

ATHEA Accreditation Report

on

Maastricht School of Management

Endepolsdomein 150
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The Netherlands

www.msm.nl

April 3, 2017

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Executive Summary

The Maastricht School of Management (MSM), an international management school located in the Netherlands, offers Master and Doctorate level degrees as well as Executive Program certificates and diplomas.

MSM applied for Institutional Accreditation on November 16, 2016. A site visit team consisting of representatives from faculty, educational administration, student body and international policy expertise, visited the MSM campus on January 23-24, 2017. The team toured the campus, met with campus leadership, examined various supporting documentation and sought clarification on relevant items from the self-report. The team concluded that MSM is completely or mostly up to standard in all of the critical criteria and provided both recommendations for improvement and commendations for exemplary performance.

Upon the recommendation of the Board of Commissioners MSM was granted Institutional Accreditation on April 3, 2017.

Section I - Introduction and context

Section 1.1. Institutional background and context

Maastricht School of Management (MSM)

The Maastricht School of Management (MSM) is an international management school located in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

MSM offers management degree programs, including, the Master of Business Administration (MBA), Executive MBA (EMBA), the Master in Management and Master of Science in Management and Engineering programs. MSM also offers one DBA program and a wide range of certificate and diploma based short Executive programs.

In addition to its campus in Maastricht, MSM offers also, in collaboration with partner institutions, postgraduate education in countries all over the world. Among others, MSM collaborates with partner institutions in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Peru, Romania, Suriname, UK, Vietnam and Yemen.

MSM has an extensive portfolio of international capacity development projects. These are offered both for the public and private sector and cover a variety of fields such as higher education, public administration, entrepreneurship, private sector development, labour market, international trade, environmental management, sustainable tourism development and gender. These are often funded by the Dutch government as well as international donor organizations such as the World Bank and European Union.

Section 1.2. Accreditation Self-Study

The Accreditation Self-Study was provided by:

Prof. Wim A. Naudé, PhD, Dean

Liliana Bedoya, Senior Officer Global Education Programs and Quality Enhancement

Katalin Kovacs, Associate Dean Global Education Programs

Shiwen Ma, Quality Enhancement Officer

Chantal Muyrers, Associate Dean Finance and Support

Marion Rutten, Director Human Resources and Legal Affairs

Section 1.3. Members of the site visit team

Site Visit Chair - Dr. Günther Singer, ATHEA

Site Visit Faculty Member – Dr. Donna Roberts, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Site Visit Administrator - Dr. César Baena, International School of Management

Site Visit Student – Ms. Dara Miller, International School of Management

Site Visit International Expert - Dr. Günther Singer, ATHEA

Section 1.4. The site visit

Site Visit: January 23-24, 2017

MSM Members:

Prof. Wim A. Naudé, PhD, Dean

Liliana Bedoya, Senior Officer Global Education Programs and Quality Enhancement

Katalin Kovacs, Associate Dean Global Education Programs

Mr. Oliver Olson, Director Global Education Programs

Shiwen Ma, Quality Enhancement Officer

Chantal Muyrers, Associate Dean Finance and Support

Marion Rutten, Director Human Resources and Legal Affairs

Section II - Assessment of each standard

Introduction

This section is limited to a summary of the findings from the site visitor's report. See Section III for the recommendations and commendations made by the Board of Commissioners.

Standard 1 - Policy for Quality Assurance

The institution has a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of the institution's strategic management. Internal stakeholders develop and implement this strategy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders. This strategy should be included in the institution's strategic planning process. All transnational activities of the institution including joint programmes, partnership arrangements, branch campuses, etc. should also be included within the strategy for quality assurance.

Background information and analysis

As a guiding principle, all MSM's degree programs are subject to the standards set by various international accrediting bodies such as the Association of MBAs (AMBA), The International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE) and The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

On a national level, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs (full-time, part-time and online delivery mode) offered at MSM's main campus in Maastricht, The Netherlands, are accredited by the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO).

To ensure efficiency in the processes MSM has a Quality Enhancement and Accreditations Office committed to create continuous quality improvement cycles at MSM, and it aims to guide the institution through the processes of national and international accreditation both at the institutional and programmatic level. The Office serves as the body which performs tasks related to what could be considered as "external checks" such as degree checks (whether or not students have fulfilled all requirements for graduation) and is responsible for organizing quality checks (content level checks).

MSM's Quality Assurance Policy complies with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and its implementation covers from the institutional to the programmatic level.

Recommendations for quality improvement

Provide further documentation and evidence regarding institution's approaches to continuous improvement and quality assurance at the organizational level.

Provide evidence that the institution is acting and promoting environmental sustainability.

Standard 2 - Design and Approval of Academic Programmes

The institution has processes for the design and approval of their academic programmes. The programmes are designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme is clearly specified and communicated and referred to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Background information and analysis

The Academic Coordinator of each degree program develops and proposes the programmatic objectives and student Intended Learning Outcomes following the Dublin Descriptors for Higher Education and framed by the Broad-Based Learning Goals. These are discussed with the Academic Disciplines or in small teams. Final proposals are taken to the Education Board who advises on solutions and decisions. The Dean has a final review and approval on the programmatic objectives and student Intended Learning Outcomes and on the overall Outcomes Assessment Plan.

Given MSM's nature and the number of programs that run in cooperation with global partners, the Outcomes Assessment Plan and the process of reporting the results have been vital in strengthening the collaboration and in organizing and making the information more systematic. This is a long-term process requiring short-term goals and continuous adjustments.

Concluding, continuous improvements are done in order to keep appropriate, relevant and high-quality curriculums, including fresh and relevant specializations. The constant collaborative work between faculty through the Academic Disciplines and with the Academic Coordinators and the Education Board, makes it possible to analyse.

Recommendations for quality improvement

None

Standard 3 - Student-Centred Learning, Teaching, and Assessment

The institution's academic programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process and the assessment of student learning reflects this approach.

Background information and analysis

The development of self-directed learning is an explicit goal of MSM programs and in accordance, course designs help to decrease the dependency on the teacher and improve the learning skills of the students.

At the end of each course, students fill out an evaluation of the course content and the faculty member teaching the course. The questionnaire addresses various elements of the course, such as the amount of time spent, the achievement of course learning goals, and the instructor's performance. The anonymous questionnaire includes one open question, which enables students to give an overall impression. Education officers make an overview of the general remarks and the Academic Coordinator discusses the outcome of the evaluation with the lecturer in the post course evaluation meeting. Students' opinions of the learning outcomes, satisfaction with the program and the lecturers are useful indicators of the overall quality of the program

Article 3.10 of the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) (Master Programs and DBA course work) ensures that all students have the right to inspect their exam paper. Moreover, if students think there are inconsistencies, they have the right to appeal to the course tutor who must formally respond to their request. If students still feel that the course tutor's answer is not sufficient, they may take their complaint to the MSM Examination Board.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should involve students in governance, such as their proposed plans to involve alumni in the international and corporate advisory boards.

Standard 4 - Student Admission, Progression, Recognition, and Certification

The institution consistently applies pre-defined and published regulations and policies covering all phases of the student "life cycle" including student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

Background information and analysis

The internal procedures to coordinate the Admission, Progression and Certification of students is clearly detailed in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), MSM's administrative tool that is available to all staff and faculty in Moodle, facilitating the communication and ensuring the use of updated and standardized formats for all the information (related to students' data, grades, dates, lecturers, etc.)

Each program has its specific and clearly documented guidelines for admission, progression, recognition and certification.

MSM Student Affairs caters for the non-academic aspects of student life at MSM. The Student Affairs department aims to ensure a smooth as possible student life at MSM.

MSM has a student counsellor available that can assist students on personal issues.

Career Service Officers are available throughout, and after, the studies, for face-to-face, or skype, meetings for those with specific questions, are wishing some guidance on a career-related matter.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should document that the institution's student processes are in accordance with appropriate regulatory standards and national/regional requirements.

Standard 5 - Teaching Staff

The institution ensures that its teachers, are appropriately qualified and competent to teach the assigned courses. The institution applies fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the teaching staff. The institution performs research appropriate to the institution's mission.

Background information and analysis

New faculty members are recruited through faculty networks, academic organizations, and by advertising on career sites and/or business journals. The qualifications of faculty members are assessed and evaluated during the selection process. The respective applicant is also expected to demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills during a seminar that is attended by MSM faculty.

Faculty is evaluated according to the following criteria: Strong publication record; Contribution to editorial boards; Active involvement in the academic community; Good teaching skills; Constructive contribution to society and links with the business community; Fund raising capabilities.

MSM faculty is expected to regularly publish scholarly articles in renowned (scientific) journals, (chapters in) books, working papers and occasional papers. Several strategies are used in order to encourage and facilitate fulfilment of faculty publication requirements. The Dean allocates research and teaching time to faculty. The expected performance of each faculty member in both areas is specified at the beginning of each academic year and depends on past performance in both areas.

Recommendations for quality improvement

None

Standard 6 - Learning Resources and Student Support

The institution has appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and provides adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support.

Background information and analysis

Financial oversight is conducted internally by the Management Team and the Supervisory Board, and externally by PriceWaterhouseCoopers in the form of an annual audit.

Current financial, physical, learning and technological resources are adequate to support the portfolio in business education and research.

The MSM Information Centre is a sophisticated multi-functional resource centre, with physical and virtual resources available free of charge for students, faculty and staff. Part of the requirements from MSM for its partners is to ensure that students and faculty can count on the necessary facilities on site to guarantee a proper academic setting. After a careful selection process, when MSM engages in a collaboration, it requires its partners to provide adequate educational facilities (including equipment, access to library, and other educational facilities).

The process to assess the current and future needs of learning resources at the institution are discussed during the monthly Management Team meetings.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should provide clear and detailed closure and teach-out plans, especially with regard to partner sites.

MSM should document QA processes for Operations, HR and Finance.

MSM should develop a comprehensive auditing system for partner sites to ensure that they are following SOPs, Financials, Legal, etc.

Documentation of more comprehensive oversight of partner locations is recommended.

Standard 7 - Information Management

The institution collects, analyses, and uses relevant information for the effective management of their academic programmes and other institutional activities with appropriate policies and procedures to facilitate clear communication with all stakeholders.

Background information and analysis

In order to enhance the communication management among the administrative units and with faculty within the whole MSM partner network, MSM developed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The SOP has been implemented to improve communication between the different stakeholders and strengthens collaborative work. It is formatted as a “handbook” and users are guided through the whole set of necessary activities and procedures related to the administration of the programs.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should establish a consistent system for collecting data on the career paths of their students/alumni. The visiting team acknowledges efforts being made in this direction and the inherent difficulties therein based on the distributive network and lack of voluntary participation of alumni.

Standard 8 - Public Information

The institution publishes information about its activities, including academic programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, and readily accessible. The institution also publishes information regarding its ethical standards and conduct, community engagement activities, and social responsibilities.

Background information and analysis

MSM publishes clear and specific information about the programs and the results of the academic cycles. This is done in compliance with the international accreditors, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation CHEA and according to the Dutch law.

MSM has a Marketing and Communications department that is in charge of publishing MSM's education, marketing and branding activities as well as facilitating the communication for the institution within the network as well as with the wider public.

The MSM Communications Office is responsible for all (external) communications about Maastricht School of Management and the educational programs, both online and offline.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should publish evidence that the institution is acting and promoting environmental sustainability.

MSM should publish clearer policies on the information management systems. (The site team acknowledges that this system is currently undergoing a major update.)

Standard 9 - Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

The institution monitors and periodically reviews their programmes to ensure that the programmes achieve the objectives set for them and are responsive to the needs of students and society. Periodic reviews lead to continuous improvement of the academic programme. Actions planned or taken because of the periodic reviews are communicated to all those concerned. A periodic review is also completed on the comprehensive quality assurance plan.

Background information and analysis

MSM has a Quality Assurance Policy in place and also has a comprehensive and specific Outcomes Assessment Plan for the academic programs which describes the Intended Student Learning Outcomes per program, the Measures to assess them and the Goals. This Plan also includes the Operational Goals of the School.

This plan includes the Direct and Indirect Measures. Each year the information resulting from these measures to assess each one of the Academic Programs, is analysed and evaluated. Required steps will be taken in order to continue improving the academic excellence of the programs and the experience for students and other stakeholders.

Whenever the goals are not met, course of actions are determined, as well as a responsible (in some cases a team) and a deadline. Also, in cases where there is room for improvement and or change (in a goal that has been met), actions and specific steps are proposed to continuously enhance the quality of the programs and student's experience.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should fully document the approach to continuous improvement at the institutional level (as is clearly demonstrated at the programmatic level).

Standard 10 - Cyclical External Quality Assurance

The institution undergoes external quality assurance in accordance with ATHEA Standards on a cyclical basis.

Background information and analysis

Maastricht School of Management is recognized as a Dutch Institute of International Education (IO) in the Dutch Higher Education system by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW). As such, MSM is allowed to award degrees according to the cycles of Higher Education.

MSM's partners outside the Netherlands operate in their own national legislative environment, wherever they are located in the world. To make sure that partners are authorized, have the legal license, to operate in the legislative environment of their own country, they have included a clause into the contract of our (Standard) Collaboration Agreement that safeguards this.

In addition, MSM is listed in the World Higher Education Database. This list is extracted on a periodic basis from the database maintained by the International Association of Universities on higher education institutions and systems worldwide and includes higher education institutions offering at least a post-graduate diploma/degree.

Recommendations for quality improvement

MSM should provide detailed explanation regarding the legal operation in the various partner sites.

Section III: Summary of Actions Required, Recommendations and Commendations

Action Required

The following actions are required:

1. Student involvement in institutional governance and quality assurance.

The involvement of students in quality assurance activities is mainly at course and program level currently. The institution would benefit from an involvement of students at institutional level.

MSM must explicitly integrate students in governance and quality assurance processes.

2. Transnational arrangements – Resources (teach-out plan)

The institution cooperates with various Higher Education Providers (HEP's) to deliver its services. The information about partner resources is limited.

A) Please provide one sheet per partner/external site containing the following information:

- Partner/External Site Information
- Institution:
- Partner/External Site:
- Physical Address:
- Date Established:
- Legal Status to provide educational programs in their home countries:
- Programs/Degrees Offered:
- Number of Students:
- Number of Degrees Granted:
- Number of PhD Level Faculty:
- Number of Master's Level Faculty:
- Number of Administrative Support Staff:
- Key Local Personnel:
- Additional Information:

B) Risk and contingency plan (including a teach-out plan per partner)

C) Evidence and/or a guarantee letter that MSM takes full responsibility to ensure appropriate

- Physical and educational resources
- administrative support

for each partner location.

Recommendations

1. Alumni tracking data

The institution has an implemented concept for alumni services. Nevertheless, the current data about alumni such as career and personal development that might help to evaluate the impact of the educational services rendered at MSM are missing.

The institution would benefit in developing and implementing an impact-oriented career and personal alumni tracking system spanning minimal three but optimal ten years after graduation. The system should include quantitative and qualitative data.

2. Management and support processes

The institution has management and support processes. Compared to the size and the international scope of the institution they lag the maturity of the core business process (management process). Some of these, such as the policies on the information management system are not described at all.

To support the efficient qualitative and quantitative growth of the organization, MSM would benefit from systematized management and support processes which are more systematic, and explicit.

Commendations

1. Unique outreach aspect of mission serves the larger global purpose; Balanced approach to risk of these endeavours
2. Qualified and committed faculty
3. Strong core of key personnel committed to quality and mission
4. Satisfied students
5. Strong programmatic policies and procedures to ensure quality and consistent delivery of curriculum

Section IV: Accreditation

Maastricht School of Management was found "Substantially Compliant" in all 10 Standards of Accreditation.

Upon the recommendation of the Board of Commissioners MSM was granted Institutional Accreditation on April 3, 2017

Section V: Validity of the accreditation

The accreditation is valid until April 2, 2024 based on the condition that the institution continues to fulfil the accreditation requirements.

Section VI: Publication requirement

This report will be published at ATHEA's and MSM's webpages.

The current accreditation status of the institution will be listed at ATHEA's webpage.

Publisher

This report is published by



Association for Transnational Higher Education Accreditation

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