



WITTENBORG
University of Applied Sciences

Programme Committee Report

INSIGHT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVES (MBA/MSC) AND STAFF

Programme Committee Report – 2024

MBA/MSc Programmes

Committee Members: Deputy to the Head of School of Business, Lecturer 1, Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4

Introduction

The committee, formed by the above Staff and Students Representatives, evaluated the MBA and MSc programmes at Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences in the aspects of content, teaching, assessment, and outcomes. Based on the observations and discussion, and the feedback collected among master students (with 40 participants), we highlight the key insights in the following sections along with recommendations.

1. Content of the programme

In last year's report, we expected more streamlined content in the modules to reflect industry practices and prioritize practical application, requested more specialized modules from the beginning and industry-relevant software like analytical tools to be introduced in the finance modules, and expected that the quality and structure are maintained despite potentially smaller student groups in some specializations.

It was shown in the feedback that 70% of the students were satisfied with the cohesion in the programme, 64% of the students were satisfied with the level of content regarding logic and efficiency. In the National Student Survey (NSS) 2023, content and organisation was also one of the indices that was closer to the average level of universities of applied sciences (WUAS: 3.4; UAS: 3,59). Students were satisfied with the curriculum design, educational resources, comprehensiveness of the programme, and academic input of the university.

However, we still received some feedback from students that the content is not always practical for students. The module guides need to be relatively stable for lecturers and students to follow. Students of the Logistics & Trade hope to have more specialisation modules in their programme. We noticed that some lecturers supported students with up-to-date analytical software but did not plan sufficient time for students to practice or experiment. We suggest that they can choose one or two popular/representative ones for students to practice and transfer that experience to others. It's good to see that more guest speakers were invited to enrich the professional knowledge of the students. We expected more opportunities for company visits so that students could get direct experience on site and opportunities to communicate with professionals.

We noticed the various levels of students in mathematics, which is the foundation of some core modules in statistics, finance and accounting. We suggested that a supporting course can be offered to students at least twice per year, just like Support English module, to support students with limited knowledge about mathematics and statistics.

As many Type 2 exams are changed to Type 1, we expect more project/problem-based activities conducted in class so that students could have more opportunities to learn by doing it and reflect on the contents of the modules and their practices in the exams.

2. Teaching of the programme

The report of last year recommends improving teaching quality at Wittenborg by using more interactive activities, streamlining course content, and aligning assessments with learning objectives. While acknowledging positive changes like providing practice exams, the report calls for a more hands-on approach with professional training sessions and better time management within classes.

According to the recent survey, 59% of the students considered the level of the lecturers to be good, and the same proportion of the students were satisfied with the teaching techniques. 74% of the students agreed that they were given the space to express their opinions and pursue their own interests. In NSS 2023, the satisfaction of WUAS students was the closest to the average level of UAS among all aspects (Wittenborg: 3.6; UAS: 3.69). Students are encouraged to communicate with and consult the lecturers. They are invited to give the best in the class and share their knowledge.

Obviously, there are still places to be improved. Students expect better learning experiences and more experienced professionals teaching in the class. We hope teachers who teach the same module will communicate well on the distribution of the contents and topics to avoid too much overlap and/or confusing sequence of topics.

Based on the feedback from students and observations, the deputy heads of schools have talked to several lecturers and communicated with them about how they needed to be improved, mostly in the aspects of student support, interactive pedagogy, class management, etc. The reports of the conversations were sent to the members of the Education Development and Quality Management Department (EDQM). We provided suggestions for the lecturers to improve and will follow up with observations and reflections. There was one case that the teacher received ungrounded negative feedback. We expect all our students to be more honest and ethical in evaluating the modules.

3. Assessment of the programme

In the previous report, requests for improved transparency in assessment criteria, feedback were emphasized. While some progress has been made, further improvements are desired. While final exams are crucial, better aligning them with classroom activities and incorporating in-class analysis would better prepare students. Exam details like estimated time, question types, and an orientation session should be provided beforehand for optimal student preparation.

It is good to see the improvement of this year, such as the exam orientation sessions in the introduction week, the increasing transparency of the assessment types and criteria, and the support of students retaking exams under mitigating circumstances.

However, in the recent survey, most students (72%) were still not satisfied with the assessment (In NSS 2023, Wittenborg: 3.3; UAS: 3.51). 67% of the students considered the assessment not transparent enough. For example, the detection of AI is not visible to students, the reason for punishing students for using AI-based language editing was not justified, and the grading rubrics need to be more transparent. The change of exam types increased the pressure of students in preparing and doing the exams. 56% of the students considered the exams not suitable for the modules. Students consider it necessary to use practical exam formats over written or question-and-answer ones to simulate real-world management scenarios. Practical application of knowledge should be emphasised in the assessment so as to equip students with effective practices. Assessments should be more project/problem based.

Another concern of the students was the delay of the exam results. Usually, exam results should be available within 2-3 weeks after the exams or submission deadlines. But a few exam results were terribly delayed and left students less time or even no time to attend the exam review, prepare for the retake exams, etc. Students expect the examiners follow the same criteria as students are requested to submit their exam papers before deadlines.

4. Outcomes of the programme

The report of last year highlights improvements in communication and transparency based on previous recommendations. The code of conduct is available, classroom relocations are minimized, and anonymous feedback is no longer collected by a specific lecturer. We proposed more effort on enhancing student career prospects through networking opportunities and demonstrating transparency in responding to student feedback.

It is encouraging to see more initiatives aimed at improving student employability, such as the Central Netherlands Job Fair, the Global People Lunch & Talk events held every block, and career development seminars.

However, in the survey, the students did not score remarkably high on their learning experiences, final projects, and chances of their employability. NSS 2023 results also show below-average scores for students' connection to professional/practice/career opportunities (Wittenborg: 3.3; UAS: 3.71) and access to guidance/counselling (Wittenborg: 3.3; UAS: 3.51). To address these concerns, we believe increasing the number of professional career coaches and providing more work placement opportunities are crucial.