



Assessment Report

Extensive programme assessment

Higher Education Institution:

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands

Bachelor programme:

Bachelor of Business Administration
(registered under Croho 39239)

Qualification awarded on completion:

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)

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1. Executive Summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which led to the assessment of the quality of the programme Bachelor of Business Administration at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, which has been assessed according to the Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands.

The panel noted that the programme management followed up on the recommendations, made during the previous assessment in 2017. Significant changes were implemented in regard to the final project, as WUAS Education Board decided to drop the option of the Business Plan as a form of Final Project, mainly due to the incongruence of the nature of a thesis, where considerable emphasis is placed on the literature review and academic writing.

Intended learning outcomes

From the panel's view, the intended learning outcomes are well defined and reflect the programme objectives appropriately. The level is appropriate for a Bachelor's degree. In addition, the achievement of the competence goals is verified systematically and on a regular basis.

The BBA programme is aimed specifically at providing graduates with a very broad and equally balanced range of business, management and organisational knowledge, skills and competencies. The specialisations allow them to specialise in a region of business administration that interests them, and can allow them to create a more specific graduation profile. However, the panel would like to point out that it would make sense from a strategic point of view to also establish differentiated goals/learning outcomes for the individual pathways and, if necessary, also specialisations, which could also sharpen the professional profile of further graduates. WUAS regards the BBA programme as a broad programme, but better differentiation between the pathways could also be applied with regard to a stronger positioning in the educational and professional market.

Curriculum

The concept is a broad business programme leading to a specialisation profile, which is chosen by the student. It is didactically developed over three phases. The qualification objectives of the programme in the field of Business Administration are explained and convincingly presented by WUAS in relation to the target group of international students from countries all over the world.

The study programme's qualification goals are effectively reflected in the curriculum. The module's content is logically integrated, well-balanced, and focused on the desired learning outcomes. The extensive specialisation options give students the opportunity to learn extra competencies and skills in the field of their choice in addition to the core Business Administration modules. As the projects call for a more comprehensive approach to the relevant issue, the project weeks ask the students to think transdisciplinary. Additionally, students can create an interdisciplinary profile by selecting a variety of modules from diverse specialisations.

Concerning the academic skills WUAS has implemented a number of measures to enable students to acquire methodological skills and to be able to work scientifically at Bachelor level. Nevertheless, the final projects provided showed for the most part that scientific skills were present, but that aspects such as literature studies, literature research and problem analysis should be further developed. The panel recommends improving the research methods modules and, if necessary, investigating in a more structured way where students' problems are located in the final project in order to adapt the corresponding modules and promote students' skills accordingly.

Faculty

The panel received information on the structure and number of the faculty and concluded that both correspond to the programme requirements and ensure that the students reach the intended qualification objectives. The faculty's composition, consisting of full-time and part-time lecturers, guarantees that both the academic standards and the requirements of professional practice are fully satisfied.

The academic qualification as well as the pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. WUAS verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. Specific measures for further qualification of the faculty members are implemented. Lecturers from the industry without experience in teaching are advised to participate in the Teacher Training Certificate Programme. All of the lecturers have an international educational background and can therefore provide insights into their international experiences in their lectures. The panel concludes that one key factor in achieving WUAS' internationalisation objectives is the expertise of the teaching staff.

As the programme is run in different locations (only Amsterdam and Apeldoorn have been assessed for NVAO accreditation), WUAS has also demonstrated that it has established a very good internal collaboration with the staff of the different campuses.

Facilities

The quantity, quality, media and IT facilities of the teaching rooms meet the standards required for the programme, even considering the resource needs of other study programmes. The buildings are fully equipped with modern information technology. Free access to a Wi-Fi network is available for students. All rooms and entrances are equipped for people with disabilities and can be reached barrier-free.

The library provides good access to necessary book and journal literature as well as digital media. This also applies to various databases. The library is open during the lecture period as well as during the lecture free period. The needs of the students are considered.

Tutoring

Students are able to receive intensive counselling and assistance during their studies as a result of the open-door policy and the tutor-system. Even after the designated office hours, the faculty members are available for the students. Help is available via the help desk, which serves as first-level support.

Students with disabilities are provided with affirmative actions concerning time and formal standards/requirements throughout the programme and examinations. The exact regulations concerning the disability support are stated in the Education and Examination Guide (EEG).

Quality assurance

A quality assurance and development procedure has been set up and described in a quality handbook. The processes are based on a PDCA-cycle and continuously monitor the status and development of the study programme with respect to its contents and outcomes.

Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure. Furthermore, WUAS promotes a constant dialogue between students, lecturers and programme management in forms of continuous tutoring or regular meetings of the management with "Student Representatives". During the site visit students confirmed the close contact of all involved parties in the programme and were satisfied with WUAS improvement measures and the ways of communication. In this respect, the panel recommends making students more aware of where they can find the results of their evaluations and open sets of minutes in order to create an easier and more transparent access.

Besides the students' involvement in the development of the BBA programme also lecturers as well as third parties (employers, alumni) are regularly invited to give feedback on the programme.

With regard to the quality management system, the panel would like to point out that the module descriptions should be updated and made more transparent. The panel noticed that some module descriptions still contained old literature works and the module descriptions could also be used to differentiate more strongly between the respective specialisations. Thus, the panel recommends ensuring a regular update of the module descriptions with regard to the literature, and with regard to a specific description of the content.

Assessment and learning outcomes achieved

All exams, as they are defined for the modules, are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level. The exams are characterised by a wide variety of different test formats. The examination types offer a good combination and variety to adequately check the achievement of the learning goals.

The panel observes that the examination and assessment system is in general appropriately designed and of sufficient level. However, with regard to the final project, there were a few weaknesses in the assessment, as the panel noticed inconsistencies between the first and second markers, especially with regard to the assessment of the research design. The panel found that WUAS has already implemented improvement measures, but which still seem very informal. Therefore, the panel recommends that all supervisors and external markers work in a more structured way and according to the same procedure.

The panel had the chance to assess several final projects. Altogether, the final projects proved that the students achieved the ability to do scientific work and the overall programme's qualification objectives. However, the panel noticed that students still seem to be rather weak in problem analysis and literature studies, although a lot of different workshops, courses and academic support is already provided for students. The panel assesses that these are particularly aspects that could have been addressed during the supervision of the final project in order to intercept and guide the students at an early stage of their work. Thus, the panel strongly recommends bringing consistent knowledge to supervisors and external markers on how to supervise and grade an academic thesis.

2. Introduction

2.1 Procedure

A contract for the re-accreditation of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) was made between FIBAA and Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences on February 27, 2023.

FIBAA appointed a review panel. The HEI agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Ed Peelen (Chair)

University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Professor of Content Marketing

Prof. Dr. Bibiana Grassinger

IUBH International University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Professor of Marketing and Tourism Management

Prof. Dr. Marco J. Menichetti

University of Liechtenstein
Professor of Business Administration, Banking and Financial Management

Dr. Julian Rossig

Director at Capgemini Invent, Germany

Konstantin Schultewolter

University of Cologne, Germany
Student in Economics (B.A.)

Adriane Janosch (secretary) was responsible for the process coordination and the drafting of the experts' report.

This panel composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. All the panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel has based its assessment on the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Extensive Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands.

The following procedure was undertaken. The panel members studied the programme documents (Annex). Their first impressions were sent to the secretary, in order to outline these remarks within the accreditation framework and detect the items to be clarified during the site visit.

The site visit took place on July 12 and 13, 2023 at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences in Apeldoorn (Annex).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per theme and standard immediately after the site visit. These are based on the findings of the site visit and the assessment of the programme documents.

2.2 Advisory report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report, while the current chapter is the introduction.

The third chapter gives a description of the programme including its position within the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (WUAS) and within the higher education system of the Netherlands.

The panel presents its assessments in the fourth chapter. The programme is assessed by assessing the themes and standards of the Extensive Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of the Netherlands. For each standard the panel presents an outline of its findings, considerations and a conclusion.

Well in advance of the site visit date, WUAS programme management sent a list of final projects of graduates of the programme of the last two complete years. Acting on behalf of the assessment panel, the Secretary in cooperation with the Chair selected 15 final projects from this list. The panel members were forwarded a number of final projects of the programme graduates; these final projects were part of the selection made.

The outline of the findings are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the site visit. The panel's considerations are the panel's subjective evaluations regarding these findings and the importance of each. The considerations presented by the panel logically lead to a concluding assessment.

The panel concludes the report with a table containing an overview of its assessments per standard.

The report was completed on September 19, 2023. The response of WUAS to any factual inaccuracies in the report was received on October 5, 2023, and has been taken into account when finalising the report on October 10, 2023.

3. Programme

3.1 General characteristics

Institution	: Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
Programme title	: Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
Registration in CROHO	: 39239
Type of study programme	: Bachelor programme
Mode of study	: full-time
Teaching language	: English
Location	: Apeldoorn, Amsterdam
Number of ECTS points assigned	: 240 ECTS credits
Projected study time	: 3-4 years
Initial start of the programme	: 2004

3.2 Institution

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (henceforth WUAS), is a privately funded (not for profit) institution for higher education with a primary focus on management disciplines. WUAS is based in the Dutch town of Apeldoorn and operates fully in English. Its directors, management team and its student body are predominantly non-Dutch. WUAS currently offers three Bachelor and Master programmes to around 1,327 students (2022) with 116 different nationalities. Its size, international environment and the fact that it is privately funded contribute to a dynamic and continuously developing institute that enjoys bringing a global outlook to a local region. Its key values are 'Internationalisation', 'Diversity' and 'Ethics', on which it builds its organisation and its programmes. Therefore, WUAS has defined its mission in its Strategic Plan, which states as follows: "Contributing to society in Apeldoorn & the region by promoting excellence in teaching and learning of international business and management, as well as by creating the best environment for students and staff where internationalisation, diversity and ethics set the premises for successfully applied, research-informed, global learning."

WUAS is headquartered in the town of Apeldoorn, a municipality of around 160 thousand inhabitants and is the eleventh biggest city in the Netherlands. In Apeldoorn, WUAS currently occupies two school locations (Brinklaan and Sportsraat, 10 minutes from each other) and owns and develops student accommodation in the town to support its students. WUAS has two other study locations, one in Amsterdam and one in Munich, where the Bachelor of Business Administration is also offered.

In 2015, WUAS opened the study location in Amsterdam and currently has around 100 students there. In 2019, WUAS opened a small study location in Munich (around 50 students), together with a German partner, the New European College (NEC). In 2022, WUAS registered at the Chamber of Commerce in Munich, with an aim to restart the Dutch Transnational Education (TNE) permission from the (Dutch) Education Minister process in 2023 (after having met certain conditions required by the Ministry of Education). Therefore,

the current accreditation process is not officially applicable to the location in Munich. At the moment students at the Munich campus are studying under the so-called 75 % rule, meaning 75 % of the BBA programme is taught in Munich, and in order to gain a Dutch degree, students must complete the last 25 % of their programme in the Netherlands at WUAS.

3.3 Programme

In 2006, at initial NVAO accreditation, the programme was originally named 'Bachelor of International Business Administration'. In 2019, WUAS formally defined four pathways within the general Bachelor's programme. This did not have any immediate effect on the curriculum, the outcomes, or the block system. In 2022, WUAS applied to NVAO to have the official name changed to **Bachelor of Business Administration**, which was approved. The reason for the name change was to align the programme name with the degree title, also for it to be aligned with WUAS' strategic plan, and positioning as a business school.

The WUAS Bachelor programme was originally developed as a single broad BBA (the Bachelor programme in Business Administration, with 17 specialisations in 2021). Due to the growth in student numbers the Bachelor programme has now been split into four distinct pathways each with its own specialisations:

- BBA Pathway 'IBA' - International Business Administration
In this pathway Bachelor of Business Administration graduates shall be able to link cultures and customs together within the organisations where they work.
- BBA Pathway 'MCI' - Marketing, Communication & Information
The MCI pathway comprises a combination of business and digital marketing strategies, data science, branding and the way that businesses and organisations promote themselves to the outside world.
- BBA Pathway 'HBA' - Hospitality Business Administration
The courses of this pathway address core business and management subjects, and hospitality as a global phenomenon and how it is consumed by cultures and societies.
- BBA Pathway 'EBA' - Entrepreneurial Business Administration
The EBA pathway offers a focus on Entrepreneurship with three specialisations: Small Business, Digital Marketing, and Finance.

Another possibility is to choose courses from various specialisations to gain competencies according to individual preferences.

WUAS has grown since 2017 (688 students) to 2022 (1,327 students), of which around 50 % are BBA students, and the creation of pathways has an organisational benefit. However, WUAS explains in its self-evaluation report¹, that subdivision of the BBA into pathways also has benefits for 'student identity', 'teacher identity', and more tailor-made education: for

¹ See NVAO self-evaluation report p. 5

instance, even though the aims and objectives are the same and the learning outcomes are the same, the students studying on the different pathways may expect a specialisation-focused approach to the subjects.

Development of the programme

In 2017, the FIBAA – NVAO accreditation panel at that time made some recommendations for the programme, building on the developments implemented following the suggestions of the 2011 panel.

In their report, two recommendations have been mentioned. The panel recommended:

1. Students who chose to study in the fast model (three years) should be monitored regularly because there is a risk that they rush through the programme, pass the modules with low results and struggle in the later semesters or the final project proving that they achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes.
2. The possibility of writing a business plan appeared less challenging in comparison to the other three project forms. Hence, even if the panel is satisfied with the final projects and their quality in general it recommends paying special attention to the equivalence of the four different forms.

Addressing the first point WUAS has placed the responsibility of monitoring each student in the hands of their process tutors, who are their first point of reference, and can be contacted at any time for study advice. The process tutor would advise the students on choosing their study path and advise them in case they struggle at any point; standard meetings are held biannually, and students can request extra meetings if needed. With the introduction of Assurance of Learning (programme level student competency assessments) and Multidisciplinary (Phase) Exit Exams the school will be able to even better monitor the progress of students through the three phases as well as compare student cohorts more easily.

The second point regarding the business plan as a form of the final project has been addressed by WUAS in the first instance by enhancing the requirements of this type of final project. This has been approached by highlighting the literature review aims and the academic writing aspects in parallel with the other types. In 2022 on the recommendation of its Graduation & Examination Board, observing a high fail rate due to issues of business feasibility, the WUAS Education Board decided to drop Business Plan as a form of Final Project, mainly due to the incongruence of the nature of the thesis, where considerable emphasis is placed on the literature review and academic writing compared to the importance of the feasibility of a business and serious consideration of the financial component when it comes to developing a real-life business plan.

Credit Transfer: A new development in 2022 was the establishment of a sub-committee established within the GEB, chaired by the Student Registrar, that specifically deals with credit transfer and exemption applications done at the time of application.

In 2019, WUAS opened a small study location in Munich, together with a German partner, the New European College (NEC) and students are studying under the so-called 75 % rule, which in effect means that to gain a Dutch degree they have to complete the last 25 % of their programme in the Netherlands. For Wittenborg students who have started their studies in Munich and choose to complete their studies in the Netherlands, hereby transferring their credits into the programme under the Act of Higher Education and Research of The Netherlands, the Graduation and Examination Board Credit and Exemptions Committee will carry out its formal credit transfer procedure as laid out in the “Credit Transfer Procedure” stated in the official regulation Part 2b – ECTS, Credit Transfer and TNE of the Education and Examination Guide. As with the standard credit transfer procedure, students who start their studies in Munich will have their gained European credits formally transferred into the programme in order to gain a Dutch degree, only upon formally registering in the Netherlands at Wittenborg as a student.

4. Assessment

This chapter presents the evaluation of the standards by the panel. The panel has reproduced the criteria for each standard. For each standard the panel presents (1) an outline of its findings based on the programme documents, further documents provided by the institution and the site visit, (2) the considerations the panel has taken into account and (3) the conclusion of the panel. The panel presents a conclusion for each of the standards.

4.1 Intended learning outcomes

Standard 1: *The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.*

Findings

The BBA programme was originally developed in the period between 2003 and 2006, at which point it reached the stage where it had become a broad Bachelor of Business Administration with the possibility for students to choose field specialisations. The aim was to create a programme within the domain business administration that would allow students to enter a general first phase of the programme, and then choose to specialise in an area of business that interests them.

The BBA provides students with a solid foundation in business: It aims to equip students with a broad understanding of the various functional areas of business, including accounting, finance, marketing, operations, and management. The BBA allows students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills: Students in the programme learn to analyse complex business situations, identify problems, and develop creative and effective solutions.

The BBA aims to develop students' communication and interpersonal skills: The programme aims to improve students' ability to communicate effectively, work collaboratively with others, and interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The BBA programme aims to expose students to global business practices and trends, and to provide opportunities for students to study and work in other countries.

The programme aims to prepare students for careers in either business or the wider management field: The programme is designed to prepare students for a wide range of career opportunities in business and management, including entry-level management positions, entrepreneurial ventures, and graduate study in business or related fields.

Overall, the BBA programme aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of business principles and practices, and to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a dynamic and global business environment.

In addition, the programme is aimed at international and local students who aspire to work within an international context in the fields of management and administration, either in

business or non-commercial organisations. Students entering the programme will have a feel for an intercultural and multi-lingual learning environment.

WUAS uses the terminology 'Final Qualifications' to describe the '*qualification objectives of the study programme*'. The Final Qualifications of the Bachelor of International Business Administration are clustered into five *Core Overall Final Qualifications* that cover 18 Programme Outcomes that mapped to the aims and objectives of modules, including the Project Weeks and the Final Project. The Programme Outcomes remain also mapped to the Professional Profile of a "business administrator":

1. Understanding (Body of Knowledge)

- Have knowledge of the processes in an international business, analyse its processes and its environment to understand the relationship with other organisations in the same environment (1 & 3)
- Understanding and developing effective marketing strategies and policies (4 & 6)
- Supporting information technology and business automation processes (7 & 9)
- Understand the concept of human resources management, supporting and optimizing organisational processes (11)
- Develop an insight into the major challenges of contemporary society and have a conceptual understanding of economics, social sciences and business philosophy (12)
- Supporting supply chain and quality management in order to increase efficiency and competitiveness (7 & 14)

2. Adoption (Strategic Management Roles)

- Being able to manage and expand processes in small to medium sized businesses, the non-profit sector and governmental organisations (2)
- Being able to make data driven decisions with ethical considerations (13)
- Being able to instigate the setting-up a small company (15)
- Supporting the concept of corporate sustainability and the transformation process towards an ethical, sustainable business (3 & 14)

3. Communication (Skills)

- Being able to communicate fluently in English and understands the importance of learning second languages (also basic skills in a 2nd or 3rd language) (10)
- Being able to use various inter-personal and inter-cultural communication skills (8)
- Implementing effective problem-solving, team-work and team-building skills (8&11)
- Acquire commercial thinking, networking skills and an entrepreneurial attitude (5 & 8)
- Being able to assess others' linguistic communication skills at business level (8)
- Being able to develop, position and communicate policies within an organisation (e.g. on sustainability) and propose improvements (11 & 14)
- Being able to report financial and economic data (16)
- Being able to use digital communication tools (9)
- Being able to write a business plan (15)

4. Conduct (Research)
 - Being able to use and present (in tables and graphs) descriptive statistical data and indicators within the context of business planning and research (16)
 - Being able to design a methodologically sound research proposal based on current conceptual models and quantitative & qualitative techniques (16)
5. Continuously develop personal skills (Lifelong learning and Leadership)
 - Being able to self-reflect on one's personal and professional development, taking responsibility for the continuous development of his or her knowledge and learning skills, and being able to continue to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy (17 & 18)

The qualification goals of a BBA must always be achieved, regardless of the specialisation: i.e. every BBA pathway, whether Event Management or Financial Services Management, achieves the qualification goals of the entire BBA programme.

The Final Qualifications described above have been developed from the Professional Profile and have been aligned with descriptors such as the Dublin Descriptors and the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences' (AUAS) Domain Competencies.

WUAS's aim is to develop and offer programmes with a clear line of focus, based on three 'pillar' values: "Internationalisation, Diversity & Ethics". The developments on the BBA programme are in line with the institute's strategy by furthering development of business management specialisations, where applicable, and adds to the two main strategic initiatives that WUAS wishes to achieve, namely: internally shaping organisational culture based on the Key Values and externally increasing societal impact in Apeldoorn and the Region.

During the past year, the programme's "Professional Profile", and therefore the "Final Qualifications" have been reviewed after discussions with the work field, both at home and abroad. Consultations, interviews, and surveys were conducted with WUAS' business network. Job market analysis continues to be conducted by collecting facts regarding employment opportunities from a national and international perspective, by means of work placement opportunities, discussions with employers, alumni tracking and research, such as that of the local and provincial government, the Chamber of Commerce and the Employers' Associations like VNO-NCW.

This programme is placed within the Netherlands 'HBO', or applied sciences-oriented (higher vocational education) bachelor's degree programmes. The programme is a university of applied sciences bachelor's degree, which means that it contains significant parts related to work experience. All students complete at least three months' work experience and two to three months' action learning during their dissertation period. Although the BBA is focused on students being able to directly enter the workplace after graduation, it is also aimed at providing students with the knowledge and skills that would enable them to further their studies at a higher level (e.g. MSc or MBA) within a Dutch higher education system, and also in other systems, such as in the UK or USA.

Considerations

In relation to the target group, targeted professional domains, and societal settings of the linked disciplines, the qualification objectives of the programme are appropriately described and explained. The stated goals and required competencies line up with the desired bachelor level after graduation. The national and European requirements are also taken into account.

The goals of the BBA are clearly stated and logically connected to the "Professional profile" that the programme defines for its graduates. Students interested in a variety of professions are drawn to the numerous specialisations. Academic competence, employability, and personality development of each student are all included in the programme's outcomes.

However, the panel would like to point out that it would make sense from a strategic point of view to also establish differentiated goals/learning outcomes for the individual pathways and, if necessary, also specialisations, which could also sharpen the professional profile of further graduates. WUAS regards the BBA programme as a broad programme, but better differentiation between the pathways could also be applied with regard to a stronger positioning in the educational and professional market.

Through permanent contact and exchange with employers and partners from the practice WUAS ensures to be up-to-date regarding the graduates' competencies and skills for the professional field and thus ensures that the current requirements of the professional field and discipline are adapted in relation to the content of the programme.

All in all, the panel believes that the programme is convincingly incorporated into the institution's overarching strategic concept. Accordingly, the qualification goals of the study programme are in line with the mission and the strategic planning of WUAS.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 1 is met.

4.2 Curriculum; orientation

Standard 2: *The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.*

Findings

Originally, the final qualifications of WUAS Business Administration programme were developed from existing benchmarked business programmes, and from the experiences of English language programmes at other universities in the Netherlands, and similar programmes in the UK. Business networks in Europe and abroad were consulted as to the types of function and employment possibilities graduates would have. This has resulted in the Professional Profile and thus to the curriculum. The BBA programme is positioned in

the national and international market as an English taught, broad BBA programme with specialisations in which students can focus their studies, their graduation assignment and their career development.

Academic skills

WUAS is a University of Applied Science (HBO) but has set itself the goal of becoming more academic. For example, WUAS explains that in developing its Bachelor programme, is drawn on its experience by offering both programmes and modules with a more practical approach, as traditionally found in Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences (HBO), and programmes and modules with a more academic, research-based methodology, taking into account that its graduates have the ambition to continue their studies at a (research) university. WUAS aspires to introduce students to the concepts of social science, research and increased academic learning through scientific investigation during all the phases of the programme.

From the start of their Bachelor's programme, students are introduced to the use of Academic English and Research Methods, in which the skills required for reading specialist literature and doing research are developed, and the appropriate academic writing skills, through the seminars now to be linked directly into core modules. WUAS introduces BBA students to the concepts of methodological competencies already from Phase 1 of the programme, predominately through the six project weeks and through the module Personal Development Plan (PDP). In these modules, students are required to write project reports and mini-papers. Students are encouraged to read and understand the requirements for the Final Project, including key aspects such as research methodology and literature review, so that they can use and practice these skills in their papers.

In Phase 2, students also follow two modules that encourage methodological competencies and to some extent scientific practice, within a management programme. The subject Marketing Research, and the module Business Plan, requires them to follow a clear, structured approach to basic research and reporting. The subject "Statistics" in Phase 2 introduces students to the importance of methodological competence in the programme, and provides them with some of the skills and competencies they will need in the Phase 3 module Research Methodology & Quantitative Methods. In order to facilitate students further with hands-on experience, an additional quantitative data analysis workshop was introduced in 2021-22 as an obligatory part of the statistics module. This workshop with an emphasis on practical data analysis learning is offered twice per year.

In the students' Final Project, a degree of methodological competence must be shown, and the dissertation is required to stand as an independent piece of academic work.

Throughout the phases, students are offered support modules in Academic English.

Additionally, a decision was made to incorporate an introductory statistics course in phase 1 starting from September 2023 in response to feedback provided by students and programme committees during the annual student & staff representation conference day. The education board unanimously agreed to offer this course starting from September 2023.

Academic Skills and Final Project

The Final Project is always an individual piece of work, required to comply with internationally recognised standards of academic writing. WUAS requires students to use the "Harvard Method" of referencing and reporting. The project is intended to be a culmination of the students' work in the programme, reflecting their general knowledge based on programme modules, using various different methods to research and explore an area of business or management within their chosen field (specialisation).

In 2022 on the recommendation of its Graduation & Examination Board, observing a high fail rate due to issues of business feasibility, the WUAS Education Board decided to drop the Business Plan as a form of Final Project, mainly due to the incongruence of the nature of the thesis, where considerable emphasis is placed on the literature review and academic writing compared to the importance of the feasibility of a business and serious consideration of the financial component when it comes to developing a real-life business plan.

Professional competencies

The main skills for employment are directly learned through the modules Work Placement (and work placement preparation) and Project Weeks, throughout Phases 1 and 2. Phase 3, students prepare for their period of Work Placement, a module Work Placement Preparation is offered, and the Work Placement and Careers Officer works with students to ply for an optimal work placement either in the Netherlands or abroad.

The programme contents often focus on reflection of recent practical experience that is part of and incorporated in the programme (work-placement), while stimulating students to look forward, in relation to their careers and ambitions.

Several of the project weeks use a format in which students are expected to form groups that comprise specific roles (using the Belbin method). The communication structures used during the project weeks are defined in a way that will help students understand the different communication roles and functions that take place during teamwork of a project. Project Weeks are characterised by real-life projects, teamwork, relevant topics being discussed and workshops delivered by industry experts Project weeks will see students interact with people from industry, in the companies and organisations that instigate the consultancy tasks, and students will be required to present to these organisations at the end of the project week.

Considerations

The programme's common thread throughout all of its modules is the promotion of employability, for example, through the integration of theory and practice and the promotion of multidisciplinary competences and skills. With regard to the connection between theory and practice, theoretical questions are combined with practical exercises and examples. The project week and work placement in particular enables students to put what they have learned into practice in a professional environment. The project weeks in particular, as well as the opportunity for students to participate in a wide variety of projects with a constantly changing group of students and group dynamics (due to the carousel entry), as well as the

versatile specialisation options and free decisions as to how the content of the study programme is structured, puts an emphasis on preparing the students for an occupation requiring trans- or interdisciplinary knowledge.

According to the module descriptions, students develop cooperation, conflict resolution, public speaking, and communication skills during their project weeks. The same applies for leadership abilities. This is reinforced through the use of appropriate didactic and methodological tools, such as group projects and project weeks done in cooperation with a business partner.

During the site visit, the panel was able to gain impressions of practitioners working with WUAS as part of the work placement and cited examples of students from the fields of marketing and hospitality management who confirmed the assumption of the panel that the integration of theory and practice and the promotion of cross-disciplinary competences and skills actively promotes the employability of students.

Concerning the academic skills within the curriculum there are several courses geared to help students to develop scientific research skills as well as workshops on e.g. quantitative analysis. Thus, in general, the panel positively assesses the teaching of scientific research skills as well as the workshops which support students with research proposals and the related final project. Thus, WUAS has in principle implemented a number of measures to enable students to acquire methodological skills and to enable them to work scientifically at Bachelor level. The panel appreciates the measures that have been taken to enable students to write an academic thesis.

Nevertheless, the final projects provided showed for the most part that scientific skills were present, but that aspects such as, literature research, problem analysis and empirical research skills should be further developed (see also Standard 11). Since WUAS, in addition to its position as a University of applied sciences, would also like to develop in a research and academic-orientated manner, the panel **recommends** improving the research methods modules and, if necessary, investigating in a more structured way where students' problems are located in the final project in order to adapt the corresponding modules and promote students' skills accordingly.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 2 is met.

4.3 Curriculum; content

<p>Standard 3: <i>The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i></p>
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Findings

The four-year programme is divided into three learning phases. Each phase is timetabled into a full academic year, in such a way that allows students to follow all modules from the phase, or only the required modules from that year.

The concept is a broad business programme leading to a specialisation profile, initially chosen by the student at entry and confirmed by the second half of the study programme. The coherence of the programme is achieved through the vertical build-up of knowledge, competencies and experience throughout three phases, each of which have a balanced portfolio of modules that allow students to complete a phase successfully at whichever block they start the programme:

Phase 1

In the first phase (80 ECTS credits), which includes the full 60 ECTS credits of year one and 20 ECTS credits of year two, the emphasis is on gaining knowledge about a broad range of business subjects. The modules are balanced within the phase with a core business element of Organisation & Management, Marketing and Finance basics (two subjects each), whilst providing students with subjects in business communication, interpersonal skills and the new module in Intercultural Management.

Throughout Phase 1, students follow six Project Weeks, each independent from the core modules themselves, made relevant through design and tutoring to the content students are following in the core modules. Also, throughout Phase 1, students are tutored as a group, in the subject “Personal Development Plan (PDP)”. This subject also interlinks all the subjects that students are learning, as well as relating them to practice.

Phase 2

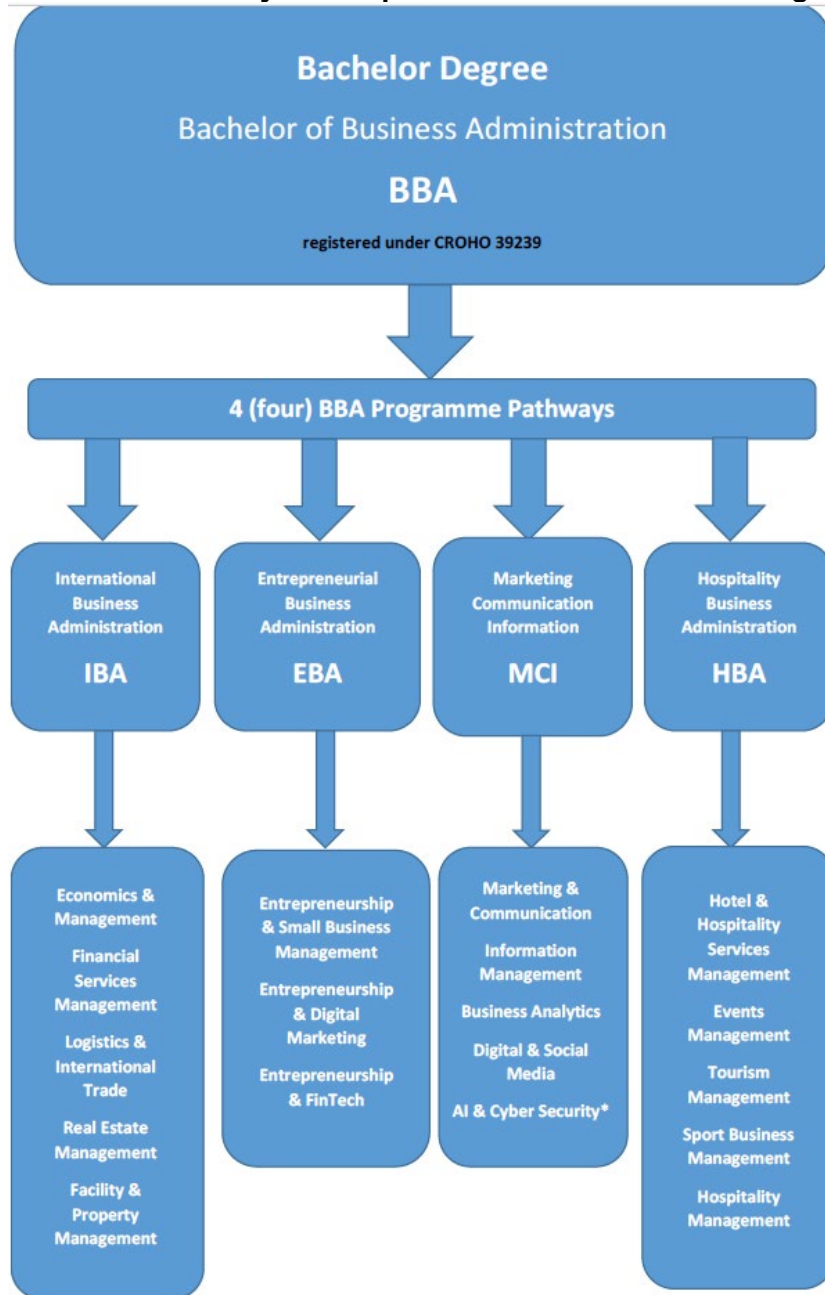
In Phase 2 the modules are more focused on understanding and planning, and are focused on giving students a balanced view of how businesses and organisations are managed and run, whilst allowing students to choose a more in-depth study of a particular specialised field (the specialisation pathways). Specialisations generally have six to nine specific modules relating to that field.

Students choose their BBA programme specialisation at entry. However, all BBA students can still opt to choose another specialisation at the start of Phase 2. If students complete all the modules of a specialisation and graduate in that area, then the specialisation is noted on the awarded degree. If a student chooses to pick modules from different specialisations, or switches during the programme, then no specialisation is mentioned on the award. Students are all following a majority of same core subjects, led by the same teaching staff, support team, and processes.

WUAS explains further, that the four ‘pathways’ are a way for students to be able to focus on a package of specialisation modules / electives that is a natural fit for the job market – also for finding a work placement company, and choosing an area / company for their graduation assignment – all essential when studying a degree that is in the realm of applied sciences, rather than fundamental research.

In Phase 2, the subject “Personal Development Plan (PDP)” is continued as in the previous phase, and languages can either be restarted through choosing a new foreign language, or progression to a higher level of the first-year choice.

Overview: Pathways and Specialisations of the BBA Programme



Phase 3

Phase 3 is where the 'practical exposure' of students is developed from the project weeks of Phases 1 & 2 to a period of work placement, either extended by an in-company project or with an independent dissertation with real-life practical applied research.

Students in Phase 3 are confronted with the 'implementation' of what they have learned so far, during their work placement and eventually in their final project.

Further, the specialisation modules in the third phase allow students to delve deeper into their chosen subject area.

Considerations

The BBA programme is structured as a broad Bachelor programme where students can select elective courses specific to the chosen pathways. When comparing the individual curricula of the four pathways, the panel observed that they contain a wider range of identical modules. The panel thinks it might be reasonable to differentiate the content of the individual pathways more strongly; thus, also sharpening the professional profile of the students. But in general, the panel concluded that the study programme's qualification goals are effectively reflected in the curriculum. The course content is logically integrated and focused on the intended learning outcomes. The subdivision of the curriculum into three phases, which the students have to complete one after the other, enables the students to start their studies at different points in time and still build up knowledge first and then deepen and specialise it in the further phases. Furthermore, the different pathways and their specialisations enable thereby students to acquire additional competences and skills.

Although the module descriptions provide detailed information following the ECTS Users' Guide including intended learning outcomes, the panel noticed that some module descriptions (e.g. niche marketing, hospitality management) still contained old literature works from 2016 and 2017. During the site visit, WUAS showed that since the Covid-19 pandemic, they have made all literature available online through journal databases and e-books (see also Standard 7) and therefore always use the latest version of a work. This should also be reflected in all module descriptions, so that the panel **recommends** updating the module description with regard to the literature and ensuring that it is always up to date. Furthermore, the international outlook and the incorporation of international content and objectives in the respective modules could also be more strongly emphasised in the module descriptions. The module descriptions could also be used to differentiate more strongly between the respective specialisations. For example, in the pathway international business in the finance modules, the extent to which international content such as interest rates, exchange rates, etc. is also addressed could be presented more clearly. The discussions with the lecturers revealed that these topics are indeed dealt with, but it would be more transparent to present this in more detail in the content descriptions of the modules, so that the panel also **recommends** that the module descriptions be specified with regard to the content descriptions.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 3 is met.

4.4 Curriculum; learning environment

Standard 4: *The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

Findings

Modular structure

The programme is offered twice a year with six entry points allowing for a carousel entry system. This means that each taught module will be offered twice a year, for each cohort. The BBA programme follows the modular block system used at WUAS. The modules are offered in blocks of six weeks. Students study max. three modules each block.

- The Wittenborg courses are planned into two separate semesters known as the Winter term and the Summer term;
- Each semester is comprised of four blocks = three teaching blocks of six-weeks (made up of four weeks of lessons, one project week and one exam week); and one block of two weeks for missed lessons and re-take exams. Modules are examined on one day at the end of that block.
- Students can start their studies either at any full six-weeks block, in the Winter term or the Summer term.
- Each block has individual modules and these will be offered once a year.
- Each exam has a retake exam, held in blocks four or eight. Students are only allowed to register for re-take exams for modules that have been given in that term.

WUAS states that the programme is feasible both in three years (80 ECTS credits a year) and 4 years (60 ECTS credits per year). Due to the programme's flexible characteristics, with the block entry system and the way that in Phase 3 modules are offered in both the Winter and the Summer semesters, students are able to spread the workload in a way that fits their needs, if they wish to study part-time or add in an optional work placement. They can switch easily between the three-year and four-year option, which results in an average projected study time of 3.5 years².

The weight and allocation of ECTS credits to a module is done on the basis of the estimation of the study load at the stage of programme design, by the Education Board, in line with the Netherlands norm of an average 28 hours of study equalling 1 ECTS credit.

Didactical Concept

In order to maintain the internationalisation of its character and its programmes, WUAS has embedded 'internationalisation' into its 'DNA' and the curriculum of the programme is oriented towards an international mix of students from the Netherlands and around the

² See NVAO self-evaluation report p. 7

world. One of the 'main characteristics' of WUAS is its international profile. WUAS programmes are all offered solely in English and its teachers, support staff and management represent a diverse range of cultures and nationalities.

The predominant foreign language in the programme is English, however as a good level of English is required to enter the programme (see Standard 5) it is not taught as a subject in the curriculum. However, a support module (English Support) is offered to help students improve their writing skills – this is open for students of all three phases. Twice a year, an Intensive Dutch Course is offered to help international students integrate in the Netherlands. This is in addition to the Dutch Beginner and Intermediate as part of the BBA curriculum for all pathways.

WUAS has designed its curriculum in such a manner as to provide students from different and diverse backgrounds a mix of didactical methods and approaches, which in many cases introduce them to styles of teaching and learning that may be unfamiliar. The programme leads students toward more independent and less taught methods of learning in the final phase of the programme.

Throughout the bachelor's programme a balance of teaching and learning methods are used, including:

Overview: teaching and learning methods

Teaching

- Classroom lecturing
- Case study discussions
- Feedback and presentation sessions
- Interviews and debates
- Video and film
- Company visits
- Discussion sessions
- Research papers
- Coaching and tutoring
- Work experience tutoring
- Dissertation coaching

Learning

- Compulsory reading
- Recommended reading
- Internet research
- Library research
- Classroom lectures – notes, listening, review of videos/recordings
- Case study learning in class, in project groups
- Preparing and presenting
- Discussions with peer students, with business people
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Feedback on film – reflection
- Reflective writing – for example, project weeks, work experience
- Visiting companies
- Speaking to entrepreneurs
- Helping business people with projects
- Organising events
- Starting companies
- Desk research
- In-company research
- Dissertation writing

According to the development of the programme, the teaching and learning methodology changes also as the programme progresses, from knowledge-focused teaching and learning, through understanding, to strategic thinking and practice.

Considerations

The programme structure supports the smooth implementation of the curriculum and helps students to reach the defined learning outcomes. The panel appreciates the very flexible design of the programme with its various points of enrolment and the possibility to spread modules over a longer period of time. According to the panel, this has a positive effect on student's learning path, as it brings together different groups of students (students with less or more study experience) especially in the project weeks, which also has a positive influence on the cooperation among each other, which was also confirmed by the students interviewed during the site visit. Furthermore, the feasibility of the workload benefits from the course/block system, which allows for faster or slower learning depending on individual needs.

The study programme's didactical concept is described in a way that is convincing and aids in the accomplishment of the programme's goals. It uses a variety of teaching and learning techniques (e.g. case studies, project work, group work) and pays close attention to how students' competencies grow over the course of the three phases.

With regard to the English programme title and the fact that the programme is conducted entirely in English, the panel finds this choice sufficiently logical, considering the international inflow of students, the international composition of the teaching staff and the internalisation goal of WUAS. According to the panel, the language level of the lecturers (see also Standard 6) and the quality of the study material is adequate.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 4 is met.

4.5 Intake

Standard 5: <i>The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i>
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Findings

Admission into programmes at WUAS is governed by the Graduation & Examination Board (GEB) that empowers the Student Registrar and admissions team to admit students based on pre-defined criteria. The final decision formally rests with the Graduation & Examination Board; however, the GEB maintains a list of approved pre-bachelor and pre-master entry qualifications that allow the Registrar to make decisions without requesting the GEB to approve every acceptance individually.

In cases where applicants have deviating admissions documents, that are not on the abovementioned list, such as Bachelor's degrees that are not listed in Enic-Naric³ or recognised by NUFFIC⁴, the Student Registrar is required to forward the application to the GEB for a decision. The Student Registrar is supported by a deputy, who is part of an admissions team comprising seven members of staff.

A specialty of WUAS' admission process is the possibility of enrolling six times throughout the year (September, October, December, February, April or May). This is possible due to the block system of the programme. The programme is organised in four pathways and students choose their BBA programme specialisation at entry but are able to switch their decision.

The basis for admission is:

Students should have the appropriate secondary school education qualifications, deemed by NUFFIC to be equivalent to the Dutch HAVO diploma or MBO-4 diploma (for instance BTEC National Certificate, or UK 'O' and 'AS' levels).

- Arrangement Admittance for students 21 years and older: students applying for the BBA programme who do not meet the above-mentioned entry requirements, are entitled to take an entrance examination (i.e. 21+ Test) set by the Wittenborg Graduation and Examination Board.
- Students have attained a working level of the English Language equivalent to an IELTS 6 band⁵. Exceptions to this are native speakers from countries where English is the official language, and they have successfully completed their last educational qualifications from an institute where the language of instruction is English.
- Applicants must write a letter of motivation and submit their Curriculum Vitae.
- Students are offered a diagnostic interview by the admissions team for intention, motivation and aptitude. This admission interview can be carried out in person, or through IT communications, such as video call.
- After students have completed the admission interview, and offered have been offered a place at Wittenborg, they are asked to sign a Wittenborg Study Agreement, which details the agreements made between Wittenborg about entry into the programme, and possible preparation courses that are required. The Wittenborg Study Agreement also states that students have read and understood the Education and Examination Guide (EEG).
- Wittenborg is signatory for the national Code of Conduct for international students in the Netherlands, where specifics regarding entry requirements are also reiterated. The application procedure for international students is fully described on the Wittenborg website. All the required documents and information regarding the fee structure can be found there.

³ ENIC (European Network of Information Centres in the European Region) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union)

⁴ **Nuffic** is the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education. It is an independent, non-profit organisation based in [The Hague, the Netherlands](#).

⁵ i.e. "Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations."

Bachelor's Preparation Programme: Students fulfilling all the above requirements except for an English band level equivalent to IELTS 6, may enter the Bachelor's Preparation Programme, as long as they have an IELTS band level of 5, for a full-year Preparation Programme or 5.5, for a ½-year Preparation Programme.

The admission requirements for entry into programmes are stated on the WUAS website, both in a page that describes overall admission and on each of the BBA programme pages. The admissions requirements are also stated in the EEG (Education Guide, Part 2), and defined in the Graduation & Examination Regulations (Part 6).

Due to the highly international character of WUAS students, and in coherence and adherence with the Code of Conduct for International Students in the Netherlands, WUAS does screen its students in their interviews for motivation and English language fluency. The admissions interviews before acceptance serve the following purposes:

- Managing expectations from both the student as well as from WUAS.
- Ensuring that students are fully knowledgeable with regards to the Dutch higher education system.
- Narrowing down the suitable student by conducting a sequence of comprehensive interview inquiries.

The interviews have a number of aims: to ascertain that the student understands the school and programme they are applying for; for WUAS to ascertain that the student speaks good English and to make sure the student has all the necessary documents about the school, the programme and the application procedure (sent in advance by email). The School uses a standard interview form in which:

- the student's academic qualifications are considered;
- non-Dutch qualifications have been advised on by NUFFIC or attested through NARIC;
- the student's English language qualifications are considered;
- for non-EU students a financial assessment has been made.

On the basis of the above, an applicant is given an offer in the form of a study agreement. In the study agreement it is clearly stated how many ECTS credits are required to gain a degree and the minimum study duration.

Considerations

The admission requirements set by WUAS are defined and comprehensible. The Dutch requirements have also been considered. The selection procedure is transparent and ensures that qualified students are admitted.

The panel considers the carousel entry system, which allows admission six times a year, to be a real and unique advantage. In addition, this provides easier access to the programme for international students with regard to lengthy processes such as visa application.

The necessary level of English language competency is considered in the admission requirements in a sufficient manner. As all lectures are conducted in English, the regulations require a sufficient level of language proficiency. Before a student is admitted to the programme, WUAS assures through initial interviews that they have a thorough understanding of the institution, the chosen programme, and their expectations. Furthermore, the English level is verified, so that all enrolled students have the chance to successfully complete the study programme. Additionally, it provides supplementary services (courses, additional reading, use of counselling services, and extracurricular activities) to ensure students' success.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 5 is met.

4.6 Staff

Standard 6: *The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.*

Findings

WUAS has always maintained a core team of educators who have permanent contracts and teach Bachelor's and in some cases Master's modules. They also have key roles in the management of the programmes, the schools, student support or in areas such as research, external relations, or staff development.

The engagement and development of faculty and professional staff at WUAS are affected by a few factors specific to the Dutch higher education environment, and at the same time WUAS ambitions, strategy, and vision. For instance, as a university of applied sciences, WUAS is orientated towards employability and its business degrees are linked to professional practice. Research in the programmes has a focus of 'applied research', and students are encouraged to ensure their applied research is relevant to the industry and sector they are studying and the overall professional field. Therefore, faculty at a university of applied sciences are generally practice based, often with a large amount of experience in industry and less academic experience. In order to find a balance between offering applied sciences degrees and at the same time ensuring it was supported by highly qualified academic staff, WUAS only employs faculty with at minimum a Master's degree.

WUAS has a core team of educators who have permanent contracts and teach Bachelor and/or Master modules. This applies to the location in Amsterdam as well. The programme management can use the lecturers pool of WUAS and involve practitioners in case of specific needs. The Amsterdam campus follows the general processes of WUAS regarding the teaching staff.

Part-time faculty work as freelancers at WUAS and are not hired directly, but must first conduct so-called "trial lectures" in which the teaching skills are tested, as well as cooperative lectures with lecturers already employed at WUAS. Student representatives are also expected to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the part-time lecturer.

In 2013, WUAS introduced a policy whereby faculty leaving were always replaced by a teaching staff member who has a Master's degree or a PhD. At WUAS, international experience is considered an important additional qualification. Therefore, many staff have experience in more than one country, not only the non-Dutch teaching staff, but also many of the Dutch teaching staff have lived and worked abroad.

WUAS's main challenge in 2020-2021 was to raise the number of scholarly active (SA) faculty in the Bachelor's programme and in 2020 and 2021 WUAS has looked carefully at the re-alignment of teaching faculty, and the improvement of balance in the programmes, between SA and non-SA faculty, also in context of wider duties and tasks throughout the school. A member of faculty is classified as being Scholarly Academic if they correspond to one of the following:

- A PhD student in the last dissertation phase of their doctorate, with or without peer-reviewed publications.
- Have completed a PhD within the past five years, with or without peer-reviewed publications.
- A PhD/DBA degree holder with at least two peer-reviewed publications in qualified business and management journals in the past five years. Qualified journals are listed, for example, in the Harzing, Scopus and ABS journal lists.

Another important aspect at a university of applied sciences remains the professional field input. WUAS explained that it remains a challenge to balance the need for scholarly active faculty with practitioners. A solution for this has been to look for faculty internationally, such as in Germany, where the combination of a professional career and academics is more widely found.⁶

As a business and management university, WUAS expects a good proportion of its business teachers to have experience in business. Several of the core teachers have experience in corporations and/or government organisations. A number of faculty have experience working in companies and some have extensive managerial experience. Some faculty have experience in starting and running their own companies. Entrepreneurship and business experience are a core element to the management of WUAS. All teachers of guest lectures have experience in business, organisations and industry.

WUAS defines faculty from industry as Instructional Practitioners; however, explains, that this does not mean that Scholarly Academics (PhD-qualified faculty with a research profile) and Practice Academics (teaching faculty) do not all have non-industry-based experience.

⁶ See self-evaluation report p. 51

Faculty Comparison Table 2019-2022

FQ in %	Scholarly Academic (in %)				Practice Academic (in %)				Scholarly Practitioner (in %)				Instructional Practitioner (in %)				Additional Faculty (in %)				
	Academic Year Starting	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
BBA	12	25	54	60	6	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	52	70	42	42	30	0	0	0	0

Until 2017, WUAS has expected its permanent teachers from industry who do not have a teaching qualification to participate in its specifically designed Teacher Training Certificate Programme. Between 2017 and 2021 members of the faculty have been attending WUAS's Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning, which is a UK (Advance HE) course that was taught at WUAS by the University of Brighton and was made available to all WUAS faculty. WUAS faculty have successfully followed the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning in HE which is accredited by the UK's HEA (now Advance HE) and with the ending of the delivery partnership with the University of Brighton due to Brexit, WUAS is planning to accredit the PGCert independently, in order to continue providing this award to its faculty.

WUAS is a small, tightly knit institution, even though it is situated in two locations in Apeldoorn plus another location in Amsterdam and Munich, where the BBA programme is offered. Collaboration is carried out through:

- On modules that have two or more teachers, there is a module leader to safeguard the quality across the different study locations, teachers share the development of the delivery plan and the examinations and marking. The module leader brings together different lecturers and locations and make sure that there is consistency in the delivery of the programme and everyone is on the same (quality) level. For this purpose, regular calibration meetings are held between all those involved.
- Subject groups have been created in which teachers with similar subject areas discuss the content and aims and objectives of modules and especially the delivery methods and models used.

Considerations

The structure and number of teaching staff corresponds with the programmes' requirements. A list of all lecturers and of the University's staff in general shows the availability of the required capacity to implement the programme. The faculty's composition, which consists of full-time and part-time staff guarantees that both the academic standards and the requirements of the professional practice are satisfied.

On the basis of the CVs provided, the panel was able to get an overview of the staff employed and concluded that the academic qualification of the faculties corresponds to the requirements of the study programme. However, WUAS is aware of the fact that they need

to improve the numbers of scholarly academic faculty members (SA) and their academic research output in order to reflect their ambitions to be a more research-oriented school. Staff involved in research methods have sufficient academic skills. The panel also found that the teaching staff had sufficient command of English. This was also confirmed during the on-site visit and interviews. All of the lecturers have an international educational background and can therefore provide insights into their international experiences in their lectures. The panel concludes that one key factor in achieving WUAS' internationalisation objectives is the expertise of the teaching staff.

The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty is supported by the *Teaching & Learning* programme offered to all faculty members. The skills and qualifications basically correspond to the needs of the programme. However, the panel still sees a need for improvement on the part of the development of further all-round skills for grading and assessing academic work of students. This matter is examined in more detail under Standard 10 and a recommendation is also made by the panel.

The conversations with the teachers showed that WUAS offers them opportunities for continuing education, for example, teachers can also suggest what they would like to be trained in and are supported in this. In this respect, WUAS could implement this in a more structured way, as the possibilities are given to the staff at any time, but it seems that it is more ad hoc and at the initiative of the respective teacher. In addition, the panel learned that WUAS is active in various Erasmus+ projects and WUAS' participation in Erasmus+ also extends to staff mobility. Since the majority of the lecturers are from abroad, they live out their daily experiences as teachers in different nations. Therefore, the interest in going to a third country for a period of time is limited. As a result, the Erasmus exchange opportunities are only occasionally utilized. Thus, the panel **recommends** that teachers should be made more aware of the Erasmus+ research and exchange possibilities as they have not yet taken advantage of them, so that they are also more integrated into the academic network (this would also be an added value with regard to the research-oriented goal of WUAS).

As the programme is conducted in three different locations (only Amsterdam and Apeldoorn have been assessed for NVAO accreditation), good internal cooperation is essential: Discussions with teachers from different locations and the module leaders showed that there is a strong cooperation between them, which also ensures that the quality of teaching remains the same for all locations. Some of the faculty members also teach across locations, which is possible mainly through the carousel admission, whereby a course only takes place over six weeks and gives the teachers flexibility to teach at several locations. Overall, the faculty members cooperate with each other for tuning the modules towards the overall qualification objectives.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 6 is met.

4.7 Facilities

Standard 7: *The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.*

Findings

WUAS is headquartered in the town of Apeldoorn, a municipality of around 160 thousand inhabitants and is the eleventh biggest city in the Netherlands. In Apeldoorn, WUAS currently occupies two school locations (Brinklaan and Spoorstraat, 10 minutes from each other) and owns and develops student accommodation in the town to support its students. Apeldoorn is located approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes from Amsterdam central station, and Schiphol International Airport. WUAS has two buildings in the town centre – the Spoorstraat 23 next to the railway station, with classrooms accommodating around 150 students at any one time, and the Brinklaan 268. In the summer of 2022, WUAS moved into its new building at the Brinklaan with a total area of 1,900 m² (from its previous location within Aventus College). The location can accommodate up to 180 students and 60 staff (management, finance, marketing, admissions) and faculty members at any time. The Brinklaan location and the Spoorstraat building will continually serve as teaching facilities, with students and faculty making the 15-minute walk or 4 minutes by car between the two locations.

WUAS has another study location in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam, where the study programme is offered. At the Amsterdam study location, WUAS rents a bespoke floor of a modern office building in Amsterdam Southeast, with all the required facilities for teaching and research for the approximately hundred students located there, its IT network is directly linked to the IT network in Apeldoorn.

WUAS longer-term plans are to create (build) a large study complex, a city campus, near Apeldoorn railway station, a commitment that will be both for WUAS and the benefit of the city. The municipal Apeldoorn government has committed to this development (from a planning perspective).

The Spoorstraat building houses the library and book-lending facility, which was specifically developed as part of the renovation, not only as a place in which students can browse the books and literature available, however also as a separate place to study.

Both Spoorstraat and Brinklaan locations have internet access points, and the location has full Eduroam availability, the network is now joined to the national high-speed grid via glassfibre to a data centre in Enschede and managed by the WUAS IT department, which is partially outsourced to Rayflex BV. This is also the case in Amsterdam. WUAS has its own four-person ICT team on location, based in Apeldoorn and in Vienna, that manages all the services provided over the LAN and WAN and internet networks. For all students these include:

- a combined student access to cloud-based email and office applications (Office365, SharePoint, MS Project),
- downloadable Office365 software,
- cloud-based timetable platform (Scientia),
- cloud-based student administration & results platform (Osiris),
- anti-plagiarism/reference assistance software (Turnitin), and
- a virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) to support all modules.

IT support is available through online contact as well as at the Front Desks. The online contact will respond to staff and students during daytime hours on any day during the week, and in urgent cases during the weekend.

In Amsterdam all network facilities are the same as in Apeldoorn and the networks are linked.

Osiris is a Student Information System that allows students to access their information and grades. WUAS also implemented Scientia, a timetabling software that publishes timetables to students' smartphones.

Amsterdam students have access to the academic libraries of the University of Amsterdam and the Public National Library, within walking distance. In Apeldoorn, where most students study, WUAS has created its own library at the Spoorstraat location. The library currently contains around 4,000 titles and has a yearly investment budget of around 15,000 euros. WUAS stocks copies of all recommended reading from all its modules and all reading/library books recommended by faculty. The library is open throughout the week and managed by the front desk and student support team. All books are indexed in a database and a book loan system is in place, allowing students to request a book.

Since the start of 2020, WUAS has moved to a comprehensive e-book system for all required and recommended literature. E-books are offered through a system and service called 'Perlego', but also through the Pearson system. This complements the access already arranged for journal databases and e-books via Ebsco, Wiley, Springer, EBSCO journal and E-Book databases as well as suggested Open Learn journal sites. Students also have access to academic libraries around the Netherlands. In Apeldoorn, for example the central library (CODA).

Considerations

During the on-site visit the panel had the opportunity to see both facilities of the Apeldoorn campus. The panel members got also to talk to the representatives and staff of the location in Amsterdam to receive further information.

The quantity, quality, media and IT facilities of the teaching rooms meet the standards required for the programme, even considering the resource needs of other study programmes. The buildings are fully equipped with modern information technology. Free access to a Wi-Fi network is available for students. All rooms and entrances are equipped for people with disabilities and can be reached barrier-free.

The library provides good access to necessary book and journal literature as well as digital media. This also applies to various databases. The library is open during the lecture period as well as during the lecture free period. The needs of the students are considered.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 7 is met.

4.8 Tutoring

Standard 8: *The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.*

Findings

WUAS has two types of student-tutor support systems, one for academic issues and one for non-academic issues. WUAS has an open-door policy, which means that students find all staff easily accessible during office hours on the days they are working. Also, Wittenborg Online and the email system make it easy for students to contact the correct staff member about any issue.

All students are allocated a "Process Tutor", who is called a '*Study Advisor*' at Master level. This person is responsible for monitoring a student's progress and ensuring a student's well-being through coaching and support. The study advisor is also involved with the student's teaching programme, either through the language programme or through personal development programme. Tutors and study advisors can have contact with students on a weekly basis, and also through regular online contact and emails.

Once students have initially defined their area of research for their Final Project (Dissertation/Graduation Project), which is generally after completion of Introduction to Research Methods (Semester 1), students are allocated a personal Academic Supervisor who is responsible for helping students prepare for their Final Project module, including their graduation assignment. The Academic Supervisor is responsible for monitoring progress, advising on writing and research, and preparing for the production and submission of the final project. Academic Supervisors have regular meetings together with their students, keeping contact at school and online. They are the first or second marker of the final project.

Every half year at WUAS, all students have an evaluation (appraisal) interview with their Study Advisor, who assesses progress and reviews with them the study agreement for the next academic period.

WUAS promotes a policy that encompasses gender equality and a ban on discrimination. WUAS offers its programmes to students from different education backgrounds, both academic and non-academic.

All students and staff entering Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences are aware from the start of its diverse, international and multi-cultural nature and are expected to enjoy and nurture this special environment. WUAS's equal opportunity policies are described in its staff handbooks and in its student EEG (Student Charter and Code of Conduct). Among other things, the following is regulated there:

Students with disabilities will have discussed their individual situation during the admission process, and made agreements on the individual support that can be provided. WUAS supports students with disabilities through individual agreements made with the process tutor/study advisor, for instance regarding time allowed for examinations, or the printing of examinations in a way that eases a student's experience. These arrangements are always made in consultation with the Graduation and Examination Board (GEB).

Students with special needs should fill in the form provided by the admissions department, signed by a medical practitioner and handed during admission. This form is what will be handed to the GEB with the request.

In line with Wittenborg's standard promotion policy, the programme is promoted to prospective students through specific webpages on WUAS's website, that detail an overall overview of the programme, its aims and objectives, duration cost and entry requirements. Also, the website is the central information source for current students, and the Examination Guide (EEG) and other programme documentation is published there and distributed through links to those areas.

The webpages are supported by direct downloadable files containing the Education and Examination Guide (EEG), application procedures, application documentation and year planning. This means that prospective and current students have access to all information regarding the programme.

All detailed programme documentation is included in the Education & Examination Guide (EEG). Students can download copies of the EEG from Wittenborg Online, in parts and in full. EEGs are also publicly available on the website. Students agree to have read the EEG as part of their study agreement. Loan copies of the EEG are available in print at all Front Desks and from the library. Module Guides are published online in Moodle for each module. The module guides contain an overall module description, an updated module delivery plan and an evaluation plan.

Considerations

Due to the open-door policy and the tutor-system students are able to receive intensive counselling and help during their studies. The faculty members are available for the students outside the specified office hours as well. The help desk acts as a first-level-support and offers help. In the conversation with the students, the panel got the impression that they are fully satisfied with the support they receive and are provided with different communication channels. Faculty members and students are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programme. The Education Department and the Student Administration act as service providers for students and also support the lecturers. Both, students and lecturers affirmed that during the on-site visit.

The HEI ensures gender equality and non-discrimination. In terms of time and formal standards/requirements throughout the curriculum and exams, students with disabilities are given affirmative actions. Students in special circumstances, e.g. coming from many different countries with different social as well as academic backgrounds, are particularly assisted. The exact regulations concerning the disability support are stated in the EEG.

The study programme's content, curriculum and examination scheme have been suitably documented in internal documents (EEG, module descriptions) and published on WUAS' website. In this respect, the panel would like to suggest again that the individual pathways be differentiated more strongly and that this be made more transparent in the respective descriptions.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 8 is met.

4.9 Quality assurance

Standard 9: *The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.*

Findings

From 2009, the institute has incorporated the system called Plan-Do- Check-Act (PDCA), aimed at integrating a quality system into all processes, both educational and non-educational processes, including the new programme development.

One of its operating initiatives of WUAS has been to embed the concept and the system of Assurance of Learning (AoL) into its existing quality system to further develop its robustness and to enrich the existing continuous improvement of WUAS. Through the process of AoL, information is being collected from students, graduates, and other stakeholders that feed into the system at programme level and into the development cycle. For this task, an Assurance of Learning Manager has been appointed as part of the quality system management team.

The quality assurance for the programme is embedded in the quality system for the institution. The Institutional quality system is based on a vertical Quality Flow which leads to four Domains of Evaluation Cycles of Administration (System), Education (Programmes), Communication and External Relations. The Evaluation Cycle of the procedures surrounding the domain "Education" (programmes) as part of the Quality System are described in the Quality Handbook. This handbook also describes the involvement of staff, alumni and the professional field in the further development of the programme. It is also available online for staff and students, and updated each year by an internship student, who reviews the current PDCA processes under supervision of the Quality Manager.

In 2022, WUAS has appointed an Ethics Review Committee (ERC). The ERC is comprised of senior academics, including the VP Academic Affairs, the Head of Research and the

Head of the School, plus two senior members of faculty. The role of the ERC is to establish, confirm and oversee the procedures regarding ethics followed by students and faculty during the graduation assignment process at undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as procedures followed within other research output by WUAS students and staff members. The committee is asked to review specific cases only when faculty are unable to come to a conclusion, or when there is an appeal either by a student or by a staff member. Otherwise, it meets twice a year.

From 2017, WUAS has started to instigate programme committees for its programmes. In 2018, WUAS decided to incorporate the Programme Committees into the Student Representation and Staff Representation structures, with a special Representation Event held at the start of the Summer Semester, with a reporting event later in the academic year.

The programme committees constitute two or three students and two or three teachers, who will serve one year/session. The task of the programme committee will be to evaluate the education programme, from aspects of content, 'study-ability' (study load, pace), quality of delivery, relevance of content and the overall programme. The committee will also consider the Self-Assessment for the programme accreditation, either for an up-coming visitation (give feedback on proposed changes) or the previous one in relation to the programme now. The committee will produce a one-page report with their findings, advice and recommendations before the first of May each year. The Education Board will publish its response and any possible actions to be taken before the first of June each calendar year.

WUAS adapted its quality assurance system for the Amsterdam campus. The administration and the quality management of the two campuses are in close contact and cooperate with each other in order to assure the implementation and successful running of the system. All quality instruments are carried out in Amsterdam as well.

Evaluation by students

Student evaluation of the programme continues to be carried out at different levels and at various times during their studies, formally at module level and at programme level, as well as informally through staff-to-student contact.

Module level: Throughout the programme, students are asked to complete a module evaluation form for every module they follow. The module evaluation is held during the exam week and administered via the online Moodle area. The results are evaluated and communicated to the relevant faculty and made available soon after processing for teachers, the education board and management. The procedure is described in the PDCA of module evaluation.

Programme level: Twice a year, after completing three education blocks, students are invited to their bi-annual appraisal interview, carried out by their study advisor. During this interview, they update the 'Study Agreement', a process started during the admissions process. During this appraisal, formal student feedback is registered, and reported in the notes made (now included in Osiris) and if needed in the student's study agreement.

Since 2013, the role of the 'Student Union' has been replaced by the role of the 'Student Representatives' with regard to formal feedback of the study programme and its teachers. This was done explicitly to separate the social and cultural activities organisation from direct student input into the quality of the programmes, the organisation and management. The Student Reps meet with senior management once every block during a project week.

Until 2018, feedback was documented in two sets of minutes, one confidential (for management, and the reps themselves) and one 'open' for staff and students. This was to ensure privacy of feedback. Under consideration of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), WUAS decided to make the student representation system more transparent so as to function as an open debate, at which issues are discussed in a more overall, plenary fashion. Programme management acts on the feedback given and it is valued for continuous improvements of WUAS programmes.

At the time students leave Wittenborg, either as graduates, or in other circumstances, an exit-interview is held, where possible. The evaluation results of this are fed back into the organisation.

Wittenborg encourages informal feedback to be collected at all times. All constructive feedback is channelled back into the organisation. Feedback through social media is encouraged and registered for further processing. This is mainly done through WUAS Students & Staff (closed) Facebook, LinkedIn, Google, and Twitter pages.

Evaluation by faculty

Whilst students evaluate modules, the programme and the delivery, teaching staff are also involved in this process, receiving the students' evaluation directly and using this to reflect on their own delivery, the content and the structure of their modules, and the programme. All staff members go through a periodic appraisal interview and the results of this are stored in the staff dossier and discussed by management. At the appraisal interview, staff are required to give feedback on the organisation, the programmes, their teaching, the modules they teach, the students and management. Additionally, a feedback form is integrated in all online module areas in Moodle for module guide and module content feedback which could be used by the teachers to send any feedback for the Education Board. Such feedback is discussed for continuous improvements in the taught modules during the six regular Education Board meetings (held every Project Week) and the six interim Education Board meetings (held every Examination Week). In addition to this performance, development talks are conducted with the teachers on a regular basis during every teaching block, in case of any major negative feedback from students. In such cases, teachers concerned are required to develop and submit an improvement plan. Academic faculty members are also encouraged to regularly sit in on each other's lessons as part of peer review and support and give each other feedback.

Within the programme, subject area leaders have been appointed within the subject areas defined in the curriculum, for example, Marketing, or Organisation & Management. The teachers involved in delivering subjects in these domains, across the curriculum and even across the different programmes offered at WUAS, come together to evaluate content and tools, such as different methods and models used. Periodically a 'Staff Contentment'

research project is carried out by a student as part of a work experience project that covers the feasibility of delivery of the programme.

Through the structure of Module Leaders (the lead teacher of a module across locations) and the Domain Chairs (those responsible to ensure continuity across the curriculum within domains, for instance, 'marketing', 'finance') a regular evaluation of curriculum content is carried out and ensures that all content is taught equally to all campuses.

WUAS Management and its staff have close daily contact via the morning coffee sessions, or the open staff rooms. Throughout the academic year, management organises informal lunches and end of the week drinks, specifically for staff to discuss work in an informal way and help to build their academic and administrative teams and to allow crossover feedback between administrators and teaching staff. Therefore, informal feedback from staff and students is a normal way for the organisation to be informed as to the current feeling of success or improvement possibilities.

External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties

To gain an additional external evaluation of its programmes, WUAS decided to choose an additional accreditation of its programmes, other than only NVAO. The combined external reviews of the programme by FIBAA and NVAO are geared in a systematic framework cycle of five or six years. In 2017, WUAS has decided to embark upon an extensive AACSB accreditation, a process that will generally take between five and seven years of continuous evaluation before gaining accreditation.

Employers are often involved in evaluation at the work placement stage of the programme, being asked to evaluate if the students who work for them have enough knowledge and competency to participate in the employment process in their organisation. Employers are also involved in discussions regarding the positioning and scope of the programme, from an overall qualification's perspective. Formally, WUAS organises each year a Professional Field Panel meeting, where employers and alumni are invited to review the school's programmes, qualifications and competency goals per programme and share insights into the new market trends and job market requirements for graduates. WUAS documents these inputs and makes decisions based on measured student performance and collected (indirect) data from its stakeholders.

WUAS has also engaged two external members of the Graduation & Examination Board – both participating on a regular basis in meetings, one of whom is the Chair of the Graduation & Examination Board and participates regularly in reviews of the implementation of the programmes, the level of the student output and the overall management of the programme. In addition to this, WUAS has formed a peer review partnership with the Fashion Business Academy (TMO) in which each institutes respective Exam Boards exchange a number of final projects for review and comparison of level.

WUAS has specifically chosen to engage external second markers for all final projects and are invited to the final presentations and to give feedback directly to the graduating students, to whom they were until that point anonymous. The second markers are also regularly invited to give their feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme.

Through WUAS's developing Alumni Network, alumni are asked to review the contents of the programme and provide feedback on the impact of their degree on their careers after graduation. A standard graduate survey is to be carried out each block, thereby allowing WUAS to collect information and feedback on the learning experience of the students from their own perspective. The data feeds back to the AoL system. Throughout the academic year alumni are invited to different social and career development events and workshops, but also to meetings that discuss the further developments pursued by WUAS.

The alumni-tracking system Graduway enabled WUAS to document the positions and prospects of its graduates and to remain in close contact with them. Next to the maintained alumni platform Wittenborg Connect, alumni are being monitored based on their employment status through regular survey and LinkedIn.

The next ambitions of WUAS are to develop a system of measurement of alumni success rates taking into consideration the diversity and that a proportion of students return to their home countries, that might lead to nuances in the criteria used for measuring (for instance in salary comparisons) and to create a model to outline and compare alumni's achievements in social entrepreneurship and societal impact.

Considerations

A quality assurance and development procedure has been set up and described in a quality handbook. The processes are oriented to a PDCA-cycle and continuously monitor the status and development of the study programme with respect to its contents and outcomes. It considers the evaluation results and the analysis on student workload, success rate, and graduate employment as well as the profile of the student population. By establishing a programme committee composed of students and teachers, faculty members as well as students are enabled to plan and evaluate quality assurance and development procedures in addition to participating in module evaluations. Additionally, representatives from the business world are included in the respective committees. The responsible bodies are clearly defined and the examination board, is also involved in programme's internal quality assurance.

With regard to the quality management system, the panel would like to point out that the module descriptions should be better updated and made more transparent (see Standard 3).

Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure. Furthermore, WUAS promotes a constant dialogue between students, lecturers and programme management in forms of regular meetings of the management with "Student Representatives". In this respect, the panel **recommends** making students more aware of where they can find the results of their evaluations and open sets of minutes in order to create an easier and more transparent access.

Lecturers as well as third parties (employers, alumni) are regularly invited to give feedback on the programme's quality. The appraisal interviews of lecturers with the programme management aim at enhancing the quality of specific lectures as well as developing the

programme as a whole. With regard to alumni evaluations, the panel welcomes the fact that further goals have been formulated to develop a system that captures alumni success rates and would like to encourage WUAS to continue professionalising the alumni survey in order to be able to establish stronger correlations and further develop the programme.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 9 is met.

4.10 Student assessment

Standard 10: The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.

Findings

Examination Board

At WUAS, an independent Graduation & Examination Board (GEB) oversees the operations, quality and methods of examinations. The GEB, with its (current) three external members, is completely independent of the Executive Board in its decision-making. The examination board in Apeldoorn is responsible for Amsterdam as well. The Education Board aims to ensure that there is a balance of different types of examinations across the programme, testing the aims and objectives of a module in a way that is conducive to learning and at a level in line with the academic requirements of an applied sciences BBA programme. The GEB randomly (systemically) picks examinations and papers of students to review the assessments, as well as the structure of the assessments. This process and information are recorded in the regular meeting agendas and minutes of the GEB.

Examinations and Assessment

All modules in the BBA programme have an assessment defined in the module guide. In 2018 standardised answer keys were developed, which reflect the aims and objectives of the modules and the cognitive level of skills needed for the students to complete each task. The type of examination used per module is set by the Education Board, in consultation with the teaching staff and fixed in the module guide. In the Education and Examination Guide (EEG) Part 5, WUAS has described the types of examinations that are available to teachers to use in their modules:

- Written Examination (open and closed-book examinations)
- Assignment/Report/Essay
- Project Work
- Language Test (Reading, Writing, Listening & Speaking)
- PDP Portfolio/Work Placement Journals
- Participation
- Oral Presentation/Oral Interview
- Digital/Multimedia Assessment

For written examinations, WUAS has created an examination bank, a secure area that is only accessible by a small group of staff members. Teaching staff are contracted to maintain and keep updated, (at least) three different exams for their modules. This allows the exam

administration team who manage the examinations to choose a different exam for primary and retake examinations.

Examination weeks are facilitated by the exam administration team together with a team of external invigilators (having no other contact with students), who supervise the examinations and maintain the practical examination rules students are required to adhere to. WUAS employs a team of between five and eight examination invigilators, who are in the institute eight weeks a year and are 'self-managing'.

All students at all locations have the same exams, and there is a one module leader for all courses in a module to ensure that there are no differences between the campuses.

The education team developed a new Exam Development Handbook for all teachers and examiners at WUAS and new style answer keys that ease and enhance the quality control of each exam developed.

WUAS has also further implemented the internationally accepted anti-plagiarism software Turnitin integration into a completely updated Moodle VLE to assist students with the submission of correctly referenced papers, and help bring down cases of plagiarism.

As programmes progress, assignments and examinations are developed by teachers, based on a fixed template or assessment description (in the EEG and module guides), and these are submitted to the Testing and Assessment Committee for evaluation and screening. The committee is made up of members of the GEB and all examinable components at Wittenborg are screened to check if they are of the right level – therefore in line with the Aims and Objectives of the modules and the Final Qualifications of the programme. Also, on completion of assessment, all grading is screened by the Testing and Assessment Committee on behalf of the Examination Board whose duty it is to ensure that assessment is carried out at the level described in the EEG.

Final project

To graduate, WUAS Bachelor students are required to write individual final projects that challenge them to use at least research methodology that complies with the level of a Bachelor at a university of applied sciences. The final project is always an individual piece of work, required to comply with internationally recognised standards of academic writing. The project is intended to be a culmination of the students' work in the programme, reflecting as much as they know, using various different methods to research and explore an area of business or management within their chosen field (specialisation). Assessment criteria for the final project are as follows:

- Design and conceptualisation of project
- Intellectual engagement, knowledge and understanding
- Methodology and research methods
- Analysis and Evaluation
- Structure, organisation and presentation
- Oral Defence

WUAS Education Board decided to drop the option of the Business Plan as a form of Final Project, mainly due to the incongruence of the nature of a thesis, where considerable emphasis is placed on the literature review and academic writing.

The Final Project itself is first graded by the student's Academic Supervisor, and by an independent second marker. WUAS has adopted the practice of employing a completely independent (external) second marker. This person is part of a pool of business and company experts, who work as part of a network providing second and first marker services to universities in the region. They are independent of the student and anonymous until the student is requested to present their final project, at which the second marker is present. In order to be considered as a second marker, the candidate must have prior experience to mark a thesis and must participate in all WUAS calibration sessions.

A third (external) marker is called in when first and second markers cannot reach a consensus. The grading for each graduation assignment is then also screened at a sitting of the GEB at which at least one external (non-Wittenborg) member must be present.

After submission of the thesis, an oral defence takes place. This presentation is graded with a rubrics system and amounts to 10 % of the overall grade of the thesis.

The requirements of the Final Project and the grading criteria can be found in the Graduation Final Project Handbook, that Part 8 of the EEG.

Considerations

The various assessment methods are continually examined to determine their appropriateness and alignment with the specified learning objectives. It is made sure that there is a good ratio between the various evaluation formats and the individual and group assignments. The Education and Examination Guide contains all necessary details regarding different types of exams.

From the provided information and the interviews, the panel concludes that the Examination Board secures the quality of the tests and assessment and that the board is sufficiently secure in its statutory role.

The panel observes that the examination and assessment system is in general appropriately designed and of sufficient level. The panel looked at a sample of tests made and assessed. The quality and level of the tests and judgements are sufficient. However, with regard to the final project, there were a few noticeable deficiencies in the assessment, where the panel still sees room for improvement (see also the findings of Standard 11):

First of all, the panel appreciates that WUAS took the recommendation regarding the project forms seriously in order to improve the nature of the final project, so that progress can clearly be seen. A second independent (external) marker and if necessary even a third external marker are used to assess final projects. With regard to the final projects provided and the assessment grids, however, the panel noticed inconsistencies between the first and second markers, especially with regard to the assessment of the research design. In the interviews with the teaching staff and programme management, the issue of how the quality level of the external markers in particular is ensured was discussed. According to WUAS, there are structural meetings that all markers have to attend in order to regularly exchange

information about the final projects and assessment, and to determine whether there are any structural problems. In addition, there is an academic supervisor handbook to guide them. Through the different interviews with teaching staff and markers, the panel found that WUAS has already implemented measures, but which still seem very informal. Therefore, the panel **recommends** that all supervisors and external markers work in a more structured way and according to the same procedure. In addition, the panel also noticed in some final projects provided that, for example, the methods did not quite match the research question or that there were still general weaknesses that could have been noticed during the supervising process so that the students could have been helped at an early stage (see for more information Standard 11). Since supervisors accompany students from the beginning and approve and advise on their thesis concept, the panel recommends that supervisors' skills in supervising academic work of students should be also strengthened. Thus, the panel **strongly recommends** bringing consistent knowledge to supervisors and external markers on how to supervise and grade an academic thesis.

In principle, however, the panel considers the standard to be meeting and is sure that a satisfactory solution will be found as well, among other things due to the previous efforts and improvement reactions of WUAS regarding previous recommendations.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 10 is met.

4.11 Achieved learning outcomes

Standard 11: *The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

Findings

Final projects

The panel has reviewed fifteen final projects in total, which were randomly selected but took into account the following aspects: Each of the four pathways of the programme is equally considered and each assessment level (very good, good and average) is equally present.

Basically, the panel assesses that students achieve the intended Bachelor level and the desired learning outcomes. However, during the site visit, the topic of the final project in the transition from business plans to more academic work and how to ensure academic quality standards was a point of discussion with the programme management and the lecturers. The reason for this was that the panel identified the following problems in three of the final projects provided:

- Problem analysis has deficiencies
- Literature studies are weak
- Statistical quantitative analyses show deficiencies

For example, the panel noticed in one project paper that the research question and objectives were not in line with each other, so that the theoretical framework was not coherent either. In another, only eleven participants were used for a quantitative analysis. While the third paper includes the topic "Customer Relationship Management (CRM)", but the conceptual model does not follow logically from the discussed models, and a real understanding of the topic CRM seems to be lacking. Accordingly, the panel noticed that students still seemed to be somewhat weak in problem analysis and literature studies. The lecturers or academic supervisors/markers explained in this regard that regular joint meetings take place in order to find out what problems were faced in the final projects and whether there are potentially structural problems that show that the students are fundamentally lacking knowledge, skills, competencies or support and which measures can be derived accordingly. In the last meetings, it was determined that an additional workshop on academic writing will be introduced in the introducing week of every block (for new students).

Performance of graduates in actual practice

The panel was also given information throughout the interview rounds and on paper regarding the current employment status of BBA programme graduates. A provided list showed where the graduate works (country) and in which position.

During the site visit, the panel was able to gain impressions of practitioners working with WUAS as part of the work placement and cited examples of students from the fields of marketing and hospitality management who confirmed that the achieved competences and skills actively promotes the employability of students. Altogether, the panel received positive feedback from the discussions with students, graduates and representatives from the professional field regarding the level of learning outcomes achieved. All these groups made it clear that the programme contributes to the satisfactory achievement of the learning outcomes.

Considerations

Basically, WUAS is a University of Applied Science (HBO) and directs the goals of its study programme towards higher vocational education, the achievement of which is basically reflected in the final theses. However, WUAS has set itself the goal of becoming more academic oriented. Accordingly, the panel noticed that students still seem to be rather weak in problem analysis, literature studies and in empirical research, although a lot of different workshops, courses and academic support is already provided for students. The panel found the measure to be very positive, with students starting with a workshop on academic writing, having to write a proposal before starting the final project, and a strong student and faculty support. Nevertheless, the panel sees a need for improvement in the quality of the academic support for the preparation of the final project. The panel assesses that these are particularly aspects that could have been addressed during the supervision of the final project in order to intercept and guide the students at an early stage of their work. Accordingly, the panel has made recommendations in standards 2 and 10 to improve this aspect and to counteract the identified deficits.

Nevertheless, the panel emphasises that the changes made from business project to academic project are noted and appreciated and motivate WUAS to take further steps in the right direction.

The job positions of the graduates also reflect the BBA programme's outcomes but also internationalisation goals of WUAS. The majority of WUAS graduates either work abroad (some in their native countries and some in third countries) or in the Netherlands for international businesses or in international settings.

Based on the perception of alumni functioning in professional practice, the feedback received from practitioners and the level of the final dissertations, the panel concludes that the students achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that Standard 11 is met.

5. Recommendations

In this report, a number of recommendations have been listed. For the sake of clarity, these have been brought together below.

- The panel recommends improving the research methods modules and, if necessary, investigating in a more structured way where students' problems are located in the final project in order to adapt the corresponding modules accordingly (see Standard 2).
- The panel recommends that the module descriptions be specified with regard to the content descriptions (see Standard 3).
- The panel recommends updating the module description with regard to the literature and ensuring that it is up to date (see Standard 3).
- The panel recommends that teachers should be made more aware of the Erasmus+ research and exchange possibilities as they have not yet taken advantage of them, so that they are also more integrated into the academic network (see Standard 6).
- The panel recommends making students more aware of where they can find the results of their evaluations and open sets of minutes in order to create an easier and more transparent access (see Standard 9).
- The panel strongly recommends bringing consistent knowledge to supervisors and external markers on how to supervise and grade an academic thesis (see Standard 10).

6. Assessment Overview

Standard	Assessment
1. <i>The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.</i>	Meets the standard
2. <i>The curriculum enables the students to master appropriate (professional or academic) research and professional skills.</i>	Meets the standard
3. <i>The contents of the curriculum enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Meets the standard
4. <i>The structure of the curriculum encourages study and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.</i>	Meets the standard
5. <i>The curriculum ties in with the qualifications of the incoming students.</i>	Meets the standard
6. <i>The staff team is qualified for the realisation of the curriculum in terms of content and educational expertise. The team size is sufficient.</i>	Meets the standard
7. <i>The accommodation and material facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the realisation of the curriculum.</i>	Meets the standard
8. <i>The tutoring of and provision of information to students are conducive to study progress and tie in with the needs of students.</i>	Meets the standard
9. <i>The programme has an explicit and widely supported quality assurance system in place. It promotes the quality culture and has a focus on development.</i>	Meets the standard
10. <i>The programme has an adequate student assessment system in place.</i>	Meets the standard
11. <i>The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.</i>	Meets the standard
Final conclusion	Positive

Annex 1 – Site Visit

The panel undertook a site visit on July 12 and 13, 2023, as part of the peer review of the Bachelor of Business Administration at the Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences, location Apeldoorn. (next page)

Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences

Brinklaan 268, 7311 JD Apeldoorn, Netherlands

- **Re – Accreditation (FIBAA)**
- **Extensive Programme Accreditation (NVAO)**
- **Distinctive Quality Feature for Internationalization (NVAO)**
 - Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) with the pathways
 - International Business Administration
 - Entrepreneurial Business Administration
 - Marketing Communication Information
 - Hospitality Business Administration



Site-visit on July 12th – 13th, 2023

<u>SCIENCE / CHAIR OF THE PANEL</u>	<u>SCIENCE</u>
<p>Professor University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands</p>	<p>Professor University of Liechtenstein</p>
<u>SCIENCE</u>	<u>PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE</u>
<p>Professor IUBH International University of Applied Sciences Bad Reichenhall, Germany</p>	<p>Doctor KPMG AG WPG, Global Strategy Group</p>
<u>STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE</u>	<u>FIBAA PROJECT MANAGER</u>
<p>Student University of Cologne, Germany</p> <p>Student in Economics (B.A.)</p>	<p>Project Manager FIBAA</p>

Day: July 11 th , 2023	
Until 17:00	Arrival of the Panel at the Hotel Keizerskroon
18:00	FIBAA Internal panel deliberation / Dinner at the Hotel

1 st Day: July 12 th , 2023	
Until 09:00	Arrival at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences
09:00 – 09:45 (Room H3.03)	<p>Reception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the FIBAA Team - Introduction of the representatives of Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences <p><i>Short presentation (approx. 15 mins) on the structure, classification and goals of the study programmes at hand in the overall structure and strategy of the HEI, or the associated faculty, possibly including a following discussion.</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u></p> <p><u>CEO</u></p> <p><u>President & Chair of the Board</u></p> <p><u>VP of Applied Research</u></p>
09:45 – 10:15 (Room H3.14)	Internal panel deliberation (preparatory discussion and insight of given materials (teaching and learning materials))
10:15 – 12:15 (Room H3.03)	<p>Panel interview with the programme management (no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics: Goals and position of the programme in regard to labour and educational market, curriculum (structure and content, employability), examination frequency and organisation, teaching and learning, support of students, programme administration</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u> Name / function</p> <p><u>Head of School of Business (Dean)</u></p> <p><u>Assistant Professor</u></p> <p><u>Associate Professor/Programme Coordinator</u></p> <p><u>Head of Operations</u></p> <p><u>Process & Quality Manager</u></p>
12:15 – 13:15 (Room H3.14)	<i>Break + Internal panel deliberation (Lunch/Snack)</i>

<p>13:15 – 14:15 (Room H3.03)</p>	<p>Panel interview with responsible staff for internationalisation</p> <p><i>Goals/learning outcomes, contents, intercultural aspects, internationality of teaching staff, students, didactics, assessment</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u> Name / function</p> <p><u>President & Chair of the Board</u></p> <p><u>Director of Corporate Governance</u></p> <p><u>Head of School of Business (Dean)</u></p> <p><u>Assurance of Learning Manager</u></p> <p><u>Head of Research Centre</u></p>
<p>14:15 – 14:35 (Room H3.14)</p>	<p>Break + Internal Deliberation</p>
<p>14:35 – 15:50 (Room H3.03)</p>	<p>Panel interview with 4 students and 2-3 graduates (one interviews with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics: Study structure, study process, study content, consultation and support for students, examination organization, potentially internships, terms abroad, field trips, working conditions, administration support, workload, involvement in decision making, evaluations)</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u> Names / student or graduates</p> <p><u>Graduates, alumni:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alumnus 1, IBA, Singapore • Alumnus 2, IBA, Zimbabwe • Alumnus 3, HBA, Italy • Alumnus 4, IBA, Zimbabwe • Alumnus 5, IBA, Sri Lanka • Alumnus 6, IBA, Russia • Alumnus 7, MCI, Mexico • Alumnus 8, HBA, Ukraine • Alumnus 9, IBA, Congo <p><u>Students:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student 1, HBA, Iran • Student 2, IBA, Pakistan • Student 3, IBA, Russia • Student 4, HBA, Lebanon • Student5 , EBA, Sri Lanka

15:50 – 16:00 (Room H3.14)	Break
16:00 – 16:30 (Room H3.14)	Internal panel deliberation
16:30 – 17:30 (Room H3.03)	<p>Panel interview with external stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - programme/exam committee - representatives from the practice <p><i>Main topics:</i> <i>Involvement in the programme / development of the programme, involvement in quality assurance</i></p> <p><u>Participants:</u> <i>Names / Organisation</i></p> <p><u>External Stakeholder 1</u></p> <p><u>External Stakeholder 2</u></p> <p><u>External Stakeholder 3</u></p> <p>2-3 Industry representatives / WP Supervisors / Employers</p>
17:30 – 18:00 (Room H3.14)	Internal panel deliberation
18:00	Transfer to Hotel
19:00	Joint Dinner at Hotel Keizerskroon with representatives from Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences

2nd Day: July 13th, 2023

Until 8:30	Transfer to HEI – to Spoorstraat 23 and then Brinklaan 268
8:30 – 9.30	<p>Round tour through the facilities <i>(seminar rooms, computer cluster, library etc.)</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u></p> <p><u>President of Wittenborg</u> (UK/Switzerland)/<u>CEO of Wittenborg</u> (China)</p>
9:30 – 9:40	Break
9:40 – 11:10 (Room H3.03)	<p>Panel interview with lecturers (full-time and part-time lecturers, one interviews with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i> <i>Support of students, teaching content, didactics/methods, involvement in decision making, staff education and qualification, internal cooperation and exchange/commutation</i></p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u></p>

	<p><i>Names / taught courses</i></p> <p><u>Lecturer 1</u> (Germany)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 2</u> (USA)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 3</u> (Kenya)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 4</u> (Macedonia)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 5</u> (Brazil)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 6</u> (Netherlands)</p> <p><u>Lecturer 7</u> (Iraq)</p>
11:10 – 11:30 (Room H3.14)	Break + <i>Internal panel deliberation</i>
11:30 – 12:45 (Room H3.03)	<p>Panel interview with the administration staff (one interview with all participants, no presentation)</p> <p><i>Main topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support of students - programme organisation - staff policy - quality assurance - evaluation (results, taken measures) <p><u>Participants from WUAS</u> <i>Name / Bio / Role</i></p> <p><u>External Relations & Events Coordinator</u></p> <p><u>Support Office and External Relations Coordinator</u></p> <p><u>Project Week Coordinator</u></p> <p><u>HR Manager</u></p> <p><u>Deputy Student Registrar</u></p> <p><u>Assurance of Learning Manager</u></p>
12:45 – 13:15 (Room H3.14)	Lunch/Snack + Start of Final Review
13:15 – 16:15 (Room H3.14)	<i>Internal Panel Deliberation (Final Review)</i>
16:15 – 17:15 (Room H3.03)	<p>Final feedback from the panel</p> <p>+</p> <p>Development Dialogue regarding the further improvement of the study programme</p> <p><u>Participants from WUAS:</u></p>

	<i>Names / function</i> Programme Management All interested internal departments + students/alumni
Approximately 17:15	<i>End of site visit</i>

Annex 2 – Documents

Documents available to the panel before site visit:

- Self-evaluation report
- Diploma Supplement Example of all BBA pathways
- Appendix 112P NVAO Approval Report BBA June 2017
- Appendix 114P Self-Assessment NVAO MBA Accreditation 2020
- Appendix 202P The Professional Profile (Bachelor)
- Appendix 211P The MBA Programme Final Qualifications
- Appendix 213P The BBA Programme Final Qualifications
- Appendix 231P Professional Profile versus Final Qualifications (BBA)
- Appendix 232P BBA Programme Final Qualifications in relationship with the Dublin Descriptors
- Appendix 233P BBA Programme Final Qualifications versus WUAS Domain Competencies
- Appendix 234P BBA Programme Final Qualifications versus Aims and Objectives of Modules
- Appendix 235P BBA Detailed Aims and Objectives of Modules versus Programme Final Qualifications
- Appendix 236P BBA Alignment of Module Subject Categories per Specialisation
- Appendix 243P BBA Programme Competencies vs Final Qualifications, Programme Learning Objectives
- Appendix 251P Dublin Descriptors versus HBO and WO profiles from the NVAO
- Appendix 303P The BBA Programme Curriculum
- Appendix 304P The BBA Pathways and Specialisations
- Appendix 313P BBA Programme EEG - Education and Examination Guide
- Appendix 323P Balance and Vertical and Horizontal Cohesion of the BBA Programme
- Appendix 343P BBA Programme Module Guides (Descriptors)
- Appendix 362P Teaching & Learning Methods (Bachelor)
- Appendix 373P The Modular Construction of the BBA Programme
- Appendix 383P Didactic Approach BBA
- Appendix 411P Work Placement Handbook for Bachelor Students

- Appendix 422P The professions – Alumni Examples of Positions and Sectors / Alumni Overview (Bachelor)
- Appendix 432P Example Work Placement Companies and Organisations of WUAS Students (Bachelor)
- Appendix 442P An Example of a (Team) Project Week (Bachelor)
- Appendix 513P Internationality of Student & Staff Body - Bachelor Programme
- Appendix 603P Statistical Charts - BBA
- Appendix 702P Examples of Examinations & Assessments (Bachelor)
- Appendix 704P Generic Marking Criteria for type 2 examinations - Undergraduate, Bachelor
- Appendix 712P Marking Criteria Graduation Assignments (Bachelor)
- Appendix 724P BBA Final Projects & Assessments
- Appendix 732P Examples of Student Papers (Bachelor)
- Appendix 743P Examples of Module Evaluations (BBA)
- Appendix 001G Current Programme Fact Sheet
- Appendix 002G The development of 5 Schools
- Appendix 003G WUAS Basic Organisation Chart
- Appendix 004G WUAS Year Reports
- Appendix 005G WUAS Full Financial Year Reports
- Appendix 006G Company Organisation Chart
- Appendix 009G WUAS-SPA (Strategic Plan in Action)
- Appendix 010G WUAS a history
- Appendix 011G About WUAS
- Appendix 020G Statistical Charts of Student Registrations WUAS
- Appendix 033G Erasmus+ Policy Statement
- Appendix 034G Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021-2027
- Appendix 040G WUAS Advisory Board and Advisory Bodies
- Appendix 041G The Graduation and Examination Board
- Appendix 042G Graduation & Examination Board Reports
- Appendix 044G Student & Staff Representation Overview
- Appendix 045G Governance and Representation WUAS
- Appendix 050G Admission and Selection Procedures
- Appendix 051G The Admissions Process
- Appendix 052G Transparency of Admissions Decisions and Success Rates to all Stakeholders

- Appendix 053G Examples of Admission Study Agreement & Tutoring Study Agreement
- Appendix 054G Admissions Intake Interview
- Appendix 061G The Education Board
- Appendix 062G Education Board Meeting Minutes
- Appendix 063G Programme Development Process
- Appendix 064G Ethics in Teaching and Learning at WUAS
- Appendix 065G Delivery Policy Blended Hybrid Teaching and Learning
- Appendix 066G AoL in the Programme Development Process
- Appendix 0661G Multidisciplinary (Phase) Exit Exams (MEEs)
- Appendix 070G Introduction to the WUAS Quality System
- Appendix 071G Quality Handbook Complete in PDF
- Appendix 072G Report into the Quality of the Examination System at WUAS
- Appendix 073G Quality System Audit Report 2019
- Appendix 074G Example of Module Evaluation System
- Appendix 078G Stakeholder Feedback Forms (Alumni, Faculty & Professional Field)
- Appendix 080G Academic & Operations Guide
- Appendix 085G Overall Staffing Figures at WUAS 2022
- Appendix 086G - SA WUAS Faculty - Scholarly Academics CVs
- Appendix 086G - PA WUAS Faculty - Practice Academics CVs
- Appendix 086G - SP WUAS Faculty - Scholarly Practitioner CVs
- Appendix 086G - IP WUAS Faculty - Instructional Practitioner CVs
- Appendix 086G - NB WUAS Faculty - Non-business Faculty CVs
- Appendix 087G Overview of Teaching Staff
- Appendix 088G Process Tutor - Study Advisor Handbook
- Appendix 0881G Module Leadership Guide
- Appendix 0811G External Guest Speakers
- Appendix 090G Internationality of Student Body (Institute)
- Appendix 091G Internationality of Staff Body (Institute)
- Appendix 092G Current Academic Partnerships and Memberships
- Appendix 094G Overview of Internationalisation at WUAS
- Appendix 095G Strategy Policy Internationalisation
- Appendix 101G Programme Literature Examples
- Appendix 102G Overview of On-Site Library Resources
- Appendix 120G Examples of Partnership Agreements

- Appendix 121G Memorandum of Cooperation with NEC and Annexes
- Appendix 123G WUAS Activities in Austria
- Appendix 124G Partnership with University of Brighton
- Appendix 125G Erasmus+ Programme Partnerships