

Minutes Development Dialogue (in Dutch: *ontwikkelgesprek*) of the NVAO re-accreditation of the executive Master of Mergers & Acquisitions and Valuation (EMMAV) of the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB) (University of Groningen (UoG)) with a request for Joint degree with the School of Business and Economics (SBE) (Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam).

CROHO-no: 75142
Date site-visit: 3 February 2023
Location: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam.

Participants (and their role)

Participants on behalf of the peer-review panel: Prof. dr. A. Buijs (chair), Dr. RA K.W. Slump (member), Prof. dr. M.G. Heijltjes (member), Prof. dr. H.P.A.J. Langendijk (member), drs. R.J. van der Heijden (student-member).

Participants on behalf of the Faculties: prof. dr. W.G.M. Holterman (programme director, UoG), prof. dr. ir. H.A. Rijken (prospective programme coordinator, VU), dr. M. Luiting-Drijfhout (programme manager, UoG), M. van der Vlag (programme assistant, VU), drs. K. Visscher (educational policy advisor, VU), dr. M. A. Ossevoort (department head educational quality, UoG).

This development dialogue took place within the framework of the NVAO re-accreditation of the above-mentioned degree programme on 3 February 2023 following the site-visit. The secretary of the peer-review panel was not present at the development dialogue. The minutes of the development dialogue, approved by the participants of both Faculties, was submitted to the secretary of the peer-review panel for approval to the peer-review team.

Minutes

At the beginning of the dialogue, the programme director explained the purpose and agenda of the meeting. The programme management had beforehand submitted three topics by email to the peer-review team:

- The programme aims to have a larger delegation of lecturers affiliated with the UoG and VU. What suggestions does the panel have taking into account the balance between theory/science and practice in this programme?
- Does the panel see opportunities to increase the proportion of women, or diversity in general, among both lecturers and students?
- What suggestions does the panel have to increase the studyability of the programme?

The programme aims for a larger delegation of lecturers affiliated with the UoG and VU. What suggestions does the panel have taking into account the balance between theory/science and practice in this programme?

The panel sees multiple solutions for increasing the delegation of lecturers affiliated with the UoG and VU. First, the panel suggests providing some involved guest lecturers with a formal (small) university appointment, and possibly find common ground with other university programmes as well for broader knowledge sharing. Second, the panel suggests to involve lecturers from other faculties of the UoG and VU (e.g law or organizational change) or be aware of suitable PhD candidates that are involved in M&A research that could be a fit within the programme. Due to the academic character of portfolio Part III, one could use academic lecturers. Also attracting academic lecturers for certain topics, such as change management or organization behavior who will then work with lecturers out of the M&A workfield. They

will learn from and complement each other. Finally, the panel suggests using strategic human resource planning to create a more structural plan for staffing for the long run, including the succession of the programme management.

Does the panel see opportunities to increase the proportion of women, or diversity in general, among both lecturers and students?

The panel agrees that there is relatively low diversity in people working in M&A and Valuation practice. So, to increase the diversity in staff and students, you can only achieve this by active recruitment. This requires perseverance. The panel suggested several options. If possible, give female/international (expats) alumni a role as (guest) lecturer in the programme. One could also think of asking alumni to actively recruit lecturers and students of diverse backgrounds within their own network and reward them for this. Also, the Advisory Board or the network Women in M&A or Female x Finance might contribute to ideas to increase diversity in students and staff.

What suggestions does the panel have to increase the studyability of the programme?

The panel suggests being transparent regarding deadlines and informing students on time about these deadlines so that they can prepare for periods that require a high workload. Moreover, attention should be paid to the transition to a new course (i.e., avoid scheduling the exam of the previous course on the same day of a deadline or many pre-reading tasks for the new course).

Another suggestion that is given by the panel, is to change the set-up of the programme that now consists of 22 sessions (Fridays and Saturdays) in 1.5 years. The panel mentioned investigating larger blocks of sessions, for instance blocking a full week for one course, rather than the split-ups in weeks. This set-up may be attractive for non-Dutch students living abroad as well. They specifically mentioned to organize at the start of the programme a week in Groningen to create a connection with Groningen (since all other meetings will take place in Amsterdam) and to create a community-feeling.

The longer sessions might be problematic for students in relation to their position at their business. In that sense, employers need to be asked to allow students (their employees) to give space and time to attend these one-week sessions.