Development Dialogue Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Cluster Business Administration
- Bachelor Bedrijfskunde
- Bachelor International Business Administration
- Master Business Administration (full-time)
- Master Entrepreneurship
- Master Business Administration (post-initial, part-time)
- Master Verandermanagement (post-initial, part-time)

After the site visits on 27, 28 November 2018 and 8 January 2019 the peer review committee conducted development dialogues with the main representatives of the VU Business Administration programmes. During the development dialogues, the committee made a number of suggestions for points of improvement to the programmes, either of a more general nature, concerning all programmes, or more programme specific. A summary of these suggestions is presented below.

General suggestions to improve the programmes:

- The committee suggests to reflect on the profile of the master’s programmes and to ensure that students understand what the programmes are about. The programmes’ main representatives agree that the branding of the programmes can be improved and that there will be initiatives with the VU marketing and communication department to better highlight the profiles of the programmes.

- In addition, the committee suggests taking future trends, like demographic developments and digital transformation, into consideration. The committee recommends thinking about how these trends affect future education. The programme representatives respond that they can see the importance of considering these trends and that they keep abreast of new initiatives on digital education within VU Amsterdam. The committee suggests having a look at project-based learning for the bachelor’s programmes and design-based research for the master’s programmes.

- The committee has much appreciation for the portfolio instrument of the master’s programme Business Administration. The committee finds this a suitable tool to learn to be reflective, which answers to the perspective of Life Long Development. The portfolio facilitates students reflecting on their learning process and on long-term goals throughout the year. The portfolio is a new element in the programme and still in the pilot phase. The committee suggests further development of the portfolio and to consider introducing it into more programmes.

- The committee appreciates the new form that the advisory board will take in several programmes – namely as an annual event with relevant businesses rather than a permanent board – and notes that it would be good to think about ways to most effectively use the knowledge in these businesses.

Programme specific suggestions:

- Master Entrepreneurship. Since the entrepreneurial attitude is an important aspect of the programme’s profile, the programme representatives raise the question of how to strengthen the students’ entrepreneurial attitude during the thesis. The committee suggests promoting more entrepreneurial research methods like future studies (scenario thinking) or participatory research to maintain the entrepreneurial attitude during the thesis phase. An idea is to include in the thesis assessment criteria the degree to which a student has taken risk during data collection.
- Part-time master Business Administration: Programme representatives ask the committee for ideas to raise the influx in the programme and more specifically in the Financial Management specialisation. The committee suggests various options to attract more students among which:
  - Make a stronger connection with the Zuidas.
  - Change the Financial Management specialisation (more Digital/Fintech orientation).
  - The students (from both programmes) with whom the committee spoke liked the ethics course. This could be expanded in the programme.
  - Use your alumni to discuss these options

- Master Verandermanagement. The programme representatives ask the committee to reflect on the idea of a portfolio of final projects. The committee indicates that especially with a portfolio of final projects it is important to make clear how the different parts relate to the intended learning outcomes. Also, it is important to have a transparent assessment procedure that includes the weight of the different components and if compensation between components is possible.