point of each lecture hall has been optimized for faculty to be able to move around and make use of different presentation techniques simultaneously. Technology in the lecture halls was upgraded in 2019 and again in 2020 to support a hybrid classroom concept for students who are not able to join due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the site visit took place in Tilburg, the PRT was not able to visit the premises in Utrecht. Based on the written description in the materials, the video that was made available in the base room and the - positive - input from lecturers, students and alumni, the panel thinks that the Utrecht campus is well equipped for delivering post-experience education.

Learning Management System

TIAS and its programmes are using Canvas as learning management system. In fact, every learning journey starts in Canvas with an introduction course describing among others the overall programme learning outcomes. Each course has its own learning environment but

follows a similar structure - both in practice and in the digital environment - which includes the learning journey (course learning goals), information on the professor, the assessment, the preparatory work, and other study materials.

Canvas is not only used for content delivery and course syllabi, but also serves for online tests, providing feedback, and grading / grade registration. In the future, Canvas will also accommodate the opportunities offered by blended learning. Furthermore, courses use digital tools such as Feedbackfruits (for interactive lectures and peer review assignments), Mentimeter (for questions and opinions) and SPSS (statistical software). Students confirmed during the visit that their experiences with Canvas and other digital tools are positive.

General considerations

The PRT considers that the facilities at TIAS are adequate for the number of students enrolled and the type of programmes on offer. The panel appreciates in particular the attention paid by the school to ensure that its physical and teaching infrastructure remains up-to-date.

The discussions on site have convinced the panel that the recent - and future - innovations in terms of the Utrecht campus, the learning management system and the adaptations for hybrid learning enhance the educational well-being of students and staff at TIAS. This appreciation covers the overall facilities of the School and extends to the different degree programmes under review.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the previously existing facilities at TIAS have been further enhanced and innovated, ensuring that the learning journey of students in the different programmes is facilitated adequately by the physical and technical accommodation in both campuses, Tilburg and Utrecht. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

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

General findings

The panel notices that the provisions of TIAS in terms of tutoring and student information are described in similar terms across the self-evaluation reports. General guidance and stipulations regarding tutoring and information provision to students are described in the Admission policy, the Functional Impairment policy and the Rules and Regulations document of TIAS. As mentioned before, these policy documents are up to standard according to the panel. Across programmes, students receive feedback from individual lecturers and are informed about their progress by the Programme Manager and the Academic Director. If needed, students are provided on an individual basis with extra tutoring or additional study materials.

The panel understands from the written materials that every programme relies on the service provision, hostmanship and personal contact offered by the Academic Director and the Programme Manager who form the programme management team. Together they are the primary contact for students, staff and other stakeholders. The Academic Director is responsible for the overall design, quality and content of the programme and involved in all processes and stages of the programme, from intake to graduation. The Programme Manager is responsible for programme planning, organisation and coordination and the central contact person for practical issues. The relatively small class sizes allow for a strong personal touch between students, staff and programme management.

The discussions with students and alumni have demonstrated that it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the management team members. While most students and alumni were highly appreciative of the management team members and their pro-active dynamic stance in guiding, tutoring and information provision, the panel also got feedback from a few students and alumni that not all team members were equally strong and available in addressing individual student issues. While the panel understands that the virtues of service provision, hostmanship and individual contacts are more difficult to uphold during a pandemic, the limited but motivated negative indications seem to indicate that not all academic directors and programme managers are fully up to their task. At the end of the visit, the PRT has shared the concrete cases in a confidential session with the Dean.

General considerations

The PRT considers that students at TIAS receive high-quality tutoring and information services. The panel appreciates the range of services offered and the individualised approach of these services. It therefore comes as no surprise to the panel that almost all students and alumni are very enthusiastic about the services offered by TIAS and about the personal touch combining professionalism with individualised attention with which members of the academic and support staff provide these services.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that tutoring is well organised at TIAS. Although some programmes have additional and specific personal and career development services for its students and some programme teams are more skilled than others in meeting the expectations of students regarding personalised attention, the panel's overall impression is that across programmes, information provision and tutoring are supporting students in their learning journey. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each 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.

General findings

During the previous accreditation in 2017, the panel established that TIAS had enhanced its processes for quality assurance, which resulted in a school-wide Handbook Quality Assurance that described the internal and external stakeholders involved in quality assurance (QA), the QA processes applicable in the different stages of the accredited degree programmes, and the Plan-Do-Check-Act QA cycle at TIAS.

The current PRT notices that TIAS has further enhanced its QA processes and revised its QA handbook. The panel read in the most recent version (2022) of the policy document that the foundation of the School's quality assurance provisions lays in its vision on teaching and learning. Hence, the handbook provides a structural framework for the School-wide discourse on the quality of education. It is produced for academic and professional staff who directly or indirectly are responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation of courses and degree programmes, and serves as a means to manage expectations of students and business partners who engage with TIAS. Having studied the handbook, the PRT found the document useful and relevant for all stakeholders concerned. In this respect, it constitutes a product that meets TIAS' ambition to have a feasible policy (document) that warrants the quality of educational programmes and their final attainment levels and that provides guidelines for permanent quality improvement.

The panel notices that several so-called "authorities" are involved in the QA process. In addition to external authorities such as accreditation bodies, the handbook describes the input of academic directors, programme managers, policy advisers, sounding boards, advisory boards, examination board, executive management team and faculty council. During the visit the panel spoke to representatives of all these bodies and learned that each of these authorities indeed hold a stake in TIAS's system of QA. The panel gathers from the discussions that the academic director is responsible for the implementation of quality assurance from the start to the end of the programme and effectively plays a central role in taking measures for improvement based on evaluation results.

Moreover, the materials and discussions emphasise that TIAS strives for student satisfaction and that this is taken very seriously, as programmes are subject to constant scrutiny and students provide feedback in a formal evaluation system and as a means of ongoing quality control. All modules are evaluated separately and at the end of the curriculum students are asked to assess the entire programme as well as the academic director and programme manager. The student's voice is also heard in every programme through a sounding board of student representatives. They provide solicited and unsolicited advice on the programme to the Academic Director, with whom they meet a few times per year.

Another feature of the QA system is the involvement of external stakeholders. The panel met with several representatives of the so-called International Advisory Board, a group of business leaders and entrepreneurs who discuss the school's strategy and the general developments in the market. Moreover, all degree programmes have a corporate advisory board composed of external stakeholders with a particular interest in the professional field covered by the

programme. This board meets a few times per year with the programme management to discuss the curriculum, the developments in the professional field and the relevance of the programme objectives (learning outcomes) for the labour market.

Furthermore, TIAS participates in several external rankings such as the National Student Survey or the Financial Times rankings for Executive Education and for MBA programmes. The yearly outcomes of these rankings are followed up meticulously and where necessary give raise to action at programme or school level.

The panel gathers from the materials and the discussions that the QA processes are developed at School-level (with input from the different stakeholders) and implemented in the different degree programmes along the lines that have been set up centrally. The Faculty and Education office monitors the quality assurance process. This involves the initiation and implementation of new policies regarding educational quality (assessment, evaluations, reviews, technology enhanced learning, etc.), the management and oversight of accreditation processes, the coordination of the annual revision of the Teaching and Examination Regulations, and the composition of annual reports (e.g. for The Dutch Inspectorate of Education).

Following the feedback of the previous accreditation panel in 2017, TIAS has implemented a more formalized feedback loop for all degree programmes over the past few years. It hired two instructional designers to further develop and innovate the learning and teaching tools and processes, to work on the redesign of the respective programmes and to strengthen the assessment of the assurance of learning system. The panel understands from the materials and the discussions that their work has led to the development of a QA system that includes an all-encompassing feedback loop with a structured and systematic review and a post review audit, in line with the assessment of learning approach. Since 2019, twelve degree programmes underwent a post review audit and all stakeholders - students, alumni, faculty, industry partners, and employers - are included in the feedback loop through the involvement of sounding boards (one for students, one for professional field representatives), the Assessment Committee, the Examination Board, and the Academic Council.

General considerations

The PRT considers that the programmes under review can rely on a robust School-wide quality assurance system that involves all relevant internal and external stakeholders. The system, which is minutely described in the Quality Handbook, allows TIAS to check regularly and act quickly on those issues it deems important such as programme quality, curriculum relevance, student satisfaction and external accreditation.

While the previous accreditation panel established in 2017 that the quality assurance system was up to standard, the current PRT thinks highly of the recent efforts undertaken by the School and its programmes to make the system even more performant. In this regard, the panel appreciates in particular that programmes have formalised and strengthened the feedback loop as foreseen in the PDCA-cycle and the Assurance of Learning system.

Furthermore, the discussions on site have demonstrated according to the panel that all stakeholders are knowledgeable about the quality assurance provisions of the School and the programmes and understand their importance. In this respect, the PRT considers that TIAS features a quality culture that is shared and lived by its management, staff, students, alumni and professional field representatives.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that the quality assurance system at TIAS is robust, an appreciation that relates to the entire School and extends to the different degree programmes under review. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.

Assessment policy

The PRT gathers from the written materials and the discussions on site that assessment at TIAS is organised according to the School-wide Assessment Policy, which in turn aligns with TIAS' Vision on Teaching and Learning. According to this vision, effective assessment for learning is central to teaching and an integrated part of the learning process. At programme level, TIAS uses assessment to evaluate the actual learning, to ensure that a programme delivers on its promise, and to make changes where necessary based on the level of achieved programme outcomes. At the level of the individual participant, assessment is used to evaluate student performance on specific learning outcomes at different stages of the study trajectory; students also get feedback to understand their performance and to suggest possible improvements on a specific learning outcome.

In its policy document from May 2019, TIAS stipulates that assessment must be valid, reliable, transparent and efficient. Programmes use a variety of formative and summative assessment formats and courses often combine individual and group assignments which are accompanied by self- and peer reflection on the learning process. The panel notices that across programmes there is a strong link between the programme learning outcomes, the learning goals per module, and the assessment formats to test the acquired competencies in the individual modules and throughout the programme. To ensure the link between goals and assessment, every programme produces an assessment plan - listing the assessment formats per course and their weighting - as well as a table in which the course learning goals are related to the programme learning outcomes. The PRT acknowledges that both table and assessment plan are published in the Education and Examination Regulation.

Every programme and every module have their own subject-specific competencies, which are considered important for the (future) work of the participating students; these competencies are included in the programme objectives, learning goals and assessment. Hence, assessment formats are relevant to the learning goals of the respective courses, the domain of the

programme and to the students' (future) professional work. The panel acknowledges that programmes and courses have a strong focus on assessing critical thinking skills, the ability to argue based on scientific insights, and the handling of problems in a holistic and creative way. In this way assessment aligns with the vision of TIAS that students, throughout their educational journey, need to judge, re-examine and rethink existing ideas, concepts, convictions, beliefs and practices at their most fundamental levels. The panel also notices that, in line with TIAS vision on teaching and learning and the Business & Society Competency Framework, programmes give ample space in their assessment formats to the business and society themes mentioned of the competency framework.

Quality of tests

Following the discussions and looking at the self-evaluation reports featuring the assessment plan for every programme under review, the panel notices that the assessment system is implemented properly in the day-to-day reality of the different programmes under review.

When the assessment consists of a paper, examiners complete a standard assessment form that is developed for use across TIAS and which can be adapted to the specific learning goals of each course. When designing individual course assessments, the core lecturer ensures that the exam contents and formats test all learning goals of a given course and that these learning goals in turn contribute to reaching the overall learning outcomes at programme level. At a more aggregate level, academic directors make sure that the sum of individual course assessments indeed covers all learning outcomes of the programme.

Students indicated both in their student chapters and during the site visit that the day-to-day organisation of assignments and exams is in line with the provisions and principles of the assessment policy. Both within and across courses there is a variety of assessment formats, and information on course assignments and assessments is provided timely and in a transparent way by the teachers, in the course manuals and the online course descriptions.

Quality of thesis assessment

Students conclude their studies at TIAS with a graduation assignment. This final project constitutes the masterpiece participants need to successfully complete in order to meet all examination requirements for the programme, before graduation. In most programmes, the final project takes the format of a master thesis. Every final project is reviewed by two assessors who complete a standardised assessment form to motivate their appreciations before the oral defence. Students and alumni across programmes indicated during the visit that they receive(d) comprehensive and good quality information about the trajectory of the final project, its supervision process and assessment.

In the months prior to the site visit, a committee of independent experts (see introduction) reviewed for each programme a sample of final projects and completed thesis assessment forms. The findings of the experts on the thesis quality (see standard 11) and the quality of the thesis assessment were compiled in a thesis committee report under the supervision of the PRT vice-chair and shared with the PRT members prior to the visit.

The thesis committee noticed that for each individual programme under review, the thesis trajectory is clearly outlined. All programmes are using a dedicated thesis evaluation form, which is based on the TIAS-wide standardised thesis assessment format. Each evaluation form contains clear assessment criteria that are derived from the respective programme learning outcomes and invites assessors to score each criterion and motivate their appreciation in writing.

Across all programmes the thesis committee established that the “paperwork” is organised properly: the accreditation team at TIAS - with the support of the respective programme teams - managed to identify and make available the selected final projects and their evaluation forms quite rapidly. Moreover, in case an individual thesis / evaluation did not prove to match, the correct materials were put at disposition swiftly.

Furthermore, the thesis committee reported that 74% of the thesis evaluation forms had been completed in an informative way: in 167 out of 225 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: “Based on the evaluation form, is the assessment of the thesis clear and insightful?” A clear and insightful assessment means that assessors give (differentiated) scores for each sub-criterion to arrive at a final grade and motivate why a thesis deserves a certain overall grade or scores better on some criteria than on others. The PRT agrees with the thesis committee that the programmes are not only having adequate thesis assessment forms but are also increasingly using the forms in an adequate way. The latter point is particularly important given the findings of the previous accreditation panel. In 2017 the PRT concluded – after a similar thesis evaluation exercise performed by external experts – that the evaluation forms constituted a good basis for assessment but that assessors did not systematically use the opportunity offered by the evaluation forms to motivate in writing their appreciation of individual criteria and/or their overall score. Based on the thesis committee report for the current accreditation visit, the PRT establishes that the programmes have taken the findings of the previous panel at heart in a successful way.

Notwithstanding the good quality forms and the overall share of insightful assessments, the thesis expert reviews also show that there is still some diversity in the way individual assessors complete the evaluation form. Moreover, while some programmes do a very good job, the evaluation forms in other programmes are often not completed to the extent one may expect in terms of transparency to students and accountability towards external / internal quality control bodies. This diversity, as well as the varying degrees of insightful comments, will be described for each programme separately in the next section.

Across programmes, the thesis experts reported that they could not tell from the completed evaluation form whether the final projects had been assessed separately by the supervisor and the second reader. The panel understood from the discussions on site that each thesis is evaluated independently and separately by two assessors, who each fill in an individual evaluation form. These two evaluations are then combined into a third form, which is shared with the student. It is this combined form that was provided to the thesis committee. According to the Examination Board, TIAS is exploring the option to have all three (digital) evaluation

forms uploaded in the learning management system Canvas. The panel would welcome this improvement as it allows the School to demonstrate - and quality control bodies to establish - that TIAS is effectively implementing what it sets out to do in its assessment policy, i.e. to ensure the reliability of each final project by two independent and separate thesis assessments.

In a few cases, thesis experts wondered what feedback students receive on the quality of their final project. The PRT was informed that across programmes, students receive written information – the combined assessment form with both quantitative (scores) and qualitative (feedback) information – as well as detailed and specific oral feedback during the final project defence. Moreover, in several programmes company representatives - who are not part of the grading process but supervise the students on the work floor - provide specific feedback on the applicability of the thesis for their organisation. Students and alumni from their side indicated during the visit that they were overall satisfied with the feedback they receive during the thesis trajectory and in the final assessment phase.

Assuring assessment quality

The PRT read in the materials that as part of its assessment and quality assurance policies, TIAS features an assessment organisation with a clear division of roles and well-defined tasks and responsibilities of everyone involved. A key player in the assessment organisation is the Examination Board, an independent body that has the legally assigned task to assure the quality of exams and the legitimate conferral of degrees. It advises management, academic directors and faculty, and deals with individual student requests. The Examination Board also checks that assessments are organised and administered in accordance with the School's Assessment Policy and the Education and Examination regulations. According to Dutch Law, the Examination Board has the power to appoint and revoke the appointment of examiners.

The panel establishes, based on the written materials and the discussions on site, that the Examination Board conducts its tasks in line with Dutch legislation. According to the PRT, the Examination Board in general and its members in particular have ample expertise to execute their tasks adequately and independently. Moreover, members hold – or are in the process of obtaining – a senior university assessment qualification (SKE). The external member has a corporate rather than academic profile and brings in additional expertise.

The PRT also notices with satisfaction that the Examination Board has addressed the finding of the previous panel and stepped up its efforts to control the quality of exams. In fact, since the academic year 2018-2019, the Examination Board is mandating the Assessment Committee to evaluate systematically the assessment plans and the course assessments per programme at an average rate of three programmes per year. This group of four members with considerable assessment expertise also reviews the assessment and grading of at least three randomly chosen final projects/theses per cohort of each degree programme. It discusses the outcomes of the programme / thesis reviews directly with the Academic Director and reports its findings to the Examination Board.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel understands that the appreciation of the thesis committee for the way theses have been evaluated finds its origin in the work of Examination Board since the previous accreditation visit. In fact, the Examination Board has developed TIAS-wide thesis assessment guidelines for all examiners promoting the use of a generic assessment form, emphasising that scores must be substantiated and requiring that all three evaluation forms (supervisor, second reader, combined assessments) should remain available.

Asked about its ideas on the future development of the assessment system at TIAS, the Examination Board sees room for a further incorporation of the values of the School in the (vision on) assessment, notably the ambition of TIAS to be an inclusive societal business school. Moreover, the Board would like to promote not only formative and summative assessment, but also forms of so-called “ipsative assessment” where students look at / measure their own development and the progress they make as academic and as professional on the work floor. While it understands that these are mid-term to long-term aspirations, the panel wholeheartedly supports these ambitions.

General considerations

The PRT considers that the degree programmes at TIAS can rely on a robust system of assessment. The assessment principles and policies are clear, well aligned and properly operationalised in the respective programmes. In terms of assuring the quality of assessment, the panel considers that the Examination Board has a huge remit which it is handling very competently.

The PRT thinks highly of the efforts undertaken by TIAS over the past few years to bring its assessment system to the current level of quality. This concerns notably the way in which assessment is incorporated in the School’s vision on teaching and learning and in the Business and Society Competency framework.

The PRT also appreciates the improvements made by the different stakeholders to the assessment system following the comments of the previous accreditation panel. In this regard, the efforts of the Examination Board stand out in enhancing the review capacity of programme, course and thesis assessment by mandating a dedicated assessment committee.

Based on the written materials, the discussions on site and the report of the thesis committee, the PRT considers that assessment has not only improved on paper, but also in the day-to-day reality of the respective courses, theses and programmes. The panel endorses the findings of the thesis committee that all programmes are using good quality thesis assessment forms and that in a qualified majority of cases (74%) these forms are not only completed properly but also in an insightful way. Hence, the PRT considers it fair to state that thesis assessment is an integral part of the overall assessment system at TIAS and that over the past few years the different stakeholders have given it the attention it deserves.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that assessment is well organised at TIAS in general and in the individual programmes under review in particular. Although some programmes have more variety in assessment formats and/or provide more insightful feedback in thesis assessment forms than others, the panel considers that the assessment policy, the course assessments, the thesis evaluation and the work of the Examination Board all contribute to a strong quality culture across TIAS and its degree programmes. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Quality of the thesis

According to the School's assessment policy, the final project serves to prove that students have reached the final attainment level of their programmes and deserve to be awarded the degree attached to it. In most programmes, the final project takes the format of a master thesis. In the months prior to the site visit, a committee of independent experts (see introduction) reviewed for each programme a sample of 15 final projects and completed assessment forms. The findings of the experts on the quality of the thesis evaluation (see standard 10) and on the quality of the thesis were compiled in a thesis committee report under the supervision of the PRT vice-chair and shared with the PRT members prior to the visit. Overall, 16 experts reviewed 225 final projects related to the 15 degree programmes covered in this report.

In order to make a valid selection of theses, TIAS provided per programme an overview of the final projects that had been submitted and accepted in the academic year 2020-2021. Each overview contained the title, student number, score and supervisor of the theses concerned. When these lists did not contain a sufficient number of final projects, the selection was extended with older and/or more recent theses. The final score was the key determining factor in the selection. The committee secretary calculated the total number of theses accepted per programme and the number and percentage of final projects that received a low score (between 5.5 and 6.9), average score (between 7.0 and 8.4) and high score (at least 8.5). The committee chair / PRT vice-chair and the secretary then made a selection of the final projects to be reviewed ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories. In order to have all scoring categories properly represented in the sample, the ratio of the lowest graded and highest graded theses was rounded up. Altogether, experts reviewed 26 theses (12%) with a lower score, 145 theses with an average score (64%) and 54 theses (24%) with a higher score. The selection also took into account possible programme specialisations / tracks, the academic year in which the final project was submitted, and looked for a possibly wide range of thesis supervisors. Details on the selection process per programme are provided in the next section.

At the level of thesis quality, the committee members indicated that overall 99% of the final projects reviewed across all programmes fulfilled at least the minimum criteria one would

expect of a final product of academic orientation at bachelor or master level. In 222 out of 225 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: “Is the thesis of sufficient quality to pass?” In case of a negative answer, a fellow expert was asked to do a second reading: in one case the second reviewer thought the final project did fulfil the minimum criteria. The two other cases where both initial and second reviewer thought the thesis should not have passed concerned two different executive master programmes each featuring one case. All second reviews were quality controlled individually by the committee chair. The PRT endorses the overall findings of the thesis committee and acknowledges that in all programmes, the thesis quality is (at least) adequate and well beyond the threshold of 90% set by NVAO.

In terms of scoring, the thesis committee noticed that theses tend to get adequate scores, i.e. an overall mark that does justice to the quality of the final project. This finding is valid for all programmes under review. Prior to the review exercise, it was agreed that experts would flag cases where the thesis score differed (at least) one point from their own appreciation. All in all, the committee agreed to 89% of the final project scores. In 201 out of 225 cases, the experts answered affirmatively on the question: “Do you agree to the score given by the assessors?” Following on from their positive finding on thesis scoring, the experts agreed very often with the ranking of the theses within the sample: final projects with a higher score proved indeed to be of a better quality than theses with a lower score. The PRT endorses the findings of the committee regarding the thesis score: it particularly welcomes the fact that so many different experts come to the same conclusion, i.e. that assessors in every programme do (almost) equally well in giving final projects an adequate score.

Notwithstanding the overall positive findings, the experts did report in a differentiated way on how they perceived thesis scoring across programmes. In addition to the above-mentioned 24 cases, experts also found a range of small differences of 0.5 point. This divergence could go two ways: either upwards or downwards. Looking across all programmes under review, thesis experts more often considered that students deserved a slightly lower mark. Finally, in most programmes, the overall score is calculated on the basis of quantitative marks or qualitative appreciations per component or assessment criterion. Experts reported that in several cases, there was no or hardly any differentiation in the sub-scores per component. While they agreed on the overall score, experts reported several times that more differentiated sub-scores would reflect better the sometimes differing quality of the individual components within a final project. A detailed analysis on this latter point and on the reported divergence in scoring is provided in the section on programme-specific findings.

Performance of graduates

Another way to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved is by looking at what graduates are doing after they finish the programme. According to the self-evaluation reports on the MBA and the MSc BA programme, students are particularly successful in their careers upon graduation. Around 85% of the full-time MSc BA students – mostly younger participants with limited professional experience - find employment within three months after their graduation. Another indication of graduate satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the MSc BA programme is their continued interest in TIAS and the programme

as student mentor, guest speaker or advisory board member. MBA students are often at a crossroads in their career and enrol for the programme with a specific objective. According to the report, MBA graduates value in particular the personal and career development component of the programme as this helps them shape their career after the programme. The panel also notices that upon graduation both MBA and MSc BA alumni continue to attend Company Days – but then at a different side of the table - where potential employers get in contact with current TIAS students.

Students graduating from the executive master programmes are at different positions in life and in their career. They often started the programme with the aim to increase their competencies and use the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in (a different position within) their organisation. During the discussions, alumni of these programmes indicated that their study period at TIAS had impacted considerably on their lives and careers. The panel notices that their stories are in line with the information provided in the self-evaluation reports: graduates have learned to analyse and work on a strategic level; they look at developments in a broader context; they become valuable leaders and managers in their organisation and have better prospects for their own future and career. Moreover, alumni indicated that they now write better quality (consultancy) reports and (policy) papers. Some graduates developed an interest in entrepreneurship; although this was not their prime objective when they enrolled on the programme, the entrepreneurial skills they acquired during the study period at TIAS are now used to set up and run a business.

Finally, the panel gathers from discussions with students and alumni across programmes that TIAS not only emphasises to prospective participants the academic, personal and societal nature of the programmes but that students and alumni are also increasingly attracted to this focus on business and society. Several students and alumni indicated to the panel that they took this component into account when deciding to study at TIAS because they consider it a relevant means to create value in their careers after they finish the programme.

General considerations

Thesis quality is an important indicator to measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Having established that 99% of the comprehensive thesis sample was at least of acceptably quality, the PRT considers that students who graduate from TIAS have indeed acquired the programme learning outcomes at the end of the curriculum.

The size of the thesis review exercise (15 degree programmes) in terms of sample (225 theses) and reviewers (16 experts) demonstrates according to the panel that TIAS in general and the degree programmes in particular pay careful attention to the position of the thesis as final end level product. Moreover, the PRT is impressed by the fact that so many different assessors across all programmes under review manage to come to final scores that are almost invariably (89%) considered as balanced and adequate by their peers of the thesis committee.

The PRT considers that the programme learning outcomes, which students achieve when they successfully finish their final project, also constitute a good basis for (continuing) their

professional career. The discussions on site and the information in the reports demonstrate according to the panel that TIAS programme graduates are properly qualified to find suitable employment, make internal promotion or even shift careers completely. In each case, the study period at TIAS has enhanced their competencies and boosted their confidence to assume different tasks with greater responsibilities.

Conclusion

In sum, the PRT considers that across all programmes under review, students who pass the final project invariably achieve the intended learning outcomes and are therefore entitled to graduate. Moreover, TIAS graduates across programmes manage to find a job quickly and/or give their career the boost they envisaged. Although the overall quality of the thesis sample and the adequacy of the final project scores differ slightly across individual programmes, the panel considers that all degree programmes do very well in terms of achieved learning outcomes. As a result, **the Peer Review Team judges that each programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall judgement

In sum, the PRT considers that all fifteen degree programmes submitted for external assessment meet each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment: intended learning outcomes, curriculum orientation, curriculum contents, learning environment, intake, staff, facilities, tutoring, quality assurance, assessment, and achieved learning outcomes. **The Peer Review Team therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on each of the fifteen programmes of the TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Specific Findings and Considerations per programme

In the previous section, the Peer Review Team established that all fifteen degree programmes submitted for external assessment meet each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework. This section addresses the panel's programme-specific findings, considerations and recommendations. While the general findings and considerations of the PRT on each of the standards apply to each programme, the panel has also come across particular strengths of each programme, as well as points for attention. These individual strengths are worth recording to demonstrate that a given programme may perform better on one or more standards than the general quality across programmes established in the previous section; similarly, the PRT reports on programme-specific flaws and may issue recommendations for the future: these points for attention are important yet do not affect the panel's overall positive judgement per programme and standard.

1. MSc Business Administration (full-time)

The international MSc in Business Administration is a 63 ECTS full-time programme taught in English that can be studied in 12 months. Established in 2004, it is organised on the Utrecht campus and caters for an international student audience with no or very limited professional experience who choose one of five specialisations: Business Analytics, Change Management, Financial Management, Investment Management or Marketing Management.

TIAS offers three variants of the MSc BA (CROHO 64070): this pre-experience full-time version and two post-experience part-time versions, one in Dutch and one in English. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that – contrary to the previous accreditation visit – the full-time variant will be assessed separately, while the two part-time versions are looked at together.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the dedicated full-time MSc self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the separate thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team prior to the visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme. The full-time MSc BA programme has been developed and is currently implemented in full alignment with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS. In addition, the programme features strong links to the professional field, which in turn ensures that its objectives remain up-to-date.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that the purpose of the programme is clearly outlined: to cover both the breadth of the business administration discipline and an in-depth understanding of the specialisation fields. The fact that most tracks have 'management' in their title is a way for TIAS to emphasise that the programme focuses on a combination of management and specialisations.

Sharing the same CROHO number with the part-time MSc BA, the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of this full-time pre-experience programme are closely related to those of the post-experience programme. While the ILOs of the part-time programme were adjusted recently, the panel was informed that a systematic review of the learning outcomes of the full-time MSc programme will take place in the academic year 2022-2023. The ILOs as they are in use at the time of the accreditation visit comply with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and adequately reflect the domain (business administration), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Having seen the revised learning outcomes of the part-time programme, the panel encourages the full-time MSc BA programme to take these as an example when reviewing its own learning outcomes in the near future.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the rationale of this programme and the way it holds a specific position and constitutes a specific opportunity for students within the overall MSc BA portfolio of the School.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme: it definitely is a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to – and prepares students for – the professional practice.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise this double orientation. Nonetheless, several students indicated that the more academically oriented parts could have a more direct bearing on the professional practice, e.g. through more company visits, with more projects involving companies, with more attention in class to best practices. According to the programme management, it is obvious that pre-experience students in this type of programme want to have as much exposure to the professional field as possible as this will help them in finding their own position on the labour market upon graduation. While the full-time MSc BA usually does pay a lot of attention to the professional orientation in its curriculum – in line with what students mention as points for improvement – this has not been possible during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fact, the students starting in both August 2020 and January 2021 received most of their classes online, without 'seeing' guest speakers or 'visiting' companies. The panel understands from both students and programme representatives that the programme team tried to

compensate for this in other ways, such as organising some online company visits and an online company career day, or offering students the opportunity to join the international study trip upon graduation. Nonetheless, it is clear that at least one student cohort did not get the usual treatment. Or, as one student mentioned in the student chapter: “due to many unforeseen circumstances and challenges the world faced during my studies, we did not get to enjoy all of what TIAS has to offer.”

Overall, the PRT thinks that the professional dimension is incorporated adequately in the curriculum of this academically oriented full-time MSc BA programme. The panel is confident that the ongoing discussions between students and staff and the regular course evaluations will lead to further adjustments in the curriculum while keeping a good balance between the academic and professional orientation of the programme.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on the curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this full-time MSc BA programme. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the panel considers that the programme is doing a good job in ensuring that students who plan to join the labour market on graduation get the academic competencies as well as the professional skills to do so successfully.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel’s general findings on curriculum content are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual courses add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation report that the curriculum consists of many small 3 ECTS courses and one sizeable 15 ECTS thesis that all together add up to 63 ECTS. Courses are offered in a condensed block format, concentrating in-class teaching on four consecutive days with students having time to prepare beforehand and to finish assignments and exams before moving on to the next course. Students follow courses in consecutive phases: foundation courses (24 ECTS) are followed by specialisation (15 ECTS) and integration courses (9 ECTS) before they finish the programme with the graduation project/master thesis. The panel notices that the curriculum structure and the course organisation in small blocks is highly relevant and allows students to focus on only one or two subjects at a time.

In order to cover possible deficiencies, the programme offers seven preparation courses: four (academic) skills courses at the start of the programme and three courses before specific specialisation tracks. The diversity of specializations is driven by increased business demand

for qualified young professionals in the ever more rapidly changing business environment. The panel gathers from the student chapter and the discussions that students appreciate the quality contents of the courses, as well as the opportunity they have for a broad range of specialisations. Moreover, several students informed the panel that they appreciated the preparation courses, which brought them up to speed with their fellow students and/or offered a much welcomed refresher course before entering the programme (specialisation).

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to this full-time MSc BA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the design of the curriculum, which delivers on the overall programme objective: providing students with a broad view on the foundations of business administration and in-depth knowledge on a particular specialisation.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular programme. In terms of didactics, both the overall curriculum and the individual courses are student-centred. Faculty teach in an activating way, encourage students to participate in class, and (have students) connect theory to practice; students from their side are expected to prepare in advance of each course, while the time spent together in class is dedicated to critical reflection rather than instruction.

The previous accreditation panel noticed that a large proportion of teaching happened through in-class lecturing and suggested the programme to consider investing in more innovative teaching techniques. The current PRT notices that the programme team has taken this recommendation at heart and now offers a wider variety of learning experiences. Furthermore, the above-mentioned experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has made TIAS and the programme team reflect on how to design its education in the future and strike a good balance between in-class teaching and blended education.

The panel understands from the discussions that the programme has made a conscious choice to keep in-class education as an important didactic principle thereby including engaging educational methods and teamwork assignments in the different courses. This approach is motivated by the fact that the intake is highly diverse – an average cohort consists of around 20 different nationalities. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that many (international) participants choose TIAS for its on-campus education and personal approach, and were disappointed by the alternative offered during the lockdown. Nonetheless, the programme team is attentively following the developments towards more blended learning at

the level of the School in general and in the part-time programme post-experience MSc BA programme in particular.

Furthermore, the full-time MSc BA is a general business administration programme that values internationalisation and diversity. It trains its students to become citizens of an international community. For this purpose, the programme incorporates an international and intercultural perspective into its educational activities and uses English as the language of instruction. This approach has led to a good mixture of Dutch and international participants which are taught by a team of lecturers which is equally diverse in geographic terms. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks the choice for English in this programme is well motivated and has allowed the programme to attract the students and to deliver the education aimed for.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS programmes apply fully to this full-time MSc BA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the didactic principles that underpin this particular curriculum and are effective in attracting diverse student cohorts. Moreover, the panel wholeheartedly endorses the choice to use English as the language of instruction in this programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme.

In terms of intake, the programme targets students who have a genuine interest in management and envisage a professional career in one of the five specialisation areas of the programme. Students often have an educational background in business administration, engineering or social sciences, no or limited work experience, and wish to work in an international environment. The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and composition that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 94 students representing 20 nationalities, with an average age of 24 and a balance between male and female, as well as between Dutch and non-Dutch students.

Further to the analysis in the general findings section, the intake for this programme in the academic year 2020-2021 was much lower than before, which is likely due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel was satisfied to read that over the past five years, the completion rates have increased from 79% in 2016 to 93% in 2020. Moreover, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and fact that

about 45% of students have at least one resit during their trajectory, a very high share of students (90%) finish the programme within the nominal duration.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. The panel thinks highly of the diverse intake of students. Moreover, the admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in allowing very resourceful students as most participants complete the full-time MSc BA programme successfully within the nominal duration.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing - in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

In line with the international student body of the programme, the panel notices that also the faculty teaching on this programme is geographically and culturally diverse: according to the data provided in the self-evaluation report, the teaching team consists of 38 faculty: 7 Dutch faculty and 31 lecturers representing 11 nationalities. Students appreciate the quality of the lecturers, the availability of the programme manager and consider staff diversity as a value added of the programme.

However, students also point to the strong underrepresentation of female staff, a weakness the programme team – and the entire School – is working on in their recruitment (policy). The panel gathers from the discussions that creating more gender diversity in the staff team is a key objective of the full-time MSc BA programme – and of TIAS as a whole.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the full-time MSc BA programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. The PRT appreciates in particular the geographical cultural diversity of the faculty, which aligns with the international rationale of the programme.

The panel strongly encourages the programme team to recruit more female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS programmes are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme, which is taught on the campus in Utrecht.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the MSc BA programme are adequate, in line with its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across all TIAS programmes are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme.

An additional finding concerns the attention in this programme to career development and support. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report, the student chapter and the discussions with staff, students and alumni that career-related tutoring takes place in the Personal Leadership and Career Development Programme course (3 ECTS). As an integral part of the curriculum (integration phase), career support is linked to the personal development and values of students and aims to make students understand who they are and what they want. While the personal leadership component focuses on personal and team development in terms of self-awareness and effectiveness, the career development component offers more pragmatic support on the career plans of individual students. Students and alumni indicated to the panel that they appreciated both components as they learned a lot about themselves (in part one) and received good support in finding a relevant job (in part two). Alumni furthermore confirmed that career consultants continue to provide career support free of charge up until three years after graduation.

The panel endorses the long-standing efforts of the programme, as well as its recent additional investments in career development services, to offer its pre-experience full-time students a wide variety of personal tutoring that is highly appreciated by the (former) participants.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this full-time MSc BA programme. The panel thinks highly of the additional personal leadership and career development scheme, which definitely constitutes an added value to the students on this programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across all TIAS programmes are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired. This finding applies both to individual courses – after one year of rather average scores, a course invariably gets higher scores the year after – and to the entire year when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, resulting in an overall satisfaction score of 3.6 versus 4.1 and 4.0 in the years before and after.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the full-time MSc BA programme is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the MSc BA theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert considers that in all fifteen cases, the evaluation form was completed in an insightful way: the assessors provide both quantitative scores and qualitative feedback; the evaluation texts written by the assessors are meaningful and clear; their motivation of the scores is to-the-point and rather extensive.

As a point for improvement, the expert reported that the evaluation forms sometimes combine the scoring / feedback of both assessors in one document. According to TIAS both assessors have read the thesis independently and completed separate evaluation forms that were consolidated at the end. However, the scores and feedback on the single consolidated evaluation form make it more difficult to understand how the final score and sub-scores were determined. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed at several occasions during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Finally, the expert noticed that the final grade of the thesis is based on an average of seven equally weighted sub-scores. The panel endorses the suggestion of the expert to reflect within the School and the programmes that adopt the same approach - whether all criteria are equally important or should be weighted differently.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this full-time MSc BA programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. In this regard, the PRT confirms the analysis by the TIAS Assessment Committee that "MSc BA students are challenged in many different ways, that assignments are clearly articulated, that assessments are transparent, and that students are provided with feedback."

In addition, PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is particularly strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but thesis assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates across all TIAS programmes are valid for this full-time MSc BA programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for almost a quarter of the total study credits points. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 52 students who graduated in December 2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (8% - 62% - 31%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 9 average quality and 5 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the final projects was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to all fifteen final scores given by the respective assessors. As a result, the ranking of the theses is adequate: theses with a higher score are indeed of better quality than those receiving a lower grade, while theses with an identical grade are of comparable quality.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the thesis quality was good to very good, that the topics were relevant and interesting and that students seemed to be well prepared and supervised. The weaknesses noted in individual projects varied, were due to the individual performance of the students and did not give rise to specific concerns as they were not linked to the thesis system. All theses took a structured approach. Although COVID-19 may have hindered the execution of some theses, the results are still fine. According to the expert, the programme is to be commended for the quality of these student deliverables. The PRT wholeheartedly endorses this statement.

This full-time MSc BA is the only pre-experience degree programme at TIAS; compared to other post-experience programmes, the full-time students usually have no job and are particularly keen to enter the labour market upon graduation. As mentioned before, the programme addresses this expectation through the leadership and career development course, through ongoing career support and through networking activities. The panel gathers from the written materials and the discussions that students appreciate the programme efforts in this regard and are successful in finding a job: in 2020, almost 85% of the graduates found employment within three months after their graduation.

Furthermore, the PRT gathers from the materials and discussions that alumni are very proud of their programme and continue to support programme activities through guest lectures, Company Days, student mentoring, etc. Moreover, the School and the programme can rely on an extensive alumni network. While students – and the programme team – see the strength of such network, they also see room for making (even) better use of this resource to connect current and former students in course assignments and projects. The panel endorses this finding and encourages programme stakeholders to address this in due course.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes apply to this full-time MSc BA programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the very positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the full-time MSc BA have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. This consideration is furthermore confirmed by the performance of the graduates on the labour market.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this full-time MSc BA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. **The**

Peer Review Team therefore issues a positive advice to NVAO on the full-time MSc BA programme at TIAS School for Business and Society.

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the curriculum set-up and contents, the didactic principles, the diversity in student intake, the completion rates, the choice to offer the programme in English, the personal leadership and career development scheme, and the quality of both thesis and thesis assessment.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the full-time MSc BA programme to:

- review the formulation of the programme learning outcomes;
- recruit more female faculty members;
- make (even) better use of the alumni network as an educational resource.

2. MSc Business Administration (part-time)

The international MSc in Business Administration is a 63 ECTS part-time programme that can be studied in 22 months. It consists of a Dutch and an English variant. Established in 2004, it is organised on the Utrecht campus of TIAS and targets Dutch and non-Dutch professionals and junior executives.

TIAS offers three variants of the MSc BA (CROHO 64070): a pre-experience full-time version and these two post-experience part-time versions, one in Dutch and one in English. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that – contrary to the previous accreditation visit when all three variants were assessed together – the two part-time versions are looked at together, while the full-time variant is assessed separately.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on two self-evaluation reports (one for each language variant) and their respective student chapters, on the findings from the combined thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by both programme teams prior to the visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme. The part-time MSc BA programme has been developed and is currently implemented in full alignment with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS. In addition, the programme features strong links to the professional field, which in turn ensures that its objectives remain up to date.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that the purpose of the programme is clearly outlined: to develop the academic thinking and working level of students, to acquire knowledge, skills and insight into the scientific literature covering the full breadth of the business administration domain, and to receive training in (research) methods and skills to apply this knowledge in their work. Hence, the programme focuses on business design, on the operations of profit and non-profit organizations, and on the functioning of businesses and their management. It uses insights from various scientific and business disciplines in order to offer an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to complex business problems and management.

The panel understands from the self-evaluation reports that several universities in the Netherlands offer similar post-experience programmes. It acknowledges from the benchmarking exercise that the programme at TIAS can be attractive to students because of its connection with research universities (Tilburg and Eindhoven), its attention to blended learning (which allows students to learn more place and time independently) and its integrated focus on business and society.

Furthermore, the panel endorses the decision of the School to offer two programme variants, following requests from both students and the professional field: the Dutch edition (also known as the MSc Bedrijfskunde) focusses on Dutch speaking working professionals who often want

to move to executive positions in their Dutch organisation, while the English variant caters for both Dutch and non-Dutch professionals who have similar career ambitions in Netherlands-based international companies or in Dutch organisations serving an international market.

The two part-time programmes have the same overall programme learning outcomes. Since they share the same CROHO number with the full-time MSc BA, their ILOs are closely related to those of the pre-experience programme. The ILOs of the part-time programme were updated early 2020: taking as a starting point the previous learning outcomes, new domain-specific developments were incorporated, as well as the elements that set the programme apart (attention to blended learning, focus on business and society). The panel understands from the materials and the discussions that these changes have not been imposed top-down but that several academic and professional stakeholders have contributed to the new outline before the new learning outcomes were approved. The PRT thinks that the revised learning outcomes are more concrete and up-to-date than the ones presented at the previous accreditation visit. It appreciates the explicit attention in one dedicated learning outcome to the School-wide Business and Society Competency Framework. Moreover, the formulation of the ILOs comply with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and adequately reflect the domain (business administration), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the rationale of this programme and the way it holds a specific position and constitutes specific opportunities for students who are working professionals within the overall MSc BA portfolio of the School. Moreover, the panel considers that the recently revised learning outcomes constitute a relevant and up-to-date set of competencies.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme: it definitely is a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to the professional practice in general and those of its individual students in particular.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise this double orientation. While they appreciate the academic foundations of the programme, some students indicated that the assignments are not always applicable in their own working field. According to the programme management, the applicability is an important element of the programme, and is taken on board in the set-up of the courses and in the assessment; nonetheless, students should also demonstrate that they can apply academic skills outside of their own professional domain. As students have been providing the programme with similar feedback in the past, notably on

one course whose contents are less directly transmissible into small and medium-sized enterprises, the assessment format of this course is now being adjusted in order to reflect better both the academic rigour and the practical relevance.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the panel considers that the programme variants are doing a good job in bringing their students up to an academic master level while taking into account the professional experience and background of the participants

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual courses add up nicely to the recently revised overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation reports, both curriculum variants consists of several 4 ECTS courses and one sizeable 15 ECTS thesis that all together add up to 63 ECTS. Students first follow seven foundation modules (28 ECTS), then three electives (12 ECTS) and two integration courses (8 ECTS) before they finish the programme with the graduation project/master thesis. The foundation courses offer a broad spectrum of business and management disciplines, while participants study specific domains of interest in depth in the electives and bring the acquired knowledge and skills together in the integration courses.

Since the previous accreditation, the programme has aligned its preparation courses with the overall TIAS offer allowing students to remedy deficiencies or refresh their knowledge as part of the pre-master programme. Moreover, the previously compulsory choice for one of three specialisations has been replaced by a series of advanced elective courses allowing students to tailor the programme more to their individual needs and interests. Finally, the programme adjusted the size of its courses from 3 to 4 ECTS following a TIAS-wide decision, which in turn allows students to focus on one course at a time and choose more easily elective courses from other TIAS programmes. While it understood from the student chapter that the transition from specialisation tracks to individual electives happened rather abruptly and was not always communicated clearly, the panel does gather from the discussions with students and alumni that overall they appreciate these changes that tailor the entire curriculum even more to their individual liking.

The panel notices with satisfaction that the programme team has taken its time to revise the programme objectives involving all stakeholders and asking faculty to incorporate one or more business and society competencies in their respective courses. This results in a series of modules whose contents are current, market oriented and forward looking.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the way in which the curriculum contents have been revised and considers that the respective curriculum variants deliver on the overall programme objective.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation reports describe extensively the specific learning environment of this particular programme and its two language variants.

The panel gathers from the written materials and the discussions that the part-time MSc BA programme takes up a pioneering role within TIAS in offering courses according to the blended learning format. In this way it implements the School-wide vision on teaching and learning. According to this vision, blended learning should help students combine their studies with a job and possibly family commitments and lead to improved study results. Until now, all foundational courses have been redesigned and provide students with more flexibility to prepare and work with the study material at their own time and pace. According to the PRT, this new approach also constitutes a relevant answer to the comment of the previous accreditation panel who noticed that a large proportion of teaching happened through in class-lecturing and suggested the programme to consider in more innovative teaching techniques. While it is too early to already judge the quality and success of the new approach, the panel thinks that blended learning may work very well with this particular target group of busy and ambitious professionals.

Furthermore, students indicated that they appreciate the small-scale courses and the group assignments in pre-arranged teams that reflect the diversity of the cohorts. If anything, the programme may want to monitor that in in general, and certainly in the new educational format that focuses on interaction and participation, all students are encouraged to actively engage in class and in assignments. The panel is confident based on the discussion on site that the programme team is aware of this challenge and looking carefully into this.

The English programme variant exists since 2004 while the Dutch MSc Bedrijfskunde is much younger. Following discussions with management, faculty, students and alumni, the panel

notices that there clearly is a market for both variants: students enrolling on the Dutch variant may have been hesitant to go for the English-language version while international staff working in the Netherlands would not manage in a Dutch-language programme and Dutch staff working in international organisations prefer a programme with a distinctively international dimension. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks that the choice for an English language variant is well motivated and has allowed – and still allows - the programme to attract the whole range of students it is aiming for.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. The PRT welcomes the plans of the school and the efforts of this programme to offer its foundational courses in a blended learning format. Moreover, the two language variants are effectively attracting the full range of students the school and the programme is targeting. In this regard, the panel endorses the use of English as languages of instruction in one programme variant.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme.

The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and composition that between 2016 and 2020, an average MSc Bedrijfskunde cohort consisted of 30 Dutch students, mostly male, around 31 years old with 9 years of professional experience and in almost all cases with a bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences. The average cohort in the English variant consisted of 25 students, again mostly male, around 29 years old with 5 years of professional experience. About half of the students were Dutch and two thirds held a professional bachelor's degree. Students from both variants mentioned that they see the diversity in educational, professional – and in the English-language programme also geographical – background as a value added for themselves.

Further to the analysis in the general findings section, the intake for these programme variants in the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 was much lower than before, which is likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market situation and the reluctance of employers to invest in times of uncertainty.

The panel was satisfied to read that on average the completion rates for both variants are very high with almost all students effectively obtaining the degree. Moreover, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that around one third of the students have at least one resit during their trajectory and the curriculum is spread over two years during which professional and family

issues may impact on the study rhythm, a high share of students (around 80%) do finish the programme in time.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc programme. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting resourceful students as most participants complete the two-year part-time degree successfully within the nominal duration.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing at TIAS – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The panel notices from the detailed staff overviews that both programme variants have their own core and additional faculty with hardly any staff teaching in both variants: 21 faculty are involved in the MSc Bedrijfskunde, which consists almost entirely of Dutch and Belgian staff; the English-language variant features 21 staff from ten nationalities, including five Dutch faculty.

While students indicated that in most cases they highly value the quality of the lecturers, they do point to the strong underrepresentation of female staff. In fact, the staff team only counts three female professors. The panel gathers from the discussions that gender diversity is an issue that is currently addressed at School level and constitutes a priority for the MSc BA programme teams.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the academic staff on the full-time MSc BA programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. As a point for immediate attention, the panel encourages the programme teams to recruit more female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme, which is taught on the campus in Utrecht. Students from both programme variants

indicated that they very much like the digital learning environment Canvas which they consider a relevant tool to convey information on the programme, the content of the individual courses and the assignments.

Considerations

The panel establishes that the material and educational facilities of the part-time MSc BA programme are adequate, in line with its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across all TIAS programmes are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme.

An additional finding concerns the attention in this programme to personal leadership, which is facilitated by professionals. Both in group sessions and individually, students learn to increase their personal effectiveness and create more impact in their organisations and in society. Several alumni from this and similar (M)BA programmes indicated during the visit that they highly appreciated this component as it brought something useful for every participant.

Furthermore, the panel gathers from the materials report that the programme also proactively monitors the study progress of individual students. Participants are contacted when they fail a course and are offered additional support in case of (forthcoming) changes in the professional or private sphere. Moreover, every lecturer schedules a Question & Answer session before the exam, adding relevant issues to a Frequently Asked Questions list for the next student cohort.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. The panel thinks highly of the additional personal leadership component, which definitely constitutes an added value to the students on the programme. Similarly the panel appreciates the efforts of the programme teams to closely monitor student performance.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation reports that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported in e.g. course and professor evaluations are picked up and repaired. In fact, several issues which students had mentioned in the Student Chapter and the panel had raised prior to the visit, were on the radar of the programme team.

Moreover, the panel notices with satisfaction that an additional evaluation was held – involving students, faculty, instructional designers and the programme team - to assess the quality of the seven foundation modules when they were offered for the first time in a blended learning format. This evaluation has led to several improvements in the second run of the modules.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the part-time MSc BA programme is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation reports that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

In terms of individual course assessments, a few students mentioned that there is quite some attention to knowledge tests and that feedback is not always as extensive as expected or variable in size across individual students. According to the programme team, every module consists of different assessment formats with knowledge tests being mainly used to check whether students understand the basics of a given discipline following their individual processing of the self-study materials. While faculty are at (some) liberty to provide feedback, all staff are expected to motivate their scores. In case student evaluations or sounding board meetings reveal individual flaws in feedback, then the programme team will address this immediately at individual staff / course level.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the (part-time) MSc BA theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert considers that in thirteen out of fifteen cases, the evaluation form was completed in an insightful way: the assessors provide both quantitative scores and qualitative feedback and in almost all cases both scoring and feedback were done carefully.

As a point for improvement, the expert reported that there was no consistency in the evaluation materials received for the review: while there is no reason to doubt that both assessors have read the thesis (independently), in some cases both assessors complete a separate form, in other cases there is one form signed by both supervisor and reader, and still in other cases there was only one evaluation form. When separate evaluations were submitted, it seems that the second reader is more critical than the supervisor. This is understandable as the reader has some more distance to the project and only evaluates the written document and the presentation.

While both programme variants uphold the same quality and assessment criteria, the thesis expert reviewing theses from both variants had the impression that some Dutch language theses had been assessed more critically than the (admittedly small) English language sample. The PRT will share with the programme teams part of the expert notes that form the basis for this finding.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across TIAS programmes apply fully to this part-time MSc BA programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is good. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but thesis assessors are also making good use of the form by motivating in most cases the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback. If anything, the programme teams may consider organising a calibration of the thesis quality / score across the two variants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates across all TIAS programmes are valid for this part-time MSc BA programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for almost a quarter of the total study credits. Many students execute their final project in their own organisation, which in turn demonstrates the applicability of the learning outcomes.

As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 40 students who graduated in the academic year 2020-2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the

scoring categories (8% - 68% - 25%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 10 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers. The sample contained theses from both the Dutch and the English language variant.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses is clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the final projects was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. This finding confirms according to the panel the attention paid by the assessors to the threshold quality of the master theses, as the self-evaluation reports indicate that every year a number of students fail to get their thesis accepted rightaway and need to re-submit the adjusted final project at a later stage. Overlooking the entire sample, the expert considers that most theses are well written and contain a sufficient motivation for the problems and methods that are fitting for the research questions. The PRT endorses the expert's finding on thesis quality.

In terms of grading, the expert thinks that the assessors have evaluated every thesis carefully. Nonetheless, the expert did not always agree to the final score and thought several final projects had been (slightly) overrated. In five cases the expert would have given 0.5 points less and in two cases, the difference was at least 1 point: in the latter cases, the expert found among other things that – compared to their respective final scores - the thesis contents did not live up to the title, that the innovation element was relatively limited, that the research questions were not clear and that the English language was prone for improvement. As the finding of the expert indicates that some supervisors or assessment teams give high scores, the PRT advises the programme teams – and the Board of Examiners - to monitor in the future whether the final scores reflect the intrinsic quality of the respective theses.

This part-time MSc degree is organised as post-experience education targeting students who have several years of professional experience and often are at a crossroads in their career and in their organisation. For this target group, the programme organises the previously mentioned leadership development component, which is highly appreciated by students as it prepares them well for the immediate challenges in their career. In this regard, the panel establishes that students who graduate from the part-time MSc BA programme have not only achieved the envisaged level of knowledge and skills but are also ready to apply this knowledge and skills in their work.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes apply to this part-time MSc BA programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the part-time MSc BA programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. This consideration is furthermore confirmed by the performance of the graduates on the labour market.

While it has no doubts whatsoever on the basic quality of the thesis, the PRT does advise the programme teams to monitor – and the Examination Board to guarantee – that the intrinsic quality of each thesis is properly captured in the overall score it receives from the assessors.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the funeral findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this part-time MSc BA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the part-time MSc BA programme at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the newly formulated intended learning outcomes, the curriculum set-up and contents, the completion rates, the tutoring provisions and the quality of the master thesis. Moreover, the panel considers that the organisation of the part-time programme in two variants is relevant and meets a clear need on the labour market.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the part-time MSc BA programme to:

- enhance communication to students on the programme and its modules;
- recruit more female faculty members;
- organise calibration of the master thesis scores across the programme variants;
- compare the intrinsic quality of the master theses to the completed scoring grid.

3. Master of Business Administration (full-time)

The Fulltime International Master in Business Administration (CROHO 75101) is a 70 ECTS post-experience MBA programme taught in English that can be studied in 12 months. Running since 1989, it is one of three MBA programme next to TIAS' long-standing Executive MBA and Global Executive MBA. The full-time MBA is offered on the Utrecht campus and caters for an international student audience with at least three years of professional experience.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the dedicated self-evaluation report and students chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team prior to the visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme. The full-time MBA programme aims to educate professionals in preparation for (general) management positions by providing them with the necessary concepts and analytic tools as well as by helping them grow and develop their personal leadership skills. Compared to specialised master programmes in management or business, this MBA provides students with the knowledge and understanding of all the major disciplines in business and to build on this to develop a more strategic or managerial perspective on business. Compared to pre-experience programmes, the courses in the MBA build on the experiences of students in an interactive classroom setting. The panel acknowledges that this full-time MBA programme aligns with the international definition for MBA programmes as set by the Association of MBA's (AMBA), by whom it is also accredited.

The TIAS full-time MBA programme has been developed and is currently implemented in full alignment with the mission, vision and strategy of the School. The panel gathers from the materials and discussions that students are increasingly attracted by the business and society mission of the School, as well as by the international dimension of the MBA programme, which is explicitly mentioned in the programme title.

The programme team ensures that the intended learning outcomes reflect not only the requirements of the accreditation bodies but also the mission of the School and the recommendations of the MBA Advisory Board representing the professional field. The actuality of the ILOs is verified on an annual basis and written down in the Teaching and Education Regulations. The panel notices that the ILOs are formulated in a rather generic way, while the specificity of the programme is reflected in the learning goals at course level. According to the PRT, the programme learning outcomes in use at the time of the accreditation visit adequately reflect the domain, level and orientation of the programme.

Moreover, the panel was informed that currently a more fundamental review of the Executive MBA programme is being undertaken as part of the TIAS-wide review of learning outcomes, course learning goals and assessment alignment process. The lessons learned from this review

will be taken on board when a similar redesign exercise of the full-time MBA starts in September 2022, involving instructional designers, faculty and students. The panel suggests that the stakeholders involved use the upcoming review to look at the formulation of the learning outcomes.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this full-time MBA programme. The panel thinks highly of the way the rationale of the programme aligns with the mission of the school, the requirements of the international accreditation body and the demands of the professional field.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this full-time MBA programme. The programme courses emphasise critical thinking and the understanding, discussion and application of concepts. While there is a strong focus on application, all courses start from theoretical models, textbooks and articles. Assignments test theoretical knowledge, the application of knowledge to practice or ask students to design solutions in ambiguous contexts. Students enter the programme with a diversity of educational and professional backgrounds, which they are stimulated to draw upon in class. Moreover, the personal development component of the programme trains students to become (self-)critical, reflective and inquisitive managers.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise this orientation and appreciate the balanced combination of academic and practical knowledge, as well as the mixture between attention to personal and career development. According to students, the personal skills are important ingredients to effectively leverage technical business competence, and the MBA programme provides a good blend of both through the Personal and Career Development programme. Nonetheless, several students indicated that they miss/want more real-life cases and collaboration with companies. The programme management is aware of this demand and has modified the teaching and assessment formats in several courses over the past few years. An important change in this respect has been the implementation of a Team Business Project (instead of the individual thesis) as graduation project. In addition, several courses feature a guest speaker, a real-life case, or require students to work on their own business idea. However, the programme management also emphasises that it is important to find a balance between delivering on the one hand content and theory, and incorporating applications and real-life cases in the curriculum on the other hand.

Overall, the PRT thinks that the academic, professional and personal dimensions are reflected adequately in the curriculum of this programme. The panel is confident that the ongoing

discussions between students and staff, the regular course evaluations and the upcoming programme review will lead to further adjustments in the curriculum while maintaining an appropriate balance in the programme orientation.

Considerations

The panel considers that the orientation of the MBA curriculum is adequate, which in turn confirms the positive considerations of the PRT on curriculum orientation across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this MBA programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual courses add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the curriculum consists of 19 small (2-4 ECTS) modules and one 10 ECTS Team Business Project. The programme is structured in five consecutive blocks: two blocks of fundamental business courses, positioning for long term value, business in context, and generating impact in practice (graduation project). In order to cover possible deficiencies, the programme offers three online preparation courses which are taken prior to the academic year and are consolidated during the first block. Students indicated that the course structure is nicely arranged throughout the entire trajectory, although it can be very intense at times. Starting from basic business elements and concepts, courses gradually address more specific topics and what is learnt in one course can be transferred easily used in subsequent modules. The panel notices that the curriculum structure in five blocks and the course organisation in small modules allow students to focus on only one or two subjects at a time. Moreover, the module contents clearly contribute to the overall objective of the programme, i.e. to prepare students for their next career steps by becoming better business professionals with an academic attitude and a strong sense of the business context.

The panel gathers from the materials and discussions that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 cohort started only in January 2021. This entailed a reorganisation of the programme flow. The lessons learned from this experience and student indications that the workload is unevenly spread throughout the curriculum will lead to adjustments in the programme flow and in the order of courses as of September 2022.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to this MBA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the design of the curriculum, while the module contents meet the specific expectations of the audience and the aim of the programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment*Findings*

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this MBA programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular programme. The PRT notices that students are housed as much as possible on campus because the programme focuses strongly on interaction, peer-learning, discussion and cohort-feeling. This is all the more relevant because the full-time programme is intensive (70 ECTS in 12 months) and most students decide to take one year leave from their job to do the MBA.

The previous accreditation panel noticed that a large proportion of teaching happened through in-class lecturing and suggested the programme to consider investing in more interactive teaching techniques. The current PRT notices that the programme team has taken this recommendation at heart and now offers a wider variety of learning experiences. Furthermore, the experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has made TIAS and the programme team reflect on how to design its education in the future and strike a good balance between in-class teaching and blended education.

The panel understands from the discussions that the programme has made a conscious choice to keep in-class education as an important didactic principle thereby alternating conventional lecturing with interactive elements such as breakout exercises, group work and discussions. This approach is motivated by the fact that the intake is highly diverse – an average cohort consists of 17 nationalities. Moreover, many (international) participants choose TIAS for its on-campus education and personal approach; hence the decision during the COVID-19 pandemic to delay the start of the 2020 cohort to January 2021.

Furthermore, the full-time MBA programme values internationalisation and diversity. For this purpose, the programme incorporates an international and intercultural perspective into its educational activities, uses English as the languages of instruction and offers international students a language course in Dutch as part of the curriculum. This approach has led to highly international student cohorts, which are taught by a similarly geographically diverse team of lecturers. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks that the choice for English in this programme is well motivated and has allowed the programme to attract the students and to deliver the education aimed for.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment apply fully to this programme. The PRT considers that the didactic principles are particularly suited for this type of programme with this type of students. Moreover, the panel wholeheartedly endorses the

decision to use English as the language of instruction in this programme. Moreover, the PRT welcomes the attention in the curriculum to Dutch language as a means to integrate on the Dutch labour market.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this MBA programme.

The MBA programme targets international students with a minimum of three – but often many more - years of work experience. Participants often have very different educational and professional backgrounds but invariably aim through this MBA for a career change. The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and composition that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 36 students representing 17 nationalities, with an average age of 31 and a balance between male and female participants. Almost all students are international. Further to the analysis in the general findings section, the intake for this programme in the academic year 2020-2021 was lower than before, which is likely due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel was satisfied to read that over the past five years, drop-out rates have been very low (2%). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that 87% of the students had at least one resit during their trajectory, most students (93%) finish the programme in time.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MBA. The PRT thinks highly of the diverse intake of students. Moreover, the admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting very resourceful students as most participants complete the full-time MBA successfully within the nominal duration.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

In line with the international student body of the programme, the panel notices that also the faculty teaching on this programme is geographically and culturally diverse: according to the

data provided in the self-evaluation report, the teaching team consists of 26 faculty: 11 Dutch and 15 non-Dutch lecturers representing 10 different nationalities. Furthermore the team consists of 19 core faculty and 7 additional faculty: in this way the programme addresses the finding of the previous accreditation panel that in 2017 a relatively large proportion of staff members on the MBA programme was affiliated to other schools. The current PRT gathers from the discussions that the current additional faculty are non-permanent core faculty who often also teach in other TIAS programmes and have been involved with TIAS for a long time: they are in tune with the TIAS-wide processes and participate for instance in faculty alignment sessions around the Business & Society component of TIAS. In this way, the programme team ensures that the course content is complementary and that permanent and non-permanent core faculty are aligned to deliver this essential element of the TIAS MBA programme.

Students appreciate the quality of the faculty who do not only have great academic knowledge and good didactic skills but also practical business experience, which makes the lectures inspiring. However, students also point to the strong underrepresentation of female staff, a weakness the programme team – and the entire School – is working on in their recruitment (policy). The panel gathers from the discussions that creating more gender diversity in the staff team is a key objective of the full-time MBA programme – and of TIAS as a whole.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MBA programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. The PRT appreciates the geographical and cultural diversity of the faculty, which aligns with the international rationale of the programme. As a point for attention, the panel encourages the programme team to recruit more female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MBA programme, which is taught on the Utrecht campus.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of this MBA programme are adequate, in line with its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across all TIAS programmes are valid for this MBA programme.

An additional finding concerns the attention in the MBA programme to career development and support. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report, the student chapter and the discussions with staff, students and alumni that career-related tutoring takes place in the Personal and Career Development Programme (PDCP). As an integral part of the curriculum, PDCP (4 ECTS, 90 contact hours) is linked to the personal development and values of students and aims to make students understand who they are and what they want. While the personal leadership component focuses on personal and team development in terms of self-awareness and effectiveness, the career development component offers more pragmatic support on the career plans of individual students. Students and alumni indicated to the panel that they appreciate both elements as they learned a lot about themselves and received good career advice. The panel endorses the long-standing efforts of the programme to offer its full-time MBA students a wide variety of personal tutoring that is highly appreciated by the (former) participants.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MBA programme. The panel thinks highly of the personal and career development scheme, which definitely constitutes an added value for the MBA students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for this MBA programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired. Moreover, the programme team and individual module coordinators use the insights gained through student evaluations, Sounding Board meetings and contacts with alumni and corporate relations to make both incremental and comprehensive adjustments to the courses and the curriculum. In this regard, the decision to replace the master thesis by a team business project was taken based on feedback from alumni, insights from career coaches and a benchmark with similar MBA programmes.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MBA programme is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes. The PRT was informed that as of September 2022, the MBA programme will go through a full improvement cycle to evaluate course assignments, assessments and feedback. The result of this exercise will serve as input to align the assessment formats to the course learning outcomes, and to adjust where necessary the formulation of the intended learning outcomes at programme level.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the team business projects are assessed using a structured evaluation form with criteria, definitions, scoring grids and room for overall feedback. Each project is evaluated separately by two assessors. The individual reflection paper is scored individually: every student receives written feedback on the deliverable and on his/her individual contribution to the team project. The expert considers that the assessors have worked independently on their assessment of the team projects. In almost all cases the evaluation forms are completed in an informative way.

As a point for improvement, the expert reported significant variance among assessors with regard to the weighting they attribute in their feedback to the criteria of the reflection report. Generally speaking, the main divide is between those who seek student insights about the actual content and process of the project, and those who mostly value students' personal learnings regarding their functioning during the project. The programme team acknowledges this finding and thinks it is due to the evolution of the programme and the redesign of the final project from a thesis to a business project. Initially, the personal reflection was more focused on personal learnings; the last two years it is more a reflection on the project steps and choices. The current criteria on the assessment form reflect this change. Nonetheless, assessors have a different focus in their feedback on the form. After a recent calibration, the focus on the reflection on problem-solving skills has been re-emphasized and will be mentioned again when assessors evaluate the next Team Business Projects. The PRT endorses the positive findings of the expert, the point for improvement and the way the programme team will address this flaw. Moreover, the panel suggests that the programme team could set clear indications for the assessors as to what constitutes a sufficient, average and high quality paper / contribution to the team endeavour.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MBA programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but most thesis assessors are also making good use of the form by motivating their scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this programme.

The final project of the MBA programme is a 10 ECTS Team Business Project: a group of students implements a consultancy project which results in an advice for a client, while each student also writes an individual reflection paper on the group assignment. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection was based on a list featuring 88 students who graduated since September 2019. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (1% - 67% - 32%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 9 average quality and 5 high quality business projects.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen projects is clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the team advices or individual reflection papers was submitted to the thesis committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to fourteen out of fifteen final scores given by the respective assessors. In one case, the expert thought the grade was too high because other reports with similar scores were of better quality and the – in the eyes of the reviewer correct - feedback from the assessors on several criteria was not reflected in the (sub) scores. Overall, the distribution of grades in this sample indicates that grading is reasonable, according to the expert, and there is no tendency towards grade inflation.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the quality of the final assignments was high, an appreciation that covers both the group projects and the individual reflection reports. The final projects are invariably at a level that can be expected from MBA students; the group projects / individual reflections moreover suggest that students can critically evaluate their own

work, are able to analyse clients' situations while taking into consideration a broad range of management dimensions, and can communicate their ideas in an effective manner. The PRT endorses the positive findings of the expert on the quality of the final project.

As a point for reflection, the expert reported that the consultancy project captures many of the (intended) programme learning outcomes at team level, while the individual reflection report does not have sufficient breadth to do the same at the level of the individual student. According to the programme team, the two components of the Team Business Project assess different, yet related outcomes. In this regard, the individual reflection is meant to reflect on the learnings in the project that mirror the different steps of the team assignment. Although the core of the project constitutes teamwork, the programme manages to capture the end-level competences of individual students by having them individually reflect on the steps taken, and judge the quality of their reflection. Moreover, team coaching sessions during the process focus on the effectiveness of the team work and on the responsibility of the individual for the team as a whole. The PRT agrees to the reflection point of the expert and acknowledges the reply from the programme team. The panel welcomes the team's intention – and the possible solutions proposed - to address this flaw in the future.

This full-time MBA programme is organised as post-experience education targeting students who have several years of professional experience and often are at a crossroads in their career and in their organisation. For this target group, the programme organises the previously mentioned leadership and career development component, ongoing career support and networking activities, which are highly appreciated by the students as it prepares them well for the immediate challenges in their career. In this regard, the panel establishes that students who graduate from the MBA programme have not only achieved the envisaged level of knowledge and skills but are also ready to apply this knowledge and skills in their work.

Furthermore, the PRT gathers from the materials and discussions that many MBA students want to find employment in the Netherlands afterwards and are quite successful at this. Moreover, alumni are proud of their programme and continue to stay in contact with TIAS supporting MBA activities through guest lectures, experience evenings, company days, student mentoring, etc. Finally, students and alumni indicated that they did not only choose TIAS for its business and society component but were also trained during the programme how to create value afterwards in their professional career.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes apply to this MBA programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the very positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the full-time MBA programme have indeed achieved the intended learning outcomes. This consideration is furthermore confirmed by the performance of MBA graduates on the labour market.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this full-time MBA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the full-time MBA programme at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the programme rationale, the curriculum design, the choice for English as language of instruction, the diverse student intake, the personal and career development programme, and the quality of both thesis and thesis assessment.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the full-time MBA programme to:

- review the formulation of the programme learning outcomes;
- recruit more female faculty members;
- optimise the assessment (form) of the individual reflection paper;
- ensure that the final project also addresses all learning outcomes at individual level.

4. Executive Master Business Valuation

The Executive Master in Business Valuation (MBV) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in English that can be studied in 18 months. Established in 2008, it is currently organised on both campuses of TIAS in Tilburg and Utrecht. The Executive Master (EM) programme targets talented financial management professionals who want to enhance their data analysis skills, improve their ability to tackle financial dilemmas using sound theoretical frameworks, and develop their personal leadership qualities.

TIAS offers two EM programmes with the same CROHO number 75073: Business Valuation and Finance. Both programmes have many elements in common and produced together one self-evaluation report. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that both programmes would be assessed separately. The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the common self-evaluation report, as well as on the dedicated student chapters, the findings from the separate thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the visit.

On explicit request of the PRT, the programme team provided a written update on the status of the two EM programmes at the time of the site visit. The panel understands from this note that although one self-evaluation report has been written that covers both programmes, each programme currently leads to a separate master degree. While there are some very distinct features to each programme - three specialized courses and the final project - there also is and always has been a strong connection and sizeable overlap between the two programmes. The plan for the near future is to establish an even closer alignment between both programmes. Since the previous accreditation visit in 2017, both programmes have been reviewed as part of a TIAS-wide programme redesign exercise. In the case of Business Valuation and Finance, this review has led to a reformulation of the programme learning outcomes. In the near future, the programmes finish the work on the vertical integration of the programmes by aligning the new programme learning outcomes with the learning goals of each course and their respective assessment formats. This work should culminate in a curriculum that features a set of core courses for all students, as well as dedicated Business Valuation and Finance tracks. At that point, TIAS will submit a request to NVAO to formally approve this change.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this MBV programme.

The PRT notices that the programme features a strong connection with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS and explicitly positions itself as the go-to programme for business transformation that serves society. The panel appreciates the efforts of the programme to make this connection more explicit as the previous accreditation panel found in 2017 that there could be more attention in the programme to the societal role of business. Moreover, the panel gathers

from the materials that the programme objectives and learning outcomes have been designed to align with the trends in the academic discipline and the specific needs of industry.

In comparison to the previous accreditation visit in 2017, the programme's intended learning outcomes are formulated more sharply and now consist of six instead of 27 learning outcomes. The panel understands that the previous set of ILOs was too long, that their formulation was outdated and that translating these numerous outcomes into course-specific learning goals was very impractical for both faculty and students. After a "clean sheet exercise" involving all stakeholders, the programme team adopted a set of six comprehensive learning outcomes which align better with the mission of TIAS and incorporate explicitly the international dimension of the programme.

Furthermore, the panel gathers from the materials that TIAS has opted for learning outcomes with an outside-in approach. This choice reportedly makes it stand out from other degree programmes in the Netherlands. Instead of merely focusing on the career opportunities of the students, the team has taken the societal dynamics and puzzles as a starting point and designed the programme as a means to translate these societal challenges into prudent corporate decision making. According to the programme team, starting outside will in the long run also benefit the transitional qualities and the job market appeal of the students.

The panel notices that the current set of learning outcomes are formulated in line with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and reflect properly the level and orientation of the programme. Given that the learning outcomes apply to both Business Valuation and Finance programmes, which currently lead to separate degrees, the panel wonders to what extent the specific Business Valuation domain is sufficiently addressed in the formulation of the (intended) learning outcomes at programme level.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MBV. The written materials and discussion on site have provided the panel with a clear view on the objective of this programme and on the rationale for offering the programme until now as a separate degree in a common set-up with the Finance EM programme. Overall, the PRT endorses the programme developments since the previous accreditation as well as the plans for the future.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes as they stand now reflect properly the objectives, level, orientation and ambitions of the programme, as well as the mission of the School. If anything, the PRT advises the programme to monitor that the specific Business Valuation domain is sufficiently addressed in the learning outcomes, which are currently shared entirely with the EM Finance.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation across TIAS are valid for this MBV programme.

In addition, the panel notices that the programme involves various stakeholder groups to ensure that the design of the programme stays up-to-date, market oriented and forward looking. By doing so, the programme provides students not only with in-depth knowledge of business valuation but also teaches them to apply new insights from various scientific disciplines to the challenges that society at large faces today and tomorrow.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the curriculum orientation across TIAS apply fully to MBV. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the PRT considers that the programme curriculum provides the particular target group of experienced finance professionals with a relevant mixture of high-level domain specific knowledge, as well as academic and professional skills.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content across TIAS are valid for MBV: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

Compared to the situation in 2017, the PRT notices that the curriculum has been restructured and now consists of six core courses (21 ECTS), six specialisation courses (24 ECTS) and a final project (15 ECTS). The core courses are shared with the EM Finance students and offer the foundations of strategy, valuation, financial reporting, corporate finance, and quantitative tools. In the specialisation courses, Business Valuation students enhance their understanding of fiscal and business law, risk management, and how to value private companies. In the final project, Business Valuation students produce both a valuation report and an academic chapter. Moreover, students who do not meet all enrolment criteria, complete a few pre-master courses before they are admitted to the programme. The panel understands that in addition to the curriculum structure, also the module contents have been updated.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the discussions that overall students and alumni are satisfied with both the structure and the contents of the curriculum. If anything, students indicated that the study load of certain courses is quite high. Given that participants combine study with professional and family commitments, it proves difficult for them to dedicate considerably more time to a course than what is expected in terms of the allocated study credits.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to MBV. The PRT welcomes the considerable efforts of all stakeholders in revising the curriculum structure and updating the contents of the modules. According to the panel this has resulted in a coherent curriculum that aligns nicely with the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this MBV programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular EM programme.

The previous accreditation panel reported that a large proportion of teaching happened through in-class lecturing. The current PRT notices that a significant part of the programme is now offered in a blended format: students prepare for modules via online learning, followed by in-class sessions which focus on more complex topics, case discussions, and application. Blended learning was introduced as of 2018 when the programme decided to join a TIAS-wide blended learning project as a frontrunner. At the time, the idea was that blending the programme would improve the learning experience of post-experience students by introducing more online synchronous and asynchronous learning tools, especially in the preparation phase of their course work. This in turn would help students to better plan their own study pace and timing that fitted their personal quality and schedules. Once the COVID-19 pandemic caused the first wave of lockdowns, the programme was forced to switch to a fully on-line format. This mandatory transition turned out to be feasible as the blending efforts from the past offered a very sound foundation for this obligatory switch. Moreover, the School provided very high-quality support by a team of educational specialists, which was able to rapidly produce adequate training and fully online solutions to the lecturers involved.

The panel notices that the programme values internationalisation, a dimension that has been further enhanced in the past few years and resulted among others in a dedicated programme learning outcome on globalisation. For this purpose, the programme incorporates and international perspective in its educational activities and uses English as the language of instruction. This approach has led to attracting a few international participants – there are more international students in the 'twin' programme on Finance - which are taught by a team of lecturers which is diverse in geographic terms. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks the choice for English in this programme is well motivated and has allowed the programme to attract the students and deliver the education aimed for.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply fully to MBV. The PRT appreciates the frontrunner mentality of the programme in designing and implementing blended learning as the main didactic principle. Moreover, the panel endorses the decision to use English as the language of instruction in this programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this programme.

The panel gathers from the materials that the background of Business Valuation students is rather homogeneous: most of them hold a financial position within their organisation and have a relevant specialist bachelor or master degree. Data on student intake and composition show that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 19 Business Valuation students. Compared to other TIAS programmes, the intake was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the contrary: it seems that the new curriculum structure has attracted more students to the programme.

Almost all students were Dutch, most were male and held a master degree. On average they were 42 years old with 16 years of professional experience. The panel notices that the experience level of the Business Valuation students is much higher than what is formally required (at least five years). While cohorts are not diverse in terms of gender and nationality, the programme team indicated that this composition reflects the field of business valuation in the Netherlands. Students who graduate the programme can apply for membership of the Dutch Institute for Register Valuers (NIRV) and become accredited as Register Valuator (RV).

Since many students have a background and degree in finance, several participants – and in comparison many more than in other TIAS programmes – have been asking for exemptions. However, the programme team observed that a lot of the pre-existing knowledge and experience deteriorated over the years and that taking some classes “again” was appreciated ex-post by the participants. Hence, the programme recently formulated a new set of restrictive exemption criteria that are in line with the policy of the School and have been laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations. The panel welcomes the clear policy on exemption and supports the criteria stipulated by the programme.

The panel was satisfied to read that over the past five years, most Business Valuation students (92%) manage to complete the programme. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that about 41% of the participants have at least one resit during their trajectory, 67% of Business Valuation students finish the programme in time.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to MBV. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting resourceful students with considerable work experience. The panel appreciates the specific attention of the programme to formulating a policy on course exemptions.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff – are valid for this MBV programme.

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme has extended its faculty base since the previous accreditation and invested in the didactical training of the academic staff to deliver blended and online education. In line with the international dimension of the programme, the panel notices that 9 out of 17 faculty teaching in the Business Valuation programme are non-Dutch. Only two lecturers are female. Contrary to other programmes at TIAS, most courses are taught by one person because of the specialist nature of the topics.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the discussions that students and alumni think highly of the faculty: they appreciate in particular their practical experience, as well as the personal approach and the 'drive' of both lecturers and the programme team (Academic Director and Programme Manager). However, students also pointed to the limited number of female staff and the fact that most valuation courses seem to depend on one professor: while the latter is highly experienced and much appreciated, having only one high-level core expert makes the programme vulnerable. The programme team indicated that it wants to strengthen the faculty base with new, young and possibly female and international staff.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the EM Business Valuation is sufficient in number, strong in quality and dedicated to the programme and the students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS programmes are valid for this programme. Business Valuation courses are delivered both in Tilburg (70%) and Utrecht (30%).

Students and alumni confirmed to the panel that the facilities are appropriate and conducive to learning.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the EM programme in Business Valuation are adequate, in line with its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for MBV.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS programmes apply fully to MBV.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS programmes are valid for MBV.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Furthermore, the panel notices that TIAS is also accredited as provider of post-experience education in the field of valuation by the Dutch Organisation of Register Valuers (NIRV). This organisation periodically assesses the quality of the programme and its graduates, which in turn constitutes an additional guarantee that the programme provides the competencies the labour market is expecting from business valuation graduates.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on quality assurance apply fully to MBV. Within the overall provisions on QA, the quality of this programme is monitored even more attentively because graduates can apply for the professional title of Register Valuator.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The review performed by the thesis committee shows that the graduation project consists of two deliverables: a valuation report and an academic chapter. Both products are assessed together using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert finds the evaluation form appropriate and considers that in thirteen out of fifteen cases, this form was completed in an informative way: the criteria are scored and most of the feedback was to the point. In two cases, however, there was hardly any written feedback to motivate the score.

The panel endorses the positive findings of the thesis committee on the quality of thesis evaluation in this programme. While the thesis evaluation form was considered useful already at the time of the previous accreditation, the panel notices that assessors are now also using the form in a much better way. Further to what was mentioned in the general section, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that since 2018, when TIAS implemented Canvas as learning management system, the programme is using Speedgrader as a standard function to offer feedback and assessments using more structured rubrics in which grades are always accompanied by insightful comments.

As points for improvement, the expert reported that while the two assessors should independently fill in a form according to the Guidelines on the Assessment Form, in most cases only one form is completed and signed by both assessors. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed at several occasions during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Furthermore, the expert was surprised to see that assessors are very tolerant in the academic chapter to sloppy writing, bad typos and even manifest misstatements.

Finally, the expert wondered if the two deliverables should not be assessed separately. During the site visit, the programme team indicated that this was a relevant suggestion as the valuation report and the academic chapter serve different programme outcomes (or at least are weighted in different ways) and could indeed be evaluated differently. The panel welcomes the intention of the programme team to discuss the proposal internally and look how to implement it.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to MBV. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but almost all thesis assessors are also making good use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this programme.

The final project consists of a valuation report and an academic chapter, which together account for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated between September 2019 and August 2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (10% - 63% - 27%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 2 low quality, 9 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen graduation projects is clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the deliverables was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to fourteen out of fifteen final scores given by the respective assessors. In one case, the expert thought the deliverables were well written but not to the extent that they deserve such high grade (8.5); in some other cases, the expert thought a slightly lower score would be more appropriate.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the valuation reports tend to be impressively careful and professional: in most cases a lot of work must have gone into these reports. Most academic chapters are good too, although their quality across the sample is more unequal.

Moreover, the expert noted that with the exception of one submission, all papers are professional, not academic. While encouraging more empirical academic research, the expert also realises that this orientation may not blend in well with the nature of the programme and the self-selection of the students who enter this programme. According to the programme team, the final project consists of writing a Valuation Report on a real-life company plus an Academic Chapter in which the student analyses a valuation-related topic using academic literature. As the Valuation Report is considered an empirical based case-study, usually involving company-related data analysis, the (relatively short) Academic Chapter does not require further empirical

analysis. The purpose of the Academic Chapter is primarily to show that the student is able to analyse and address a (valuation-related) topic based on academic literature and insights. In some cases, students choose to perform a (small) empirical study, but in general, this is considered to be outside the scope of the Academic Chapter as this is only one (smaller) part of the final project.

While many reports contain lots of materials originating from company documents, the expert noted that references and quotation marks are often absent. According to the programme team, students receive guidelines on references and quotations in the Academic Reading & Writing course which is part of the pre-master programme, and supervisors and assessors only perform a sanity check on this. The panel endorses the suggestion of the expert that the programme could set clear guidelines on references and quotations: authorship and credit matter more in academic articles than in valuation reports, but also in a professional report the reader might appreciate information as to what is the consultant's independent opinion or not.

Finally, the expert reported that in at least one case, the valuation report mentioned help from an employee ('buddy'), and this report happened to be stunningly sophisticated. The programme team agrees with the expert and the PRT to include a statement in each valuation report clarifying the role and the support of the company.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this EM programme in Business Valuation targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career and have clear expectations on how this executive master should contribute to their career plan. Alumni indicated that they have indeed been able to accomplish their goals after completing the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate MBV have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this Executive Master programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master programme in Business Valuation at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the curriculum set-up, the didactic principles, the specific student intake, the dedicated staff and the quality of the final projects and their assessment. Moreover, the panel endorses the overall programme developments since the previous accreditation as well as the future plans for an even closer alignment with the Executive Master in Finance.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the MBV programme to:

- monitor that the specific Business Valuation domain is sufficiently addressed in the programme learning outcomes;
- assess separately the two graduation deliverables;
- issue clear guidelines to students on references and quotations;
- include a statement in valuation reports clarifying the role and support of the company.

5. Executive Master Finance

The Executive Master in Finance is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in English that can be studied in 18 months. Established in 1986, MFI is currently organised on both campuses of TIAS in Tilburg and Utrecht. The executive master (EM) programme targets talented financial management professionals who want to enhance their data analysis skills, improve their ability to tackle financial dilemmas using sound theoretical frameworks, and develop their personal leadership qualities.

TIAS offers two EM programmes with the same CROHO number 75073: Business Valuation and Finance. Both programmes have many elements in common and produced together one self-evaluation report. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that both programmes would be assessed separately. The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the common self-evaluation report, as well as on the dedicated student chapter, the findings from the separate thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the visit.

On explicit request of the PRT, the programme team provided a written update on the status of the two EM programmes at the time of the site visit. The panel understands from this note that although one self-evaluation report has been written that covers both programmes, each programme currently leads to a separate master degree. While there are some very distinct features to each programme - three specialized courses and the final project - there also is and always has been a strong connection and sizeable overlap between the two programmes. The plan for the near future is to establish an even closer alignment between both programmes. Since the previous accreditation visit in 2017, both programmes have been reviewed as part of a TIAS-wide programme redesign exercise. In the case of Business Valuation and Finance, this review has led to a reformulation of the programme learning outcomes. In the near future, the programmes finish the work on the vertical integration of the programmes by aligning the new programme learning outcomes with the learning goals of each course and their respective assessment formats. This work should culminate in a curriculum that features a set of core courses for all students, as well as dedicated Business Valuation and Finance tracks. At that point, TIAS will submit a request to NVAO to formally approve this change.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme.

The PRT notices that the programme features a strong connection with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS and explicitly positions itself as the go-to programme for business transformation that serves society. The panel appreciates the efforts of the programme to make this connection more explicit as the previous accreditation panel found in 2017 that there could be more attention in the programme to the societal role of business. Moreover, the panel gathers from the materials that the programme objectives and learning outcomes have been designed to align with the trends in the academic discipline and the specific needs of industry.

In comparison to the previous accreditation visit in 2017, the programme's intended learning outcomes are formulated more sharply and now consist of six instead of 27 learning outcomes. The panel understands that the previous set of ILOs was too long, that their formulation was outdated and that translating these numerous outcomes into course-specific learning goals was very impractical for both faculty and students. After a "clean sheet exercise" involving all stakeholders, the programme team adopted a set of six comprehensive learning outcomes which align better with the mission of TIAS and incorporate explicitly the international dimension of the programme.

Furthermore, the panel gathers from the materials that TIAS has opted for learning outcomes with an outside-in approach. This choice reportedly makes it stand out from other degree programmes in the Netherlands. Instead of merely focusing on the career opportunities of the students, the team has taken the societal dynamics as a starting point and designed the programme as a means to translate these societal challenges into prudent corporate decision making. According to the programme team, starting outside will in the long run also benefit the transitional qualities and the job market appeal of the students.

The panel notices that the current set of learning outcomes are formulated in line with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and reflect properly the level and orientation of the programme. Given that the learning outcomes apply to both Business Valuation and Finance programmes, which currently lead to separate degrees, the panel wonders to what extent the specific Finance domain is sufficiently addressed in the formulation of the (intended) learning outcomes at programme level.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to MFI. The written materials and discussion on site have provided the panel with a clear view on the objective of this programme and on the rationale for offering the programme until now as a separate degree in a common set-up with the Business Valuation EM programme. Overall, the PRT endorses the programme developments since the previous accreditation as well as the plans for the future.

According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes as they stand now reflect properly the objectives, level, orientation and ambitions of the programme, as well as the mission of the School. If anything, the PRT advises the programme to monitor that the specific Finance domain is sufficiently addressed in the learning outcomes, which are currently shared entirely with the EM Business Valuation.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation across TIAS are valid for this MFI programme.

In addition, the panel notices that the programme involves various stakeholder groups to ensure that the design of the programme stays up-to-date, market oriented and forward looking. By doing so, the programme provides students not only with in-depth knowledge of finance but also teaches them to apply new insights from various scientific disciplines to the challenges that society at large faces today and tomorrow.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the curriculum orientation across TIAS apply fully to MFI. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the PRT considers that the programme curriculum provides the particular target group of experienced finance professionals with a relevant mixture of high-level domain specific knowledge, as well as academic and professional skills.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content across TIAS are valid for this MFI programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

Compared to the situation in 2017, the PRT notices that the curriculum has been restructured and now consists of six core courses (21 ECTS), six specialisation courses (24 ECTS) and a master thesis (15 ECTS). The core courses are shared with the EM Business Valuation students and offer the foundations of strategy, valuation, financial reporting, corporate finance, and quantitative tools. In the specialisation courses, Finance students enhance their understanding of among others management accounting, financial markets and financial data analytics. The thesis constitutes the final masterpiece. Moreover, students who do not meet all enrolment criteria, complete a few pre-master courses before they are admitted to the programme. The panel understands that in addition to the curriculum structure, also the module contents have been updated.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the discussions that overall students and alumni are satisfied with both the structure and the contents of the curriculum. Students did indicate, however, that the study load of certain courses is quite high. Given that participants combine study with professional and family commitments, it proves difficult for them to dedicate considerably more time to a course than what can be expected in terms of the allocated study

credits. The programme team indicated to the panel that it is aware of the issue and is currently in the process of changing topics among courses. Moreover, the team is also trying to balance the variation in workload over the entire curriculum.

Moreover, the panel notices that in comparison to the ‘twin’ programme in Business Valuation, Finance students were more critical of the changes that had been made to the curriculum and the impact this has had on the internal coherence of the specialisation courses, i.e. those courses taught solely for the EM programme in Finance. The panel suggests the programme team to address this issue in the Sounding Boards with students.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to MFI. The PRT welcomes the considerable efforts of all stakeholders in revising the curriculum structure and updating the contents of the modules. According to the panel this has resulted in a curriculum that aligns nicely with the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel’s general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this MFI programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular EM programme.

The previous accreditation panel reported that a large proportion of teaching happened through in-class lecturing. The current PRT notices that a significant part of the programme is now offered in a blended format: students prepare for modules via online learning, followed by in-class sessions which focus on more complex topics, case discussions, and application. Blended learning was introduced as of 2018 when the programme decided to join a TIAS-wide blended learning project as a frontrunner. At the time, the idea was that blending the programme would improve the learning experience of post-experience students by introducing more online synchronous and asynchronous learning tools, especially in the preparation phase of their course work. This in turn would help students to better plan their own study pace and timing that fitted their personal quality and schedules. Once the COVID-19 pandemic caused the first wave of lockdowns, the programme was forced to switch to a fully on-line format. This mandatory transition turned out to be feasible as the blending efforts from the past offered a very sound foundation for this obligatory switch. Moreover, the School provided very high-quality support by a team of educational specialists, which was able to rapidly produce adequate training and fully online solutions to the lecturers involved.

The panel notices that the programme values internationalisation, a dimension that has been further enhanced in the past few years and resulted among others in a dedicated programme

learning outcome on globalisation. For this purpose, the programme incorporates an international perspective in its educational activities and uses English as the language of instruction. This approach has led to growing interest in the programme from international participants, who are taught by a team of lecturers which is diverse in geographic terms. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks the choice for English in this programme is well motivated and has allowed the programme to attract the students and deliver the education aimed for.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply fully to MFI. The PRT appreciates the frontrunner mentality of the programme in designing and implementing blended learning as the main didactic principle. Moreover, the panel endorses the decision to use English as the language of instruction in this programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this programme.

The panel gathers from the materials that the background of Finance students is rather homogeneous: most of them hold a financial position within their organisation and have a relevant specialist bachelor or master degree. Data on student intake and composition show that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 12 Finance students. Compared to other TIAS programmes, the intake was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the contrary: it seems that the new curriculum structure has attracted more students to the programme.

Most students were Dutch, most were male and 40% had an initial degree issued by a university of applied science. On average participants were 39 years old with 14 years of professional experience. The panel notices that the experience level of the Finance students is much higher than what is formally required (at least five years). While cohorts are not diverse in terms of gender and nationality – although they are more diverse than in the Business Valuation programme - the programme team indicated that this composition reflects the field of finance in the Netherlands.

Since many students have a background and degree in finance, several participants – and in comparison many more than in other TIAS programmes – have been asking for exemptions. However, the programme team observed that a lot of the pre-existing knowledge and experience deteriorated over the years and that taking some classes “again” was appreciated ex-post by the participants. Hence, the programme recently formulated a new set of restrictive exemption

criteria that are in line with the policy of the School and have been laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations. The panel welcomes the clear policy on exemption and supports the criteria stipulated by the programme.

The panel was satisfied to read that over the past five years, most Finance students (91%) manage to complete the programme. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that about 41% of the participants have at least one resit during their trajectory, 71% of Finance students finish the programme in time.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to MFI. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting resourceful students with considerable work experience. The panel appreciates the specific attention of the programme to formulating a policy on course exemptions.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff – are valid for MFI.

According to the self-evaluation report, the programme has extended its faculty base since the previous accreditation and invested in the didactical training of the academic staff to deliver blended and online education. In line with the international dimension of the programme, the panel notices that 9 out of 17 faculty teaching in the Finance programme are non-Dutch. Only two lecturers are female. Contrary to other programmes at TIAS, most courses are taught by one person because of the specialist nature of the topics. The programme team indicated that it wants to recruit additional new, young and possibly female and international staff.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the discussions that students and alumni think highly of most faculty and guest lecturers and appreciate in particular their practical experience and didactic skills. Students also praise the programme support, notably the coordinator who is “very effective, efficient and reliable, genuinely a great help to students”.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MFI programme is sufficient in number, strong in quality and dedicated to the programme and the students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS programmes are valid for this programme. Finance courses are delivered both in Tilburg (70%) and Utrecht (30%). Students and alumni confirmed to the panel that the facilities are appropriate and conducive to learning.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of MFI are adequate, which confirms its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this MFI programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across all TIAS programmes apply fully to MFI.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for this MFI programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in MFI is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the EM Finance theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert considers that in nine out of fifteen cases the evaluation form has been completed in an informative way: in these cases, the feedback was extensive and formulated in a friendly manner. In other cases, the scores were provided but the feedback was very limited. The panel acknowledges with satisfaction that the quality of thesis assessment has increased compared to the findings of the previous accreditation panel in 2017. However, compared to the findings in other TIAS programmes under review, it seems that less progress has been made in this programme in terms of providing insightful feedback across the sample of evaluation forms.

Moreover, the expert noted that while two assessors should independently fill in a form according to the Guidelines on the Assessment Form, in most cases only one form was completed / put at disposition of the expert. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply to MFI. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment in this programme is adequate: the programme is using a relevant assessment form and several assessors make good use of the form by motivating their score and sub-scores with insightful feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee

reviewed a sample of 15 theses. The thesis selection was based on a list featuring 28 students who graduated between September 2018 and August 2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (11% - 54% - 36%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 2 low quality, 8 average quality and 5 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, fourteen out of fifteen theses are of sufficient quality to pass. One thesis (with final score 7.5) was submitted to the committee for a second opinion: both reviewer and second reader agree that some of the formulas the student had used were not appropriate and the calculations were wrong. By doing so, the student only demonstrated a poor understanding of the topic and did not seem to master the subject. Hence the thesis committee considers that fourteen out of fifteen theses are of sufficient quality.

In terms of grading, the expert agreed to twelve out of fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. In addition to the above-mentioned case, the experts reported that two other theses are of sufficient quality but received too high scores because (i) the research question was doubtful, the literature study was limited and the interviews were not well structured, and (ii) because the wrong methodology was used for part of the work while the other part seemed more suited for a thesis of bachelor level. Furthermore, the expert thought that in a few other cases, a slightly lower grade would be more appropriate.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that most theses were of reasonable quality with some very positive exceptions. Nonetheless, the expert also reported that in several cases (also beyond those mentioned above), the applied technical skills were not very strong. Moreover, the level demonstrated in some of the theses seemed to indicate that students are not always able to read the academic literature from the top journals. According to the programme team, EM Finance students should be able to read and analyse the academic literature regarding the topic of their thesis. In addition, they should be able to analyse a financial problem based on the analytic tools that were offered in several courses. This may be in the form of an empirical study based on a (big) financial dataset, but it may also be in the form of an in-depth case study such as a risk management problem within a single company. In each case the student needs to demonstrate a sound analysis and a good understanding of the literature. Endorsing the findings of the thesis committee and acknowledging the input from the programme team, the PRT suggests the programme team to inform both course coordinators and thesis supervisors about the thesis committee findings and to monitor that all students acquire the necessary competences during the first and second curriculum phases to produce a good quality master thesis.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this EM programme in Finance targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career and have clear expectations on how this executive master should contribute to their career plan. Alumni indicated that they have indeed been able to accomplish their goals after completing the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the EM programme in Finance have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this Executive Master programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master programme in Finance at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the orientation and set-up of the curriculum, the didactic principles, the specific student intake and the dedicated staff. Moreover, the panel endorses the overall programme developments since the previous accreditation as well as the future plans for an even closer alignment with the Executive Master in Business Valuation.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the EM in Finance to:

- verify whether the specific Finance domain is sufficiently addressed in the programme learning outcomes;
- review – and discuss with students - the internal coherence of the specialisation modules in Finance;
- monitor that all students acquire the necessary competences during the first and second curriculum phases to produce a good quality master thesis.

6. Executive Master Finance and Control

The Executive Master of Finance and Control (CROHO 75019) is a 67 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 22 months. Established in 1998, the EMFC programme is now offered on both Tilburg and Utrecht campuses of TIAS and targets (chief) finance officers with at least three years of experience who want to register at the Professional Association of Register Controllers VRC.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes across TIAS are valid for this programme.

EMFC aims to deliver skilled controllers who make a valuable contribution to the performance of their organisation. The function, roles and challenges of (chief) finance officers is described extensively in the self-evaluation report. In addition to the level of competence students acquire by the end of the programme, it is important for (future) controllers to have the ability to develop and learn in the rest of their career using the skills developed during the programme. EMFC graduates registering with VRC should adhere to the five principles of the VRC Code of Conduct: professionalism, objectivity, expertise, integrity, and confidentiality. The panel notices that this code of conduct is consistent with TIAS's vision on Business and Society, in particular regarding responsible leadership.

Professionals who want to register with VRC should obtain a post-experience MSc degree in Finance and Control at one of seven higher education institutions in the Netherlands. For these programmes VRC prescribes big part of the contents to be covered. The panel notices that TIAS took on board the provisions of VRC and turned these into a specific EMFC programme that distinguishes itself to some extent from other programmes, notably by integrating the graduation process as a regular module in the curriculum. This in turn allows participants to complete the programme in four semesters instead of five.

The provisions of VRC and the specific features of TIAS' approach to Finance and Control have in a set of 10 intended learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are monitored regularly by representatives of VRC, the programme team and the sounding boards. The panel gathers from the materials that since the previous accreditation in 2017 performed by NVAO and VRC, the Business and Society component has been added more explicitly.

The PRT notices that the learning outcomes as they are in use at the time of this accreditation visit comply with the national qualification framework (NLQF) level 7 and the widely agreed

Dublin Descriptors. Their formulation adequately reflect the domain (Finance and Control), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. The aim and substance of this programme aligns nicely with the requirements of the professional body and the specific vision of TIAS. Moreover, the PRT considers that the formulation of the intended learning outcomes is adequate and reflects properly the programme objectives.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this programme: EMFC is definitely a programme of academic orientation that highly values the academic development of its students. At the same time, the programme maintains strong links to professional practice through its connections to VRC and by challenging students in assignments to apply the acquired knowledge in practice. Students recognise this double orientation and praise the very good links in the different modules between theory and practice.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this EMFC programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this EMFC programme.

The panel notices that the programme is structured according to the content requirements of VRC. The curriculum consists of ten differently sized modules: five compulsory main courses (38 ECTS), two supporting courses (5 ECTS), two courses at the discretion of TIAS (9 ECTS), and a master thesis including business research methods (15 ECTS). Since EMFC requires participants to already hold an MSc degree, there is no pre-master programme. Students who may not have sufficiently covered certain domains in their initial education are expected by VRC to take additional exams.

The PRT gathers from the extensive description in the self-evaluation report that since the previous accreditation visit, several adjustments have taken place within courses. These changes are well motivated and aim to keep curriculum contents up-to-date. As of next year (cohort 2022), a module on leadership and change management will be included to make EMFC students familiar with the latest academic viewpoints on leadership and change management. The PRT is satisfied to notice that these adjustments also take on board the recommendations of the previous accreditation panel asking for more anticipation of future developments and for more attention to competencies such as presentation and communication skills.

In the student chapter and the discussions, students and alumni indicated that most courses are very interesting. They praise in particular the opportunity for personal development in the TIAS-specific courses and the attention in most modules to the relationship between theory and practice. In addition to these positive features, there was also criticism on the relation / connection of the course materials to the actual knowledge level of students. Participants who fulfil all entry requirements are not necessarily familiar with the latest developments on each and every topic - e.g. because they graduated a long time ago - and reported it is difficult to obtain materials from the programme on the expected entry level knowledge. Furthermore, students thought the Internal Control and Accounting Information Systems (11 ECTS) played too big a role – also in terms of assessment - within the first year of the curriculum, while the Topics in Finance course lacked depth in content and was not always linked to practice. The panel acknowledges both positive and negative elements in the student analysis and invites the programme team to discuss with students and staff how the reported flaws can be mitigated.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. The EMFC curriculum covers all domains required by VRC and adds a specific – and well appreciated – TIAS flavour to it. The panel considers that the recent adjustments to the curriculum are for the better.

The PRT advises the programme team to review together with students and faculty how the quality of individual modules can be further enhanced.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this EMFC programme.

The PRT gathers from the materials that the EMFC programme is delivered in four semesters of 15 weeks, with one regular day of in-class tuition per week. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, this scheme switched radically to 100% digital delivery of education. While this

switch was accomplished almost without study delays and digital education certainly offers certain advantages, it was clear to all that online education only is not a feasible alternative in the long term. Currently, the programme team is looking for each module what combination of in-class, online, and offline education works best to achieve the learning goals. Given the positive experience of both instructors and students with digital education, the modules will increasingly take on a blended character.

Students and alumni mentioned to the panel that they appreciate in particular the way courses are organised in small and diverse groups of participants, which allows to learn a lot from each other during lively on-site discussions. This level of interaction, however, was reduced considerably during the pandemic as online sessions are not as lively. Furthermore, and in line with their remarks on the curriculum contents, several students and alumni mentioned to the panel that the overall study load is high, certainly if one wants to finish the programme in time. Moreover, the study load of individual modules is not always in line with their respective study credits: in these cases, the main obstacle is the number and size of assignments. Again, the PRT acknowledges both positive and negative elements in the student analysis and invites the programme team to discuss with students and staff how to address the study load in individual modules and across the entire curriculum.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this EMFC programme. The panel welcomes the efforts of the School and the programme to look for an educational delivery format that meets the expectations of both the participants and the professional field. The PRT advises the programme team to review the study load of individual courses as well as the feasibility of the entire curriculum within four semesters.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS-wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this EMFC programme.

In order to be admitted, students should fulfil the requirements of both TIAS and VRC: at least two years of work experience, a master degree, and sufficient knowledge of nine topics acquired during university education.

The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and composition that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort (two entry moments) consisted of 51 students per year, who on average were 34 years old and had nine years of work experience. Participants were mostly male (78%) and educated at academic master level (84%). The intake figures show that the

COVID-19 pandemic only had a small impact on student enrolment: 47 students started the programme in 2020-2021. The programme team is aware that female students are underrepresented in the cohorts. While efforts are undertaken to attract more female students, the panel understands from the materials that across the Netherlands, women are underrepresented in positions of (chief) finance officer.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students (95%) complete the programme. Given the strict entry requirements, the programme aims for a 100% success rate within three years. It seems that this target is within reach. However, the share of students that finish within the nominal duration, i.e. 22 months, is much lower (56% on average). Further to its findings under learning environment, the panel is concerned that TIAS' main selling proposition to participants – completing EMFC in four semesters – could backfire on the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across TIAS apply fully to this programme. EMFC students are resourceful and represent different professional sectors. The PRT encourages the programme team to look for ways to attract more female students and to enhance the share of students who finish the programme within the nominal duration.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing - in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The panel gathers from the materials that the programme can rely on a group of 31 core and additional faculty who often been involved in EMFC for a long time. The programme team is satisfied with the long-standing commitment of its faculty but also aware that this maintains rather than solves the existing gender imbalance: currently there is only one female faculty.

The materials and discussions revealed that students and alumni are satisfied with most staff on the programme: they mentioned explicitly that the majority of the faculty is of high quality combining domain know-how with didactical skills, practical experience and a personal approach. Given the high number of staff, the PRT was surprised to read in the student chapter that in a few cases, the course schedule had to be reorganised because a given teaching faculty was not available.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the EMFC programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. The PRT encourages the programme team to recruit more female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this EMFC programme, which is offered in both Tilburg and Utrecht. Students mentioned explicitly the good quality facilities on both locations.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the EMFC programme are good, which confirms its overall positive considerations on this standard.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring are valid for this EMFC programme.

While EMFC students tend to be satisfied with the provisions in place for tutoring, some students and alumni indicated that the communication between the programme team and students did not always run as smoothly as expected. In fact, students/alumni did not appreciate the last minute changes that had to be made to the schedule as this jeopardised their planning and increased the already considerable study load. Moreover, some students/alumni indicated to the panel that the programme team was not always forthcoming in its communication to individual participants. According to the PRT, good quality communication entails both (timely) information sharing and checking that the message has been (well) received.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS programmes apply fully to EMFC. The PRT invites the programme team to monitor the perceived quality of its information and communication flow.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for EMFC programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice. However, the PRT notices that the scores on individual module and faculty evaluations seem to differ more than in many other TIAS programmes: some courses and faculty obtaining (very) high scores while a few others get consistently low marks. This picture seems to confirm the aforementioned comments from students and alumni, which in turn proves that the QA system is functioning properly.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that VRC brings an additional level of external quality control to the EMFC programme. In 2017, VRC performed its own accreditation of EMFC together with NVAO thereby focusing on the professional profile of the register controller. The outcome of this accreditation was positive.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on quality assurance across TIAS apply fully to EMFC. The additional accreditation by the professional body constitutes a further guarantee, according to the panel, that EMFC delivers the quality it envisages.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The panel was informed that in 2019, the EMFC programme was audited by the Assessment Committee. The committee established that the assessment plan was well followed and that the programme used many different forms of assessment as well as extensive assessment criteria. However, while students received many grades, there was little individual feedback. Hence, the Assessment Committee advised EMFC to balance assessment and feedback. Moreover, it was not always clear how the difference in study credits of individual modules was reflected in the assessment.

In addition to what students and alumni mentioned on the study load of individual modules, the PRT gathered from the student chapter and the discussions that student and alumni are not always satisfied with the way assessment is handled in practice: at least in a few courses there seems to be a discrepancy between what is announced in terms of assessment criteria and how the exam is eventually assessed; furthermore, exam results are often published late and in many cases the feedback is limited and not always insightful.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert found that in eight out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms had been completed in an insightful way. In fact, while the expert could relate to the vast majority of the grades given per criterion, more elaborate verbal explanations as to why something was graded in a particular way could have been insightful, especially when a thesis barely passed or was deemed to be of excellent quality. The PRT endorses the findings of the expert, which seem to confirm the indications of students and alumni that there is room for improvement in providing insightful feedback.

Moreover, the evaluation forms put at disposition consisted of one form signed by both assessors while each assessor should independently fill in a form according to the Guidelines on the Assessment Form. The panel endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Furthermore, the expert reported that only a small number of co-readers seems to assess a great number of theses covering a wide range of subjects. The programme team indicated that the final EMFC projects are organised in thesis circles, which consists of five participants and one supervisor. Given the number of participants, this results on average in five thesis circles per cohort. Each student addresses a real life (management) control problem in their organisation and the faculty involved in the thesis as supervisor or second reader have a proven (research, professional) interest in Management Control and case study research. Their workload is limited: at most, faculty serve as supervisor for one thesis circle and as second reader for another thesis circle per cohort.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across TIAS programmes apply to this EMFC programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. While the organisation and implementation of course and thesis assessments is fine in many cases, the panel has also come across a number of flaws, notably but not exclusively with regard to the absence of insightful feedback motivating overall grades and sub-scores. The panel urges the programme team to address these issues with priority.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance are valid for this EMFC programme.

The final project consists of a thesis where students define and analyse individually a realistic controlling problem (usually from their own organizations) with the help of scientific insights. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated in 2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (10% - 63% - 27%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 2 low quality, 9 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to fourteen out of fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. In one case the expert thought the final score (8.5) was too high: while the thesis was well written and the topic relevant for the company, the literature review and the empirical part did not warrant such a high mark. In several other cases, the reviewer thought a slightly lower mark was more appropriate.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that all final projects were well structured and had interesting topics that clearly fitted the EMFC programme. While a few theses lacked depth in the literature review or focused on sometimes rather dated management accounting and control frameworks, these flaws were typically discounted in the final grade.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that the EMFC programme directly contributes to the professional career of the participants. One student indicated that following the programme was not only of added value to the participant, but also brought return on investment for companies. Upon finishing the programme, EMFC graduates can register with VRC and apply for the Register Controller title.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes apply fully to this programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings of the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the EMFC programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. This consideration is confirmed by the performance of EMFC graduates on the labour market.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on

the way this EMFC programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Finance and Control at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the EMFC programme, the connection with the professional body, the substance of the curriculum, the resourceful students, the dedicated staff and the quality of the thesis.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests EMFC to:

- discuss with students and faculty how the quality of certain modules can be enhanced;
- review the study load of individual courses and monitor the feasibility of the entire curriculum;
- enhance gender diversity among participants and faculty;
- monitor the (perceived) quality of its information and communication;
- urge all faculty to provide insightful and timely feedback to course assignments, as well as in thesis evaluation forms.

7. Executive Master Health Administration

The Executive Master of Health Administration (CROHO 75086) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 15 months. Established in 1992, the MHA is now offered in Utrecht and caters for managers at Dutch cure and care organisations, as well as in public and private healthcare related organisations.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes across TIAS are valid for this programme.

The MHA programme focuses on health care and health care delivery embedded in a regulated Dutch healthcare (related) market and changing society. As an executive master programme it focuses on policy making professionals who want to broaden their practical experience with theoretical knowledge and analytical skills in order to achieve more effective and efficient strategic decision-making at a high level. This implies that the programme has an interdisciplinary character combining an academic, analytic approach of management and organizational issues in healthcare organizations with a continuous translation to managerial practice regarding the social role and responsibility. In this way the programme rationale aligns with the Business & Society vision of TIAS.

According to the self-evaluation report, the MHA programme at TIAS is the only accredited MSc healthcare degree in the Netherlands. Moreover, it is recognised by the Dutch body for continued professional education (ABAN): as medical specialists need to update their knowledge regularly, the MHA programme is a relevant option.

The panel notices that the rationale for the programme has been translated in an extensive set of 16 intended learning outcomes. In terms of substance and formulation, there is a strong link to the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and taken altogether, the learning outcomes are appropriate for the domain, level and orientation of the programme.

Looking at the outcomes in terms of combining knowledge, skills and attitude, the current PRT agrees with the previous accreditation panel that the learning outcomes are detailed in terms in knowledge and understanding, but remain rather general in terms of skills and attitude. Acknowledging that these skills and attitudes are covered in the respective curriculum blocks, the current panel advises the programme team to have this also reflected explicitly in the overall learning outcomes at programme level. The panel notices that the learning outcomes are monitored regularly. However, the programme may want to consider a more comprehensive revision similar to other degree programmes at TIAS.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this MHA programme. The panel thinks highly of the programme rationale. The intended learning outcomes as they are formulated at the time of the site visit are adequate but could be sharpened to reflect more explicitly the skills and attitude MHA students are acquiring throughout the curriculum.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for MHA: it definitely is a programme of academic orientation with a clear link to developments in the professional field.

The panel notices that the foundation of the programme is a scientific approach to healthcare and healthcare delivery that values the academic development of its students. MHA provides students with in-depth knowledge of healthcare, teaches them new insights from various scientific disciplines, and allows them to apply their newly acquired knowledge at their places of employment. In each assignment and in each paper, students provide recommendations for their organizations.

Students and alumni indicated in the student chapter and the discussions that they recognise this double orientation in the programme. While the curriculum provides knowledge and insight that is relevant and applicable on the job – i.e. sending information from the programme to the students - there is only limited room/attention for relating the input and experiences of participants to the contents of the curriculum or the wider practice in health and healthcare. The panel encourages the programme team to discuss with students and faculty how the contributions of participants can be accommodated in the delivery of the courses.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MHA programme. Given the executive character of the programme, the programme could pay more attention to the specific practice-based input of students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this MHA programme.

The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that in recent years the curriculum set-up has been restructured. At the time of the site visit, the curriculum consists of four core blocks (32 ECTS) and four additional modules (28 ECTS) including the 15 ECTS master thesis. While there are connections between the blocks, each block is a self-standing unit addressing a range of topics. The additional modules connect and deepen the insights obtained in the blocks. Students can start the programme in any block. The programme team monitors that new students keep up with more experienced participants and the very first session of each block addresses the learning goals of that module and helps students to obtain a common level of preparation. Furthermore, the PRT notices that – further to the suggestion from the previous accreditation panel – the economic perspective is now incorporated more explicitly in several blocks.

Based on the materials and discussions, the panel notices that students and alumni have mixed feelings about the curriculum content. Generally they are positive about the content of the curriculum, which has increased their knowledge and often contributed to their personal and career development. The level of the courses is sufficiently academic and the courses and reading materials are informative. Students also appreciate the breadth of topics and the way the teaching faculty at TIAS approaches healthcare and health administration. However, students also indicated in their chapter that they attend(ed) a programme in transition when also the health care sector is in transition and that in several ways the high expectations they had when enrolling for the MHA are/were not being met. While part of their criticism relates to the structure, the assessment and the programme team (see further), students also mentioned that there is a disbalance between care and cure in the programme and that there could be more room for marketing related subjects, for electives and for their own input. Endorsing the overall message in the student chapter, the panel advises the programme team to discuss with students and faculty how the student concerns can be taken on board in the programme.

Furthermore, based on its findings from the materials and the discussions, the PRT thinks the programme team – as well as TIAS’ cluster and education management – needs to address a more fundamental issue, i.e. how the MHA programme and its curriculum can cater for an increasingly heterogenous target audience representing different healthcare domains (hospital, mental health, nursery services, etc.). In this exercise, the focus should be not only on the potentially wider group of participants, according to the panel, but also on the contents the programme wants to convey in order to catch up with the rapid changes in the healthcare and health administration domain.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on curriculum content apply to this MHA programme: the curriculum as it is set-up and delivered at the time of the site visit covers the programme objectives and allows students to achieve the competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) mentioned in the learning outcomes. In this respect, the PRT considers that the content of the individual blocks and modules is adequate and that altogether these components constitute a decent curriculum in health administration.

Considering that the MHA programme meets this standard, the PRT sees room for adjusting the content of the curriculum to meet not only the concerns of the students but also the expectations of an increasingly heterogenous target audience.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this MHA programme.

The panel notices that the didactic design of the MHA programme is linked to TIAS vision on teaching and learning. Throughout the curriculum, students are trained in the four business and society competency areas of responsible leadership, sustainable innovation, collaboration, and business modelling.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the delivery of the programme has changed drastically. As a reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MHA programme switched completely from in-class sessions to an online format. While most lecturers adapted quickly, the personal contact and interaction in the classroom was difficult to replicate online. Afterwards, in periods of (semi-)lockdown, the programme offered hybrid forms of education with some students being in-class, others participating online and interaction being stimulated in break-out rooms. This opportunity was all the more important as many participants were extremely busy in their healthcare-related profession and were often not allowed by their employers to attend classes in person.

Around the same time, the curriculum structure was revised combining several course units with different sizes in four blocks of equal study load, which in turn allowed for more flexibility. Moreover, every block was designed to be delivered in a blended format. The panel acknowledges that the new modular and blended structure aligns with TIAS policy and enables healthcare students to complete their study according to an individual timeline thereby facilitating the balance between study, work and private life.

The panel gathers from the student input that studying MHA during the COVID-19 pandemic proved difficult, and this for several reasons: first and foremost, the participants had expected a different form of studying and the approach sustained by the programme team did not align with what students were looking for. Moreover, students question the study load of the curriculum, the programme's insistence that attendance is compulsory, and the so-called flexibility of the curriculum structure which seems to apply only at the entry moment, not at the end when students want to graduate. Furthermore, several (small) issues which had been mentioned by students who were on the programme at the start of the pandemic, were not

addressed sufficiently afterwards. In sum, while they admit that (the impact of) the pandemic created a hitherto unseen situation to which several individual faculty tried to respond to the best of their abilities, several students and alumni found that the programme team did not handle adequately with the consequences of the pandemic for the curriculum structure.

The panel notices that - compared to other TIAS programmes - MHA students were more critical about the way the MHA programme was eventually delivered during the pandemic, about the way the programme team handled their concerns, and about the experience/added value of the MHA programme for their professional and personal development. While several points of concern can be 'classified' as expectation management, students did state in their chapter that they do not recommend the programme to others and did mention to the panel that the programme did not offer good value for money.

Based on its findings from the materials and the discussions, the PRT thinks that many of the concerns of students and alumni have their roots in the pandemic, but will not entirely disappear once society and education return to the 'old normal' situation. In fact, the programme team and faculty need to enter into a critically constructive dialogue with students and (recent) alumni to identify where the programme in general - and for this standard the curriculum structure in particular - can be enhanced. In this regard, an important element in the discussion will be how the programme (team) will manage the expectations it has raised among participants but reportedly was not able to meet fully.

Furthermore, and following on from its findings under curriculum, the PRT thinks that the proposed 'brainstorm' on curriculum content will also affect the delivery (and assessment) modes of the MHA programme, possibly going into the direction of more peer learning/assessment or collaborative group learning. Similarly, the panel sees room for a more flexible use of the learning tools in order for individual participants to use these in line with their own professional situation, job background, expertise and ambitions.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply to this MHA programme. The PRT thinks that the new curriculum structure and the adjustments made towards a blended form of educational delivery are for the better and - in normal, i.e. non pandemic circumstances - would have contributed to the overall programme appreciation of the participants.

Considering that the MHA programme meets this standard, the PRT does recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has jeopardised the quality of programme delivery. The panel recommends programme stakeholders to identify together how the curriculum structure can become more robust in the longer term and how the programme can manage the expectations it has raised and will undoubtedly also raise in the future. Once the block structure in blended format is up and running, the programme team should monitor carefully the quality of delivery.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this programme.

The MHA targets a broad audience of mid-career leaders at different positions in Dutch public and private organisations in the healthcare domain: in fact, students are involved in caregiving, care support financing, management, policy making, consulting, etc. In all cases, applicants who are admitted to the programme (show an explicit motivation and ambition to) combine high level of academic thinking with a profound insight in healthcare provision.

The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and cohort composition that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 29 students, mostly female (63%), aged 43 with 12 years of relevant work experience, and often (59%) holding a professional degree from a university of applied sciences.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students (94%) complete the programme and that most (84%) do so within the nominal period. The panel notices that this success rate will decrease somewhat as several participants could spend less time on their study and often incurred delay in the thesis project during the pandemic.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MHA programme. The panel thinks highly of the diverse target audience and considers that the admission and selection procedure are effective in attracting resourceful students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The teaching team consists of 13 faculty: 9 male and 4 female lecturers. Students are positive about the quality of the teaching faculty and found that most of them dealt flexibly and creatively with the new forms of education delivery in COVID times. This appreciation is also reflected in the faculty evaluations, with teaching staff invariably getting high scores.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MHA programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MHA programme, which is organised on the campus in Utrecht. Students and alumni spent quite some attention to facilities in their chapter and confirmed in the discussion with the panel that the facilities in Utrecht are good, centrally located, easy to reach, and nice to work in and study.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the MHA programme are good, which confirms its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on the provisions for tutoring across TIAS are valid for MHA.

The panel notices, however, that in comparison to other TIAS programmes, students and alumni are much more critical for the way the programme team has managed the student cohorts during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the panel could not double-check the veracity of each and every element mentioned in the student chapter and during the discussion, it is clear that students did not feel heard by the programme team and that the programme team was not forthcoming in offering alternatives or compensations.

While it is difficult to establish to what extent this feeling is shared by all MHA students, twelve students from cohorts 30 and 31 mentioned in the student chapter that their cohorts have missed a lot of opportunities that would normally have been part of the programme (interaction, networking, collaboration, participation, international experience and personal development). Moreover, these students sensed no empathy for the situation caused by COVID among the programme team, who had too little attention for the students and showed very limited flexibility. Several students indicated to the panel that they had offered to think along with the programme team to find solutions, but that their input was hardly considered.

In line with its findings on the curriculum structure, the panel thinks that many of the student concerns have their roots in the pandemic, but will not entirely disappear once society and education return to the ‘old normal’ situation. In fact, the programme team needs to address the elements in the student chapter and identify together with students and (recent) alumni how their concerns and criticism with regard to interaction with the programme team can be mitigated. Given the type of concerns, it may be relevant to involve the School management in the discussion.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on tutoring apply to this MHA programme. While the provisions for tutoring are in place, their day-to-day implementation proved to be suboptimal in the MHA programme during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considering that the MHA programme meets this standard, the PRT urges the programme team and the School management to address the legitimate concerns mentioned in the student chapter.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel’s general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for this MHA programme. In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

The panel gathers from the discussions with students and alumni that the student sounding board remained active during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the aforementioned concerns, the PRT advises the programme team to make even more use than before of the student sounding board to monitor those programme developments that go beyond the content and quality of individual courses and lecturers.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MHA programme is good, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

In terms of course assessment, students mentioned that almost all modules are tested through papers and that participants are expected to read and write academically before the start of the curriculum. Students indicated to the panel that this reliance on papers is suboptimal and that the entry level expectations are difficult to meet for many students, even after a pre-master course. According to the programme team, there is now more diversity in assessment – less papers, more assignments – and all students are trained in academic reading and writing at the start of the curriculum in the Business Research Methods component. The panel welcomes the adjustments made to the assessment plan and the curriculum and invites the programme team to monitor the diversity in assessment formats, as well as the entry-level academic skills in the first module.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the MHA theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the feedback from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this evaluation form is appropriate for the assessment of master theses. The expert reported that in eight out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms had been completed in an insightful way. While each element was motivated with a short explanation, the extent of these motivations differed substantially: some supervisors provided one sentence, while others went in the detail of plusses and minuses.

Compared to other TIAS programmes, the PRT notices that the quality of thesis assessment in the MHA programme is appropriate but has not improved to a similar extent as in many other programmes: in fact, while the MHA programme is using a relevant assessment form, there is still room for more assessors making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MHA programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is sufficient. The thesis evaluation form is good but the programme team should encourage all assessors to provide insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance are valid for this MHA programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 theses. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated in 2019 and 2020. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (17% - 80% - 3%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 3 low quality, 11 average quality and 1 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to ten out of fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. In one case, the expert thought the thesis deserved a higher grade to account for the quality of the quantitative analyses and the experiment administered by the student. In four other cases, the expert found the grades too generous.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert reported that the overall thesis quality was high, that there was good integration of theory and practice and that each thesis paid attention to areas for improvement.

As points for improvement, the expert mentioned that most theses leaned heavily on qualitative research and did little in terms of quantitative analysis. Students who used quantitative methods, did so in a rather basic way. In light of the shift towards data driven practice, the programme may want to invest in bringing these skills to the students. The programme team indicated that within the overall set of theses, there is not more attention to qualitative than to quantitative research.

Moreover, the expert reported that there is a fine line between a case-specific case-study and a case-study that provides insights that are more broadly applicable. Many of the case studies did not really have lessons for other contexts. According to programme team, it is a continuous struggle to learn students to perform scientific research up to an acceptable level. There are plans to make instruction videos concerning issues that are repeated in several theses. Moreover, the thesis instructors will be informed about the findings of the thesis committee.

Finally, the expert noted that students did not include a policy summary of their thesis, which may be useful for the work field, such as *Medisch Contact*. The team very much welcomed this suggestion.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that MHA directly contributes to the professional career of the participants. Although not all final projects have high grades, the conclusions coming out of a thesis can be important for the organisation and can make a difference to the career of individual graduates. Furthermore, students go through tremendous personal development at the level of strategic approach and leadership responsibility. Half of the students reportedly switch to a higher career level during or after the programme. Graduates have learned to analyse and work at a strategic level and are – more than before – able to look at events and developments in a broader context within the healthcare domain. Hence, they become valuable leaders and managers in their organizations and have better prospects for their own future and careers.

While it is not in a position to check the veracity of these statements, the panel understands the aforementioned concern of some students that – by following the programme in COVID-19 times – they may have missed out on the long-term benefits of the MHA programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to MHA. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MHA programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. This consideration is furthermore confirmed by the career advancement of many MHA graduates.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this MHA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master Health Administration at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on the MHA programme, the panel thinks highly of the programme rationale, the curriculum orientation, the diverse student intake, the teaching faculty and the thesis quality.

Throughout the report, the panel has raised a number of issues that require urgent attention of the programme team. In most cases these issues related in one way or another to expectations that were raised by the programme (in pre-pandemic times) but were not met during implementation (under COVID). The PRT urges the programme team to address these curriculum and tutoring related issues with all relevant stakeholders to avoid similar disappointments in the future.

Moreover, the panel has come across a few programme related issues that deserve attention, too. Hence the suggestion to:

- sharpen the formulation of the intended learning outcomes;
- adjust the curriculum content and delivery modes to serve an increasingly heterogenous target group;
- monitor the quality of delivery of the new block structure in the new blended format;
- monitor the variety of assessment formats;
- encourage all thesis assessors to provide insightful written feedback.

8. Executive Master Information Management & Digital Transformations

The Executive Master of Information Management and Digital Transformations (CROHO 75091) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in English that can be studied in 19 months. Established in 1986, the MIMDT programme is organised on the Tilburg campus and caters for experienced professionals in the domain of Information Management with technical, project management, finance management and managerial roles in private and public organisations. The programme focuses on the management and use of information systems in a business context. Previously known as the Executive Master of Information Management, the programme changed names in 2021 adding Digital Transformation to emphasise the connection the programme is making between Information Management and Digital Transformations.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme.

The MIMDT programme has its intellectual roots in the Department of Information Management at TiSEM. It provides students with in-depth knowledge of information management and digital transformations but, at the same time, teaches them to apply new insights from various scientific disciplines, including organizational science, strategic management, and entrepreneurship. The programme is continuously updated by annually refreshing topics and materials for lectures.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme has been revised significantly in terms of learning outcomes, course contents, curriculum structure, staffing and assessment. These adjustments, including the name change, have been implemented incrementally involving all relevant stakeholders. The panel notices that the MIMDT programme 'new style' is effective since November 2021.

The panel notices that the intended learning outcomes as they are currently in use are extensive and include six programme objectives to be reached upon graduation, fifteen competencies (knowledge, skills, attitude) that are built into the programme, and the learning outcomes to be reached in each module. In formulating its end level qualifications, the programme has taken into account the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors. While the set of learning outcomes is way more comprehensive than in other TIAS programmes, the panel establishes that they reflect adequately the domain, level and orientation of the programme. Moreover, the programme objectives clearly state what the MIMDT programme stands for.

Further to the PRT's findings on portfolio management at School level (see general section), the panel inquired about possible synergies with the Executive Master IT Auditing. According

to the programme team, there is overlap in staffing with faculty from MIMDT being involved in EMITA and the other way around. However, the emphasis of both programmes is different: MIMDT looks at information management, while EMITA focuses on audit aspects.

Given its positioning as an English-language programme with an international dimension, MIMDT has long-standing collaboration with a university in the United States that hosts the international study trip. Moreover, MIMDT compares itself with an international standard set by the Innovation Value Institute, which focuses on digital transformation and technology adoption and which aligns with the vision of TIAS on business and society. In the near future, the programme team intends to increase the number of international staff and to explore collaboration with other European universities.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this MIMDT programme. The programme has a long track record and the recent adjustments to the programme domain, its objectives and learning outcomes reflect the developments in the academic and professional field of Information Management. The panel considers that the current extensive set of programme objectives, competencies and module learning outcomes is clear, precise and correct. As a point for attention, the programme could develop its international dimension in a more comprehensive way.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this MIMDT programme: it definitely is a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to the professional practice. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that the programme highly values the academic development of its students and ensures at the same time that students have the opportunity during the programme to apply the newly acquired knowledge at their places of employment. Students recognise this double orientation and consider the combination of academic rigour and professional applicability an important strength of the programme.

In addition, the panel notices that the specific orientation of the curriculum culminates in the final project: MIMDT has deliberately chosen for a project (in small groups) instead of an individual master thesis. In this way, students benefit from understanding the field of information management and digital transformations in all its facets and appreciate the coherence of all programme module topics rather than taking a deep dive on a single topic.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MIMDT programme. The PRT considers that the professional dimension is

incorporated adequately in the curriculum of this academically oriented executive master programme. The panel also endorses the motivation of the programme team for the specific format of the final project.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this MIMDT programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

The panel notices that the curriculum set-up and contents have changed considerably since the previous accreditation visit. These changes are extensively described in the self-evaluation report and summarised in a comparison of the curriculum of the November 2017 cohort and the November 20212 cohort. At the time of this assessment visit, the curriculum consists of nine modules of different size and the 15 ECTS final project. From a contents point of view, the panel acknowledges that the individual modules and the overall curriculum in its current format are highly appropriate and deliver what the programme stands for. Students were unanimously positive about the curriculum contents.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MIMDT programme. The PRT considers that from a content point of view, the recent adjustments to the curriculum have been for the better.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of the MIMDT programme.

Again, the panel notices that over the past few years several fundamental changes have taken place in the curriculum structure and the way the programme is delivered. These changes reflect the policy of TIAS on teaching and learning. Compared to the previous accreditation visit, the programme now has a modular set up which in turn allows for more flexibility. This means that every module forms a coherent unit combining theory and practice that can be taken in any particular order within the curriculum. As a result, it is now possible to start the programme at

two entry moments. Moreover, MIMDT students can choose a limited number of electives from other TIAS programmes, while participants from other executive master degrees can join MIMDT modules. Students indicated that this approach was feasible, but entering the programme in spring seemed more difficult than in fall.

Furthermore, modules are now offered in a hybrid format. Following the rapid change from in-class to online education at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme joined the TIAS-wide effort to completely redesign the mode of educational delivery and make it standard across all modules. This redesign process was completed for MIMDT in 2021. Students indicated that they appreciate the blended form of education, and the fact that each module now centres around three days of class sessions. As a point of attention, the students mentioned that class sessions are very long and – although highly interesting - tend to put a strain on the attention span of the participants. Moreover, online lectures (as during the height of the pandemic) are too long and could be broken down in smaller sessions.

The MIMDT programme is offered in English given its specific international content and context. Nevertheless, students are allowed to submit their assignments in Dutch. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT thinks that the choice for English is relevant. Nonetheless, the panel notices that the international perspective of the programme did not (yet) attract many international students. It therefore welcomes the intention of the programme team to address this issue in the near future.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply fully to this programme. The panel acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to redesign the curriculum structure and considers that the new delivery format is adequate. The changes are very recent and require evaluation and follow-up. Further to the interesting comments and feasible suggestions of the students in the student chapter, the panel is confident that small adjustments in delivery will enhance the overall quality of the individual courses and the overall curriculum structure.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this MIMDT programme.

The MIMDT programme targets executives with a minimum of five years of relevant experience in the information management domain. The panel gathers from the materials and the discussions that the cohorts are very diverse in terms of job positions and employers: around half of the participants work for private companies, others are employed in the public or non-

profit sector: less than 10% are digital and technology consultants. While almost all students (95%) are Dutch, many work in an international environment. Students mentioned that they highly appreciate this heterogeneous intake and welcome very much the lively and interesting discussions and the exchange of different perspectives in class.

Between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 18 students, predominantly male (82%), 42 years old with 17 years of experience. About half of the students have a bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences. The panel was informed that the programme intends to recruit more actively female and international students. Compared to other TIAS programmes, the intake was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the contrary: it seems that the new curriculum structure has attracted more students to the programme.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students (95%) complete the programme. Moreover, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that 46% of the student have at least one resit during their trajectory, a very high share of students (79%) finish the programme within the nominal duration.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MIMDT programme. The panel considers that the programme is very effective in attracting resourceful students in different positions who mostly manage to finish the programme within the nominal duration. The PRT encourages the programme to step up its efforts in targeting also female and international students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The panel notices that in recent years, several changes were made to the faculty lecturing in the programme, and this for different reasons, such as new course contents, retirement or poor student evaluations. Several staff have been replaced to ensure that at all times, the programme can rely on a sufficient number of core and additional faculty. At the time of the site visit, the teaching team consists of five core faculty and 38 additional faculty. In both cases, the lecturers are predominantly male and Dutch. A good number additional faculty holds expert and/or management positions in the professional field. Students were very positive about the quality of the faculty in general and praised in particular their know-how, enthusiasm, didactic skills and familiarity with the professional field. Similarly, students found that the guest lecturers constituted an added value to the programme and for the participants. In addition to these

positive elements, students reported that several faculty were less inspiring in a digital learning environment.

According to the programme team, the share of both female and international faculty should be increased noticeably and is likely to attract more female and international students. The panel acknowledges that the underrepresentation of female faculty is a feature of many TIAS programmes and the entire School is working on it in its recruitment (policy).

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MIMDT programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. The PRT encourages the programme to step up its efforts in recruiting female and international faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MIMDT programme, which is delivered on the university campus in Tilburg.

Several MIMDT students indicated in their student chapter the need for better equipment on the Tilburg campus, particularly in view of hybrid forms of teaching education whereby part of the students are present and others participate online. Their suggestions confirm the information provided by the School and the findings of the PRT in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on facilities across TIAS apply fully to MIMDT.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this MIMDT programme.

In addition, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that following a practice installed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academic Director continues to hold biweekly online office hours. These contact moments are not compulsory but constitute an opportunity for participants to engage more informally with the Academic Director and their fellow students. The panel notices from the student chapter that this virtual office hour was highly appreciated

during the pandemic and continues to be a very welcome moment to engage informally with the programme. Similarly, individual feedback sessions on assignments continue to be held online as it reduces the feedback loop considerably and allow for more extensive and insightful reactions.

Furthermore, students indicated in their student chapter that they appreciate hugely the way in which both the academic director and the programme manager fulfil their tasks in leading / coordinating the programme and creating a welcoming atmosphere for the participants.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring apply fully to this programme. Moreover, the PRT acknowledges the important role of the programme team members in ensuring a good feeling among the participants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance are valid for this programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in MIMDT is strong, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on assessment policy, quality of tests and quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this MIMDT programme.

In recent years, the programme revision has also impacted on the assessment of modules. Based on the extensive information in the self-evaluation report, the panel notices that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the most recent projects have been assessed according to the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the input from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this assessment form is appropriate for the evaluation of final projects. The expert who looked at the sample of MIMDT projects reported that in twelve out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms were completed in an informative way. In the three other cases, there were no remarks in the feedback sheets although the grades themselves seemed fair.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert agreed with the differentiation of theses and the calibration of grades. In this way, the assessment process seemed fair and balanced. Clear themes came through in the evaluation, which suggest that instructors have a shared understanding of what is expected. Assessors were also constructive in tone, especially in the longer explanations. These three characteristics are valuable for students, especially in combination.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MIMDT programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in the programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of final project assessment is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but almost all assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on thesis quality and on graduate performance are valid for this MIMDT programme.

The MIMDT final project accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 67 students who graduated since September 2017. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (4% - 78% - 18%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 11 average quality and 3 high quality projects that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen final projects was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the projects was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to all fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. As a result, the ranking of the projects was adequate: products with a higher score were indeed of better quality than those receiving a lower grade, while projects with an identical grade were of comparable quality.

Overlooking the sample, the expert reported that that the projects were generally of good quality. They demonstrated significant reading, which often included some challenging academic material. They also focussed on a wide variety of contemporary and important contexts, without falling into the trap of only looking at big, obvious organizations. The frameworks used were also varied and useful.

Moreover, the projects generally emphasized the creation of prescriptive outputs. This emphasis on prescriptive outputs is a healthy approach to learning in this topic, where students should feel proactive towards the design/redesign of new systems. It also created challenges, as some students seemed to be confused about which types of methods were suitable. This confusion seemed common enough that instructors may wish to increase their efforts to help students with these elements of research, and specifically, how to connect their empirical work and theorization.

As a minor point for attention, the expert reported that students were relying on extensive appendices in many of the projects. It was not clear whether some of these appendices could be better placed in the main document, such as the SWOT analysis or the discussion of market forces. If they would be part of the main document, these relevant pieces of text would probably also get more attention in the assessment.

Furthermore, the PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this MIMDT programme targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Employers tend to be satisfied with the professional development of their employees and welcome the new insights their employees bring to the organisation. Alumni from their side indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MIMDT programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MIMDT programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. In this regard, the panel endorses the conclusion of the thesis expert that the final project experience at MIMDT provides significant learning for students, up to and including the submission and defence. Furthermore, the panel considers that having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way the MIMDT programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Information Management and Digital Transformations at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the way in which the MIMDT programme objectives are reflected in the orientation, contents and learning goals the modules. Moreover, the resourceful participants, the competent faculty and the dedicated programme team are key to the programme success. Furthermore, the quality of the final projects and their assessment are both strong.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests MIMDT to:

- enhance the international dimension of the programme;
- finetune bits and pieces in delivering a blended, modular and flexible programme;
- to attract more female and international students;
- to recruit more female and international faculty.

9. Executive Master IT Auditing

The Executive Master of IT-Auditing (CROHO 75099) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 30 months. Established in 1988, the EMITA programme is offered on the Tilburg campus and targets not only IT auditors but also information specialists, accountants, IT, quality and risk managers who want to broaden and deepen their knowledge in the field of information management, technology and law from an auditing perspective. The programme offers two specialisations: Cybersecurity and Data & Analytics.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme.

The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that the IT auditing profession in the Netherlands is represented by the centralised body / professional association NOREA, which coordinates four degree programmes in the Netherlands, including this EMITA at TIAS. According to NOREA, IT auditing is a profession to “judge” and to advise the board of a company in a neutral way about the quality of the IT environment. These objectives are specified by NOREA in a common body of knowledge (exit qualifications). The panel notices that TIAS took on board the provisions of NOREA and turned these into a specific EMITA programme featuring embedded business research methods, insights into international audit research, business process control modules, a case-based education approach, emphasis on teamwork and collaboration, and two specialisation tracks.

The common body of knowledge of NOREA and the specific features of TIAS' approach to IT Auditing have resulted in a set of 11 intended learning outcomes. These learning outcomes are monitored regularly and have been adjusted as part of a larger revision exercise (involving also the curriculum and the assessment) which started after the CORONA-19 pandemic in 2020 and will be completed in 2024. The PRT notices that the learning outcomes as they are in use at the time of the accreditation visit comply with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and adequately reflect the domain (IT auditing), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Further to the PRT's findings on portfolio management at School level (see general section), the panel inquired about possible synergies with the Executive Master Information Management and Digital Transformations and the EM Finance. According to the programme team, there is overlap in staffing with faculty from EMITA being involved in MIMDT and the other way around. However, the emphasis of both programmes is different: MIMDT looks at information management, while EMITA focuses on audit aspects. While no concrete arrangements have been made yet, there is potentially room for synergy with MIMDT in the

two specialisation tracks and with the EM Finance in the domain of emerging technologies like Fintech and Data & Analytics.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this EMITA programme. The panel thinks highly of the rationale for this programme aligning with both the requirements of the professional body and the specific selling propositions of TIAS. Moreover, the PRT considers that the formulation of the intended learning outcomes is adequate and a proper reflection of the programme rationale.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this programme: EMITA definitely is a programme of academic orientation that also pays ample attention to the professional domain in general and the professional practice of its students in particular.

The panel notices that the EMITA curriculum provides a thorough knowledge of current research in the field of IT auditing. While its primary focus is on IT auditing in practice – and on the ability of the students to solve multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary questions in the professional field - the EMITA programme uses research as the foundation of these practical skills. Moreover, the practical relevance of the theoretical knowledge that is taught in the programme reflects all relevant aspects of the professional practice of IT auditing.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this EMITA programme. The PRT thinks highly of the way in which the programme combines academic knowledge with practical applications in a way that befits the different professional domains of the participants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this EMITA programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual courses add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

The panel acknowledges that the curriculum has been adjusted recently and that the revision process is not yet completed. According to the self-evaluation report, the programme content is structured in a logical flow. Students first learn the basics of controlling processes and IT (27 ECTS) before moving on to auditing and the chosen specialisation (14 ECTS). In this way, they are educated across the IT life cycle in all forms of IT audits. The focus of EMITA on professional practice focused on the ability to use the content and skills in practice, culminates in the master thesis (15 ECTS), which is prepared in the Business Research Methods course (4 ECTS).

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to this EMITA programme. The PRT thinks the design of the curriculum is strong. Moreover the panel understands that the current scheduling of the different modules is key to building up in an incremental way the different end level competencies, as is convincingly shown in the table combining learning outcomes, with course modules and Dublin Descriptors.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes in good detail the specific learning environment of EMITA.

The panel notices that the didactical design is well suited for the target group. It offers a mixture of theoretical knowledge and practical insights; students are educated individually and in group dynamics; every module contains real audit cases, Most of the time, IT auditors solve problems in teams, working together with different specialists. Therefore, besides individual exams, the programme also features group exams and papers. The panel also notices that alumni participate actively in the facilitation of the courses.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all courses were offered online and in a few cases blended formats were introduced. The panel gathers from the materials that because lecturers and students have responded positively to this type of learning, there are plans to include the blended learning format in each module soon. The new approach is likely to change the current set-up according to which there are weekly classroom meetings during the first 24 months.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. The panel considers that the didactical design benefits the target group. In view of the envisaged transition to blended learning across all modules, the

panel advises the programme team to monitor carefully that participants (perceive they) receive at least a similar quality of education.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this EMITA.

The PRT notices that in terms of intake, the background of students is quite homogeneous: most hold a bachelor or master degree in information management, and all have been assessed by their employers before entering the programme. Detailed data on student intake and composition show that between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 42 students, mostly male (80%) and often (63%) with an academic degree. While the programme team admits that gender diversity could improve, the current disbalance seems to reflect the actual composition of the working field. Nonetheless, it is the ambition of both the programme to attract and the employers to select more female candidates.

Further to the analysis in the general findings section, the intake for the EMITA programme in the academic year 2020-2021 was much lower than before, which is likely due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students (94%) complete the programme. Despite the fact that 63% of the participants have at least one resit during their trajectory, very many students (91%) finish the programme within the nominal duration. This very positive result is in part due to students working in the IT audit profession and their study progress being monitored by their employers. The panel understands from the materials and discussions that the success rate is likely to drop (slightly) when students who joined EMITA during the pandemic near the end of their trajectory.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. The panel thinks highly of the admission and selection procedure which seems very effective in attracting very resourceful students. The PRT encourages the programme to continue its efforts to attract more female students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The PRT gathers from the materials that the core teaching team at EMITA consists of 15 core faculty members, who are supported by another 28 additional faculty. Each module is taught by a dedicated lecturer and all together the core team is stable, familiar with the mission and structure of the programme, and involved in assessing the actuality of the contents. In line with the composition of the student cohorts, there are hardly any female faculty members (no core staff, three additional faculty) teaching on the programme.

In their chapter, students refer at several occasions to the quality of the staff: they find lecturers highly qualified in the domain of (IT-)auditing with a proven track record of work experiences at large and complex companies. Moreover they appreciate that faculty are approachable and that they encourage discussion. The programme management is praised for their dedication and support. The – highly appreciated – diversity in lecturers, however, entails that different teaching methods are applied. While the latter is fine as such, the grading of assignments and the feedback is sometimes confusing or even contradictory.

Considerations

In line with its general findings on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the EMITA staff is sufficient in number and strong in quality, and supported by a dedicated programme team. As a point for attention in future, the programme should recruit more female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this EMITA programme, which is organised in Tilburg. Students mentioned in their chapter that the online platform Canvas is up-to-date with relevant content and that (virtual) teaching facilities are in place. According to the participants, the quality of the platform and the support of the programme team were key elements that mitigated the effects of the pandemic on their learning curve.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the EMITA programme are strong, which in turn confirms its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this EMITA programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS programmes apply fully to EMITA.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for EMITA.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaw reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that NOREA brings an additional level of external quality control to the EMITA programme. As it oversees registering qualified IT auditors, EMITA graduates can register with NOREA and apply for the Register EDP auditor title. In 2019, NOREA performed its own accreditation of EMITA thereby focusing on the complete coverage of the common body of knowledge and the validation of the relevant aspects of the programme. The outcome of this accreditation was positive.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in EMITA is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes. The additional accreditation by the professional body constitutes a further guarantee, according to the panel, that EMITA delivers the quality it envisions.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the EMITA theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the input from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this assessment form is appropriate for the evaluation of master theses. The expert who looked at the sample of EMITA theses reported that in five out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms had been completed in an informative way. In all other cases, the expert reports that the motivation per criterion is very minimal and in general does not comprise arguments for the given grade. In this way, the evaluation is mainly limited to the scores per criterion, and thus remains quite subjective.

Endorsing the finds of the thesis committee, the PRT notices that that the quality of thesis assessment (evaluation form, grading, insightful feedback) is adequate. However, compared to the findings in other TIAS programmes under review, it seems that since the previous accreditation visit, less progress has been made in EMITA in terms of providing insightful feedback across the sample of evaluation forms.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this EMITA programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in the programme. The PRT considers that the quality of thesis assessment is adequate. While the programme is using a relevant assessment form and several assessors are making good use of this form, the panel does recommend the EMITA programme team to encourage all assessors to motivate their overall scores and sub-scores with insightful feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on thesis quality and graduate performance of graduates are valid for this programme.

EMITA's final project accounts for a quarter of the total study credits and consists of a thesis which combines IT auditing skills, knowledge, and methodology. The master thesis is usually performed in small groups and is mostly executed in the company of the participant. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 86 students who graduated since June 2020. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (3% - 69% - 28%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 10 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses is clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to thirteen out of fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. In two cases, the grading was too high because the thesis missed the appropriate focus and several criteria were graded too positively, and because there was not much of a link between the analysis, the literature review and the theoretical basis.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the thesis quality was good when perceived as a demonstration of well-designed and executed IT audits as professional service. Each thesis was the result of a professional IT audit and the individual quality varied on the applied assurance framework in the presentation.

According to the expert, however, it remained rather ambiguous why the professional audit reports - which admittedly represent in every little component a thorough deliverable – are considered to constitute a master thesis: the audit report and its justification document did not sufficiently account for the awarded academic master level. The literature review in most theses did not comprise peer reviewed papers and the amount of relevant academic theory applied was minimal. In sum, the current deliverables constituted well-executed professional service reports, but not an academic master thesis. According to the programme team, the master thesis reports are the result of professional IT auditing. Both the professional IT auditing skills and the academic skills are evaluated during the master thesis. Participants need to document their research approach and the methodologies used and have to reflect on dilemmas. All these individual elements are then documented in a separate report. The panel endorses this finding of the expert and invites the programme team to monitor that individual students can/do demonstrate in the master thesis that they have acquired the programme learning outcomes.

Moreover, the expert noted that the grades covered the overall team efforts and but did not distinguish between the individual contributions of team members. While the reflection of team members was not always included and if included, did not account for the individual contribution of team members. Hence, the grade for the master thesis is an overall grade for the team, and does not say anything on the performance (and the achievement of learning outcomes) of the individual student. According to the programme team, this approach is part of EMITA's procedure for the master thesis. During the assignment the team efforts and individual contributions are evaluated and each student writes a reflection. This reflection will be scored from cohort 39 onwards (2020). During the final exam each member needs to present and gets questions. The PRT endorses this finding of the expert and welcomes the plans of the programme team to also grade this individual contribution.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that the EMITA programme directly contributes to the professional career of the participants. Graduating the programme allows students to register with NOREA. Students and alumni indicated that the fast pacing changes in the world (post-Corona) provides many opportunities for EMITA graduates. Moreover, the growing group of alumni and the diverse positions they hold in interesting companies and organisations help students to build a solid professional network.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across all TIAS programmes apply to EMITA. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that EMITA graduates achieve the programme learning outcomes. This consideration is confirmed by the performance of the EMITA graduates on the labour market. As a point for attention, the panel advises the programme team to monitor that students demonstrate in the thesis that they achieved all learning outcomes individually.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way the EMITA programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master in IT-Auditing at the TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the programme, the orientation and contents of the curriculum, the resourceful students, the good quality staff and the additional external validation by the professional body.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests EMITA to:

- monitor that participants receive at least a similar quality of education in the envisaged blended teaching format;
- enhance gender diversity among participants and faculty;
- encourage all thesis assessors to motivate their scores with insightful feedback;
- monitor that students can demonstrate in the thesis their individual achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

10. Executive Master Management & Organisation

The Executive Master of Management & Organisation (CROHO 75072) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 18 months. Established in 1987, the MMO programme is offered on both Tilburg and Utrecht campuses of TIAS and targets mid-career senior professionals from a broad range of organisational backgrounds who seek to strengthen their management knowledge and abilities and expand their horizons.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes are valid for this programme.

The panel notices that the purpose of the MMO programme is clearly outlined: training students to become responsible academic reflective practitioners of management, which are able to develop and apply academically sound knowledge to contribute to management and organizational solutions. To this end, the programme provides them with a solid and broad basis of theoretical management knowledge along with a permanent training in translating theoretical insights into practical solutions. In order to be effective, these practical solutions in turn must be embedded in a thorough understanding of the ethical, societal, and international context of modern management.

The panel acknowledges that in comparison to benchmark programmes in the Netherlands, this MMO programme at TIAS strikes a more active, inquisitive and socially conscious tone. Moreover, the programme clearly reflects the conviction of TIAS that the role of business is to serve society.

Furthermore, the panel notices that these objectives have been translated in nine programme learning outcomes (ILOs). These ILOs address the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and their formulation adequately reflects the domain, level and orientation of the MMO programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MMO programme. The panel thinks highly of the programme rationale and considers that the programme objectives have been translated adequately in (intended) learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this programme: MMO definitely is a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to professional practice.

In addition, the panel notices that the work experience of each participant plays an important role. Across the curriculum modules, MMO students apply their newly acquired knowledge to current organizational problems or opportunities in their own professional environment. By working on actual and self-identified problems in their organizations, students develop the professional skills to connect between research-based knowledge and actual business practice and in this way evolve into genuine academic reflective practitioners.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise the double orientation of the programme. Students appreciate the coupling of academic theory and practical application in both courses and assignments. Moreover, students consider the academic training with a focus on methods and paper writing a key strength of the MMO programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this programme. Establishing that MMO is a master programme of academic orientation that clearly promotes the academic development of its students, the panel considers that the professional dimension and the specific domain expertise of the participants are incorporated adequately in the curriculum. Moreover, the panel thinks highly of the way in which the curriculum contributes to making participants evolve into academic reflective practitioners.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this MMO programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the basic architecture of the programme has grown and proven its value over the past 35 years combining modules on traditional business functions with more specialized topical courses. Nonetheless, the programme has witnessed several major revisions since the previous accreditation visit. Currently, the curriculum consists of seven functional modules (28 ECTS), three topical modules (12 ECTS), two research methods courses (5 ECTS) and the master thesis (15 ECTS). In order to cover possible deficiencies, the programme offers three pre-master courses. Moreover, students can tailor their curriculum to some extent by substituting a maximum of two so-called choice modules.

The panel gathers from the student chapter and the discussions that students appreciate in particular the quality of the courses, as well as the actuality of the programme contents. Moreover, students indicate that the focus on business and society in this programme does not only comply with the vision of TIAS but constitutes a selling proposition that could even be further developed in the curriculum (and in the School's marketing efforts) in order to attract more participants.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MMO programme. The panel thinks highly of the curriculum set-up and considers that the recent adjustments are clearly for the better. As a coherent and comprehensive set of modules, the curriculum delivers on the programme objectives and supports the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular programme.

In terms of didactics, the programme adheres to the TIAS vision on teaching and learning, according to which effective executive education is characterized by creating strong links between powerful, actionable academic content and the actual, day-to-day practice of executives. Therefore, MMO provides participants with a hands-on educational experience offering a mixture of theory, research, practical insights, reflection, and application. The programme uses different educational formats to create engaging and valuable learning experiences, such as lectures, breakout group work, in-house days, simulations, case work, practical assignments, and personal reflection. The PRT is satisfied to notice that in implementing these educational principles, the MMO programme has taken at heart the recommendation of the previous accreditation panel to incorporate more innovative teaching methods.

In line with TIAS policy on flexibility and modularisation, the MMO programme has introduced blended learning in 2018 and finetuned its approach based on the experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the pandemic yielded a huge amount of experimental learning with alternative educational formats, in particular online delivery modes. As a result, the current programme structure consists of a fixed 8-week set-up for every module, which allows students to plan their time in class and do the preparatory work and the assignments at their own pace. The panel gathers from the detailed description of this set-up that the fixed module structure

indeed creates a steady and predictable study “heartbeat” across the entire programme, which is beneficial for students who combine their study with work and family commitments.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS programmes apply fully to MMO. The panel thinks highly of the didactical principles that underpin the MMO curriculum and considers that the delivery of blended education according to a fixed modular set-up is particularly relevant for the participants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel’s general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this MMO programme.

The programme targets mid-career professionals from a broad range of organizational backgrounds, which results in heterogeneous cohorts in terms of work places: students are active in diverse sectors such as manufacturing, services, government, education, NGOs, banking, R&D, and health care. Students see this diversity as a strength of the programme as it enlarges the perspective of the participants and is inspiring for one’s own development.

The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and composition that between 2016 and 2020, on average 48 students enrolled across the two intake moments per year, with an average age of 41, bringing 15 years of experience and holding mostly (75%) a bachelor’s degree from a university of applied sciences. The panel notices that while the shares differ per cohort, overall there is a balance between male and female students.

The panel was satisfied to read that since 2017 almost all students complete the programme. Moreover, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that 62% of the students have at least one resit during their trajectory, about 70% of the students finish the programme within the nominal period of 18 months. The programme monitors study progress regularly and participants are invited twice for an individual talk with the Academic Director to discuss study progress. The most recent talks, however, have informed the programme team that more students are incurring study delay since the pandemic. These talks also revealed that students who successfully pass the pre-master programme, still struggle to find literature, study the modules and write academic papers. As a result, additional writing support is offered during the first module.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MMO programme. The panel welcomes the diverse professional backgrounds of the

participants as this allows for meaningful interaction and demonstrates that the programme rationale works effectively.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

The teaching team on this programme consists of 19 faculty: 15 staff are male, 14 are Dutch (and 4 are Belgian). Recognising that the current team is not sufficiently diverse, also in terms of average age, the programme team intends to enlarge the pool of well-qualified younger faculty. While the vast majority of teachers are very experienced and the School continues to hire experienced staff, it is also important from faculty development point of view that younger colleagues are invited to get a taste of executive teaching. In doing so the programme creates a (small) pool of future colleagues from academia. While these young PhD's often lack executive experience, their contributions are usually sought in the academic/empirical research area, which is highly appreciated by the participants.

The panel gathers from the student chapter and the discussions that students and alumni appreciate the know-how of the faculty, as well as their didactic abilities and their capacity to link academic theory with professional practice. The input of guest speakers is also strong as they offer a practical perspective on scientific insights. In addition to these positive remarks, students indicated that several faculty lose part of their appeal when teaching online. Moreover, the organisation of the programme seems to have suffered from the absence/leave of professional staff.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MMO programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. The PRT welcomes the plans of the team to recruit a more diverse team of (junior) lecturers in the future.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MMO programme, which is offered on the campuses in Tilburg and Utrecht. Moreover, the learning management

system CANVAS is used extensively for the organisation of blended learning. Students indicated that both the material facilities and the learning environment are state-of-the-art.

Considerations

The panel considers that its general considerations on facilities apply fully to this MMO programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this programme.

In addition, the panel welcomes the efforts of the programme team to monitor the study progress of participants through individual talks and take action where needed. The reporting of individual flaws, in turn, has allowed the team to take cohort-wide initiatives increasing the writing skills of students and enhancing supervision during the master thesis phase.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS programmes apply fully to MMO.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance are valid for MMO.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MMO programme is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme.

The panel was informed that in 2019, the MMO programme was audited by the Assessment Committee, which established that MMO offers a varied programme working with individual and group assignments. Students are addressed on different competencies and a lot of attention has been given to feedback. Students do not get an easy deal, as insufficient marks are regularly given. If anything, the assessment could be more transparent and the assessment forms could be more aligned. In response to the findings of the Assessment Committee, the programme reviewed all modules making sure that learning goals and assessment criteria were aligned and, if needed, more clearly formulated. The above-mentioned audit and the programme's response strengthen the panel in its conviction that in MMO there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The PRT also notices that the MMO programme has accommodated in part the recommendation of the previous accreditation panel to diversity the types of assessment. While the emphasis has been and continues to lay on paper writing, the grades are now often co-determined by graded pre-course, in-course or post-course assignments. Nonetheless, paper writing remains the most prominent assessment form because it provides an excellent ongoing training in academic research reporting. Moreover, it allows for a recorded transfer of what is learned to the student's daily work context, which in turn constitutes an important win-win as the employer is typically the student's main financial study sponsor.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the MMO theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the feedback from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this evaluation form is appropriate for the assessment of master theses. The expert reported that in thirteen out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms had been completed in an informative way. The assessment forms do not only contain grades for every criterion, but also feedback to motivate the different scores per criterion. Moreover, the expert thought highly of the tone of the feedback, which is probably a reflection of the informal and friendly relations between staff and students. It was also nice to read the compliments given: students do appreciate that a lot and tend to never forget this.

As a point for improvement the expert reported that the evaluation forms combined the scoring/feedback of both assessors in one document. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MMO programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the

organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. In this regard the PRT confirms the analysis by the TIAS Assessment Committee that “the assessment in this programme is careful.”

In addition, the PRT endorses the finding of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is particularly strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but almost all thesis assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel’s general findings on thesis quality and on graduate performance are valid for this MMO programme.

The final project of the MMO programme is an applied research project on a management and organization challenge in practice. Students consider the master thesis as a true capstone project, so they take pride in delivering their best work. This is reinforced by the fact that there is a ‘client party’ involved, often the employer of the student. The thesis accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated since June 2020. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (10 - 87% - 10%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 2 low quality, 11 average quality and 2 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading the expert agreed to fourteen out of fifteen final scores given by the respective assessors. In one case the expert thought the thesis deserves a lower score given its extensive length (110 pages without appendices) and the additional supervision support the student needed.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert was impressed by the variety of the topics and the writing skills demonstrated in the theses, which were easy to read and without academic jargon aimed to impress the reader. According to the expert, much attention must be given to this in the thesis syllabi, introductory lectures and/or by the supervisors. Similarly, almost all reference lists closely adhered to the APA guidelines. Moreover, the expert appreciated the short biographies of the thesis authors, the very helpful glossaries, and the sections on the research process and the validity and reliability of the research.

Furthermore, the expert noted that the breadth allowed in the thesis topics entailed that some topics were rather peripheral to the domain of management and organisation. Similarly, the expert wondered to what extent the practical purpose of the thesis – to have an impact in the real business world – went at the cost of scientific rigour: the evaluation forms contained several comments from the assessors on the scientific relevance of the thesis, which seemed somewhat underdeveloped. According to the programme team, the practical goals of the thesis does not go at the cost of scientific rigour: practical research has to meet common standards of validity and reliability, next to practical usefulness. The Business Research Modules at the start and the end of the curriculum provide students with extensive training. As the expert was struck by the length of the average thesis, the programme team indicated it communicates a preferred length of 12000 to 15000 words, excluding appendices. While students are urged to write concise reports, the programme is not too strict in maintaining this guideline. Gross extensions of the maximum length are usually prevented by thesis supervisors.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this MMO programme targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Alumni indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions. Moreover, the panel notices that it is a sign of market trust that several organisations have repeatedly referred their employees to follow the MMO programme and that more than 90% of the students are sponsored by their employer.

During the visit, students and alumni emphasised that community building and networking are very important both during the programme and afterwards. While TIAS and MMO are supporting initiatives in this regard, more can be done at both levels. The panel endorses this finding, as well as the recommendation of students and alumni that the programme could facilitate more explicitly networking among students. While the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardised such opportunities, it is all the more important according to students that the networking component is supported by/in the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MMO programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MMO programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this MMO programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Management and Organisation at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the rationale for this programme, the orientation, design and structure of the curriculum, and the quality of both thesis and thesis assessment.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the MMO programme to:

- monitor the continued progress in academic skills of students entering the programme after completing the pre-master courses;
- recruit a more diverse team of teaching faculty;
- facilitate the opportunities for community building and networking among students and between students and alumni.

11. Executive Master Management in Education

The Executive Master of Management in Education (CROHO 75079) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 18 months. The MME programme was established in 2000 in response to the decentralisation in education policy, which meant that stronger education management was required. Still today the programme is focusing on governance, management and leadership in education.

Since 2005-2006, this programme and the Executive Master programme in Public and Non-Profit Management (MPM) are offered together. Both programmes address overlapping disciplinary domains and target student groups with similar backgrounds. Moreover, the individual programmes attracted too few students to be economically viable. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that both programmes would be assessed separately. The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the common self-evaluation report for MME and MPM, as well as on the dedicated student chapters, the findings from the separate thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme teams before the visit.

On explicit request of the PRT, the programme team provided a written update on the status of the two executive master programmes at the time of the site visit. The panel understands from this note that although one self-evaluation report has been written that covers both programmes, each programme leads to a separate degree. While there are some very distinct features to each programme, there also is a strong connection and sizeable overlap between the two curricula. Participants on both programmes have professional experience in the public sector and share their insights with each other. While MME students mainly do so from an education (sector) perspective, they are expected to acquire competencies that go beyond the borders of their educational organisation. The programme teams aim to create added value for their students in two ways: by exposing all participants to the breadth of the education and public non-profit management disciplinary domains and by accommodating the learning needs of each individual student/group through differentiation in courses, learning materials and assignments.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the intended learning outcomes are valid for this EM programme Management in Education.

The panel notices that the combined MME/MPM programme has a solid scientific foundation: it is rooted in the disciplines of economics, sociology and psychology, as well as in the interdisciplinary management and organizational science, public administration science and - particularly for MME - education sciences. The programme provides MME students with in-depth knowledge of the education sector but at the same time teaches them to apply new insights from various disciplines.

The programme has been designed and is currently implemented in full alignment with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS. The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that by its very nature, the programme has a strong Business and Society outlook, as is demonstrated by its overall focus on creating public value in a co-creation process between public, non-profit and for-profit organisations. Moreover, the School's Business and Society competency domains of responsible leadership, sustainable innovation and collaboration are explicitly addressed in various parts of the curriculum.

The panel notices that the current set of ten intended learning outcomes (ILOs) is formulated in line with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and reflects properly the level and orientation of the programme. Given that the ILOs apply to both MME and MPM programmes, the panel wonders to what extent the specific Management in Education domain is sufficiently addressed in the formulation of the learning outcomes. The panel is confident that – if deemed appropriate - the stakeholders who involved in the current review process of the programme will adjust (the formulation of) the ILOs accordingly.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this EM programme Management in Education. The written materials and discussions on site have provided the panel with a clear view on the objective of this programme and on the rationale for offering it in combination with MPM. Overall, the PRT endorses the programme developments since the previous accreditation and welcomes the ongoing efforts of the programme teams to create added value for students through both combined MPM/MME and differentiated MME elements.

According to the panel, the ILOs as they stand now reflect properly the objectives, level, orientation and ambitions of the MME programme, as well as the mission of the School. If anything, the PRT advises the programme to monitor that the specific Management in Education domain is sufficiently addressed in the learning outcomes, which are shared entirely with the MPM programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this EM programme Management in Education. In addition, the panel notices that the programme involves various stakeholder groups to ensure that the design of the programme stays up-to-date, market oriented and forward looking. In this way, MME students are brought to an academic level at which they are able to perceive ideas and practices from different angles and perspectives.

According to their statements in the student chapter, MME students and alumni enter the programme with high expectations: they come to TIAS to obtain an academic master degree and want the programme to provide in-depth knowledge, to connect with practice and to provide tools for their day-to-day professional activities. The panel gathers from the discussions that the programme meets these expectations to a large extent.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation apply fully to this EM programme Management in Education. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the panel considers that the programme is doing a good job in providing participants with a relevant mixture of domain specific knowledge, as well as academic and professional skills.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this EM programme Management in Education: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

Compared to the situation in 2017, the PRT notices that the curriculum has been restructured and now consists of nine 5 ECTS courses in three domains - strategy & analysis, organisation & networks, and governance & leadership – and a master thesis (15 ECTS). While most courses are taught jointly to MME and MPM students, there is considerable differentiation for both groups within the courses. The modules Leadership and Strategy in Context have the same title in both programmes but are taught separately. Moreover, students who do not meet all enrolment criteria, complete a pre-master preparation programme before they are admitted. The panel understands that in addition to the curriculum structure, also the module contents have been updated notably in so far as the differentiated materials for both student groups is concerned.

MME students and alumni indicated to the panel that overall they are satisfied with both the structure and the contents of the curriculum. They like the connection with MPM, the focus on public value, the scientific approach and the curriculum build-up around themes. As points for attention, they mentioned more (and more recent) literature, the study trip (preferably separate from MPM) and more attention to current topics.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content apply fully to this EM programme Management in Education. The PRT welcomes the efforts of all stakeholders in revising the

curriculum structure and updating the contents of the modules. According to the panel this has resulted in a curriculum that aligns with the objectives of the programme and meets the expectations of the MME participants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this EM programme Management in Education.

In addition, the panel notices that one of the didactical aims of the programme is to arrive at cross-pollination and stimulation through group interaction between professionals with different educational and professional backgrounds. While there is a clear split between MME and MPM in terms of profile, exploitation, and assignments, this is not the case for the actual delivery of the curriculum where a lot of the actual teaching is done jointly. The knowledge and skills available within the group of students contribute to the depth of the programme.

In order to accommodate the busy lives of the participants, the curriculum schedule is concentrated around monthly lectures spread over three consecutive days. Every module consists of course preparation (pre-session), 24 contact hours and take-home assignments (post-session). When together, students follow lectures, hold class discussions and work in breakout sessions on case studies.

The panel understands from both the self-evaluation report and the student chapter that the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a game changer with the programme being altered multiple times during lockdown. The need for distance learning required a conversion of the complete programme into an online or - in another phase of the pandemic – hybrid version of the courses. Some elements, such as the international study trip to Copenhagen, had to be redesigned completely. Students and alumni indicated to the panel that academic and professional staff was helpful during the pandemic and made the best of it, but that the planning, communication and delivery of the modules in online/hybrid format was suboptimal in that period.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment apply fully to this EM programme Management in Education. The PRT thinks that the delivery of the curriculum in consecutive and interactive modules is highly appropriate for this (combined) programme and the target group of highly experienced and busy professionals.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this programme.

According to the self-evaluation report, MME students should have an academic bachelor's degree in a relevant field and at least five years of work experience in the broad domain of education, including three years in a strategic or line management position. In order to guarantee the quality of the group of students, an introductory intake interview with the Academic Director is part of the admission procedure. Over the years, MME applicants tend to shift from traditional line manager positions towards professionals with other relevant skills or knowledge, such as involvement in education policy.

Data on student intake and composition show that between 2016 and 2020, an average MME cohort consists of 24 students. Since 2018, the programme welcomes two cohorts per year. This resulted in 2019-2020 in a combined group of almost 50 MME and MPM students. Both the programme team and the students/alumni indicated that at that point, the group was (too) big and the educational quality was under pressure.

Following the COVID-pandemic, the intake in 2020-2021 was considerably lower (16 MME students). All students are Dutch (a few have migrant roots) and the gender balance is near perfect (and more so than in the previous accreditation period). Over half of the participants have a professionally oriented bachelor's degree and took the pre-master programme before enrolment. On average participants were 43 years old with 13 years of professional experience. The panel notices that the experience level of the MME students is much higher than what is formally required.

The PRT was satisfied to read that over the past five years, almost all MME students (95%) manage to complete the programme. Since the previous accreditation visit, the share of students finishing the programme in the nominal duration has increased from 40% to 69%. While the programme aims to bring the nominal completion rate to 70%, this ambition could not be maintained following the COVID-19 pandemic, partly because several students played a role in tackling and coordinating the coronavirus situation in their own organisations.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake apply fully to MME. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting resourceful students with considerable work experience.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staff – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff – are valid for this programme.

Further to the findings of the previous accreditation panel that the number of staff involved in the MME/MPM programme is huge and may even jeopardise the coherent delivery of the curriculum, the current PRT notices that the programme now works with dedicated course coordinators who are responsible for the delivery of the module and belong to the core faculty of TIAS. Over the past few years, a total of 13 core faculty and 8 additional faculty were connected to the MME programme. While there are more male than female faculty, the balance (66%-33%) is less distorted than in other TIAS programmes.

In terms of staff quality, the MME programme enhanced the collaboration with researchers / faculty from the former Governance Lab and the current TIAS Governance & Education Knowledge Cluster. The panel gathers from the Student Chapter, the data on faculty evaluations and the discussions that students and alumni think highly of the lectures and appreciate in particular the network of academic and professional contacts they bring to the programme.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the EM Management in Education is sufficient in number and strong in quality.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for MME programme, which is taught on the campus in Utrecht. Students confirmed to the panel that the facilities on the new campus are state-of-the art.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of MME are adequate, in line with its positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this programme.

In addition, the programme has tightened the master thesis trajectory in 2019 in order to keep MME students connected to their study and avoid delays in graduation due to the individual and solitary character of this final curriculum component. Several common activities have been created (kick-off, workshops), as well as a Canvas page featuring a schedule with multiple submission moments for interim results. The final workshop near the end of the thesis project is mainly meant as a moment of moral peer support.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring apply fully to this programme. The panel welcomes the programme-specific initiative regarding the master thesis trajectory, which helps participants in the final phase of their study and should boost their overall success rate.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for MME.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Moreover, the combined MME/MPM programme has an active Sounding Board consisting of four students. Together with the Academic Directors, they evaluate the programme three times per year after every domain (set of three courses). In these meetings, the learning outcomes are evaluated and specific events, requests or concerns from the students are discussed.

The combined programme also has an Advisory Board which functions as an external quality control body and is a source of in-depth knowledge on both strategic developments and the implementation of policy in public sector organisations. The Advisory Board has the explicit task of relating the programme to the professional field. A recent discussion with the Board concerned the envisaged redesign of MPM/MME and the required changes this redesign entails in terms of curriculum contents.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in MME is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this MME programme. The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the master theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert considers that in all fifteen cases, the evaluation forms have been completed in an informative way. The assessment forms do not only contain grades for every criterion, but also feedback to motivate the different scores per criterion.

The PRT endorses the positive finding of the thesis committee. It is clear that the quality of thesis assessment has improved considerably since the previous accreditation visit. At that time, the evaluation form was useful, but there was hardly any calibration of the grading per criterion and several forms did not contain insightful feedback to motivate the (sub)scores. The panel was informed that currently, the programme organises calibration sessions and the programme manager checks whether evaluation forms are complete and insists that three separate forms are completed and added to the file.

With regard to the former point, the expert agreed to twelve out of fifteen final scores given by the respective assessors. In the other three cases the expert thought the theses deserved a higher (twice) and lower (once) score but did not find an appropriate motivation for these particular scores in the evaluation forms. While the programme has set up calibration sessions in the recent past, it seems that there is still room for more internal discussion among thesis supervisors/assessors as to what constitutes a high quality, good quality and sufficient quality thesis.

With regard to the latter point, the thesis expert reported that the full set of evaluation forms was not always made available for the external review. This finding applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed by the PRT during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment apply fully to the MME programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but thesis assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback. Based on the findings from the thesis committee, the

panel welcomes the organisation of calibration sessions and encourages the programme to continue this initiative in the future.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this MME programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits points. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 42 students who graduated in the academic year 2020-2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (14% - 76% - 10%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 2 low quality, 11 average quality and 2 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the final projects was submitted to the thesis committee for a second opinion. Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that each thesis achieved an appropriate academic level, was clearly structured, included an empirical component and touched on the central objectives of the programme.

Because all final projects were drawn up according to a fixed format and thus followed a recognizable pattern, the expert wondered if students do not only apply a format but also really learn to produce an academic paper independently. Similarly, the expert wondered if the strict format of the thesis allowed students to really demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes. According to the programme team, the master thesis is first and foremost about the latter: identifying a practically relevant topic / strategic question and – under the guidance of the supervisor - going through the different stages of the research cycle to answer the initial research question. Based on the input from both thesis committee and programme team, the panel is confident that students invariably acquire the academic and research competences that can be expected of an academic master graduate. In so far as the link between final project and programme learning outcomes is concerned, the panel understood from the matrix in the self-evaluation report that the thesis only covers three programme learning outcomes while other modules ensure that students demonstrably achieve the seven other exit qualifications.

Furthermore, the empirical part of the thesis is usually carried out in the organization in which the student works. Participants learn how to relate in an academic way to their colleagues and line managers in the organisation. While the panel acknowledges the added value of

internalising the research attitude in a context that is close to the student, it does also endorse the finding of the expert that some students did not indicate in their thesis how they ensured the reliability and validity of the data they had collected 'in-house'. The panel suggests the programme team to draw attention of the thesis supervisors to this point and to verify whether students are sufficiently trained on this aspect prior to starting the master thesis.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that MME targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Alumni indicated that this EM programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on the achieved learning outcomes apply fully to this programme. The positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate MME have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way MME fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master Management in Education at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the orientation and set-up of the curriculum, the didactic principles, the specific student intake, the staffing, the programme-specific quality assurance provisions and the thesis assessment. Moreover, the panel endorses the overall developments in the combined MME/MPM programme featuring a greater overlap with and a stronger differentiation from the public non-profit management domain.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests MME to:

- verify whether the specific Management in Education domain is sufficiently addressed in the programme learning outcomes;
- continue holding calibration sessions to finetune the grading of master theses;
- ensure that students are trained in establishing the reliability and validity of data collection prior to starting the thesis trajectory;
- monitor that students achieve each programme learning outcome during the programme.

12. Executive Master Marketing and Customer Management

The Executive Master of Marketing & Customer Management (CROHO 75111) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 16 months. Established in 1989, the MMCM programme is now organised on both Tilburg and Utrecht campuses of TIAS and caters for experienced commercial, marketing and communication professionals and managers in profit, non-profit and non-governmental organizations. It provides a range of theoretical and practical modules in the classic marketing discipline, as well as topical subjects such as Marketing Intelligence, Customer Experience, Digital Transformation, Agile Marketing and Opti-channel strategies.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings of the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes are valid for this MMCM programme.

The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that, at least in the Netherlands, there are not so many post-experience programmes in Marketing that lead to an academic master's degree. Moreover, the rationale of the MMCM programme is quite specific as it encourages students to look for opportunities and challenges that the changing context presents to their own management position and their organization. The programme also emphasises the importance of close cooperation with other functional disciplines and processes and the ability to organize change. According to the panel, the purpose of the MMCM programme is clear, specific and in line with its target audience.

In 2019, the TIAS-wide portfolio redesign prompted a review of the MMCM programme and its learning outcomes. This redesign also led to a change of the programme title from Executive Master of Marketing to Executive Master of Marketing and Customer Management. According to the programme team, the new title does justice to current developments in the field of marketing where relationships with customers constitute a critical success factor. As a result, the emphasis of the programme has shifted from communication, market research and sales support to (designing) the interface with the customer.

The panel notices that the current set of learning outcomes addresses important developments in the marketing domain related to the future role of the marketer, the attention of the market to change management content, the increasing importance of the shared value concept and the emergence of network-based structures. In this way, the revised learning outcomes do justice to the new programme title. Moreover, the panel acknowledges the efforts of the team to formulate the learning outcomes in line with the European-wide Dublin Descriptors. Hence, the

nine exit qualifications reflect adequately both the master level and the academic orientation of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this MMCM programme. The PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the programme and the way the new programme title and the adjusted objectives are reflected in the revised programme learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this MMCM programme: this executive master programme is definitely of academic orientation yet has a clear link to the professional world of the students. Hence, the programme highly values the academic development of its students and at the same time contributes directly and indirectly to the professional skills development of the participants.

In addition, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that the basis of this programme lies in the students' own marketing practice, which is the frame of reference that students bring with them when they enrol. Theory and science-based foundations are the starting point for broadening and deepening their marketing insights, and the programme does so through marketing-specific modules that collectively cover the full breadth of the field.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise the double academic and professional orientation of the programme and appreciate that their own practice is the reference framework for the programme. Nonetheless students see room for making theory even more applicable and for using their own practice as a starting point. According to the programme team, there are several ways in which students are exposed to real-life experiences and can include their own experiences.

Overall, the PRT thinks that the professional dimension is incorporated adequately in the curriculum of this academically oriented master programme. The panel is confident that the ongoing discussions between students and staff and the regular course evaluations will lead to further adjustments in the curriculum while keeping a good balance between the academic and professional orientation of the MMCM programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS apply fully to this MMCM programme. Establishing that this is an executive master programme of academic

orientation, the panel considers that the programme is doing a good job in translating its objectives in a curriculum that does justice to its ambitions, its orientation and its participants.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content across TIAS are valid for MCMM: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the curriculum consists of ten disciplinary modules of 4 ECTS each, one business research module (5 ECTS) and a master thesis (15 ECTS). The panel notices that the MMCM programme uses a dedicated strategic marketing mindset, attitude and strategy. Marketing is not defined in isolation but rather as a competence interacting with other disciplines and echelons. Hence, the programme aims to build the student's competencies and skills in a way that resembles how the marketing discipline and marketing professional relate to other disciplines, how cooperation takes shape among them, and how joint ambitions and objectives are achieved. Modules, therefore, have a multi-disciplinary starting point and a change management foundation and address a fundamental question: how do we achieve this in the organization? The link with one's own organization, therefore, remains crucial throughout the programme. Students write papers for more than half of the modules, which relate to a strategic marketing issue for their organizations.

The PRT acknowledges that following the recommendations of the previous accreditation panel and the TIAS-wide portfolio revision, the curriculum has been adjusted in several ways. It now features new topics such as digital marketing, innovation and customer experience, while change management, leadership and business & society have gained prominence in the curriculum. Moreover, some modules have been renamed to better match their substantive content and some contents have been adapted to reflect the contemporary technological and social trends.

Finally, the panel notices that the final project work has been spread in time with students producing a thesis proposal as final deliverable of the business research module. In this way students acquire the necessary research skills during the first part of the programme and start the second phase with a concrete thesis plan, which in turn should help them finish the entire curriculum in time.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the discussions that students and alumni appreciate(d) the great variation in curriculum contents that altogether cover the comprehensive domain of marketing domain. Through this particular set of modules, the programme manages to get the message through that marketing is so much more than marketing communication.

Moreover, students and alumni praise the opportunity to follow other modules at TIAS in order to tailor the curriculum to their individual needs.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS apply fully to this MCMM programme. The PRT thinks highly of the design of the curriculum, which reflects - and delivers on - the overall programme objective. Moreover, the panel considers that the changes in the curriculum since the previous accreditation visit are clearly for the better.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this MCMM programme.

In addition, the panel notices that the programme's educational philosophy is based on three principles: (i) exploring the frontiers of knowledge where faculty provide students with recent scientific insights and discuss current case studies; (ii) creating effective learning experiences as students are challenged intellectually during classes, in discussion groups, through active participation in groupwork and in individual exercises; (iii) connecting with peers, business, and society when guest lecturers and practitioners are invited to interactively discuss hot topics, cases, and best practices and lessons learned.

The programme lasts 18 months: ten months for the modules, two months of summer break and six months for the thesis. In order to enhance flexibilization, the programme features five intake moments, one at the start of every cluster of two modules. Every module consists of extensive preparation time, three consecutive days in class, and an assignment paper and/or presentation to be completed after the session. This means that every module should be self-contained and that some modules can be taken as elective by other students. Students and alumni recognise the self-contained modules and appreciate the flexible structure. However, they also mention that the many intake moments do not contribute to a cohort feeling, that feedback on assignments never occurs during the dedicated block, and that there is room for strengthening the coherence, for emphasising the red thread, across modules. The panel advises the programme to take at heart the points for improvement which students mentioned and motivated in the student chapter.

Furthermore, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a complete switch to online education, supervision and assessment had to be made. This switch was very intensive and quite successful thanks to the support and advice from several professional staff: ICT experts, education advisors, instructional designers, and

the Education Office. Given the contents of the marketing modules and the interactive teaching approach of the programme, the transfer from fully on-site to fully online education was hard and resulted in a loss of spontaneous interaction and cross-fertilisation. At the time of the site visit, the programme is still examining on an individual module basis how the learning journey in general and the student journey in particular can be designed in an optimum way and in line with TIAS' policy towards more blended learning in a conscious and mindful way.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply fully to this MCMM programme. The PRT thinks highly of the educational philosophy that underpins this particular programme. While sympathetic to the programme structure, the panel also shares the student concerns on the flip side of such advanced flexibility and advises the programme team to take these up with students and faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this programme.

The panel gathers from the extensive description in the self-evaluation report that a wide variety of professionals enrol on this programme, most of whom (71%) hold a bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences. A qualified majority Between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 16 mostly male (66%) students with an average age of 40 and 17 years of work experience. The panel notices that the experience level of the MMCM students is much higher than what is formally required. Compared to other TIAS programmes, the intake was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the contrary: it seems that the new curriculum structure has attracted more students (25) to the programme.

The panel was satisfied to read that over the past five years, most students (94%) complete the programme. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that 50% of the students had at least one resit during their trajectory, 82% of the students finish the programme within the nominal duration. According to the programme team these positive figures are due to the strict intake procedures and the intense supervision and coaching during the entire curriculum.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across TIAS apply fully to MCMM. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting very resourceful students to the programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staff – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this MCMM programme.

According to the data provided in the self-evaluation report, the teaching team consists of 8 core faculty and 6 additional faculty. While the programme is offered in Dutch, several staff are international. Currently, there is no female faculty member, a weakness the programme team and the entire School is working on in their recruitment (policy).

In addition, the panel notices that the applied scientific orientation of the programme is reflected in the professional profile of the faculty, most of whom are scholars or practitioners with strong academic credentials as well as ample practical experience in their respective professional fields. In fact, almost all faculty have a hybrid profile, combining publishing in international peer-reviewed publications with active links to industry, either through educational work, consultancy work and/or applied contract research. In this way, the faculty on the programme guarantees both academic proficiency and the ability to link classroom material directly to the students' daily work experiences and to the latest topics and trends in practice.

Students and alumni are highly positive about the programme staff. In fact, half of the programme strengths mentioned in the student chapter relate to staff on the MCMM programme: faculty are very knowledgeable and inspiring (even in a digital environment), and combine analytical know-how with relevant marketing and consultancy experience. They also stimulate interaction in class and are available beyond the dedicated sessions. Several lecturers can be approached or offer their guidance pro-actively when students write their papers. This availability and involvement is a key feature – and highly appreciated - during the thesis trajectory.

Finally, the panel understands from the student chapter and the discussions that students very much appreciate the programme team and thank in particular the programme manager whose name was dropped in both the chapter and the discussion.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on staff across TIAS apply fully to this MMCM programme. The panel thinks highly of the match between the staff profiles and the programme objectives. Moreover, the PRT endorses the positive feedback from students and alumni on the academic, professional and educational qualities of the faculty and the involvement of the programme team. As a point for attention, the panel encourages the programme team to recruit female faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS programmes are valid for this MCMM programme, which is taught on both campuses of TIAS in Tilburg and Utrecht. The quality of the facilities is mentioned explicitly as a strength in the student chapter: the building in Tilburg is welcoming and the catering excellent. Moreover, students who attend courses on the Utrecht campus mentioned that the educational facilities are state-of-the-art.

Considerations

The PRT considers that the material and educational facilities of the MCMM programme are good, which matches the panel's overall positive impressions on the facilities at TIAS.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this programme.

According to students and alumni, the provisions for tutoring are effectively and successfully implemented in the MCMM programme. Students mentioned the perfect organisation of and communication on the programme, and give full credit for this to the programme manager. Moreover, the panel read in the self-evaluation that the programme holds individual meetings with every student half-way the programme to discuss study progress, as well as personal points of interest.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS apply fully to this programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance are valid for this MCMM programme. In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that

the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported, e.g. in course evaluations, are picked up and repaired.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MCMM programme is robust, which matches with all the positive impressions of the PRT on QA across TIAS.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

According to the Student Chapter, the assessment is relevant and contributes to acquiring the overall programme outcomes. Students reported that in the paper assignments, they can apply theory to practical cases that are relevant to their own organisation. While students often get feedback during the assignment process, the assessment takes a long time and the final content feedback is not always as extensive as hoped for.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the most recent theses are assessed according to the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the input from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this assessment form is appropriate for the evaluation of master theses. The expert who looked at the sample of MMCM theses reported that in seven out of fifteen cases, the evaluation forms had been completed in an informative way. While all assessment forms contained grades for every criterion, in several cases feedback was missing to motivate the respective sub-scores and final grade. The panel acknowledges with satisfaction that the quality of thesis assessment (evaluation form, grading, insightful feedback) has increased compared to the findings of the previous accreditation panel in 2017. However, compared to the findings in other TIAS programmes under review, it seems that less progress has been made in this programme in terms of providing insightful feedback across the sample of evaluation forms.

Moreover, the expert noted that while two assessors should independently fill in a form according to the Guidelines on the Assessment Form, in most cases only one form was completed - or at least put at disposition of the expert. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment apply fully to MCMM. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the organisation of the thesis assessment is good and that several assessors provide insightful feedback on the quality of the thesis. The panel invites the programme team to encourage all thesis assessors to make optimum use of the evaluation form by motivating their scores with relevant feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this MCMM programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 38 students who graduated since June 2019. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (8% - 53% - 39%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 8 average quality and 6 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to fourteen out of fifteen final scores. In one case the expert thought the thesis (7.5) was overrated: given that for this thesis there was no motivation of the scores, it proved difficult to compare arguments.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the thesis topics represented existing company issues/questions that are studied in a scientific way. In terms of process, the theses followed a good structure: problem definition, formulation of a research question (theoretically founded). In each thesis, students follow a scientific based research method and discuss the results. The output is also of good quality. In sum, the theses showed that the students are able to perform individually a research project on a master level, that most students can reflect critically on literature, on the practical problem that is addressed in their research study and on their own work. The panel wholeheartedly endorses the positive findings of the thesis committee.

As a point for possible improvement in the future, the expert thought that across the sample a bit more attention could be given to the theoretical contribution of the work, to a reflection on how the thesis results/ideas can be implemented in a real company, and to what could be the risks when doing so.

Furthermore, the PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this MCMM programme targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Employers tend to be satisfied with the professional development of their employees and welcome the individual papers they write on strategic issues in their organisation. Alumni from their side indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this MMCM programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MMCM programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way in which the MMCM programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Marketing and Consumer Management at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the programme, the orientation, contents and educational philosophy of the curriculum, the academic and professional staff, and the thesis quality.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests MMCM to:

- mitigate the “flip side” of the very flexible programme structure;
- recruit more female faculty members;
- encourage all thesis assessors to provide insightful feedback on the thesis evaluation form.

13. Executive Master Public and Non-Profit Management

The Executive Master of Public and Non-Profit Management (CROHO 75078) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 18 months. The MPM programme was established in 1997 focusing on policy in non-profit organisations. Still today the programme is focusing on governance, management and leadership in public and non-profit organisations.

Since 2005-2006, this programme and the Executive Master Management in Education (MME) are offered together. Both programmes address overlapping disciplinary domains and target student groups with similar backgrounds. Moreover, the individual programmes attracted too few students to be economically viable. Prior to the visit, it was agreed with TIAS that both programmes would be assessed separately. The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the common self-evaluation report for MPM and MME, as well as on the dedicated student chapters, the findings from the separate thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme teams before the visit.

On explicit request of the PRT, the programme team provided a written update on the status of the two executive master programmes at the time of the site visit. The panel understands from this note that although one self-evaluation report has been written that covers both programmes, each programme leads to a separate degree. While there are some very distinct features to each programme, there also is a strong connection and sizeable overlap between the two curricula. Participants on both programmes – and notably in MPM - have professional experience in the entire spectrum of the public sector and share their insights with each other. The programme teams aim to create added value for their students in two ways: by exposing all participants to the breadth of the education and public non-profit management disciplinary domains and by accommodating the learning needs of each individual student/group through differentiation in courses, learning materials and assignments.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes are valid for this MPM programme.

The panel notices that the combined MME/MPM programme has a solid scientific foundation: it is rooted in the disciplines of economics, sociology and psychology, as well as in the interdisciplinary management and organizational science, public administration science and - particularly for MME - education sciences. The programme provides MPM students with in-depth knowledge of the developments in the public sector thereby emphasising the importance of a public-sector-wide perspective. Compared to similar programmes in the Netherlands, MPM focuses less on leadership and more on strategic issues in public and non-profit management.

The programme has been designed and is currently implemented in full alignment with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS. The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that by its very nature, the programme has a strong Business and Society outlook, as is demonstrated

by its overall focus on creating public value in a co-creation process between public, non-profit and for-profit organisations. Moreover, the School's Business and Society competency domains of responsible leadership, sustainable innovation and collaboration are explicitly addressed in various parts of the curriculum.

The panel notices that the current set of ten intended learning outcomes (ILOs) is formulated in line with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and reflects properly the level and orientation of the programme. Given that the ILOs apply to both MPM and MME programmes, the panel wonders to what extent the specific Public and Non-profit Management domain is sufficiently addressed in the formulation of the learning outcomes. The panel is confident that – if deemed appropriate - the stakeholders who involved in the current review process of the programme will adjust (the formulation of) the ILOs accordingly.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to MPM. The written materials and discussions on site have provided the panel with a clear view on the objective of this programme and on the rationale for offering it in combination with MME. Overall, the PRT endorses the programme developments since the previous accreditation and welcomes the ongoing efforts of the programme teams to create added value for students through both combined MPM/MME and differentiated MPM elements.

According to the panel, the ILOs as they stand now reflect properly the objectives, level, orientation and ambitions of the MPM programme, as well as the mission of the School. If anything, the PRT advises the programme to monitor that the specific Public and Non-Profit Management domain is sufficiently addressed in the learning outcomes, which are shared entirely with the MME programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this MPM programme.

In addition, the panel notices that the programme involves various stakeholder groups to ensure that the design of the programme stays up-to-date, market oriented and forward looking. In this way, MPM students are brought to an academic level at which they are able to perceive ideas and practices from different angles and perspectives.

According to their statements in the student chapter, MPM students and alumni enter the programme with high expectations: they come to TIAS to obtain an academic master degree and want the programme to provide in-depth knowledge, to connect with practice and to provide

tools for their day-to-day professional activities. The panel gathers from the discussions that the programme meets these expectations to a large extent.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation apply fully to MPM. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation, the panel considers that the programme is doing a good job in providing participants with a relevant mixture of domain specific knowledge, as well as academic and professional skills.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this EM programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual modules add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

Compared to the situation in 2017, the PRT notices that the curriculum has been restructured and now consists of nine 5 ECTS courses in three domains - strategy & analysis, organisation & networks, and governance & leadership – and a master thesis (15 ECTS). While most courses are taught jointly to MPM and MME students, there is considerable differentiation for both groups within the courses. The modules Leadership and Strategy in Context have the same title in both programmes but are taught separately. Moreover, students who do not meet all enrolment criteria, complete a pre-master preparation programme before they are admitted. The panel understands that in addition to the curriculum structure, also the module contents have been updated notably in so far as the differentiated materials for both student groups is concerned.

MPM students and alumni indicated to the panel that overall they are satisfied with both the structure and the contents of the curriculum. They like the focus on public value, the scientific approach and the curriculum build-up around themes. As points for attention, they mentioned a greater variation in MPM-specific theory and articles. Although MPM students appreciate the variety of participants and topics, the panel gathers from the student chapter that (contrary to their MME colleagues) MPM participants see more overlap and less differentiation in the curriculum contents: when allowed to dream, they would prefer a dedicated MPM programme without MME.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content apply fully to MPM. The PRT welcomes the efforts of all stakeholders in revising the curriculum structure and updating the contents of the modules. According to the panel this has resulted in a curriculum that aligns

with the objectives of the programme. The programme team may want to monitor that the combined programme offers sufficient MPM-specific content.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this MPM programme.

In addition, the panel notices that one of the didactical aims of the programme is to arrive at cross-pollination and stimulation through group interaction between professionals with different educational and professional backgrounds. While there is a clear split between MPM and MME in terms of profile, exploitation, and assignments, this is not the case for the actual delivery of the curriculum where a lot of the actual teaching is done jointly. The knowledge and skills available within the group of students contribute to the depth of the programme.

In order to accommodate the busy lives of the participants, the curriculum schedule is concentrated around monthly lectures spread over three consecutive days. Every module consists of course preparation (pre-session), 24 contact hours and take-home assignments (post-session). When together, students follow lectures, hold class discussions and work in breakout sessions on case studies. MPM students indicated that this schedule suits them very well and constituted an important trigger to enrol at TIAS.

The panel understands from both the self-evaluation report and the student chapter that the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a game changer with the programme being altered multiple times during lockdown. The need for distance learning required a conversion of the complete programme into an online or - in another phase of the pandemic – hybrid version of the courses. Some elements, such as the international study trip to Copenhagen, had to be redesigned completely. Students and alumni indicated to the panel that academic and professional staff was helpful during the pandemic and made the best of it, but that the planning, communication and delivery of the modules in online/hybrid format was suboptimal in that period. As points for improvement, MPM students mentioned more interaction in online education, more on-site education and a more equal spread of the study load across the curriculum.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment apply fully to MPM. The PRT thinks that the delivery of the curriculum in consecutive and interactive modules is highly appropriate for this (combined) programme and the target group of highly experienced and busy professionals.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel’s general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process – are valid for this programme.

According to the self-evaluation report, MPM students should have an academic bachelor’s degree in a relevant field and at least five years of work experience in the broad domain of education, including three years in a strategic or line management position. In order to guarantee the quality of the group of students, an introductory intake interview with the Academic Director is part of the admission procedure. Over the years, MPM applicants tend to shift from traditional line manager positions towards professionals with other relevant skills or knowledge, such as involvement in public policy or senior staff members in HRM, finance or quality control.

Data on student intake and composition show that between 2016 and 2020, an average MPM cohort consists of 19 students. Since 2018, the programme welcomes two cohorts per year. This resulted in 2019-2020 in a combined group of almost 50 MME and MPM students. Both the programme team and the students/alumni indicated that at that point, the group was (too) big and the educational quality was under pressure.

Following the COVID-pandemic, the intake in 2020-2021 was only slightly lower (17 MPM students). All students are Dutch (a few have migrant roots) and the gender balance is near perfect (and more so than in the previous accreditation period). A qualified majority of participants have a professionally oriented bachelor’s degree and took the pre-master programme before enrolment. On average participants were 42 years old with 14 years of professional experience. The panel notices that the experience level of the MPM students is much higher than what is formally required.

The PRT was satisfied to read that over the past five years, almost all MPM students (93%) manage to complete the programme. Since the previous accreditation visit, the share of students finishing the programme in the nominal duration has increased from 40% to 69%. While the programme aims to bring the nominal completion rate to 70%, this ambition could not be maintained following the COVID-19 pandemic, partly because several students played a role in tackling and coordinating the coronavirus situation in their own organisations.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on intake apply fully to MPM. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting resourceful students with considerable work experience.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staff – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff – are valid for this programme.

Further to the findings of the previous accreditation panel that the number of staff involved in the MME/MPM programme is huge and may even jeopardise the coherent delivery of the curriculum, the current PRT notices that the programme now works with dedicated course coordinators who are responsible for the delivery of the module and belong to the core faculty of TIAS. Nonetheless, the self-evaluation report indicates that the number of faculty involved in MPM is still considerable (while the MME programme overview list much less staff). Over the past few years, a total of 33 faculty were connected to the MPM programme. While there are more male than female faculty, the panel notices that the balance (64%-36%) is less distorted than in other TIAS programmes.

In terms of staff quality, the MME programme enhanced the collaboration with researchers / faculty from the former Governance Lab and the current TIAS Governance & Education Knowledge Cluster. The panel gathers from the Student Chapter, the data on faculty evaluations and the discussions that students and alumni think highly of the lecturers in terms of disciplinary know-how, pedagogical skills and connection to the professional field.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MPM programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MPM programme, which is taught on the campus in Utrecht. Students confirmed to the panel that the facilities on the new campus are state-of-the art.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of MPM are adequate, which confirms its positive observations regarding facilities across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this programme.

In addition, the programme has tightened the master thesis trajectory in 2019 in order to keep MPM students connected to their study and avoid delays in graduation due to the individual and solitary character of this final curriculum component. Several common activities have been created (kick-off, workshops), as well as a Canvas page featuring a schedule with multiple submission moments for interim results. The final workshop near the end of the thesis project is mainly meant as a moment of moral peer support.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring apply fully to this programme. The panel welcomes the programme-specific initiative regarding the master thesis trajectory, which helps participants in the final phase of their study and should boost their overall success rate.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance across TIAS are valid for MPM.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired.

Moreover, the combined MPM/MME programme has an active Sounding Board consisting of four students. Together with the Academic Directors, they evaluate the programme three times per year after every domain (set of three courses). In these meetings, the learning outcomes are evaluated and specific events, requests or concerns from the students are discussed.

The combined programme also has an Advisory Board which functions as an external quality control body and is a source of in-depth knowledge on both strategic developments and the implementation of policy in public sector organisations. The Advisory Board has the explicit task of relating the programme to the professional field. A recent discussion with the Board concerned the envisaged redesign of MPM/MME and the required changes this redesign entails in terms of curriculum contents.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in MPM is robust, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this executive master programme. The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the master theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. The expert found the evaluation form appropriate. While not agreeing to the grade provided in one (out of fifteen) case, the expert reported that all evaluation forms had been completed in an informative way. In all assessments, the criteria are scored and discussed in the evaluation forms, resulting in most cases in transparent motivations for the final grade and the respective sub-scores per criterion.

Nonetheless, the expert noted that the level of insightful detail differed somewhat across the sample: some assessors used rather general expressions that provided limited information for the student on how to learn or improve for the future. Moreover, the expert reported that the assessment materials did not contain a separate evaluation per assessor. This finding applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed by the PRT during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment apply fully to this MPM programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme.

In addition, PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but thesis assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and the sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this Executive Master programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits points. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 28 students who graduated in the academic year 2020-2021. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (7% - 82% - 11%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 1 low quality, 12 average quality and 2 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, fourteen out of fifteen theses were of sufficient quality to pass. One thesis (with final score 7) was submitted to the committee for a second opinion: according to the expert, the thesis quality was poor in several respects, ranging from the research question and the literature study, over the method and the validity and reliability of the research, to the lack of critical reflection. The second reviewer agreed that the thesis was indeed not strong on the above-mentioned elements – and should have received a lower final score - but found the level demonstrated by the student less problematic and overall sufficient. Hence, the thesis committee considered that all theses in the sample were of sufficient quality. The PRT endorses the positive findings of the thesis committee on the quality of the final projects.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that the thesis subjects represented actual, relevant questions for society and practice. The sample seemed representative for the entire programme both content-wise and in terms of the quality demonstrated. Most theses had a clear structure and explained the reader what can be expected in the next paragraphs. Moreover, the expert noted that most theses use a qualitative approach and that three theses build on the same theory (a book about networked organisation) thereby presenting a comparable theoretical framework. The programme team indicated that the research methodology training in MPM has a focus on qualitative research and that most research questions in the master thesis can be studied using qualitative methods. Nonetheless, students who prefer to pursue quantitative research are at liberty – and properly supported – to do so.

Although it was not raised as an issue by the thesis expert in this programme, the panel understood from the matrix in the self-evaluation report that the thesis only covers three programme learning outcomes while other modules ensure that students demonstrably achieve the seven other exit qualifications. Hence, the panel suggests the programme team to monitor that students demonstrably achieve each programme learning outcome during the programme.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this EM programme Public and Non-Profit Management targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a

crossroads in their career. Alumni indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this programme. The positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate MPM have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this EM programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master Public and Non-Profit Management at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the orientation of the curriculum, the didactic principles, the specific student intake, the programme-specific quality assurance provisions and the thesis assessment. Moreover, the panel endorses the overall developments in the combined MPM/MME programme featuring both a greater overlap with and a stronger differentiation from the Management in Education domain.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the programme to:

- verify whether the specific Public and Non-Profit Management domain is sufficiently addressed in the programme learning outcomes;
- monitor that curriculum contents are sufficiently specific for MPM students;
- monitor that students demonstrably achieve each programme learning outcome during the programme.

14. Executive Master Operations and Supply Chain Management

The Executive Master of Operations and Supply Chain Management (CROHO 75136) is a 62 ECTS part-time programme taught in English that can be studied in 20 months. Established in 2010, the MOS programme is organised on the Tilburg campus and caters for supply chain and operations management professionals with at least five years of relevant experience working for companies across the entire supply chain.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings from the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes across TIAS are valid for this programme.

The PRT gathers from the self-evaluation report that the domain of operations and supply chain management is very broad. Within this domain, the programme is dedicated to both the modelling and understanding of operational processes and their management when dealing with challenging customer requirements in a competitive environment. Students learn to use scientific knowledge when assessing new trends under the assumption that operational processes and their management can be characterized by generic scientific concepts and models. This enables them to select the appropriate management concepts and models in the context of their professional environment. In this way, the knowledge acquired during the programme creates added value for both students and their employers.

The panel notices that the programme is aligned with the mission of TIAS to be “the go-to school for business transformation that serves society.” The content of all module papers and the thesis support the transition to a society that makes efficient use of scarce resources. Other key features of the programme are the attention to recent developments in the digitalization of society and the training students receive to perform design-oriented research in their thesis.

Furthermore, the panel acknowledges that the programme learning outcomes are discussed – and when necessary adjusted – every year following the assessment of the programme's strengths and weaknesses. The programme team, key lecturers and the Advisory Board play an important role in this process. The intended learning outcomes as they are in use at the time of the site visit comply with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and adequately reflect the domain (MOS), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MOS programme. The PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the programme

and the way key stakeholders monitor the ongoing relevance of the programme. Moreover, the panel considers that the nine learning outcomes are formulated adequately.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this programme: MOS is definitely a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to the professional field.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS apply fully to this MOS programme.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this programme: the design of the MOS curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of the individual courses add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the curriculum consists of 10 substantive courses (41 ECTS), one elective (4 ECTS), one study trip (2 ECTS) and a master thesis (15 ECTS). The panel notices that the programme has a strong functional (content) orientation featuring four generic and six topic-oriented modules. Since the previous accreditation several courses have been adjusted or replaced. Following the request from students to include more soft skills in the curriculum, an elective was added that can be taken from other TIAS programmes.

The panel gathers from the student chapter that students appreciate the broad variety of modules and the attention in these courses to in-company research. Moreover, the topics are relevant and linked to developments in society. Overall, students strongly value the quality of the course materials. As points for attention, students mention the little focus on leadership and the limited offer of electives.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum content across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MOS programme. The individual modules are relevant and together form a coherent curriculum. The panel considers that the adjustments that have been made to the curriculum since the previous accreditation are clearly for the better.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment*Findings*

The panel's general findings on curriculum learning environment are valid for this programme. Moreover, the self-evaluation report describes extensively the specific learning environment of this particular programme.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the programme has been adjusted in line with the policy of TIAS towards more modularisation and flexibility. The curriculum schedule is concentrated around monthly lectures spread over three consecutive days. Every module consists of course preparation, contact hours and take-home assignments. Moreover, students have now more choices to start the programme and to complete their master thesis.

While students overall like this modular and flexible approach, they also indicated that the pace is very fast and that three-day class sessions can be short. The panel is confident that the ongoing discussions between students and staff and the regular course evaluations will lead to further adjustments in the curriculum and mitigate the reasonable concerns of the students.

The PRT gathers from the materials and the discussions that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted considerably on the delivery of the MOS programme. Right after the outbreak of the pandemic, the programme switched immediately to online education: this switch has affected negatively on the group dynamics, certainly at the beginning. Moreover, the pandemic often changed the professional and personal situation of the participants who were expected to deal with the consequences of the pandemic both at home and at work. Furthermore, it sometimes proved difficult – and certainly time-consuming - for students to conduct interviews or collect data for their thesis. During this period, the programme team has been forthcoming as much as possible in stretching deadlines and increasing the number of thesis supervision moments.

As the field of supply chain management is very international in both research and application, the programme team has decided to use English as the language of instruction. Students from companies where the working language is Dutch can be allowed to write their paper assignments and the thesis in Dutch. In line with its overall position on the use of Dutch and/or English in TIAS programmes, the PRT supports the choice and the language policy of the programme. Nonetheless, the panel sees room for attracting more international students, which in turn would enhance the international (and intercultural) dimension of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across TIAS apply fully to this MOS programme. The panel acknowledges the efforts of the programme team to make the curriculum flexible and modular and considers that the result is positive. It also appreciates

the humane way in which the programme has addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a point for attention in the future, the programme could attract more international students.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this programme.

The programme targets talented, experienced and motivated professionals in the field of operations and supply chain management. Between 2016 and 2020, the programme attracted on average 16 students per year, with an average age of 35 and 10 years of work experience. Most MOS students were male (79%), Dutch (90%) and held a degree from a university of applied sciences (79%). Whilst impacting on the delivery of education, the COVID-19 pandemic did not so much affect the intake figures: the modular curriculum structure has kept the number of enrolments on pre-pandemic levels.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students complete the programme. Over the past few years, however, the share of students completing the programme in time has decreased. As mentioned before, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a particular impact on the thesis component of the programme, which in turn affected the success rates of several cohorts.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across TIAS apply fully to this MOS programme. The admission and selection procedure seems to be effective in attracting the motivated and experienced professionals which the programme is targeting. Nonetheless, the share of female students is still limited while the number of Dutch students entering the programme after a pre-master programme is high.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

According to the data provided in the self-evaluation report, the MOS teaching team consists of 8 core faculty and 16 additional faculty: 20 staff are Dutch and 3 are female. The programme team acknowledges the underrepresentation of female faculty – a weakness it shares with many

programmes at TIAS. In line with its findings on the international students, the panel thinks that also more international staff should teach on the programme.

Students praise the quality of the core team, and see the practical experience of the additional faculty and the guest lecturers as a strength of the programme. Moreover, students appreciate the support provided by the programme team, notably the programme manager, as this allows them to focus on their study.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MOS programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. As a point for attention, the panel encourages the programme team to recruit more female and international faculty.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MOS programme, which is taught on the university campus in Tilburg.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the MOS programme are adequate, in line with its overall positive appreciation of the facilities across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this MOS programme. In addition, the panel notices that thesis supervisors play an important role in the overall tutoring efforts of the programme. This is recognised and appreciated by the students and seems all the more necessary since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across TIAS apply fully to MOS.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance are valid for this programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired. In fact, two modules which scored well below the threshold were discontinued and its contents have been reallocated across other modules taught by different faculty.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MOS programme is effective, which in turn confirms the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across TIAS.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme. The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes.

According to the student chapter, the individual assignments are relevant for acquiring the programme competencies. Moreover, as most modules require students to write a paper on their own organisation, the information collected and the analysis made are interesting for both the students and their employers. As a point for attention, the programme should ensure that all lecturers provide relevant feedback on the assignments. While many already do so, some of the feedback is reportedly simplistic.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the most recent theses are assessed using the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the input from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this assessment form is appropriate for the evaluation of master theses. The expert who looked at the sample of MOS theses reported that twelve out of fifteen evaluation forms have been completed in an informative way. In all cases, assessors have graded each criterion. However, in three cases the feedback provided to motivate the scores was rather brief and/or uninformative.

Moreover, the expert sees room for more transparency in the assessment as the form does not contain a separate evaluation per assessor, as announced in the Guidelines. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Furthermore, the expert noted that there seems to be little room to excel in the thesis, at least from an assessment point of view. The range of final grades in the theses was between 6 and 8.5, and also partial grades were never really high. According to the programme team, thesis grading over the last four cohorts shows a normal distribution of grades. About 15% of the theses get a high grade, which is perceived as a regular percentage.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment apply fully to this MOS programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. In this regard, the PRT confirms the analysis by the TIAS Assessment Committee that "the process of examination is generally in order in this programme; there are clear learning objectives, a clear assessment plan, clearly formulated and challenging assignments, and critical assessment."

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment in the MOS programme is strong. The programme is not only using a relevant evaluation form, but almost all thesis assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating their overall scores and sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on the thesis quality and on the performance of graduates are valid for this MOS programme.

In the final project, knowledge and theoretical concepts from at least three different modules must be applied to a substantial company problem. The problem statement is reviewed by the business research methods lecturer and approved by the Academic Director before the student embarks on the master thesis. This final project accounts for almost a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated since December 2018. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (20% - 60% - 20%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 3 low quality, 9 average quality and 3 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, each of the fifteen theses was clearly of sufficient quality to pass. Hence, none of the theses was submitted to the committee for a second opinion. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to all fifteen final grades given by the respective assessors. As a

result, the ranking of the theses was adequate: theses with a higher score were indeed of better quality than those receiving a lower grade, while theses with an identical grade were of comparable quality.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert reported that the quality of the theses was good and that students demonstrated in their research a level of competence that can be expected of an academic master's degree. All theses followed a default structure. Moreover, there was great consistency among the different supervisors in terms of the general thesis framework and what should be in a thesis and what not. Although theses typically had the right content, the specificities of the different companies - that are well known by the student and the supervisor - made it difficult for an external reader to really grasp all the aspects of the thesis. Part of this knowledge, also in terms of abbreviations, concept definitions, etc., is probably tacit and therefore not known to an external reader. The PRT endorses the overall positive findings of the thesis committee on the quality of the final projects.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that this MOS programme targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Alumni indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions and in advancing in their careers.

Moreover, the panel was satisfied to read that employers are particularly positive on the way their companies benefit from the programme: they often integrate the results of the module assignments in their companies and the results of the master thesis even leads to financial pay-backs. This finding is confirmed in the student chapter: according to MOS students, one of the programme strengths is "good marketing to motivate employers to pay tuition".

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the positive findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MOS programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career. Although it was not in a position to check the veracity of the statements, the panel established that this programme was very explicit in mentioning the benefit of / payback for companies when they invest in the tuition of their employees.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment.

This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this MOS programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Operations and Supply Chain Excellence at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the rationale of the programme, the recent changes to the curriculum, the competent staff and the quality of both thesis products and their assessment.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the MOS programme to:

- mitigate the ‘flip-side’ of the flexible and modular curriculum structure,
- monitor the (nominal) completion rates of the programme;
- target more international students;
- recruit more female and international faculty members.

15. Executive Master Real Estate

The Executive Master of Real Estate (CROHO 75106) is a 60 ECTS part-time programme taught in Dutch that can be studied in 18 months. Established in 1998, the MRE is now offered on the Utrecht campus and caters for versatile real estate professionals who combine personal management skills with analytical skills and academic thinking. In the programme, in-depth knowledge about the real estate sector goes hand in hand with new insights from other disciplines, such as strategic management, data science, finance, behavioural economics, marketing, geography, and leadership. This multidisciplinary approach teaches students to change perspectives, thereby assisting them in solving new issues in real estate practice.

The programme-specific findings and considerations are largely based on the programme's self-evaluation report and student chapter, on the findings of the thesis review and on the additional clarifications provided by the programme team before the site visit.

Standard 1 – intended learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on intended learning outcomes across TIAS are valid for this programme. The MRE programme has been developed and is currently implemented in line with the mission, vision and strategy of TIAS: companies and institutions can only be successful if they take their role in society seriously rather than merely focusing on profits. In addition, the programme features strong links with the professional field, which in turn ensures that its objectives remain up-to-date.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that the rationale for the programme is clearly outlined: the MRE programme looks at the real estate sector as part of a broader economic system with real estate organizations being important players in major societal challenges. Developing real estate and managing real estate portfolios is not possible without knowledge of this bigger picture. Compared to its benchmarks, the MRE at TIAS takes a multidisciplinary approach, integrating several of TIAS's key themes and knowledge domains such as strategy, finance and social entrepreneurship. RME students, in turn, should also master and apply knowledge from outside their own discipline.

Since the previous accreditation visit, the MRE programme has been considerably redesigned in terms of both contents, structure and learning outcomes. The panel notices that the nine learning outcomes that are in use at the time of this accreditation visit reflect the vision of the School, the rationale for the programme and its distinctly multidisciplinary approach. The PRT acknowledges that the formulation of the intended learning outcomes aligns with the widely agreed Dublin Descriptors and adequately reflect the domain (real estate), level (master) and orientation (academic) of the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intended learning outcomes across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. The panel thinks highly of the rationale for this programme

and considers that the intended learning outcomes are formulated adequately and clearly reflect what this programme stands for.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 1, intended learning outcomes.**

Standard 2 – curriculum orientation

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum orientation are valid for this MRE programme: it definitely is a programme of academic orientation yet has a clear link to the professional practice.

In addition, the panel notices that the starting point of the programme is the actual work experience of each student. This is the frame of reference with which students enter the program. The MRE programme provides students with the ability to step back from daily practice and view dilemmas from a fresh perspective. This ability is taught using practical examples combined with recent scientific insights. Moreover, students bring their own work experience and case materials to class, which makes executive education different from more traditional pre-experience university education.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students recognise both the double orientation and the starting point of the programme. Students joined the programme in order to acquire knowledge about the broader domain of real estate, to perform their job in a more evidence-based way, to get better insight into their own motives and professional behaviour, and to become a more complete real estate professional.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum orientation across TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. Establishing that this is a master programme of academic orientation that effectively promotes the academic development of its students, the panel considers that the professional dimension, as well as the specific domain expertise of the participants, is incorporated adequately in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 2, curriculum orientation.**

Standard 3 – curriculum content

Findings

The panel's general findings on curriculum content are valid for this MRE programme: the design of the curriculum is coherent, its contents are relevant and the learning goals of individual courses add up nicely to the overall learning outcomes at programme level.

The PRT acknowledges that the curriculum has been adjusted considerably since the previous accreditation visit. According to the self-evaluation report, the current curriculum consists of four foundation courses (32 ECTS), one personal management skills module (4 ECTS), one elective (4 ECTS), one Business Research Methods course (5 ECTS) and the master thesis (15 ECTS). The panel acknowledges that the new curriculum reflects nicely the repositioning of the programme and the fundamental principles that underpin its objectives.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter and the course evaluations that students appreciate both the individual course contents and the quality of the curriculum overall. They value the opportunity of an elective course, the practice-based character of sessions and the personal impact of the coaching component. Nonetheless, students also point to several – according to the panel interesting and feasible - elements for improvement or investment, such as advancing the research skills module, attention in class to basic but fundamental elements of the real estate domain, a coaching trajectory that is spread over a longer period, etc. The panel is confident that the ongoing discussions between students and staff and the regular course evaluations will lead to further adjustments in the curriculum.

Furthermore, the PRT notices that following the suggestion of the previous accreditation panel, the panel has enhanced the international orientation of the thesis project. While several students work for local real estate organisations and address ‘Dutch’ issues in their thesis, the number of research topics that have a broader knowledge base (e.g. on creating shared value, smart cities, affordable housing) is growing. Moreover, all students are required to position their research proposals within international scientific literature.

Considerations

The panel’s general considerations on curriculum content across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. The panel thinks highly of the design of the curriculum and considers that the recent adjustments to the modules are for the better.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 3, curriculum content.**

Standard 4 – curriculum learning environment

Findings

The panel’s general findings on curriculum learning environment across TIAS are valid for this programme.

In addition, the self-evaluation describes the specific learning environment for this particular programme. Following its repositioning in 2018, the MRE curriculum has been designed in a blended format. Instead of weekly in-class sessions, students now attend class on three consecutive days per month, which in turn allows students to do the preparation and assignment work at their own pace and in their own time. The introduction of Canvas as learning management system has facilitated the transition to blended learning. Moreover, as post-

experience education programme addressing domain professionals, the MRE makes extensive use of real-life cases and expects students to address their own professional situation in the course assignments.

The panel gathers from the Student Chapter that students appreciate the blended format of the modules and the flexibility of the curriculum. As a point for improvement, students indicated that in a modular approach with limited in-class sessions, the programme team could facilitate more explicitly the networking opportunities among students. While the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardised such opportunities, it is all the more important according to students that the networking component is supported by/in the programme. The panel endorses this suggestion.

Furthermore, the panel notices that the programme is delivered in Dutch but has an English language title. According to the programme team, the target group consists predominantly of Dutch professionals working for real estate organisations that operate mainly at local, regional or national level. The programme title Master of Real Estate, as well as the abbreviation MRE are recognised as such by the market / professional field. In line with its overall position on the use of English and/or Dutch in TIAS programmes, the PRT endorses the language-related choices of the MRE programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on curriculum learning environment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. The new curriculum structure befits the strategy of TIAS and allows students to organise their own study pace thereby facilitating the combination of study, work and private life.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 4, curriculum learning environment.**

Standard 5 – intake

Findings

The panel's general findings on intake – and notably the TIAS wide approach to admission in terms of requirements and process - are valid for this programme.

According to the self-evaluation report, the MRE programme targets ambitious professionals working in the real estate sector in an intermediate or senior position with at least five years of relevant work experience. It attracts students with diverse professional backgrounds who are looking for a broader strategic scope as well as in-depth knowledge of the real estate market. This diversity encourages interesting interaction in the classroom and enriches the alumni network upon graduation.

The panel gathers from the detailed data on student intake and cohort composition that the number of students fluctuates strongly. Between 2016 and 2020, an average cohort consisted of 16 students, aged 40 with 14 years of work experience. Most students were male (74%) and

held a bachelor's degree from a university of applied sciences (70%). Although the share of female students has increased in recent years, their underrepresentation seems to correspond with the general picture of the working population in the sector. Compared to other TIAS programmes, the intake was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the contrary: it seems that the new curriculum structure has attracted more students (25) to the programme.

The panel was satisfied to read that almost all students (96%) complete the programme. While 54% of the students have at least one resit during their trajectory, on average 62% finish the programme in time. The main bottleneck has been and continues to be the thesis work, which was further jeopardised by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding considerable supervision and dedicated attention during the graduation process, some students struggle with the master thesis. Moreover, the flexible curriculum structure does not impose strict deadlines but allows students to complete the RME in four years.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on intake across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. The diverse background of students, both in terms of job positions and education, is used by the programme to enhance interaction and discussion among cohorts. While the admission and selection procedures seems effective in attracting resourceful students, the programme team could look for ways to mitigate the main cause of study delay.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 5, intake.**

Standard 6 – staff

Findings

The panel's general findings on staffing – in terms of policy, number and quality of academic and professional staff - are valid for this programme.

In addition to a dedicated team of four core lecturers, who are each responsible for one foundation course, there are 19 other core and additional faculty involved in the MRE programme. Most faculty members (17) are male and all but one is Dutch. Students appreciate the quality of the core team and the additional faculty and praise the personal attention by the programme manager.

Considerations

In line with its general considerations on staff across all TIAS programmes, the panel considers that the staff on the MRE programme is sufficient in number and strong in quality. While the programme could attract more female faculty, the current disbalance is less explicit than in some of the other TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 6, staff.**

Standard 7 – facilities

Findings

The panel's general findings on facilities across TIAS are valid for this MRE programme, which is taught on the Utrecht campus. Students indicated to the panel that the location is very well suited for executive master education. Moreover, the panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that the new location, in combination with the blended offer of monthly meetings, has given the programme a larger geographical reach.

Considerations

The panel considers that the material and educational facilities of the MRE programme are good, which confirms its overall positive considerations regarding all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 7, facilities.**

Standard 8 – tutoring

Findings

The panel's general findings on tutoring across TIAS are valid for this programme.

In addition, the panel notices that thesis supervisors play an important role in the overall tutoring efforts of the MRE programme. This is recognised by the students and seems all the more necessary since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on tutoring across all TIAS programmes apply fully to MRE.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 8, tutoring.**

Standard 9 – quality assurance

Findings

The panel's general findings on quality assurance are valid for this programme.

In addition to its positive impressions on the policy, system and stakeholder involvement in quality assurance, the panel gathers from the extensive data provided in the self-evaluation report that the QA measures are implemented in practice and that flaws reported e.g. in course evaluations are picked up and repaired. Moreover, the panel notices that the programme can rely on an active student sounding board and an Advisory Board featuring two alumni.

In terms of external quality control, the panel notices that TIAS and its MRE programme have been accredited as provider of professional education by several real estate industry associations in the Netherlands.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assurance in the MRE programme is good, which in turn confirms all the positive considerations of the PRT on QA across all TIAS programmes.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 9, quality assurance.**

Standard 10 – assessment

Findings

The panel's general findings on the assessment policy, the quality of tests and the quality assurance of assessments through the Examinations Board are valid for this programme.

The panel gathers from the self-evaluation report that there is a strong alignment between the assessment formats, the course learning goals and the programme learning outcomes. Each foundation course is concluded with an individual assignment and multiple short group assignments. The individual assignments have different forms: a literature review, an essay, an empirical paper, or a case study. For the group assignments, groups of 3 to 4 persons are formed. After each course, the group composition changes. Working in groups during the course contributes to students becoming acquainted with each other's field of work and broadens their perspective. Depending on the type of assignment, the work field of one of the group members is chosen as the subject for the group assignment. Students appreciate the combination of individual and group assignments and find it inspiring to notice how different other participants sometimes think about problems and solutions.

Furthermore, the panel was informed that in 2021, the MRE programme was audited by the Examination Board, which established that the programme has a clear structure and is based on concretely formulated learning objectives. The assessment formats combine group assignments and individual papers which appeal to the students and are clearly formulated. However, the organization of group assignments requires attention as the individual performance of students is insufficiently transparent and may lead to 'free-riding' behaviour. As a result of this audit, individual assignments now constitute at least half of the grades for each module and the group composition for group assignments is changed regularly.

The final project review performed by the thesis committee shows that the most recent theses are assessed according to the Assessment Form Master Thesis TIAS. Based on the feedback from the respective experts, the thesis committee established that this evaluation form is appropriate for the assessment of master theses. The expert reported that ten out of fifteen evaluation forms were completed in an informative way. In all cases, assessors had graded each

criterion. However, the size and level of feedback varied considerably over the different evaluation forms.

As a point for improvement, the expert reported that the evaluation materials did not contain a separate evaluation per assessor. The PRT endorses this finding, which applies to several TIAS programmes and has been addressed during the site visit and in the general section of this report.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on student assessment across all TIAS programmes apply fully to this MRE programme. Its appreciation covers the system of assessment, the organisation and implementation of course assessments, and the way the quality of assessment is assured in this programme. In this regard, the PRT confirms the analysis of the Examination Board and welcomes the resulting adjustments made by the programme team.

In addition, the PRT endorses the findings of the thesis committee that the quality of thesis assessment is good. The programme is not only using a relevant assessment form, but a majority of assessors are also making optimum use of the form by motivating the overall score and sub-scores with insightful written feedback.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 10, assessment.**

Standard 11 – achieved learning outcomes

Findings

The panel's general findings on thesis quality and on graduate performance are valid for this MRE programme.

The final project consists of a master thesis that accounts for a quarter of the total study credits. As part of the external assessment of this programme, an expert on the thesis committee reviewed a sample of 15 final projects. The selection of the sample was based on a list featuring 30 students who graduated since December 2016. Ensuring a fair distribution among the scoring categories (17% - 60% - 23%) in the sample, the expert reviewed 3 low quality, 8 average quality and 4 high quality theses that had been assessed by a variety of supervisors and second readers.

According to the expert, fourteen out of fifteen theses were of sufficient quality to pass. One thesis with the lowest score of the sample (6) was submitted to the committee for a second opinion: both reviewer and second reader agreed that this thesis should not have been accepted but sent back for a final round of content and linguistic improvements. In fact many of the experts' viewpoints were shared by the assessors who nonetheless gave it a very meagre pass score. Hence, the thesis committee considers – and the PRT endorses this result - that fourteen theses are of sufficiently quality. In terms of grading, the expert agreed to twelve out of fifteen

final scores given by the respective assessors. Next to the above-mentioned case, two other theses (8.5 and 7.5) deserved a lower score because the students did not develop all components sufficiently thoroughly, lacked a critical attitude and did not reflect much on the results.

Overlooking the entire sample, the expert found that in most cases the research subject and its societal relevance were well elucidated, that theory was mostly well discussed, that the methodology and data tended to be thoroughly reported, and that the conclusions showed a consistent relation with the analysis and the main research question. Nonetheless, the expert also reported that students paid less attention to academic relevance, seldomly criticized theory and did not often compare the research results with the literature outcome.

The programme team recognises these flaws: the academic field of real estate research is still young and this means that regarding certain research topics the academic literature is limited. However, students are stimulated to study this literature, encouraged to reflect on what their results contribute to this literature, and required to position their research question within the literature that they have reviewed. Moreover, during the first part of the curriculum, students work on assignments in which they learn to gather and review academic literature, to convert their research review into a clear conceptual framework, and to read and discuss at least 10 academic peer reviewed papers. Furthermore, the programme team indicated that MRE students are often struggling with gathering relevant papers and are then more inclined to discuss and summarize these papers in the literature review. During their progress meetings with their thesis supervisor, they are challenged to formulate their research contributions and to clearly position their own research within the literature discussed.

The panel endorses the findings of the expert and acknowledges the input from the programme team. It welcomes the attention of the programme to the thesis trajectory, which constitutes a stumbling block for some RME students. The panel invites the programme team to share the findings of the thesis committee with the faculty involved in the programme and to discuss how all students on the RME programme can be accompanied throughout the entire curriculum and in the final project phase to produce a good quality master thesis.

The PRT gathers from the information materials and the discussions that the MRE programme targets highly experienced professionals who are often at a crossroads in their career. Alumni indicated that this executive master programme has played an important role in furthering their professional ambitions and in advancing in their careers. In fact, graduation constitutes often the reason for promotion within the own organization. Other students decide to change jobs, sometimes even during the programme. As the RME broadens the scope of the participants, it also contributes to broadening the students' own opportunities in the real estate market. Or as was mentioned in the student chapter: the programme provides "handvatten voor een completere vastgoedprofessional met oog voor de toekomst." In a few cases, students decided to start their own real estate company after the programme.

Considerations

The panel's general considerations on achieved learning outcomes across TIAS apply fully to this programme. As thesis quality is a key indicator to measure this standard, the findings from the thesis committee convinced the PRT that students who graduate the MRE programme have indeed achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. Moreover, having acquired new competences at academic master level allows students to advance in their professional career.

In addition to these positive conclusions, the findings of the thesis committee also confirm statements from the programme team that (some) students struggle with producing a master thesis. The panel advises the programme team to discuss with the programme faculty how students can be prepared throughout the curriculum modules to produce a good quality master thesis in the graduation phase.

Conclusion

The PRT judges that **this programme meets standard 11, achieved learning outcomes.**

Overall conclusion

In sum, the panel considers that this programme meets the quality requirements on each of the eleven standards of the NVAO evaluation framework for extensive programme assessment. This appreciation is based on the general findings across all TIAS programmes, as well as on the way this RME programme fulfils each and every standard in its own way. Hence, **the Peer Review Team issues a positive advice to NVAO on the Executive Master of Real Estate at TIAS School for Business and Society.**

Summarising its considerations on this programme, the PRT thinks highly of the programme rationale, the orientation, design and structure of the curriculum, the professional background of the participants, and the staff involved in the programme.

With an aim to further improve programme quality, the PRT suggests the MRE programme to:

- discuss with students their suggestions for curriculum enhancement;
- facilitate the networking opportunities among students and between students and alumni;
- enhance the academic research skills of students throughout the curriculum in order to prepare them for the master thesis trajectory.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Administrative data on institution and programmes

Administrative data on the institution

Name of the institution:	TIAS School for Business and Society
Locations:	Tilburg and Utrecht
Status of the institution:	non-funded research university
Result of the institutional quality assurance assessment:	not applicable
Contact person TiSEM:	Lucienne Mochel (l.mochel@tias.edu)

Administrative data on the programmes

(1) Name:	Business Administration
CROHO:	60470
Level:	master (pre-experience)
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	63 ECTS
Location:	Utrecht
Mode of study:	full-time (12 months)
Language:	English
Tracks:	Business Analytics - Change Management - Financial Management - Investment Management - Marketing Management

(2) Name:	Business Administration
CROHO:	60740
Level:	master (post-experience)
Orientation:	academic
Credits:	63 ECTS
Location:	Utrecht
Mode of study:	part-time (20 months)
Language:	Dutch and English
Tracks:	none

(3) Name:	Master in Business Administration
CROHO:	75101
Level:	master (post-experience)
Orientation:	MBA

Credits: 70 ECTS
 Location: Utrecht
 Mode of study: full-time (12 months)
 Language: English
 Tracks: none

(4) Name: **Executive Master of Business Valuation**

CROHO: 75073
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg
 Mode of study: part-time (18 months)
 Language: English
 Tracks: none

(5) Name: **Executive Master in Finance**

CROHO: 75073
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg
 Mode of study: part-time (18 months)
 Language: English
 Tracks: none

(6) Name: **Executive Master of Finance and Control**

CROHO: 75019
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 67 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg and Utrecht
 Mode of study: part-time (22 months)
 Language: Dutch
 Tracks: none

(7) Name: **Executive Master of Health Administration**

CROHO: 75086
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Utrecht
 Mode of study: part-time (15 months)
 Language: Dutch
 Tracks: none

(8) Name: **Executive Master of IT-Auditing**

CROHO: 75099
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg
 Mode of study: part-time (30 months)
 Language: Dutch
 Tracks: Cybersecurity – Data & Analytics

(9) Name: **Executive Master Information Management and Digital Transformations**

CROHO: 75091
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg
 Mode of study: part-time (19 months)
 Language: English
 Tracks: none

(10) Name: **Executive Master of Management and Organisation**

CROHO: 75072
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg and Utrecht
 Mode of study: part-time (18 months)
 Language: Dutch
 Tracks: none

(11) Name: **Executive Master of Management in Education**

CROHO: 75079
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg and Utrecht
 Mode of study: part-time (18 months)
 Language: Dutch
 Tracks: none

(12) Name: **Executive Master of Public and Non-Profit Management**

CROHO: 75078
 Level: master (post-experience)
 Orientation: academic
 Credits: 60 ECTS
 Location: Tilburg and Utrecht
 Mode of study: part-time (18 months)

Language: Dutch
Tracks: none

(13) Name: **Executive Master of Marketing & Customer Management**

CROHO: 75111
Level: master (post-experience)
Orientation: academic
Credits: 60 ECTS
Location: Tilburg
Mode of study: part-time (16 months)
Language: Dutch
Tracks: none

(14) Name: **Executive Master of Operations and Supply Chain Management**

CROHO: 75136
Level: master (post-experience)
Orientation: academic
Credits: 62 ECTS
Location: Tilburg
Mode of study: part-time (20 months)
Language: English
Tracks: none

(15) Name: **Executive Master of Real Estate**

CROHO: 75106
Level: master (post-experience)
Orientation: academic
Credits: 60 ECTS
Location: Utrecht
Mode of study: part-time (18 months)
Language: Dutch
Tracks: none

Annex 2 – Peer Review Team and Thesis Committee members

Peer Review Team

Rudy Martens, PRT chair

Professor Martens was full professor of Management and Strategy at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. He was Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Antwerp and Head of the Management Department before retiring in September 2021. Rudy has extensive experience as chair and member of Peer Review Teams on behalf AACSB, EPAS-EFMD and VLIR-NVAO.

Philip Vergauwen, NVAO member and vice-chair of the PRT

Professor Vergauwen is the past Dean of the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Before, he was Dean of the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University. Philip has extensive accreditation experience, on both sides of the table, with AACSB, EFMD and NVAO.

Michael Ginzberg, AACSB member of the PRT

Professor Ginzberg is professor of Technology Management and Dean Emeritus at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester (MA), USA. In his long career he served as Dean at several colleges in the US and set up among others a graduate business school in post-war Sarajevo. Michael mentored several schools seeking accreditation and served on many AACSB accreditation panels, both domestic and international, including one combined AACSB-NVAO panel.

Filipe Santos, AACSB member of the PRT

Professor Santos is Dean of the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics and professor in Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation. Filipe founded Portugal Inovação Social, which promotes and supports social innovation in Portugal.

Evi Voets, NVAO student-member of the PRT

Ms. Voets has a bachelor's degree in International Business (major Marketing) and is currently following a MSc International Business at Maastricht University. Evi is member of the programme committee and student council in the School of Business and Economics.

Thesis Committee

Philip Vergauwen, Solvay Brussels School of Economics & Management, chair

Being familiar with the Dutch higher education system, Professor Vergauwen functioned as linking pin between the Peer Review Team and the thesis committee. As chair of the thesis committee, he supervised the sample selection, quality controlled the individual thesis reviews that required a second opinion, and validated the thesis committee report.

René de Koster, Erasmus University Rotterdam

René is professor of Logistics and Operations Management and chairs the Technology and Operations Management Department at RSM. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Business Administration (post-experience part-time variant).

Ivo De Loo, Nyenrode Business University

Ivo is professor Management Accounting & Control at Nyenrode. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Finance and Control.

Rob Gleasure, Copenhagen Business School

Rob is professor of Digitalisation in Copenhagen. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses in Information Management and Digital Transformations.

Jochen Mierau, University of Groningen

Jochen is professor Public Health Economics and scientific director of the School of Public Health in Groningen. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Health Administration.

Ed Nozeman, University of Groningen

Ed is professor Economic Geography in Groningen and guest professor Real Estate Development at the Amsterdam School of Real Estate. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Real Estate.

Liliane Pintelon, KU Leuven

Liliane heads the Centre for Industrial Management/Traffic and Infrastructure in Leuven. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed theses on Business Administration (pre-experience full-time variant).

Lieven Quintens, Maastricht University

Lieven is professor at the department of Marketing and Supply Chain Management in Maastricht. On behalf of the committee he reviewed theses on Operations & Supply Chain Management.

Remko Renes, Nyenrode Business University

Remko is professor Corporate Governance and member of the Centre for Accounting, Auditing & Control at Nyenrode. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on IT Auditing.

Jan Schoormans, TU Delft

Jan is professor of Consumer Research at the School of Industrial Design Engineering in Delft. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Marketing and Consumer Management.

Piet Sercu, KU Leuven

Piet is professor of International Finance in Leuven. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Business Valuation.

Meir Shemla, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Meir is professor of Organisational Behaviour and Director of the MBA programme at RSM. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed the MBA theses.

Ad van Iterson, Maastricht University

Ad is emeritus professor of Organisation Studies and freelance thesis supervisor at the School of Business and Economics in Maastricht. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses in Management & Organisation.

Kristin Vanlommel, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences

Kristin is Lector Organiseren en Verandering in Onderwijs in Utrecht and thesis supervisor at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Antwerp. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed theses on Public and Non-Profit Management.

Renée van Schoonhoven, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Renée is professor Onderwijsrecht at VU. On behalf of the committee, she reviewed theses on Management in Education.

Ton Vorst, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Ton is emeritus professor and former chairman of the Finance Department at VU. On behalf of the committee, he reviewed theses on Finance.

Both the thesis committee and the peer review team were 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 has broad experience in supporting combined AACSB-NVAO accreditation panels in the Netherlands.

All members of the peer review team and the thesis committee, as well as the secretary have signed the NVAO independence form.

Annex 3 - Programme of the site visit

Sunday 29 May 2022

- 16.00h Preparatory meeting Peer Review Team
- 18.00h Welcome Dinner TiSEM and TIAS
- 21.00h end of day 1

Monday 30 May 2022

- 08.45h Meeting with Rector and Vice-Rector
- 09.30h Strategic Management TiSEM
- 10.35h Academic Directors BSc programmes TiSEM
- 11.35h Students BSc programmes TiSEM
- 12.10h Faculty BSc programme TiSEM
- 12.45h Lunch and internal meeting PRT
- 13.30h Leadership TIAS
- 14.20h Directors and Cluster Managers TIAS
- 15.15h Parallel sessions on Faculty Development TiSEM and TIAS
- 16.05h Programme Directors TIAS
- 17.20h Parallel sessions with Alumni TiSEM and TIAS
- 18.30h Walking Dinner with International Advisory Boards TiSEM and TIAS
- 20.30h end of day 2

Tuesday 10 November 2020

- 08.30h Dedicated session to Research Master Economics TiSEM
- 09.20h Academic Directors MSc programmes TiSEM
- 10.20h Students MSc programmes TiSEM
- 11.15h Faculty MSc programmes TiSEM
- 12.15h Examination Board and Assessment Assurance Committee TiSEM
- 13.00h Lunch and internal meeting PRT
- 13.45h Staff services TiSEM
- 14.35h Faculty degree and non-degree programmes TIAS

15.40h	Students degree programmes TIAS
16.30h	Staff support departments TIAS
17.15h	Quality assurance and improvement TIAS
18.05h	Examination Board TIAS
19.30h	Dinner and internal meeting PRT
23.00h	end of day 3

Wednesday 1 June 2022

08.30h	Session on research and intellectual contribution TiSEM
09.20h	Session on impact and engagement TIAS
10.20h	Consultative Feedback and Development Dialogue TiSEM and TIAS
11.30h	Optional meeting to clarify outstanding issues
12.00h	Lunch and internal meeting PRT
13.45h	Feedback to Management TiSEM and TIAS
14.30h	Feedback to Academic / Programme Directors TiSEM and TIAS
14.45h	Feedback to Rector and Vice-Rector
15.15h	end of site visit

An overview of the persons interviewed is available on request.

Annex 4 – Materials reviewed

Documents prepared for the AACSB-NVAO combined visit:

- AACSB Continuous Improvement Review report TiSEM and TIAS 2021-2022
- Self-Evaluation Report for the International MSc in Business Administration
- Self-Evaluation Report for the International MSc in Business Administration, Dutch part-time edition
- Self-Evaluation Report for the International MSc in Business Administration, English part-time edition
- Self-Evaluation Report for the full-time International Master of Business Administration
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master Business Valuation and the Executive Master in Finance
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Finance and Control
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Health Administration
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of IT-Auditing
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Information Management and Digital Transformations
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Management and Organisation
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Management in Education and the Executive Master of Public and Non-Profit Management
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Marketing & Customer Management
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Operations and Supply Chain Management
- Self-Evaluation Report for the Executive Master of Real Estate

Every self-evaluation report covered the eleven standards of the NVAO assessment framework for extended programme evaluation and contained appendices on programme learning outcomes, curriculum courses, admission, intake, staff and assessment plan. Students shared their own appreciation of the respective programmes in separate and dedicated student chapters, which took different forms, such as a video presentation or a written report.

Moreover, the PRT had access to other school-wide and programme-specific materials in a dedicated digital base-room set up jointly by TiSEM and TIAS. Before and during the visit, the panel looked among others at the following documents:

- Weaving Minds & Characters, Tilburg University Strategy towards 2027
- Learning Management System TIAS
- Education and Examination Regulations 2021-2022 TIAS
- Policy Functional Limitation TIAS
- Handbook Quality Assurance TIAS
- Toetsbeleid TIAS
- Annual Reports Examination Board TIAS
- Alumni analysis TIAS

In order to facilitate the work of the thesis committee, TiSEM and TIAS set up a filing system on MS Teams containing all information that was necessary to perform the thesis review, including thesis guidelines and grading grids per programme. For each programme the thesis committee reviewed a representative sample of 15 theses. A list of the selected theses per programme is available on request.