

# External reflection

## Bachelor of Business Management

22nd of March 2024

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### Part 1 | Introduction

1. Positioning of the external reflection
2. Composition of the commission and interviewees
3. Format of the external reflection

### Part 2 | Report

1. Quality feature 1: Profile, learning outcomes and curriculum
2. Quality feature 2: Learning environment
3. Quality feature 3: Student mentoring
4. Quality feature 4: Stakeholder involvement
5. Quality feature 5: Internationalization, applied research and community service

### Part 3 | Appendix

1. Odisee's reference framework

This report is part of the VARIOSO cycle: Odisee's self-directed quality assurance tool. It is a snapshot of educational quality by the Education and Quality Department, alongside the continuous development and improvement work of the program.

For more background information you can visit our website: <https://www.odisee.be/en/quality-education>



## Part 1 | Introduction

### 1 Positioning of the external reflection

The external reflection is part of the self-directed quality monitoring of Odisee, also called the VARIO cycle (Explore, Analyze, Reflect-internal, Optimize, Reflect-external, Follow-up). The external reflection is a review of a program by an independent/external commission of experts. Odisee collaborates with VLUHR KZ for this purpose.

The external commission takes note of the program's quality profile. The quality profile is a concretization of five quality features:

- Quality feature 1: Profile, learning outcomes and curriculum
- Quality feature 2: Learning environment
- Quality feature 3: Student mentoring
- Quality feature 4: Stakeholder involvement
- Quality feature 5: Internationalization, applied research and community service

For each feature, the program documents an accomplishment that it is proud of and a challenge that it intends to prioritize in the near future. The commission discusses this quality profile with the training team, endorses and/or helps to further deepen the program through questions/comments and tips for the future. If necessary, the commission may also make urgent recommendations related to the program's documented quality profile. It's possible for the commission to question topics that were not addressed in the quality profile, but this is more exception than rule. If necessary, an additional consultation meeting will be scheduled for this and additional documentation will be provided.

Assessment is done in report form by describing three items for each quality feature:

- strengths
- questions/comments
- tips for the future

### 2 Composition of the commission and interviewees

#### Commission

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Chairperson:               | Elke Struyf          |
| Peer:                      | Ralph Ferwerda       |
| Work field representative: | Hanne Van den Berghe |
| Educational expert:        | Bram Rotthier        |
| Student:                   | Charmaine Le'Toille  |
| Reporter:                  | Sofie Metsers        |

#### Participants of the program

|                                |                                                         |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Stand-in for Cluster director: | <u>Speeddating + in-depth discussion:</u> Katrijn Claes |
| Head of BBM Program:           | <u>Speeddating + in-depth discussion:</u> Tom Kestens   |
| BBM Graduation Coördinator:    | <u>Speeddating + in-depth discussion:</u> Xander Rabaut |

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lecturers:                         | <u>Speeddating + in-depth discussion</u><br>Kathleen Caenen<br><u>Speeddating</u><br>Geert De Backer<br>Igor Nowe<br>Emily Hamilton<br>Philippe De Bruecker<br><u>In-depth discussion</u><br>Dr. Alea Fairchild<br>Stephanie Gardner JD<br>Françoise Humbert-Todd<br>Francesco Matranga<br>Jef Bormans |
| Students:                          | <u>Speeddating</u><br>Joanna Simacio<br>Omar Bekdash<br>Alana Li<br><u>In-depth discussion</u><br>Ikram Salad                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Work field representatives/alumni: | <u>Speeddating</u><br>Delphine Geyskens<br>Ricardo Oliva Cano<br>Chelsea Arreymbi Enanga<br>Kyan Van Der Weyden                                                                                                                                                                                        |

### 3 Format of the external reflection

- 8h30-9h Arrival of commission - coffee
- 9h-10h15 Consultation commission– preparation for speeddating
- 10h15-11h15 Speeddating
- 11h15-11h45 Showcase moment of the program (in function of 2 accomplishments)
- 11h45-12h30 Consultation commission – Feedback speeddating
  
- 12h30–13h30 Lunch – Preparation for in-depth discussion
  
- 13h30–15h00 In-depth discussion
- 15h00-15h15 Break
- 15h15–16h30 Consultation commission– decision making
- 16h30-17h Report

## Part 2 | Report

For each quality feature, a brief description is given first. Below that, the reader will find the chosen accomplishment and challenge of the program, as described in the quality profile. This is followed by the assessment of the commission.

In the appendix you will find the complete reference framework.

It is clear to the commission that since the arrival of the new head of the program a lot has been initiated. The commission met passionate team members and students, but there is also still a lot of work to come for the team.

### Quality feature 1: Profile, learning outcomes and curriculum

#### Description

The program has a clear, specific profile consistent with the educational vision of the field of study and the organization. The learning outcomes of the program are a clear implementation of the internationally and nationally validated domain-specific learning outcomes. The curriculum of the program is in line with the most recent developments in the field of study, in the professional field and is societally relevant.

#### Choice of the program

Accomplishment: Program and curriculum redesign, including change in tuition fee

Challenge: Roll-out and realization of the new curriculum

#### Strengths

The team members show great commitment towards the program. Lecturers are enthusiastic, want to learn from each other and co-operate across courses. The core team, including the head of the BBM program, has a *realistic perspective* on the steps that still need to be taken to develop and further improve the content of the program. The new electives and the new setup for secondary languages are good examples of stepwise initiatives the team is about to accomplish.

The program was able to recruit a large number of students from very *different regions and nationalities* in a short timespan which shows that there is a real interest in the program. This also shows the quality of the program.

#### Tips for the future

- ✓ The program does not have an explicit, written-out vision and strategy. However, within the team a shared vision and ideas with regard to which goals they want to reach in the end are present. The commission recommends to clearly formulate what distinctive elements the program is aiming at and to develop marking points to give direction to the program development process.
- ✓ The current set of learning outcomes are a direct translation from the former Dutch program. The commission has the impression these learning outcomes do not function as a guiding tool for future developments. The BBM team is encouraged to use the backward

design approach (which has already been used for the electives) for the whole curriculum. New learning outcomes can be derived from the needs of professional practice. We recommend limiting the number of learning outcomes and connecting them to the learning paths of the program.

- ✓ The current design of the curriculum is characterized by a large number of small sized courses. The commission encourages the team to not treat the structure of the program as set in stone. Bigger course units could very well be a solution to establish more efficiency, more room for innovation and more possibilities for engagement of professional practice.

## Quality feature 2: Learning environment

### Description

The learning environment encourages students to play an active role in the learning process and contributes to smooth study progress. There is alignment of the learning environment with the diverse student population, student talent development, and interaction with the professional field.

Student assessment reflects the learning process and concretizes intended learning outcomes. We weigh assessment against deployed talents and taken up challenges.

### Choice of the program

Accomplishment: The BBM program offers a balanced mix of educational activities, with an emphasis on engaging students and ensuring they commit to their studies

Challenge: Gradual improvement on approach/set-up for bachelor thesis

### Strengths

The commission met a very enthusiastic team with lecturers that consciously engage with didactics. Throughout the whole day and especially in the showcase, a lot of *good practices* (for example initiatives for stimulating student engagement and the concept of interactive teaching) were presented.

Business Management is clearly a *practiced based program*, several courses include practice in one way or the other. Partner companies are involved in projects and courses.

The commission appreciated how much attention is given to *professionalizing* the teaching staff.

It is clear that the team has a clear view on their student population, with their strengths and challenges. It was good to see how the team is *co-creating with students* when addressing challenges such as 'Ownership'.

### Tips for the future

- ✓ For the next steps to Odisee 2027 the commission advises to turn these good practices into a program wide educational vision, taking into account both the authenticity of each lecturer and the shared learning principles which are recognizable in each course. Discussing, finding consensus and in the end having a clear, shared vision, will not only bring clarity to the students, but also to all members of the educational team.
- ✓ A challenge for the team will be to ensure that all staff members are engaged in the process of creating an overall teaching concept.
- ✓ The commission recommends less assignments per course and more integrated assignments with more room for formative feedback. The first focus can be on the hurdle courses.

### Quality feature 3: Student mentoring

#### Description

The teachers assigned to the program offer students optimal opportunities to achieve learning outcomes. The program has appropriate study (and trajectory) guidance and inflow and outflow of students. The program provides complete and easily readable information on all phases of the course. The program-specific facilities in terms of library, ICT, infrastructure, social services are accessible and adequate.

#### Choice of the program

Accomplishment: Communication within the program

Challenge: Diversity & inclusion initiatives

#### Strengths

There is a big and committed team of *student representatives*. It's a sign of strong student participation that elections had to be organized because there were too many candidates who wanted to become a student representative. This is probably linked to the fact that BBM has very mature students. This means that the right circumstances to discuss problems with the teaching staff are present.

*Students are stimulated* to take responsibility, add their ideas, and take initiatives. The teachers help them discover their talents and develop a positive professional attitude.

The three *individual appointments* that the ISP-coaches have with each student are greatly appreciated.

#### Tips for the future

- ✓ The monthly meetings with the student representatives are needed to monitor the changes yet to come and to make sure that students are involved in the choices that are being made.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the mental health of every student. BBM students are strong and mature, but some students can easily feel isolated in a new country and environment. STUVO is an important service and it's good that the specific background of the BBM students is being taken into consideration, but sometimes these general student services aren't enough.
- ✓ It's a good thing that the two hours onboarding has been turned into a full day, but there are also programs that have an onboarding process of a full week or that organize activities during an entire year. The commission recommends the program to think about how they can facilitate activities for students outside the onboarding day, so that they feel welcomed in our country. Students themselves organize a lot of activities, but it would be positive if the program played a role in this. This could be in the form of social activities, English events in Brussels, administration or even student housing.

## Quality feature 4: Stakeholder involvement

|                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Description</b><br>The cooperation between work field representatives/other partners and the program has added value for both parties.<br>The program has active and embedded student participation. |
| <b>Choice of the program</b><br>Accomplishment: Mix of experienced lecturers, bringing business into the classroom<br>Challenge: Building a sustainable and formal platform for industry stakeholders   |

### Strengths

The work field speaks of the *BBM students* as *highly motivated*, mature and really polite. There's a lot more interactivity coming from the BBM students versus the average marketing student. They managed to impress stakeholders by (for example) being well prepared for the selection process from the "Welcome Talent" mentorship program.

Feedback from students showed that *co-creation* is definitely possible within the 'walls' of the BBM program and gave the following scenario as an example: the curriculum for AI was swiftly altered/updated with the rise of AI. Students were positively surprised at how rapidly the Odisee staff switched gears in that regard. Lecturers also invited ex-students to come talk about the connection between law and AI. There was also a workshop initiated and organized by a teacher, a student and an administrative staff member about creating a positive self-image.

### Questions/comments

Even though the people who come in contact with the BBM students feel like they have a certain maturity and motivation, it's not always easy for the students to actually find a way into a (qualitative) workplace as a non-EU student. Steps have been taken in the right direction to support the students even further with a dedicated *workplace coordinator*.

During the showcase it was clear that there are some highly motivated teachers to train the students into business professionals by also hammering on soft skills such as punctuality, interactivity, ownership and respect for one another. However, skills like "*critical thinking*" are difficult to assess with the students and the stakeholders in the work force. Soft skills are the core business of the BBM program.

There were some questions about the validity of the 2nd year internship (2-3 weeks) and the value this brings to the students. This internship is being transformed into a *project week* which can bring more value to both the students and the workplace. The commission thinks this is a step in the right direction for the program.



### **Tips for the future**

- ✓ Keep working on a blacklist of companies that treat students as cheap labor, but also keep a whitelist with qualitative workplaces where the BBM students are welcomed for their internship.
- ✓ Reach out to more (international) businesses to create further long-lasting relationships with the industry like the mentorship program from WPP, IQVIA, UN, etc.
- ✓ Look into keeping track of the feedback from all work placements to find strengths and weaknesses that might be recurring to further improve the program.
- ✓ The commission suggests providing students with interesting English conferences and events in Belgium for them to attend.

## Quality feature 5: Internationalization, applied research and community service

### Description

The program invests not only in its main mission around education but also in internationalization, applied research and/or service in interaction between the program and the work field.

### Choice of the program

Accomplishment: Truly international mindset & approaches

Challenge: Co-creation and collaboration with Cense/Odisee research team

### Strengths

The BBM program is inherently *international*. Students are also encouraged to do their internship abroad.

With regard to *research* it is interesting to notice that various BBM-lecturers are active in research and combine this with teaching in the BBM program. There are links to other universities, schools and research institutes.

The commission thinks that the *electives* offer great opportunities. They can be turned into microcredentials in the long run.

### Tips for the future

- ✓ The commission wishes the program success with their plans with the CenSe research group to integrate applied research in the four minors in the program. This can offer interesting opportunities for both students and staff for integrating research in the BBM program. This way community service is also facilitated. However, the commission doesn't consider this a priority for the program right now.

## Part 3 | Appendix

### Odisee's reference framework

#### Quality feature 1: profile, learning outcomes and curriculum

- We are committed to sustainable education that results in energy for lifelong learning.
- We also opt for effective learning, with transfer of what is learned into practice. Students base these practical experiences on internships, work-based learning, projects, as well as very real cases provided by the work field and the teacher.
- We are fully committed to a holistic perspective of student functioning in an authentic context.
- The student chooses from a range of learning objectives (discipline-specific, discipline-transcending and personal learning objectives). The finality of students' learning trajectory then depends not only on the chosen program or discipline.
- Differentiation in assessment results in a degree with a 'personal touch'.
- Through sharp choices and greater efficiency, we create room for innovation.

#### Quality feature 2: Learning environment

- In the Odisee community, students are given opportunities to grow, at their own pace, along flexible learning trajectories, in increasingly diverse contexts inside and outside the college. We recognize, encourage and support informal learning in the college, as well as outside of it.
- Odisee is a welcoming community and safe environment where students learn together. They stimulate each other to personal and professional development. Students have a strong bond with each other, with their program, with all Odisee staff, with the work field. Various grouping forms support learning together.
- We utilize all opportunities for students from different programs and levels to collaborate and learn together.
- Authentic learning experiences are the starting point and closing point for learning. We use practice as the context in which urgent learning needs arise, as the trigger for intrinsically motivated learning.
- Students seek challenges and utilize the experimental space where they can take uninhibited responsibility and initiative.
- Hybrid apprenticeships, which involve some degree of simulation, can be a good intermediate solution in the interaction between training and work. They offer room for experimentation and learning that is not always present in real-life situations.
- The societal dimension is given every opportunity in the learning process.
- Students in Odisee take ownership of their own assessment through involvement in the formulation of learning objectives, in the content, form and timing of assessment, and in ongoing feedback and feedforward on the learning process. The dialogue between coach and coachee, between evaluator and evaluatee makes assessments a learning opportunity.
- As far as possible, we test preset learning outcomes independently of the trajectory followed. In this way we offer the best chances for successful differentiation of learning trajectories.

### Quality feature 3: Student mentoring

- In a world where diversity is the reality and the norm, we choose differentiated education that embraces differences and harnesses diversity as a strength. Differentiated education does not presuppose different approaches for each learner, but emphasizes meaningful activities for all learners.
- The student is qualitatively supported in designing their own learning trajectory, through coaching from the beginning and through the completion of their own learning trajectory, with just-in-time knowledge and guidance, tailored to the chosen learning trajectory. The teacher is aware of the need to work sometimes in class, sometimes in smaller groups and sometimes individually, with the greatest possible learning return for the learners and practical feasibility in mind.
- The teaching team assumes roles related to curriculum design, development of course units and coaching. The team distributes roles among itself or combines them, according to the expertise and talents present. Experts from departments support as needed.
- Our campuses validate our image as a "broad" college, as an open community facing outward. We appeal to diverse audiences and are anchored in the surrounding community.
- By 2027, our campuses are attractive and sustainable learning, living and working environments that provide maximum support for education, research and services that invite meeting, collaboration and interaction; that provide opportunities for time- and location-independent working and learning; arranged according to the principles of universal design, already assuming differentiation in design.

### Quality feature 4: Stakeholder involvement

- Our education in 2027 truly comes about in co-creation with professional field.
- Talented and entrepreneurial students increasingly take initiative and responsibility in their development as professionals. They actively participate.
- We break down the walls between the college, the professional field and society. We are committed to sustainable partnerships and networking between education, academia and the professional field.

### Quality feature 5: Internationalization, applied research and community service

- By 2027, we will develop a quality multilingual education and will increase cross-fertilization with (inter)national students. We offer all students and staff at least the opportunity for an experience abroad. We strengthen our international learning environment, including on our own campuses, including through internationalization@home.
- We ensure that lifelong learners can come to us for short and long-term programs, for basic training, refresher courses and specializations. We develop trainings and post-graduates that are closely aligned with subsidized educational programs and applied research. In addition, we develop a niche of high-end programs that represent an important market value in the non-subsidized training market, together with other educational partners.
- In 2027, applied research is an engine for sustainable and societally responsible innovation for both the work field and education:
  - applied research departs from a problem or question from the work field or society;
  - we focus on developing new or improving existing practices, products or processes and on implementation and dissemination of the findings;
  - we focus on co-creation and active partnerships with the work field and other scientific institutions;
  - in these collaborations students and teachers deepen their expertise and develop an innovation-oriented and scientific attitude.
- Through services and resource centers, we disseminate the accumulated expertise.