

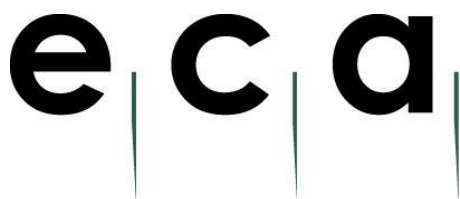
Assessment report

Bachelor programme International Business

Hanze University of Applied Sciences



Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation



european consortium for accreditation

Assessment report

Bachelor programme International Business

Copyright © 2017
ECA OCCASIONAL PAPER

European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education



All rights reserved. This information may be shared, copied and redistributed for non-commercial purposes, provided that the source is duly acknowledged. Derivatives of this material are however not allowed. Additional copies of this publication are available via www.ecahe.eu.

Cover art: David Goehring (CC. by)

e c a

Table of content

1.	Executive summary	8
2.	The assessment procedure	10
3.	Basic information	12
4.	Assessment scale	13
5.	Assessment criteria	14
6.	Overview of assessments.....	32
Annex 1.	Composition of the panel.....	33
Annex 2.	Documents reviewed	34
Annex 3.	Site visit programme	35

e c a

1. Executive summary

This report contains an assessment of the quality of internationalisation of the bachelor programme International Business (IB) at the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen. The audit was performed by an international panel, convened by Hobéon and validated by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), during a visit to Groningen on 28 November 2019. The panel's finding, considerations and conclusions are based on a self-evaluation report, on additional materials illustrating the programme's performance on internationalisation and on a series of discussions with different internal and external programme stakeholders.

According to the panel, the IB programme in Groningen fulfils all criteria and all standards of the CeQuInt evaluation framework and this up to a level which often surpasses the generic quality that can be reasonably expected from an international perspective. The panel considers that internationalisation constitutes an intrinsic element of the school and is at the core of the IB programme. Moreover, the six programme internationalisation goals have a direct bearing on the quality of teaching and learning and are sufficiently concrete to be monitored. Nonetheless, these goals are formulated in a rather generic way that does not set the programme apart from other IB programmes in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the panel recommends the management team to monitor carefully that the recently produced key performance indicators that are linked to the programme goals are more clearly defined, feasible and eventually achieved.

In terms of international and intercultural learning, the panel appreciates the way in which the school is integrating its international and intercultural profile in the nationally agreed IB framework and how each of its six programme internationalisation goals is covered in one or more programme learning outcomes. According to the panel, the assessment system is not only robust but also reflects the character of the study programme, including the international and intercultural aspects of the curriculum. The panel thinks highly of the level of graduate achievement: students are adequately prepared for a follow-up study or a position on the labour market with tried and tested international and intercultural competences.

The panel considers that students are offered good quality teaching and learning. This appreciation relates not only to the curriculum, but also extends to the teaching methods and the learning environment. According to the panel, the curriculum, teaching methods and

learning environment of the programme are relevant for the type of education the school and the university offer to the IB students in Groningen. Moreover, the panel thinks highly of the way in which the international and intercultural dimensions impact the curriculum, the didactical underpinning and the learning environment of the IB programme.

In terms of staff, the panel considers that the number and quality of staff are appropriate to deliver the IB programme. It appreciates the international, intercultural and language expertise of the staff. The opportunities for staff professionalisation are numerous and appropriate. Having met highly motivated teachers on site, the panel fully understands that students are very satisfied with the knowledge, skills and availability of the staff who contribute to a safe and welcoming learning environment.

In terms of students, the panel considers that the composition of the student body is truly international and interculturally diverse. The IB curriculum allows students to acquire extensive international and intercultural competences. Moreover, students can use a variety of services e.g. the learning labs, which are of good quality and benefit from the international and intercultural dimension of the IB programme.

In sum, the panel considers that the IB programme at Hanze UAS in Groningen fulfils each of the five standards of the CeQuInt assessment framework. Its overall judgement on the programme's quality of internationalisation is **positive**.

2. The assessment procedure

The assessment procedure was organised as laid down in the Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalisation (Frameworks) published by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

A panel of experts was convened and consisted of the following members:

- Dr. Mr. Eric van de Luytgaarden, Professor Preventive Law Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (NL) - chair
- Aisling Tiernan MSc, Advisor/Consultant on Internationalisation (IRL), former senior policy advisor Internationalisation at Maastricht University (NL), CeQuInt certified auditor
- Andrew Disbury MBA, former Vice Principal University of the West of Scotland, (UK)
- Ing. Joep C. de Jong, Lecturer Change Management Hotelschool The Hague (NL) and Lecturer at the MSOD programme of the American University (USA)
- Jaydee Wenneker, bachelor student Business Administration – International Business, Saxion University of Applied Sciences (NL) – student member
- Mark Delmartino MA, MDM Consultancy Antwerpen (B), CeQuInt certified auditor – panel secretary

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by the Frameworks. The individual panel members' expertise and experience can be found in [Annex 1: Composition of the assessment panel](#). All panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality. These signed statements are available from Hobéon upon simple request. The procedure was coordinated by Ger Broers (Advisor, Hobéon) and Mark Delmartino (panel secretary).

The assessment panel studied the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation provided by the programme before the site visit. ([Annex 2: Documents reviewed](#)) All panel members reported on their preliminary findings. The panel secretary collected this input and compiled it into a document that was distributed to the members prior to the visit. At the start of the site visit, the panel discussed these initial findings, identified the key issues to be discussed during the sessions, and agreed on a division of tasks during the site visit. The site visit took place on 29 November 2019 at the International Business School of Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen. ([Annex 3: Site visit programme](#))



The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per standards immediately after the site visit. These were based on the findings from the site visit as well as the review of the self-evaluation report and annexed documentation.

The panel finalised the draft report on 13 February 2020. It was then sent to the International Business School to review the report for factual mistakes. The panel approved the final version of the report on 28 February 2020.

3. Basic information

Qualification:	Bachelor International Business
Number of credits:	240 ECTS
Specialisations (if any):	Not applicable
ISCED field(s) of study:	Economics
Institution:	University of Applied Sciences
Type of institution:	Public
Status:	Programme accredited by the Dutch Flemish Accreditation Body (NVAO)
QA / accreditation agency:	Hobéon
Status period:	

The IB programme is a merger of two programmes (IBMS and IBL), which both hold accreditation by NVAO. Following the previous accreditation visit of the International Business and Management Sciences programme, IBMS was awarded a Distinctive Feature Internationalisation.

The assessment of the Quality of Internationalisation (as reported in this document) was combined with an assessment of the programme quality of the IB programme according to Dutch regulations. It will allow the institution to request an extension of the accreditation period with NVAO.

4. Assessment scale

The assessment-scale relates to the conclusions of the assessment panel at the level of the standards and is based on the definitions given below. Through the underlying criteria, each of the standards describes the level of quality or attainment required for a satisfactory assessment. The starting point of the assessment scale is however not threshold quality but generic quality. Generic quality is defined as *the quality that can reasonably be expected from an international perspective*.

Unsatisfactory

The programme does not meet the current generic quality for this standard.

The programme does not attain an acceptable level across the standard's entire spectrum. One or more of the underlying criteria shows a meaningful shortcoming.

Satisfactory

The programme meets the current generic quality for this standard.

The programme shows an acceptable level of attainment across the standard's entire spectrum. If any of the underlying criteria show a shortcoming, that shortcoming is not meaningful.

Good

The programme surpasses the current generic quality for this standard.

The programme clearly goes beyond the acceptable level of attainment across the standard's entire spectrum. None of the underlying criteria have any shortcomings.

Excellent

The programme systematically and substantially surpasses the current generic quality for this standard.

The programme excels across the standard's entire spectrum. This extraordinary level of attainment is explicitly demonstrated through exemplary or good practices in all the underlying criteria. The programme can be regarded as an international example for this standard.

5. Assessment criteria

Standard 1: Intended internationalisation

Criterion 1a: Supported goals

The internationalisation goals for the programme are documented and these are shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.

According to the Self-Evaluation report, the Hanze University of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Groningen is the oldest multi-sectoral university of applied sciences in the Netherlands. It offers degree programmes in the business and technical domains, as well as in social studies, health care and the arts. Hanze UAS is organized in 18 Schools with over 3000 staff and nearly 30000 students. The International Business School (IBS) is one of the bigger and more international schools at Hanze UAS. Established in 1988, IBS offers international business and management education through the bachelor International Business and three master programmes: International business and Management, Business Administration and the Interdisciplinary Business Professional Master. According to its Vision on Internationalisation, IBS has been focusing for more than twenty years on internationalisation in six dimensions: international students, international staff, international focus on business topics in the curricula, study abroad, placement abroad, and foreign language education. Recently, IBS is also focusing on two other dimensions: intercultural competencies among students and staff, and internationally oriented research. Currently there are over 1600 students studying at IBS representing over 40 nationalities. Faculty members represent 16 nationalities; Dutch faculty members have often acquired international experience.

The programme under assessment, the Bachelor Programme International Business, is being implemented since September 2018. It is the result of a merger between the bachelor programmes International Business and Languages (IBL) and International Business and Management Studies (IBMS). During the previous accreditation round in 2012, the IBMS programme was awarded the Distinctive Feature Internationalisation.

Internationalisation is an important theme for Hanze UAS and part of its Strategic Plan 2016-2020. Hanze UAS fosters the connections between international networks, (research) projects and student and staff mobility. Based on the institutional strategy, IBS is building its own internationalisation agenda. IBS' mission is "*preparing business professionals with a global mindset, who are ready to add value to international business and society*". In line with the university strategy and the mission of the school, the bachelor programme International Business (IB) operates from an international perspective aiming to educate students with an emphasis on intercultural awareness and competencies.

In the document IBS Vision on Internationalisation, which was reaffirmed by the IBS Management Team in 2019, it is stated that the IB programme meets the standards set by the university to increase internationalisation through international mobility, international staff and students, and international networks. The document emphasises, though, that the aims

of the IB programme also go beyond the university standards, hence the formulation of six goals to make internationalisation an intrinsic part of the education in the IB programme:

- IB trains international business professionals that perform in a world without borders;
- Students and staff at IB are interculturally sensitive and competent;
- Students work in international teams consisting of a diverse student population;
- Students are exposed to internationalisation issues both at home and abroad;
- Faculty have international experience and update their experience regularly;
- Applied research in an international context plays an intrinsic role in the development of students and among faculty.

The panel gathered from the discussions on site that all stakeholders – students, staff, alumni, professional field – are very much aware of the international dimension of the IB programme and support the way the management at university, school and programme level want to operationalise internationalisation at their respective levels of governance. Moreover, internal and external stakeholders share both the school's vision on internationalisation and the internationalisation goals of the programme. The Executive Board of the university acknowledges IBS' frontrunner position on internationalisation within Hanze UAS and supports the ambitions of the school in terms of international networking with academic institutions (AACSB and the Network of International Business Schools) and companies (GASMEREC, the Global Alliance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises).

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that internationalisation is within the DNA and mindset of the International Business School and a clear starting point for the IB programme. University, school and programme are committed to internationalisation. Students and staff at IB understand what internationalisation means. The panel thinks highly of the way internationalisation constitutes an intrinsic element that is at the core of every aspect in the programme.

Given the inherently international dimension of the programme discipline International Business and the long-standing focus of the school on internationalisation, the panel however found that the internationalisation goals of the programme were formulated rather generically, not offering anything really unique or different to students on the topic of internationalisation. Similarly, the panel thought that the elements which were put forward did not constitute strong unique selling points of the IB programme in Groningen and therefore do not sufficiently distinguish the programme from several other IB programmes in the Netherlands and internationally. The focus points of the programme - such as internationalisation, intercultural awareness, language learning, but also professional practice and applied research - are definitely worth while pursuing, according to the panel but more work is needed to develop these somewhat vague goals and particularly how these then convert in to verifiable objectives. The panel noted that while there are good intentions for internationalisation having spoken to and listened to both students and staff, the goals of this programme do not make the Hanze IB graduates stand out from the crowd. The panel advises the management team to reflect on the internationalisation goals, make them more specific and unique in line with what is (from the meetings during the site visit) very much intended. Having more clearly defined goals will then help with developing and setting verifiable objectives and the overall improved quality of this IB programme following the CeQuInt criteria.

The panel **concludes** that Internationalisation is at the core of the School's thinking and permeates the IB programme. The vision on internationalisation of IBS is embedded in the central university strategy on internationalisation. The internationalisation goals for the programme are documented, shared and supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme. The panel recommends to sharpen the internationalisation goals and have these reflect the unique feature(s) of the IB programme in Groningen.

Criterion 1b: Verifiable objectives

Verifiable objectives have been formulated that allow monitoring the achievement of the programme's internationalisation goals.

During the preparation of the site visit, the panel read several strategic documents on vision and policy that together shape the IB programme. The panel noticed that the foundations for the IB programme in Groningen are robust: they reflect not only the national requirements for International Business but also the strategic themes of the university, the priorities of the School and the strengths of the constituent programmes IBMS and IBL. Moreover, all these features were interlinked and cross-referenced in the documentation. These impressions from the desk review were confirmed during the site visit and also apply to the vision and policy on internationalisation.

The programme's internationalisation goals are listed in the recent (2019) vision document on internationalisation. While the document includes a section on the realisation of the school's vision and mission in education, the panel noticed that the materials did not contain a concrete operationalisation of the programme goals. The discussions during the visit revealed a disconnect between the goals and the deliverables/objectives. On one hand the programme set a number of ambitions that are in line with the internationalisation goals, but on the other hand these plans were not part of the vision document nor readily available on paper.

Asked for additional information outlining the details of how the internationalisation goals are being implemented/operationalised, the IBS management clarified in a separate note to the panel that the programme goals have been subdivided in three sub-groups – people, programme, and networks – which are operationalised through a dozen Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that are sufficiently concrete to be monitored. In terms of people for instance, the programme announced that by 2022, all IBS staff with a fixed contract will have been trained on intercultural competencies within the school's own Intercultural Didactics Learning Lab; an example regarding the learning environment concerns the student intake, which should reach a balance by the academic year 2021-2022 of maximum 50% Dutch and minimum 50% international students; in terms of network, the programme will monitor on a yearly basis that its academic network consists of at least 100 partners that are relevant for organising the study abroad period.

Overall, the panel found the information to be adequate: the materials demonstrate that the IB programme goals do not only take stock of what is in place, but that they are also operationalised in concrete ambitions for the near future. Goals and KPI's together bring the necessary focus and guidance to the international ambitions of the School and the programme. Hence, the panel **considers** that the internationalisation goals of the programme

are sufficiently concrete in order for their achievements to be monitored. Moreover, the panel thinks that there are adequate mechanisms in place – regular meetings between the head of internationalisation and the management team, and a dedicated chapter on the KPI's in the School Year Plan – to safeguard the quality of internationalisation of the IB programme. Nonetheless, the panel remarks that the operationalization of the internationalization goals is work in progress and that some KPI's should/could be formulated in a more factual way (e.g. on the international engagement of staff) or more SMART (for instance on the GASMERC network).

Having discussed this point in more detail during the visit and having received additional documentation after the visit, the panel **concludes** that objectives have been formulated and that overall, these objectives are verifiable and allow monitoring the achievement of the programme's internationalisation goals. The panel recommends the programme to follow-up on the KPI's as indicated in the materials and to make certain objectives and targets more detailed and measurable (e.g. how many more international students and from which regions of the world, and why?).

Criterion 1c: Impact on education

The internationalisation goals explicitly include measures that contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning.

The international vision of the school focuses on curricula and didactics emphasising problem-solving and teamwork. This is translated in a classroom learning environment that is international in terms of students and staff and within which student teams are composed in such an intercultural diverse way that each team consists of at least three different nationalities. The vision also emphasises the importance of intercultural sensitive behaviour – for both students and staff - which is addressed in several modules and assessment items of the IB curriculum. Furthermore, the programme's internationalisation goals are linked to the international vision of the school and are an intrinsic part of the education in IB. In this respect, all six programme goals on internationalisation contribute to the overall quality of teaching and learning. Both vision and goals demonstrate that IBS and the IB programme are moving from a diverse learning environment to an inclusive environment in which diversity is actively used as an asset.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the measures contained in the programme's internationalisation goals have a direct bearing on teaching and learning. They focus on preparing students for a job on the global labour market, on intercultural sensitivity among staff and students, on international students experiences, and on educational principles that enhance an intercultural diverse and inclusive learning environment.

The panel **concludes** that the internationalisation goals relate to teaching and learning and contribute to the quality of education.

Overall conclusion on standard 1

The panel concludes that the IB programme meets all underlying criteria of this standard. It thinks highly of the way in which internationalisation constitutes an intrinsic element of the school and is at the core of every aspect in the programme, also how it lives and is celebrated / encouraged among students and staff. Moreover, the six programme internationalisation goals have a direct bearing on the quality of teaching and learning and are sufficiently concrete to be monitored. Notwithstanding these positive appreciations, the panel found the IB internationalisation goals to be formulated in a rather generic way and questioned the uniqueness of these goals particularly in practice, noting a disconnect between the intended goals and the verifiable objectives – i.e. setting well defined KPI's and targets in order to deliver on these goals and objectives in practice. The panel also believes that the listed goals do not set the IB programme apart from other IB programmes in the Netherlands or internationally. Furthermore, as the programme goals have only recently been made operational and partially verifiable, the panel recommends the management team to re-assess the intended goals for internationalisation making them more explicit, and with a focus on monitoring and governance develop more clearly defined verifiable objectives. Based on the further discussions and additional information provided also post audit, the panel assesses *Standard 1. Intended internationalisation* as **satisfactory**.

Standard 2: International and intercultural learning

Criterion 2a: Intended learning outcomes

The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its internationalisation goals.

The programme under assessment, the Bachelor Programme International Business, is implemented since September 2018. It is the result of a merger between the bachelor programmes International Business and Languages (IBL) and International Business and Management Studies (IBMS). In accordance with the Government's vision of fewer but broader programmes, thirteen Dutch universities of applied sciences have looked into their portfolio of programmes with an international business dimension and have adjusted these to reflect current international business practices and recent insights from research. After extensive discussions with relevant stakeholders and experts from academia and industry, a new framework for IB programmes was developed and validated in 2017. This framework features 24 programme learning outcomes (PLOs), which are reflected in all IB programmes in the Netherlands. The PLOs are organised in 14 themes and four domains – ways of thinking, ways of working, living in the world, and tools for working & management - which are derived from the KSAVE (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values and Ethics). This approach ensures that in addition to disciplinary competencies, IB students also acquire generic 21st century skills that add value to a broad range of jobs.

The panel noticed that the nationally agreed IB PLOs constitute a robust framework within which each individual IB programme is at liberty to integrate and operationalise its own focus areas. The IB programme at Hanze UAS is designed in such a way that it not only takes over the common PLOs but also emphasises its own profile on international and intercultural aspects: according to the Self-Evaluation Report, 13 of the 24 PLOs contain an international or intercultural component. Moreover, the panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that there is a clear link between the programme's internationalisation goals and the PLOs: international work setting, interculturally sensitive and competent students, diverse students working in intercultural teams, exposure to internationalisation issues at home and abroad, study period abroad, language learning, and applied research in an intercultural context are all addressed in one or more learning outcomes at programme level.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the commonly agreed set of programme learning outcomes at national level constitutes a strong framework which allows the IB programme in Groningen to integrate its own focus areas. The panel thinks highly of the way in which the school has designed the IB programme to reflect its international and intercultural profile: each of the six programme internationalisation goals is covered in one or more programme learning outcomes.

The panel **concludes** that the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes correspond with the programme's internationalisation goals.

Criterion 2b: Student assessment

The methods used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

The assessment system adopted in the IB programme is rooted in the university-wide assessment policy and focuses on the principle of constructive alignment: there is a clear link between the teaching methods of a module, the learning goals and the assessment form. Furthermore, assessment at IB aligns with the assessment vision of the School and follows the principles described in the most recent IBS Assessment Policy (2019). It allows students to demonstrate the extent to which they have reached module learning outcomes and consequently the programme learning outcomes.

IB strives for an assessment programme with various assessment methods that are relevant to a study programme with an international interdisciplinary business focus. The assessments measure not only the students' performance but also their progress throughout the study. Moreover, the assessment programme wants to stimulate students to reflect on their own development as interdisciplinary business professionals.

During the discussions the staff indicated that the programme has a long-standing tradition of assessing IB students (and their predecessors in the IBMS programme) on their international and intercultural competencies in several modules and at different levels. Over the past few years, the programme stepped up its efforts to integrate (the assessment of) intercultural competencies in the curriculum through dedicated modules and learning lines. During the study abroad for instance, students develop their intercultural competencies through several practical assignments in which they interact with and reflect on the local culture. In line with the above developments, the programme also ensured that its staff develop the necessary skills to assess the (integrated) international and intercultural competencies of the IB students.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the IB programme features an assessment system that is rooted in the policies at university and school level, is well described on paper and implemented accordingly in the day to day reality of the programme modules. According to the panel, there is a good variety of assessment methods, which altogether reflects the character of the study programme, including the international and intercultural aspects of the curriculum. In this way, assessment is instrumental in delivering international business professionals with intercultural competences. Furthermore, the panel appreciates the efforts of the IB programme towards inclusive assessment.

The panel **concludes** that the methods used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes because they allow students to demonstrate the extent to which they have reached the international and intercultural learning goals per module and consequently also at overall programme level.

Criterion 2c: Graduate achievement

The achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes by the programme's graduates can be demonstrated.

At the time of the site visit, November 2019, the IB programme was not yet fully operational in all four years and featured two different graduation programmes: one for IBL students and another for IBMS students. The students who started the new IB programme in September 2018 will have a graduation programme in 2021-2022 that is likely going to consist of the Graduation Project, the Placement and possibly one or two products from the Graduation Minor.

The graduation project that was in place at the time of the site visit covers the final semester of the programme and amounts to 30 EC. In order to establish whether students achieve the intended learning outcomes, the panel reviewed a representative sample of 15 graduation projects from the IBL and IBMS programmes that were accepted in the academic year 2018-2019. The panel found that each of the fifteen projects was of the quality that can be expected from a final project of professional orientation at bachelor level. Several projects were of high quality. Moreover, the panel thought that the topics covered were interesting and relevant from an international and intercultural perspective and that the research questions spanned a diverse range of topics from management to marketing and from business development to finance and accounting.

In addition to verifying the quality of the final deliverables, the labour market performance of graduates is another way to establish whether students achieve the intended learning outcomes upon completion of the programme. The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that in general IBL and IBMS graduates have a positive opinion about their competencies when they graduate. Since 2014, IBS is monitoring the job positions of its alumni. According to the latest results, roughly one third of the graduates continues with a master programme; others tend to find a job within two or three months of graduation. Many graduates are offered jobs with their placement company or with the company for which they did the final graduation project. Upon graduation, students fly out across all parts of the world. Several Dutch and German students tend to leave their countries as well, while many international students decide to stay in the Netherlands and work for an international company. These results were confirmed by the alumni and the Advisory Board members.

Once the new IB curriculum has been fully implemented in all academic years, IB graduates will enter the job market with Groningen tinted graduation qualifications: as international business professionals who are capable of helping internationally operating businesses to achieve their goals. Besides their interdisciplinary comprehension of the key business functions, graduates will have acquired 21st century skills, including intercultural sensitivity, critical thinking, information management and communication. They will all have deepened their cultural awareness and broadened their international horizons.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that IB students are adequately prepared for a follow-up study or a position on the labour market: programme graduates 'know stuff and do stuff and are successful in either pursuing a master's programme or in finding a job that is commensurate with the level, domain and

international dimension of their studies. Given that the current graduates enter the labour market as trained business professionals with international and intercultural competencies, the panel is confident that the future IB graduates will be equally successful in achieving the intended learning outcomes - including the Groningen tinted qualifications with a specific focus on international and intercultural competencies - and in meeting the expectations of the professional field.

The panel **concludes** that the graduates demonstrably achieve the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Overall conclusion on standard 2

The panel concludes that the IB programme meets all underlying criteria of this standard. It appreciates the way in which the school is integrating its international and intercultural profile in to the nationally agreed IB framework and how each of its six programme internationalisation goals is covered in one or more programme learning outcomes. According to the panel, the assessment system is not only robust but also reflects the character of the study programme, including the international and intercultural aspects of the curriculum. The panel thinks highly of the level of graduate achievement: students are adequately prepared for a follow-up study or a position on the labour market and invariably leave the programme with tried and tested international and intercultural competencies. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 2. International and intercultural learning* as **good**.

Standard 3: Teaching and Learning

Criterion 3a: Curriculum

The content and structure of the curriculum provide the necessary means for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Both the IB programme and its predecessor programmes IBL and IBMS consist of a four-year full-time curriculum of 240 EC. In order to accommodate German (speaking) students in their transition from secondary school, the IB and IBMS programmes offer(ed) a German-taught track in year 1. Apart from this optional track in German, the language of instruction in both programmes is English. Students with a secondary school degree that prepares for academic studies can opt for a fast-track three year programme of 180 EC. While the programme was home to different variants at the time of the site visit, the panel understands that this situation is related to the transition phase from IBMS and IBL to IB. In the future, there will be one four-year full-time IB programme in English with the option of a German-taught track in year 1 and a fast-track three-year option.

The propaedeutic first year lays the foundation for further study; the second year consists of four blocks: project, theory, skills and language courses; year three is spent abroad and consists of a study semester and a work placement / internship semester; the final year is dedicated to a graduation minor deepening the understanding in one of four domains: international marketing & sales, international finance & accounting, international management, or international strategy & business development; in the graduation project in the final semester students demonstrate their ability to integrate theory and practice and apply the competencies acquired during the study programme. The panel noticed that the new curriculum incorporates the focus areas of the IB programme: internationalisation, professional practice, applied research, intercultural awareness, intercultural competence, language teaching, and interdisciplinary approach.

At the time of the site visit, the new IB curriculum was not yet fully developed. However, the approach taken by the programme team in designing years one and two gives the panel ample confidence for the future. Starting from the 24 PLOs of the IB programme, the programme team has translated these learning outcomes in learning goals per module. As was mentioned under criterion 2a, thirteen programme learning outcomes contain explicit reference to international and intercultural competences, which in turn have been taken on board when establishing the learning goals per course. The curriculum details are described extensively in the programme's Teaching and Exam Regulations.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the range of subjects covered in the programme is sufficiently broad and in line with what can be expected of an undergraduate degree in international business. The panel thinks highly of the way in which the IBS-specific focus areas are integrated in the curriculum. The international dimension is an integral part of the programme, while there is also ample attention to intercultural awareness and language teaching. According to the panel, the programme team has done a good job in relating the learning goals of the first and second year courses to the PLOs and is on the right path to design similarly fitting curriculum components for years 3 and 4.

The panel **concludes** that the content and the structure of the curriculum provide the necessary means for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Criterion 3b: Teaching methods

The teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

The IB programme adopts several didactic principles which have been described in the document “Educational Vision for the International Business Bachelor Programme”: the learning process is driven by both formative and summative elements; each block or semester in the first two years has its own profession-connected theme in which modules are interlinked; students are exposed to authentic professional contexts, feedback driven and based on 21st century skills; as the programme continues, there is growing room for individual development and choices of students.

The programme’s attention to the Groningen-specific focus areas and their impact on the teaching methods are described extensively in the strategic documents on vision and policy, as well as in the self-evaluation report. The panel gathered from the discussions that these principles do not only exist on paper but are also implemented on a day-to-day basis in class: students experience the international classroom from the start of the programme; the scrum method is used in year two to integrate theory and skills in a practical application; several educational blocks consist of integrated multidisciplinary project-based teaching; there is an extensive study period abroad and an equally comprehensive placement abroad. Furthermore, the panel noticed that the programme team features experts on intercultural competences and intercultural didactics who share their know-how with colleagues in dedicated learning labs.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the teaching methods in the IB programme are relevant for the type of education the school and the university want to offer to the IB students. The panel thinks highly of the way in which the IBS-specific focus areas, and in particular the international and intercultural components, impact on the didactical principles underlying the learning environment and the delivery of the IB programme.

The panel **concludes** that the teaching methods are suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Criterion 3c: Learning environment

The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

The IB programme aims to provide its students with a professional on-the-job learning environment from the very start of the curriculum. Students can participate as junior business professionals and work on assignments from the field. This professional on-the-job learning environment prepares students for participation in innovation labs where they operate in a

multidisciplinary environment that reflects the professional practice: students are encouraged to collaborate and experiment in such innovation labs together with other students, lecturers, researchers and business professionals. The panel gathered from the discussions that these interdisciplinary innovation labs are not only relevant for the IB programme but constitute a key part of the professional learning environment promoted across the university.

The intercultural and international classroom is at the core of the programme's learning environment: students are placed in groups with as many different nationalities as possible and are joined by exchange students who stay for one semester. Courses are taught by lecturers from various countries. Moreover, staff is trained to make optimum use of the learning opportunities of an international classroom. As a result, all students live, study and work in an international and intercultural environment, right from day one of the programme.

The diverse and inclusive environment is not limited to IB students but also includes IBS staff and applies to the Hanze UAS campus, as well. Students indicated to the panel that they appreciate very much the staff and find the campus inviting: the panel gathered from these discussions that staff and facilities are two crucial elements in providing a safe learning environment and in creating a homey feeling for international students.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the learning environment of the IB programme is very relevant for the type of education the school and the university want to offer. The panel thinks highly of the way in which the IBS-specific focus areas, and in particular the international and intercultural components, impact on the learning environment of the IB programme.

The panel **concludes** that the learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Overall conclusion on standard 3

The panel concludes that the IB programme meets all underlying criteria of this standard. It considers that the IB students, and for that matter also the remaining IBL and IBMS students, are offered good quality teaching and learning. This appreciation relates not only to the curriculum, but also extends to the teaching methods and the learning environment. According to the panel, the curriculum, teaching methods and learning environment of the programme are relevant for the type of education the school and the university want to offer to the IB students in Groningen. Moreover, the panel thinks highly of the way in which the IBS-specific focus areas, and in particular the international and intercultural components, impact on the curriculum, the didactical underpinning and the learning environment of the IB programme. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 3: Teaching and Learning* as **good**.

Standard 4: Staff

Criterion 4a: Composition

The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

According to the self-evaluation report, the IB programme has a teaching staff of 90 and a work volume of 67 full-time equivalents. A great majority is educated to master's level while 20 staff either have a PhD or are pursuing one. The staff student ratio is 1:17. The panel learned from a comprehensive staff overview that about 40% of staff are international representing 16 different nationalities or have non-Dutch roots. Almost all staff have international experience. Moreover, several staff maintain a close relationship with the professional field and with business developments.

The visit has shown that management and staff have been struggling – also from a personnel point of view – to move from two separately operating IBMS and IBL programmes with their own individual culture towards a new IB programme with combined staff. Several interviewees indicated that there is acceptance among almost all staff about the new organisational structure and that staff members from the previously different institutes are increasingly working together on the new programme. Nonetheless, they also acknowledged that it takes time to build a common culture among all teachers and staff.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the number and quality of staff is appropriate to deliver the IB programme. The panel acknowledges that it has not been easy to bring together staff from two programmes that belonged to different institutes and had their own approach and culture. The panel appreciates the positive attitude of the staff and their sense of unity as they are now increasingly working together and are looking for common ground based on a shared passion for teaching students.

The panel **concludes** that the composition of the staff facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Criterion 4b: Experience

Staff members have sufficient internationalisation experience, intercultural competences and language skills.

Although the panel has only met a small sample of lecturers and staff and does not know to what extent these are representative for the entire personnel, the interviewees showed adequate expertise in terms of international exposure, intercultural awareness and language skills. The detailed overview of IB programme staff confirms this impression as staff acquired a heterogeneous range of international or intercultural experiences prior to joining IBS.

Students indicated during the visit that they are very satisfied with the staff: teachers are competent in their respective disciplines and have good didactic skills. Study advisors and support staff are service-minded and available. Overall, students appreciate the level of

English of their teachers and mentioned that most staff display a strong intercultural sensitivity in class. Asked what they particularly like about studying at IBS, students pointed to the safe study environment and the attention they get from teachers and staff.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the staff has proper international, intercultural and language expertise to deliver the IB programme in Groningen. Having met highly motivated teachers on site, the panel fully understands that students are very satisfied with the knowledge, skills and availability of the staff who contribute to a safe and welcoming learning environment.

The panel **concludes** that staff members have adequate internationalisation experience, intercultural competences and language skills.

Criterion 4c: Services

The services provided to the staff (e.g. training, facilities, staff exchanges) are consistent with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.

To ensure that the quality of the staff is, and remains, up to standard for the entire team, IBS developed a Strategic Staff Policy Plan in 2018. The panel gathered from the discussions that the measures announced in this plan are indeed implemented: staff is supported to participate in international activities and to develop their intercultural competencies through the intercultural learning lab or the intercultural didactics learning lab. Moreover, there are opportunities to start a PhD research. All lecturers possess either an assessment certificate (BKE) or a teaching certificate (BKO or BDB). It is policy of both Hanze and IBS that new colleagues are stimulated to obtain the certificate soon.

Lecturers are encouraged to engage internationally to maintain and develop their international business and intercultural competency skills. Specific international engagement activities with business and academia have been drawn up, in line with AACSB accreditation criteria. All staff have to participate if IBS wants to fulfil the AACSB requirements regarding international dimension and school mission. Activities include conducting guest lectures abroad, hosting foreign lecturers, initiating internationalisation at home activities, and attending international business and academic conferences. Furthermore, all IBS staff are trained on intercultural competences within the school's own Intercultural Competence Learning Lab and Intercultural Didactics Learning Lab.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the opportunities for staff professionalisation are numerous and appropriate. In this regard, the in-house expertise on intercultural learning and the existence of intercultural learning labs for staff and lecturers constitute a value added for the IB programme and its (teaching) staff.

The panel **concludes** that the services provided to the IB staff are consistent with the staff composition. These services facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.

Overall conclusion on standard 4

The panel concludes that the IB programme fulfils all underlying criteria of this standard. The number and quality of staff are appropriate to deliver the IB programme. The panel appreciates the international, intercultural and language expertise of the staff. In this regard, the composition of the staff reflects the international and intercultural flavour and ambitions of the programme. The opportunities for staff professionalisation are numerous and appropriate. Having met highly motivated teachers on site, the panel fully understands that students are very satisfied with the knowledge, skills and availability of the staff who contribute to a safe and welcoming learning environment. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 4: Staff* as **good**.

Standard 5: Students

Criterion 5a: Composition

The composition of the student group (national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme's internationalisation goals.

The IB programme is very popular among students: every year more than 500 students enrolled for the combined IBL and IBMS programmes, while the IB programme has been attracting so far between 500 and 420 students. In 2018-2019, 1660 students were enrolled in the IB programme, representing over 40 different nationalities.

Currently, there are somewhat more Dutch (60%) than international (40%) students. The panel learned that it is an explicit aim of the programme to strive for a balance between Dutch and non-Dutch students in a few years. Students indicated to the panel that they appreciate the diversity of the student population. The big number and variety of international students constituted for many interviewees one of the key reasons for choosing Groningen as the place to study IB.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the composition of the student body is truly international and intercultural diverse. The panel appreciates that the programme sets the bar high in terms of student intake and aims for a balance between Dutch and international students. This ambition is clearly welcomed by the students who enrol for IB in Groningen.

The panel **concludes** that the composition of the student group is in line with the profile and the goals of the programme.

Criterion 5b: Experience

The internationalisation experience gained by students is adequate and corresponds to the programme's internationalisation goals.

The content and structure of the curriculum are designed for students to gain international experience throughout the IB programme. Right from the very start of the programme, students learn to collaborate in international groups in their own class because groups are formed in such a way that each class consists of many different nationalities. Staff is also quite diverse, with a considerable number being international or having non-Dutch roots or in any case having international experience. Moreover, guest lecturers and company visits add to the international learning environment of the students.

The third year of the curriculum is spent abroad: six months of study and six months of internship. Graduation projects are often linked to topics or companies with an explicitly international dimension. The panel appreciates the extensive opportunities the IB programme offers for international and intercultural competence development.

Alumni indicated that there is a good match between what they learn during the IB programme and the knowledge and skills they require in the professional practice. They are particularly positive with regard to the connection between the curriculum and career opportunities. The

alumni career profiles align with the content areas of the IB curriculum: management, finance and accounting, marketing and sales.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that the opportunities offered by the curriculum allow students to acquire extensive international and intercultural competences. In this way they are well prepared to leave the school as business professionals with a global mindset.

The panel **concludes** that students gain extensive internationalisation experience while studying the bachelor programme IB in Groningen.

Criterion 5c: Services

The services provided to the students (e.g. information provision, counselling, guidance, accommodation, Diploma Supplement) are adequate and correspond to the composition of the student group.

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions that the school and the programme are very effective in terms of information provision prior to enrolment. Several students indicated that they decided to study IB in Groningen after contacts with programme representatives and/or attending the Open Days. Students found the information attractive, relevant and correct.

Given that the drop-out rate among IB students is relatively high in year one – across all IB programmes in the Netherlands - the programme in Groningen pays good attention to managing expectations among both Dutch and international candidate students. Although it is not possible to refrain students with a relevant diploma from enrolling, the IB programme provides students with non-binding recommendations after they have taken tests during a matching day.

Once enrolled, students receive an academic advisor in year 1 and participate in an intensive professional skills development programme consisting of class and individual moments. After the first year students are allocated a permanent study advisor until graduation. Student advisers operate both proactively and on request of the student. Students indicated that they appreciate the range and the quality of the services and the dedication of the staff members offering the services. This appreciation also applies to the services and people organising the study period abroad and the placement.

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel **considers** that IB students can use a variety of services which are of good quality and befit the international and intercultural dimension of the IB programme.

The panel **concludes** that student services are adequate and in line with the objectives of the programme.

Overall conclusion on standard 5

The panel concludes that the IB programme fulfils all underlying criteria of this standard. The composition of the student body is truly international and intercultural diverse. The IB curriculum allows students to acquire extensive international and intercultural competences both at home and abroad. Moreover, students can use a variety of services which are of good quality and benefit the international and intercultural dimension of the IB programme. The panel therefore assesses *Standard 5: Students* as **good**.

6. Overview of assessments

Standard	Criterion	Level of fulfilment for each standard unsatisfactory/satisfactory/good/excellent (see descriptions in chapter 4)
1. Intended internationalisation	1a. Supported goals	Satisfactory
	1b. Verifiable objectives	
	1c. Impact on education	
2. International and intercultural learning	2a. Intended learning outcomes	Good
	2b. Student assessment	
	2c. Graduate achievement	
3. Teaching and learning	3a. Curriculum	Good
	3b. Teaching methods	
	3c. Learning environment	
4. Staff	4a. Composition	Good
	4b. Experience	
	4c. Services	
5. Students	5a. Composition	Good
	5b. Experience	
	5c. Services	

Annex 1. Composition of the panel

Overview panel requirements

<i>Panel member</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Internat.</i>	<i>Educat.</i>	<i>QA</i>	<i>Student</i>
• Eric van de Luytgaarden		X	X	X	
• Aisling Tiernan		X		X	
• Andrew Disbury	X	X	X		
• Joep de Jong	X	X	X		
• Jaydee Wenneker	X				X

Eric van de Luytgaarden - chair

Professor Preventive Law Zuyd University of Applied Sciences (NL)

Aisling Tiernan – member (CeQulnt certified auditor)

Advisor/Consultant on Internationalisation, former senior policy advisor Internationalisation at Maastricht University (NL / IRL),

Andrew Disbury - member

Former Vice Principal University of the West of Scotland (UK)

Joep de Jong - member

Lecturer Change Management Hotelschool The Hague (NL) and Lecturer at the MSOD programme of the American University (USA)

Jaydee Wenneker – student member

Bachelor student Business Administration – International Business, Saxion University of Applied Sciences (NL)

Mark Delmartino – panel secretary (CeQuint certified auditor)

Mark Delmartino, panel secretary (operating on behalf of Hobéon), NVAO-certified secretary & CeQulnt certified auditor

Annex 2. Documents reviewed

- Ready to Add Value, Self-Evaluation Report Bachelor Programme in International Business, International Business School, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, September 2019.
- Framework International Business, 2017
- Innovating Together, Strategic Plan Hanze UAS 2016-2020
- Educational Vision for the bachelor programme International Business, 2019
- Vision on Internationalisation, 2019
- Operationalisation of Internationalisation Goals, 2019
- The IBS partner school network and internationalisation, 2018
- Diploma Supplement
- Research vision for IBS programmes
- Vision on Profession, 2017
- Overview Programme Learning Outcomes per study block
- Rendementen Analyse IB, oktober 2019
- Measures to improve study success, February 2015
- Teaching and Exam Regulations IB 2019-2020
- Stagehandleidingen International Business and Languages, 2017-2018 & 2018-2019
- Afstudeerhandleidingen International Business and Languages, 2017-2018 & 2018-2019
- Graduation Project Handbooks IBS 2017-2018 & 2018-2019
- Assessment Policy Hanze UAS, 2016
- Assessment Policy IBS, 2019
- Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry, 2019
- Alumni Research Report, Internationalisation and IBS Hanze Alumni, 2017
- Testimonials of IBS Alumni, 2019
- Manuals, reference books and other learning materials
- Representative selection of course and assessment materials
- Representative selection of Graduation projects

Following NVAO regulations the panel has studied 15 final Graduation projects prior to the site visit. For privacy reasons, the names of these graduates and their student numbers are not included in this report. The names of the graduates, their student number, as well as the titles of the final projects, are known to the secretary of the audit panel.

Annex 3. Site visit programme

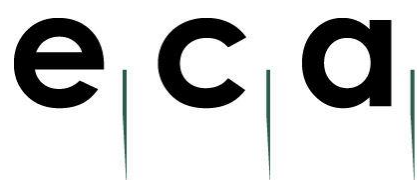
Overview

Date:	28 November 2019
Institution:	Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen
Programme:	Bachelor programme International Business
Location:	International Business School Zernikeplein 7, Groningen

Programme

08.00	Arrival panel – welcome
08.15	Internal meeting panel
09.00	Session with management
10.00	Session with lecturers
11.15	Session with students
12.00	Presentation alumni research & ICLL exercise
12.30	Lunch
13.15	Session with alumni and advisory board
13.45	session on examination and assessment
14.45	Session with HG Executive Board and Dean IBS
15.15	Session on internationalization
15.45	Session on education connected to business practice, research and entrepreneurship
16.15	Session on pending issues
16.30	Internal panel meeting
17.30	Final evaluation and plenary feedback

For privacy reasons, the names are not included in this report. The names of auditees are known to the secretary of the audit panel.



european consortium for accreditation

www.ecahe.eu